

Messages from Revelation 9 of 16

Universal Decree

#0470

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—August 10, 1973

Tonight, first of all, I would like to call your attention to something very interesting in connection with Revelation 14:8. It's an illustration of the statement I brought you at the beginning of this series, that in the book of Revelation, all the books of the Bible meet and end. It is surprising how many of the expressions in the book of Revelation are borrowed word for word from various of the Old Testament prophets. We've just read here:

“...Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city...”
Revelation 14:8.

Now turn to Isaiah 21:9. It's the last part of the verse that we'll note, for this is the part that is echoed by the great message of Revelation 14:8:

“...he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen...”
Isaiah 21:9.

So John wasn't the first one that wrote that. Isaiah wrote it 800 years before John took his pen in hand on Patmos. And what we hear in the second angel's message is the echo of that cry from old Jerusalem. As the prophet Isaiah saw in vision that which John saw in vision.

“...Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images
of her gods he hath broken unto the ground” Isaiah 21:9.

You notice that Babylon is a center of idolatry. But there comes a time when in the fall of Babylon, all those graven images fall and are broken, for that's what happens to an idol image when it falls.

You remember that Dagon, one of the false gods of the Philistines when the Ark was brought there and put in Dagon's temple. God let Dagon fall. The Philistine lords came and put him back very courteously, but the next morning when they came, he'd fallen again. And this time he was broken. This is what is going to happen to all the gods of Babylon. They're all going to fall, and they're all going to be broken—no question about it.

Now let's turn to Jeremiah 50, and we'll note another statement about the idols or the gods of Babylon. Some of you as we read the first part of this verse will remember the echo in the 16th chapter of Revelation when the sixth angel pours out

his vial upon the great river Euphrates, that's the river that runs through Babylon, and the waters thereof are what? Dried up.

“A drought is upon her waters; and they shall be dried up: for it is the land of graven images, and they are mad upon their idols” Jeremiah 50:38.

Do you see again that Babylon is noted for its idolatry, its worship of images? It was no accident, not merely coincidental that Nebuchadnezzar, the great king of Babylon, was moved upon by the enemy, working through his wise men, to set upon the plains of Dura a great golden image. It was no accident that he commanded everybody to bow down and worship it; Babylon was the land of graven images. Of course, there were three young men that said “No,” they wouldn't do that. Why? They had some queer ideas that they had gotten from two tables of stone. They had engraved upon their minds the words that the finger of God had put in those tables. The first of those Ten Commandments was, say it with me:

“Thou shall have no other gods before Me” Exodus 20:3.

That image on the plain of Dura was not Jehovah. More than that, they had the Second Commandment engraved upon their minds. That said:

“Thou shall not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shall not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me; And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep My commandments” Exodus 20:4–6.

So Shadrach and his fellows stood up when all the world bowed down. Again, and very soon, there will be a universal decree when the image of the beast is erected, and all mankind is commanded to worship. But there will be some young people, yes, and older ones, who will stand as erect as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Oh, I hope everyone here will be in that minority that is loyal to the God of Heaven. What do you say?

“It is the land of graven images, and they are mad upon their idols.” I was interested in some of the other translations on this expression. “With idols they make themselves mad”—that is insane, crazy. “They are mad over idols.” Our *Bible Commentary* commenting on this says that the literal reading is:

“With horrible things they act like mad men. The prophet probably has in mind orgies performed in the presence of grotesque, and often obscene, idols” *Bible Commentary*, Volume 4, page 527.

And then the comment is: These are orgies performed in the presence of grotesque and often obscene idols. This is a picture of the mysteries of ancient heathenism. Running through the various religions of antiquity, we note this idea: that the gods whom they worshiped were the disembodied spirits of men and women who had once lived in this world. And they worshiped these in the spirit world, but they worshiped them in the form of these images before which they bowed down.

