Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Babylon Is Fallen, Part 2
Scripture: Revelation 18:3-8
Code: 66-64

Revelation chapter 18 is our study for tonight, Revelation chapter 18. In this chapter the Apostle John describes the final world's system and the city which apparently is its capital, Babylon. What is described here in chapter 18 is a commercial system overseen and managed and operated in the power of Satan by the Antichrist. It is described to us in this chapter but the focus of the chapter is on its judgment, its demise, its devastation and its destruction. This then is the last chapter in the book of Revelation before the return of Jesus Christ to set up His Kingdom which occurs in chapter 19. So here we are getting a glimpse of the final form of world government under the Antichrist that exists in the time of the Tribulation right up until Jesus comes to destroy it. It is the judgment of the last of man's rule.

Now before we look at Revelation 18, just to give you a larger context in which to understand this, go with me back to the Old Testament, back to the prophet Zechariah, that's the second to last book in the Old Testament, right before Malachi. Zechariah the prophet saw this judgment. He saw it long before John saw it. And I want to call to your attention what Zechariah saw and what he heard.

Zechariah chapter 5, I'm going to read verses 5 through 11. The prophet writes, "Then the angel who was speaking with me went out and said to me, `Lift up now your eyes and see what this is going forth.'" By the way, very much like John in his vision of Babylon, Zechariah in the vision that he's about to have was also called to look at this vision by an angel. "And I said, `What is it?' And he said, `This is the ephah going forth.' Again he said, `This is their appearance in all the land.' And behold, a lead cover was lifted up and this is a woman sitting inside the ephah. Then he said, `This is Wickedness.' And he threw her down in the middle of the ephah and cast the lead weight on its opening. Then I lifted up my eyes and looked and there two women were coming out with the wind in their wings and they had wings like the wings of a stork and they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heavens. And I said to the angel who was speaking with me, `Where are they taking the ephah?' Then he said to me to build a temple for her in the land of Shinar and when it is prepared she will be set there on her own pedestal."

Somewhat confused? I don't imagine you could understand that without some careful understanding of the background. Let me see if I can help you a little bit.

The Jews had returned from captivity in Babylon. They had been there, you'll remember, for a period of time designated as seventy years, though for some of them it was longer than that. They had been

captive in Babylon since Babylon conquered Jerusalem and the land of Judah.

Now in coming back from Babylon, there was a...there was a renewal of sorts. When they were restored to their land, they gave up their pagan idolatry. It was really pagan idolatry that had brought about their captivity. I think that the primary iniquity for which they were indicted and which led to their captivity was that they were engaging in relationships with pagan gods and had forsaken the true God. And while in their Babylonian captivity they had abandoned false gods. They came back then, having given up their pagan idolatry...which by the way, the Jews have never embraced since, really, although there are different kinds of idols, they have never embraced pagan idolatry since the captivity. And lest we think that that meant that they came back spiritually vital, I would just add this, that when they came back from Babylon, while they had divested themselves of idolatry, they had embraced Babylonian materialism. They had been engulfed in a pagan culture that was highly materialistic and they had grown to acquire greed and the longing and the lusting for gain.

This passage then acts as a rebuke to that lust for gain, that acquired greed. It is, by the way, a sin which the prophet Malachi also rebukes. He defines it as robbing God in chapter 3 of his prophecy, verses 8 and 9. And so what Zechariah sees in this vision is the spirit of self-centered materialism which, by the way, you must remember was foreign to Israel when they were a shepherd people. And they had only acquired this materialistic mentality while in Babylon. In fact, the spell of Babylon had taken them over. And so it will be in the last days.

Now that's the general rendering here. Let's look at the details so that we can see how it yields that. "Then the angel who was speaking with me went and out and said to me, `Lift up now your eyes and see what this is going forth.' And I said, `What is it?' And he said, `This is the ephah going forth.' Again he said, `This is their appearance in all the land.'"

An ephah is basically a container. In fact, they would be about one bushel or one point zero five bushels, about eight gallons or about thirty-nine quarts. This big basket, or this big container was used to carry barley or flour. And, in fact, was large enough for a small person to fit into. And the depiction here is of a large basket, this ephah, loaded with the sins of Israel. And the ephah is filled up to the brim. The sinners of Israel are seen then like pieces of grain, collected in a large basket until the basket is heaping full. And, of course, the basket and the grain was a major part of commerce and business and so the commercial aspect comes into play as well.

