

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

FEBRUARY 9TH-10TH, 2019 // BOOK OF REVELATION

BABYLON'S FALL (REV. 18:1-3)

CONTINUING THE VISION OF CHAPTER 17

Chapter 18 continues the narrative about the "notorious prostitute," Babylon the Great. This chapter records what 3 angels say about the fall of Babylon.

- There are 2 viewpoints of Babylon's fall, first from a victorious heavenly perspective and the second from a lamenting earthly perspective.

A FUNERAL SONG FOR AN EVIL SOCIETY

Revelation 18 uses a *dirge*, a funeral song often used to lament fallen cities in the OT. This is the ultimate dirge about earth's last evil empire being destroyed.

- An angel with such "great authority" that "the earth was illuminated by his splendor" calls out this dirge with a "mighty voice."

A "HOME FOR DEMONS"

V2 says that the city has become a "haunt for every unclean spirit...unclean bird...and every despicable beast."

- This is not saying buildings are haunted, but that all remaining people will be removed from their beloved city and culture that they put so much stock into.

THE REASONS BABYLON MUST FALL

This future city/culture indulges in things that God blatantly opposes and eventually brings His wrath. This culture capitalized on people's vices to get wealthy and powerful.

- **God isn't a ruthless dictator. He sees the result of sin and its affect on us and therefore commands we not engage in them.**

FROM THE TOP TO THE BOTTOM

The 1st people indicted by God are leaders. These "kings of the earth" were **corrupt politicians and religious leaders that served themselves and damaged society.**

- The 2nd group are the corrupt "merchants of the earth" **that cared more about materialism than people. They fed off the weakness of others.**

REAPING DESTRUCTION (REV. 18:4-8)

"COME OUT OF HER MY PEOPLE"

"Another voice from heaven" said to "come out of" Babylon so "you will not share in her sins or receive any of her plagues."

- This is a warning to the reader to **remove themselves from the culture of the Antichrist before it's too late. This doesn't mean we isolate, it means we insulate ourselves with His Spirit.**

SOMETIMES IT'S THREADING A NEEDLE

As Christians we need to be **able to converse with people different from us without compromising our beliefs.** If we compromise for fear of offense or means of acceptance, we will share in the same fate as those who rebel against God.

- **This is why we read the Word and pray for wisdom and discernment!**

"PAY HER BACK THE WAY SHE ALSO PAID"

The "payback" is the bowls of wrath mentioned in chapter 16. What we see here is the furthest extreme of the **doctrine of reaping and sowing** as evil Babylon gets back all they have dished out.

- **Whatever we reap, we sow (Gal. 6:7). But, by God's grace our evil can be uprooted through repentance.**

ARROGANCE WILL ALWAYS PRODUCE A FALL

V7 mentions 3 boastful statements of Babylon the Great's culture: "I sit as a queen," "I am not a widow," and "I will never mourn."

- **Arrogance to say we'll never be alone, we're always in control, and we're the greatest there's ever been will inevitably bring destruction. Pride always leads to a fall (Pr. 16:18).**

THIS WILL HAPPEN RAPIDLY

John records that Babylon's fall will happen in "just one day" meaning that the end will come very quickly once the bowls are poured out.

- Also notice that it is **God who judges and enacts the punishment for rebellion and sin, not us (Rom. 12:19).**

MATERIALISM MOURNED (REV. 18:9-20)

LAMENTING THE FALL OF A MATERIALISTIC CULTURE

In this section we hear the cries of 3 different groups that represent all people on earth during the bowls of wrath.

- **Kings:** modern day politicians and religious leaders. **Merchants:** greedy business owners and people in the marketplace. **Mariners:** deliverers of products that capitalize on vices.

"...THE SMOKE FROM HER BURNING"

All the people of earth will witness the fall of Babylon the Great more than likely over media sources. When they see the city fall, they know that their lifestyles are coming to an end.

- They also learn that the fate of the city will also be their fate. **They finally realize that the things of this world will burn.**

THINGS NOT WORTH LIVING FOR

The kings will mourn because their time of **control** and **power** has ended. The merchants mourn because their **elaborate lifestyles** from profiting off others has ended. The mariners mourn because their **industry** has collapsed.

- The list of material goods mentioned in this section represent the fleeting things people live for in godless cultures.

There's nothing wrong with nice things, but the "glamorous things" many people long to have are temporary and are not worth living for!

- **We sell out family, friends, spouses, integrity, and honor for things that have no eternal value! We even treat people like property (slaves) and we're willing to die for temporary pleasure!**

SHIFTING GEARS

V20 looks at the destruction of Babylon from another perspective. As the world mourns the loss of their idols, followers of God will rejoice the end of the evil empire.

- **Have we made a full disconnect from the ideology of popular culture? Do we long for things that don't align with God's kingdom?**

CULTURE DESTROYED (REV. 18:21-24)

TEACHING AN OBJECT LESSON

As John watches, a "mighty angel" picks up a millstone and throws it into a sea. The point is that just like a large stone sinks into the sea, the culture that oppresses God's people will sink into oblivion.

- God "violently" throws down this culture because He is perfect love. **Perfect love always has perfect justice.**

MORE THAN JUST GREED AND POWER

Materialism and power will crumble, but culture and entertainment will as well.

- Entertainment that has become gods to so many will fall apart. **We've let media, T.V., and music shape our theology more than the teachings of Christ. We get more excited about sports than we do the Eternal Creator.**

THE LIGHT WILL NO LONGER SHINE

V23 shows us that the comfortable lifestyles we think are secure will become insecure. The phrase, "groom and bride will never be heard in you again" warns us not to idolize even marriage or our children.

- **God loves the family and marriage, but we are to "seek first His kingdom" and keep priorities in line.**

"...BECAUSE ALL THE NATIONS WERE DECEIVED"

Business, politics, family, marriage, and the arts can all be positive things that bring glory to God, but because people were "deceived by [Babylon's] sorcery" and did evil with these things, they will pay the ultimate price.

- **If we choose to serve ourselves first, even the greatest of us will fall.**

HOW THE MIGHTY FALL

- When things crumble we often ask, "How could this happen?" If we are not careful, all of us can take our comforts and securities for granted. This leads to **hubris, hubris leads to undisciplined pursuit of more, and we buy into the lie that we will never fall.**

AVOIDING THE FALL

- If we are going to stand, we must have **true humility. True humility is an accurate view of one's self.** This means we're courageous yet vulnerable, strong but aware of our weaknesses, that we **plan and prepare but ultimately trust that God is in control.** The only way we can stand is to prop ourselves up against a kingdom that can never fall. **If we will seek Him and what He desires first, we will have all the things we need given to us both now and for eternity.**