These gods that they worshiped, having once, of course, been people in this world, those who worshipped them, thought of them as having the traits, the attributes, the appetites, the passions, the dispositions of humanity. So the Psalmist says, "They that make them are like unto them." The gods were thought of as being angry, passionate, lustful. They were pictured as killing, committing adultery, and all sorts of immoral acts. And those who worshiped them were taught to follow their example. So, every species of vice and crime was practiced in the paganism of antiquity under the guise of, and as a part of, religion.

This is one of the reasons that God commanded Israel to go in and exterminate the Canaanites. They had gone so far from God, and so far in deifying vice and sin that they finally reached the place that their probation was closed. There was nothing more that God could do for them. Satan had finally brought them to the place where the image of the Devil was incarnate in them. This is the condition toward which the world is rapidly moving at the present time. And the remnant will be distinguished from all the world around them in that they worship the Creator rather than the creature; that they worship God rather than images and idols.

"Well," someone says, "Brother Frazee, surely there're not many people at least in America that are worshipping any idols."

Yes my friends, tonight I'm going to pick out just three of the gods that are being worshiped in America today that have their counterpart in the ancient worship of Babylon and its associated false religion; many of these gods that literally millions of people in America are worshipping today.

The first is the god of gold. Let's turn over to 1 Timothy 6:

"But they that will be rich..."

Not merely rich people, many poor people are pictured here. "They that will be rich" that is, they that are determined as other translations put it. Determined to be rich, that fix their eyes and fix their heart's affections on money and the things that money can buy.

"...fall..."

Babylon falls, those who worship its gods fall with it.

“...into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil...”

Other translations say: “a root of all kinds of evil.” In other words, some covetousness, that’s what the love of money is, covetousness is the love of money. From this springs a myriad of other evils.

“...which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things...” 1 Timothy 6:9–11.

Wouldn’t it be a strange thing to see a man running from money? Well, there’s a time to run from money. Don’t misunderstand me. God uses money. Thank God, it can be used in His kingdom here on earth, working out His will. But when Satan took all the money of this world, all the property of this world, all the beautiful houses of this world, and all the kingdoms of this world and piled them all in one great heap in front of Jesus and offered Him the whole pile, Jesus turned from it, and bade the Devil depart. Why? He said:

“... it is written, Thou shall worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shall thou serve” Matthew 4:10.

Yes, there’s a time to flee, and that’s when the Devil attempts to bribe the child of God with money or anything money can buy. Is this an idol? Yes, it’s an idol. Covetousness is idolatry. So if we’re covetous, if we love money, then we are idolaters, for we are letting money or the things money can buy occupy the place which only God should have.

You remember that the rich young ruler came to Jesus and wanted to get a blessing from Him. He would have loved to join His company. But the Savior said, Young man, you lack one thing. To follow me you will need to go home and do what? Sell all you have, and then what? Give it away to the poor, and then what? Come and take up the cross and follow me. He was grieved at that saying, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

You know, I saw a wonderful sight the last vesper service I was with you here. I saw men and women moved by the Spirit of God. There was no plan for that part of the meeting in advance. I saw men and women moved by the Spirit of God, turn in cash and pledges here in amounts such as I have never before seen in my life. A few moments ago, we heard another story of consecration and dedication just seven days old.

Brethren and sisters, we are in the time when God is moving on people to turn from the love of money to the love of souls, turning from the pursuit of money, and seeking for the one thing worthwhile—to know Jesus and to spread the knowledge of His love to others. Oh, if any of us have been caught with the lust for gold, if any of

us have been kneeling before the golden calf, I pray God that this evening we shall get our eyes upon the cross.

There was another rich young man in that same generation where that young man was that turned from Jesus sorrowfully. This young man was also wealthy. He was also a ruler of the Jews. He was also a member of the Sanhedrin. But this second young man when He met Jesus on the Damascus road, from that moment on everything he had was on the altar.