Here then was this new kind of sin that Israel had picked up in Babylon which had influenced them and continues to influence them even today and will influence them and the world around all of us until the coming of the Messiah. And down in verse 8 is depicted as wickedness. In fact, in the Septuagint it says it symbolizes wickedness. This is iniquity piled high. This is accumulated iniquity. Here the prophet sees the godless rich sinners of the last days. The prophet Zechariah looking forward to a future time when godless commercialism, the love of money, the love of possession,

pure secular materialism will find its final and consummate form. And I believe he even sees it in its perhaps its clearest context, for us anyway, as consistent with the Babylon of Revelation 18 because you look at verse 11 and you see the land of Shinar, that's another name for Babylon...the land of Shinar...just another name for Babylon.

But its influence is going to be worldwide in that end time. Notice that this basket filled with wickedness, the wickedness of secular commercialism in verse 11 is set on a pedestal in a temple in the land of Shinar. And there you have a prophetic image of the commercial wickedness of the final system of Babylon.

Then in verse 7 it says, and by the way, it says at the end of verse 6 that this is their appearance in all the land or in all the earth. In other words, this thing is going to extend across the world. This is the picture of this accumulated bushel-basket full of iniquity that is worldwide, and it says in verse 7 it has a lead cover on it. It simply means a lid. And the cover was lifted up just ever so briefly in order to reveal a woman sitting inside. And again in prophetic imagery, a woman is used frequently, symbolically in Scripture for religious evil. We hate to have to admit that but nonetheless it's the case. It may take us back to the fact that it was a woman, after all, namely Eve, who led the human race into iniquity. And it may also encompass the reality...and mark this one...that God has designed leadership to be in the hands of men, so Satan ever and always is trying to reverse that. And as I've told you in past studies, in the developing mystical religions of the world, women always rise and goddesses always rise to the supremacy.

So the woman may simply indicate the corruption, the evil. It may even indicate that Satan himself, of course, is personally involved in this. There is a woman, you'll remember, who is consummate with evil in Revelation chapter 2. So here you have then a collective symbol of sin. You have the bushel basket filled with sinners who are engaged in commercial evil, and you have this woman sitting in the midst of it and the whole thing, verse 8 says, is wickedness. And it's as if...it's as if when the lid is cracked the woman may try to get out and he threw her down, says verse 8, in the middle of the ephah and shut the lid. The indication is that these sinners and all their wickedness will not be able to escape until the final judgment.

The picture then goes on to another set of images in verse 9. "I lifted up my eyes and looked and there two women again were coming out of the wind...out with the wind in their wings, they had wings like the wings of a stork," which, by the way, is an unclean animal, according to Old Testament law. "They lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heavens."

Now what is this? It's no doubt a description of demons, two again women who come out with the wind in their wings, lift up the ephah from the earth into the heavens. And so then says the prophet, where are they taking this? And he says to the land of Shinar.

Demons then become involved in taking this evil system, putting it in the land of Babylon, setting it on a throne so that it can function. Demons are protective of the system. Demons set up the final Babylon system. Storks, as I noted, Leviticus 11:19, Deuteronomy 14:18 are unclean birds. And we know from the book of Revelation and we could assume, even if it wasn't there, that demons will be engaged in the final setup of the final world kingdom. They are women because they are in association with the woman inside the ephah who is wickedness. So the prophet literally sees demons setting up the final commercial world system in the land of Shinar, a system of materialism.

Now with that as a background, let's go to the book of Revelation...and with the hope, too, that you get a bit of the drift of that text. John is given a much more comprehensive picture, a much more comprehensive vision of this final stage of the earth under Satan's control. Remember now, it is called Babylon, this final world system, it is called Babylon the Great in verse 2. It is a system but it is a system centered in a city. And we've suggested that it is reasonable to believe that the city of Babylon, an actual rebuilt city, could be the capital city of this final world empire. Remember now, from chapter 17 there was a religious system also called Babylon that was destroyed by the commercial system which now absorbs all the religious components of the former religious system, becomes Babylon the Great and the mother of violence, the mother of false religion. Babylon started it all and in the end it will all go back to Babylon again.

So here you have the final form of Satan's world government under the power and authority of the Antichrist who has wiped out the false religious system and remains alone in control of the world and having the world worship him as if he were God.

