

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

NOVEMBER 30TH–DECEMBER 1ST, 2024 // REVELATION

THE FALL (REVELATION 18:1–3) CONTINUING THE VISION OF CHAPTER 17

Chapter 18 continues the narrative about the “notorious prostitute,” Babylon the Great, and records what 3 angels say about the city’s fall.

- There are two viewpoints of Babylon’s fall. First, from a victorious heavenly perspective and 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”

V. 2 says that the city has become a “haunt for every unclean spirit...unclean bird...and every unclean and 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 REASON BABYLON MUST FALL

This future city/culture indulges in things God blatantly opposes and capitalizes on people’s vices in order to get wealthy and powerful. This eventually yields the wrath of God.

- **God isn’t a ruthless dictator. He knows the results and effects of sin, and therefore commands we not engage in it.**

FROM THE TOP TO THE BOTTOM

The 1st group are leaders. These “kings of the earth” were **corrupt politicians and religious leaders who served themselves and damaged society.**

- The 2nd group are the corrupt “merchants of the earth” who **cared more about materialism than people** and fed off the weakness of others.

REAPING DESTRUCTION (REVELATION 18:4–8)

“COME OUT OF HER...”

“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 warns 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 with His Spirit.**

SOMETIMES IT’S THREADING A NEEDLE

As Christians, we must be **able to converse with different people without compromising our beliefs.** If we compromise for fear of offense or as 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 from Ch. 16. What we see here is the furthest extreme of the **doctrine of reaping and sowing** as evil Babylon gets back all they’ve dished out.

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

HUBRIS ALWAYS LEADS TO INEVITABLE FAILURE

V. 7 mentions three boastful statements of Babylon the Great’s culture: “I sit as a queen,” “I am not a widow,” and “I will never see grief.”

- **The arrogance to think we are in total control and can dictate reality and truth will inevitably bring destruction. Pride always leads to a fall (Proverbs 16:18).**

THE FALL USUALLY HAPPENS 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 (Romans 12:19).**

MATERIALISM MOURNED (REVELATION 18:9–20)

LAMENTING THE FALL OF MATERIALISM

In this section we hear the cries of three 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 people 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.**

- 1 Timothy 6:10 (CSB)

THINGS NOT WORTH LIVING FOR

The kings 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 goods mentioned here represent the fleeting things people often live for.

NOT WORTH DYING FOR

There’s nothing wrong with nice things, but we must remember the “glamorous things” of this life are temporary.

- **Many sell out people, integrity, and dignity for things that have no eternal value! Some treat people like property (slaves) and are willing to die for temporary pleasure!**

SHIFTING GEARS

V. 20 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 disconnected from popular culture’s ideology? Do we long for things that don’t align with Kingdom culture?**

CULTURE DESTROYED (REVELATION 18:21–24)

TEACHING AN OBJECT LESSON

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 love.” **Perfect love always enacts perfect and fair justice.**

MORE THAN JUST GREED AND POWER

Materialism and power will crumble, as will culture and worthless entertainment.

- **We’ve let media, T.V., and music shape our theology more than the teachings of Christ, and many get more excited about being mindlessly entertained than they do about the Eternal Creator.**

THE LIGHT WILL NO LONGER SHINE (V. 23)

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 art 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 price.

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

HOW THE MIGHTY FALL

- Collins wrote a book on why some large corporations die. His findings are useful not only to businesses, but to individuals as well. The stages are: **1) Hubris born from success 2) Undisciplined pursuit of more 3) Denial of risk 4) Grasping for a “silver bullet” 5) Irrelevance or death**

- When things crumble, we often ask, “How could this happen?” If we are not careful, all of us can take our comforts, securities, and just life in general for granted. This leads to hubris, greed, entitlement, and **the lie that our choices cannot lead to collapse.**

AVOIDING THE FALL

- **Humility** is the key to life. 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 grants us “success” and is in control.**
- **Being grateful** for what we have and acknowledging where it all comes from.
- All good things come from God (James 1:17) and **we must trust in Him, be content where He has us, and pursue “more” through the discipline of the Word (Philippians 4:11–13).**
- Knowing that **actions have consequences.**
- We must not be deceived by culture to think that our actions don’t carry ramifications (Galatians 6:7–8). **This works for both negative and positive choices.**
- Knowing that **nothing in this life apart from a relationship with Jesus leads to true contentment and peace.**
- **The world provides no “silver bullets” to finding joy and fulfillment.** Believing in a quick fix only leads to disappointment and heartache.
- Knowing **sin leads to chaos and “death,” but Jesus builds a road to restoration and life.**
- Even when it seems exciting or good, sin inevitably leads to destruction. On the other hand, **if we choose to repent and plant seeds of righteousness, we will reap the Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5).**