You know what happens to what's on the altar? It is consumed. May I warn you, friends, for I want to be very practical in the studies on the messages of Revelation 14? They're not just some doctrinal dissertations. They're not just some prophetic studies. They are some very practical lessons in how to live for Jesus and His work. May I warn you? It is dangerous to get too near to what you're near tonight if you want to hold onto all you have. Oh, I pray that instead of withdrawing from that influence as that first rich young man did, we will, like the second young man, Saul of Tarsus who became the apostle Paul, I hope we will joyously say, "Lord, what will You have me to do?"

Yes, it will take all we have. It will consume all we have. It took all that Noah had to build the Ark. But what comfort would it have been to him while he was tossed upon those billows to remember with joy how much he'd left in the bank? What comfort would it have been? How thankful he was that all he had was invested in the Ark.

Think of Nicodemus, reputed to have been the richest man in Jerusalem. He also was a member of the Sanhedrin. But thank God, the seeds that were sown in his heart that midnight hour on the Mount of Olives were watered by the prayers of Jesus.

As he saw the Son of God lifted up on the cross, his heart was moved and he surrendered himself fully to the Savior. He spent all of his wealth in maintaining the infant church. As those rude fishermen from Galilee gave their strong leadership under the power of the Holy Spirit, this mighty man of the Jews, an honored councilman, a rich ruler, came forward and poured out his wealth to keep that work going. Finally, he became a despised, poor man, turned away from by those who had once honored him. But thank God, he's going to be in the kingdom with Jesus. His eyes had been opened; he saw something worth more than all the gold of this world.

"Babylon is fallen, is fallen, and all her graven images are broken." Everybody in this world who stays with Babylon is soon going to be involved to the full in the worship of these false gods, one or another.

I spoke of the god of gold. The next god I want to speak of is the god of appetite. We have a very interesting little verse over here in Philippians 3:

“(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)” Philippians 3:18–19.

This is a very expressive verse. Paul talks in plain language here about some people, and he says their god is their belly. I’m going to read it from some of the other translations. “These men are heading for utter destruction, for their appetites are their god.” “Their doom is destruction, their stomach is their god.” “Their future is eternal loss, for their god is ‘good food.’” You know what some people’s idea of good food is, don’t you?

I want to tell you something, friend—and don’t miss it—it is on this point that sin entered this world. The thing Adam and Eve took and ate was not a piece of ham, nor a bottle of whiskey, nor some marijuana, was it? And it is possible to indulge perverted appetite by eating not only something that is poisonous, but even something that may be good in itself but eating it at the wrong time, in the wrong way, or in the wrong amount. To state it in another way, God’s ideal for humanity is that we shall be masters of appetite instead of slaves to appetite.

The Babylonians, the Greeks, the Egyptians, the Romans, and these other nations of antiquity with their false religions identified these different experiences of human life with certain gods. For instance, Bakus, he had various names and various languages and various religions, was the god of wine and revelry. So from time to time, they’d have these feasts. Of course, part of the worship of the gods of Babylon was the drinking of the wine of Babylon. And why? Because the wine puts to sleep (as I studied with you in a lesson we had some weeks ago) the higher centers. Conscious slumbers while the lower centers take over. The tongue is loosened, and speech flows freely. Also, the person who has put to sleep his conscience, his governor by some use of alcohol, or any one of a number of other poisons, the breaks are off. So he goes on eating and drinking, eating and drinking.

Do you know some of the old Romans got so far down in the depths of degradation that they would have these long feasts in which they would eat and drink, eat and drink, until finally, they could hold no more. Then they would go outside and vomit—they had even rooms to vomit—so they could come back and continue on with their banquet. This is a picture of the worship of the gods of paganism.