Now it is predicted back in chapter 14 of Revelation and verse 8, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality." There we learn that the whole world is involved with this Babylon system, the whole world is engaged in this commercial, materialistic, secular enterprise. The whole world is worshiping the Antichrist. All the nations are caught up in the lust of the passion of materialism. And the prophecy of 14:8 has literally come true here in chapter 18 as the judgment predicted in chapter 14 unfolds.

Now in working through this judgment there are at least seven different components that I want to give to you, and we gave you one last time and that was in the first three verses...judgment pronounced. Let me just read them. "After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority. And the earth was illumined with his glory. And he cried out with a mighty voice saying, `Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great and she has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird for all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality and the kings of the earth have committed acts of immorality with her and the merchants of the earth have become rich by the wealth of her sensuality.'" There is the declaration of judgment...judgment pronounced. An angelic

messenger comes to pronounce the judgment. The judgment is fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, it's a statement, by the way, of established ruin as if it has already happened. Like Babylon of old which became a haven for scavenger birds and unclean animals in the years of its desolation, so Babylon of the future will be the haven of demons.

And this, by the way, is also indicated as we saw in the vision of Zechariah, where the women flying with the wings of a stork representative of demons, it is also, I believe, indicated by the words of the prophet Isaiah. Let me just remind you of Isaiah 13 verse 17 and following. In Isaiah 13, I'll start reading at verse 17, and maybe read down to verse 22. "Behold, I'm going to stir up the Medes against them who will not value silver or take pleasure in gold. Their bows will mow down the young men. They will not even have compassion on the fruit of the womb, nor will they...their eye pity children. And Babylon the beauty of kingdoms, the glory of the Chaldeans' pride will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It will never be inhabited or lived in from generation to generation." And there you see the prophet skips from the historical fulfillment of the defeat of Babylon by the Medes to the ultimate destruction of Babylon when it is totally overthrown, never to be inhabited or lived in from generation to generation. "Nor will the Arab pitch his tent there, nor will shepherds make their flocks lie down there. But desert creatures will lie down there and their houses will be full of owls, ostriches also will live there." And here's a fascinating term here, "And howling creatures," translated in the NAS shaggy goats will frolic there. Howling creatures. What are howling creatures? I'm sorry, howling creatures refers to owls. Shaggy goats is really the word that refers to some kind of demon. Some have translated it "goat demons." So you have the howling creatures which here is translated owls. You have the ostriches and then you have these whatever they are, shaggy goats, goat demons, "Hyenas, jackals, her fateful time will soon come and her days will not be prolonged."

Now remember, there is often a double fulfillment. When the prophet writes he's looking historically and then he's looking eschatologically. And so the allusion there is not just to unclean birds and hyenas and jackals and scavenger kind of animals that only eat carrion, but there is that little interjection of that word that has to do with some kind of demon. That you have as well in the text that we just read, where you have Babylon as a place of demons and unclean spirits, as well as unclean and hateful birds.

Like literal Babylon, then, which became desolate and was occupied by birds who ate carrions, so will final Babylon be the cage of hell's winged spirits. Verse 3 tells us that this judgment is coming about because of the worldwide influence of this satanic system. The whole world allies with this system of commerce that includes the worship of the Antichrist. It says the nations of the earth have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality. The people of the world are involved in it. It sweeps across the world. The kings of the earth are involved in it. The merchants of the earth have become rich by the wealth of her sensuality. So it is a prosperous system.

And I told you last time, there's something quite remarkable about the fact that it prospers, given what's going on in the world during the period of the Tribulation which starts with seven seal judgments, followed by seven trumpet judgments which really heat up at the midpoint of the Tribulation and followed finally by seven-bowl judgments which come at the very end. But at least the system has been subjected to the trumpet judgements and the trumpet judgments in and of themselves are quite fierce judgments that alter the whole character of the world.

If you go back earlier into the book of Revelation, for example, in chapter 8, you find hail and fire mixed with blood thrown down to the earth, a third of the earth burned up, a third of the trees burned up. The green grass burned up. A great mountain with...burning with fire thrown into the sea. A third of the sea becomes blood. A third of the creatures in the sea that had life died. A third of the ships were destroyed. And then a great star fell from heaven like a burning torch, it fell on the third of the rivers and the springs of the waters and the name of it was Wormwood. It's quite amazing to think that the world can still be commercially prosperous in the midst of this kind of devastation. Maybe there's a word in there for the environmentalists who think that the little bit that we're doing in the world today is going to wipe the earth out. They haven't seen anything until they take a look at what is yet to come. And apparently even in the midst of all of that, there is some level of prosperity that can be maintained. You even have in verse 12 a third of the sun, a third of the moon, a third of the stars smitten so that a third of them might be darkened that they might not shine for a third of it. Tremendous demonic powers begin to go across the earth that are described there in chapter 9. There are other things that come, devastating earthquakes, of course we know about the collapsing of the sky that occurred in the listing of the seal judgments.