You may have wondered sometimes why the children of Israel, with that revelation of God on Mount Sinai, hearing His own voice speak to them from the top of that mountain commanding them not to worship images, should just a few days later come running in there to Aaron and then say, “Make us gods that should go before us.” You may wonder that Aaron yielded to their demands. But I want to tell you something: it wasn’t primarily the *lure* of some golden calf set up on a pedestal; it was what went with it. Turn please to 1 Corinthians 10. Here is a picture of the

apostasy at Sinai. Now I want you to see what went with the worship of the golden calf; it still does.

“Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters...”

Ne what? Idolaters. Don't be worshippers of idols.

“...as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play”
1 Corinthians 10:6–7.

What did they have in connection with the worship of that golden calf? They had feasting, they had a banquet, they had a party. So with eating and drinking, feasting and reveling, they forgot God. And then under the influence of all that eating and all that drinking, they rose up and began to play. Do you know what they played? Well, they had dances around that idol. And some of those dances were of the immoral lascivious character that they had witnessed in Egypt, for closely associated with the worship of the gods of antiquity was immorality of every kind.

That leads me to the third god I want to notice tonight—it is the god of lust. The god of passion carried to the point where it constituted a violation of the Seventh Commandment. When God made the human family, He gave man some basic urges or drives, as they call. He gave us a desire for food. Why? Well, He had made us so that we would need food to eat, but He also wanted us to enjoy it. God planned for man to enjoy every activity that he engaged in. And when you think of the delicious flavors of all the foods, the tempting odors, the lovely colors—think of the peach, the plum, the grape, the strawberry, all the other fruits. When you think of all that, you can see that God is trying to make people happy. But in order for us to be happy, we need not only delicious food, we need an appetite with which to enjoy it.

I suppose everybody here sometime in his life has had the experience of having a lovely tray brought to you, and you say, “Oh, I just can't eat any.” What's the matter? Well, there's no appetite. So it takes more than delicious food. It takes an appetite. But it takes one more thing. It takes this wonderful preparation of food that God has made in the world around us. It takes a good appetite in you and me, put there by the Creator. The third thing, it takes self-control. Without that, man makes a pig of himself. He becomes a slave to appetite. And the whole tendency of that is to sink deeper and deeper.

The same is true with this basic drive or urge that God has put in the human family which finds its proper expression in the marriage relation, in the union between one man and one woman. God intended that this should take place only in marriage. This is the meaning of the Seventh Commandment, “Thou shall not commit adultery.” But just as the Devil has brought in all sorts of perversions of appetite, so he has with this matter of passion. And so the Devil suggests that it's

narrow-minded for one man to keep himself for just one woman; that it's narrow-minded to think that these feelings, these emotions, these impulses, these passions must be under restraint. It is even taught by some scientists, science falsely so-called, that it is dangerous to repress those things. That's the serpent speaking from the tree—the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

No, as appetite must be under the control of reason and conscience, or else we are slaves, along with those we read of in Philippians 3 whose god is their belly, so it is that this impulse, this attraction of man toward woman and woman toward man, which as I say finds its proper expression in the marriage relation; if this is to carry out the Creator's plan, then all of that is to be under the restraint of sanctified reason, and controlled by the Holy Spirit. Otherwise we become slaves, we become idolaters.

This is what happened at Sinai. They not only debased themselves by indulging their appetite. They debased themselves by violating the Seventh Commandment, by various perversions.

Some years later, just before entering the Promised Land, they were tested again on this point. There on the banks of the Jordan, the prophet Balaam sought to accomplish through his special plan that which he had failed to accomplish by cursing Israel from the mountains of Moab. He introduced Midianitish and Moabitish women that came into the camp and mingled with Israel and began to invite the Israelites over to some feasts and idol worship among the Moabites. And they went over there just to look.

May I say, friends, I feel sorry whenever I hear of young people or older ones either, visiting the Moabites to see what's going on; whether it be in entertainment or religion, or anything else? It is by beholding that we become changed. So thousands of those children of Israel right on the borders of the Promised Land venturing over into the cities of the Moabites first watched, then they sat down and ate with the Moabites. Under the influence of the Moabite food and the Moabite drink their consciences were affected, and they entered into immorality of various kinds. So, back to 1 Corinthians 10:8. This is a verse dealing directly with what happened at Baal-peor, there in the plains of Moab, on the banks of Jordan.

“Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand” 1 Corinthians 10:8.

Twenty-three thousand lives lost in one day through immorality of the people of God. How were they led into it? They were led into it by going over there to watch the Moabites have their celebration, where idols were worshipped, where forbidden food was being eaten and forbidden drink was being imbibed, and finally leading into fornication, adultery, and other immorality.

We are living in the repetition of these times. So it is written:

“Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples:
and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the
ends of the world are come” 1 Corinthians 10:11.

Babylon today, at least on this continent, is not represented to any great extent by statues of Bakus and Venus and these other gods of antiquity. But those things for which those idols stood are just as current as ever. The love of money, the love of indulging appetite, the love of indulging in all kinds of immorality, *these* things are with us, and the intensity of these things is increasing. God is calling His people out of Babylon.

Turn please back to Jeremiah where we’re reading there, Jeremiah 51:6. Here is the trumpet call, the re-echoing of which we hear in the Loud Cry of Revelation 18:1–4. What’s that first word? Flee. What does that mean? Run. This was the word that the angel brought to Lot and his family. Flee, get going, escape for your life. Don’t stay anywhere around. But what did Lot’s wife do? She lingered. What did Lot do? He loitered. What did his wife finally do? She looked back and lost her life. Oh, my friend, hear the call of God. It’s re-echoed by the second angel of Revelation 14, by the Loud Cry angel of Revelation 18. Here it is in Jeremiah 51:

“Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man
his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of
the LORD’S vengeance; He will render unto her a
recompense...”

Notice God had made every effort to save Babylon

“...We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed:
forsake her, and let us go every one into his own country:
for her judgment reaches unto heaven, and is lifted up
even to the skies” Jeremiah 51:6–9.

So our salvation is not in Babylon. Our only hope is in *fleeing* from Babylon. We must be aware lest the lure of money, the lust of appetite, and the lust of passion contrary to the law of God, ensnare us, lest they affect us. We must be careful lest the influence of the time in which we live dilutes our understanding, and we become affected, and we do not have to be, my friend.

Joseph was a slave in Egypt. But so fully was his heart garrisoned that when that wife of Potipher tempted him to break the Seventh Commandment—and she’d learn that sort of thing from the gods and goddesses of Egypt, that’s the kind of thing they did. When she tried to seduce that young man to engage with her in breaking the Seventh Commandment, what did Joseph do? He fled! He didn’t stop and think, “Well now, this would be nice” or “Maybe I ought to consider it.” No. “How can I do this great wickedness,” he said, “and sin against God?” I want to tell you something, if he had been dallying with the picture in his imagination, he would have yielded when the overt act was suggested. It was because his *mind* was pure that his decision was right when the test came.

Do you want to be like Samson or like Joseph? Do you want to be like Esau and sell your soul for a meal? Or do you want to be like Daniel that can stand up in the palace of the king of Babylon when you're there on God's business and *refuse* the king's meat and refuse the king's wine?

God is going to have young people and older ones today that will be heroes of faith like those of ancient times. They will not worship any of the gods of Babylon. They'll not worship the god of gold, they'll not worship the god of appetite, they'll not worship the god of passion. They will have every impulse under control. They will recognize that the law of God is the way of liberty, the way of life, the way of hope, the way of happiness. They will not be allured by any of the temptations of Babylon.

To this experience, God is calling every one of us. The power to do all this is at the cross, and only at the cross. This is what has helped millions down through the ages to turn from the gods of Babylon and give their lives in the service of the Savior.

“When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died;
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did ere such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Forbid it Lord that I should boast,
Save in the cross of Christ, my Lord;
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His life.”

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