This commercial materialistic system is going to start to collapse but it manages to hang on to some prosperity for a while. Its prosperity will obviously diminish as it tries to survive the period of the Great Tribulation. The system depends on the sea for trade and for cargo. It says that right in verse 3, the merchants of the earth are moving things about. We know something about those merchants because they're described to us as people who are engaged in sailing, engaged in moving things on the sea, ship masters and sailors described there in verse 17, and cargoes back in verse 12. The system will depend on the sea. The system will depend on the land for transportation, for factories, for natural resources. But the natural resources are going to be destroyed. The forests are going to be destroyed and part of the land will be destroyed, the water will be destroyed. The system is going to depend on air. The air is going to be devastated with all the smoldering, burning smoke of all of these terrible tragedies that are going on. And when the plants and the grass are destroyed, that's going to...that's going to affect the balance of carbon monoxide and oxygen, or carbon dioxide, rather, and oxygen.

The system depends on man power. But already millions and millions of people have been slaughtered. The system is going to depend upon consumption. And as people are killed, the consumer pool gets smaller and smaller and smaller. And so the system is successful and it shows

the ingenuity of Satan and the ingenuity of the Antichrist, and yet it is systematically being dismantled as all of its necessary components, the sea, the land, the air, man power, consumers begin to die off.

Our world is getting ready for Antichrist's great commercial bonanza. But God is also getting ready to systematically destroy it. This is why we can take the words of James in chapter 5 and stretch them even to the end of the age, "Come now you rich, weep and howl for your miseries which are coming upon you. Your riches have rotted and your garments have become moth-eaten. Your gold and your silver have rusted. And their rust will be a witness against you and will consume your flesh like fire. It is in the last days that you have stored up your treasure. Behold the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields and which has been withheld by you cries out against you, and the outcry of those who did the harvesting has reached the ears of the Lord Sabaoth. You have lived luxuriously on the earth and led a life of wanton pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter, you have condemned and put to death the righteous man, and he does not resist you." There is a description that could well describe not only the time of James but the time of the end. And well it could be the time of the end because verse 7 says, "Be patient therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord." Be patient. Riches are going to do them no good in that time. The world is blind at that time and will not turn to the true riches.

So we saw the judgment pronounced. Let's go secondly to the judgment avoided...the judgment avoided. The judgment of God on this morally bankrupt but prosperous society, though its prosperity is in rapid decline and when the seven bowls are poured out, certainly is finally devastated. But God's judgment on this society living in arrogant luxury and self-indulgence is something that can be avoided and must be avoided.

Notice verse 4, and herein is the call to avoid the judgment. "And I heard another voice from heaven saying, `Come out of her, My people, that you may not participate in her sins and that you may not receive of her plagues.'" I heard another voice, allon, another angel, similar to the angel described in verse 1, "Come out of her, My people." And God is calling to His own to disentangle themselves with this system. Remember now, all through this time of judgment God is saving people. God is saving an innumerable host of people from every tongue and tribe and people and nation described in chapter 7. God is saving Israel. Jews are certainly turning to Christ, a hundred and forty-four thousand of them are already preaching the gospel. The angel flying across the sky is preaching the gospel.

And by the preaching of that gospel there will be the greatest harvest of souls the world has ever known. Many of them will be martyred for their faith in Christ. They will refuse the mark of the beast and pay with their lives.

Some of them will, obviously, survive. And the temptation for the survivors may be to get caught up in the system. Not unlike the temptation for us who are reminded not to love the world nor the things

that are in the world, who are reminded to be not conformed to this world, but be being transformed by the renewing of your mind. Family and friends may apply pressure to these believers in the time of the Tribulation. And then there is the need to live and the need to eat and the need to buy and sell. And all of that may apply some pressure. And some of them may get caught up in this and some of them may be even involved within the confines of Babylon. And God is warning them, "Come of her, My people."

And there may also be a evangelistic call there, for God's people can genuinely be called God's people from the sovereign side of salvation. And it may well be that He is saying to those who have set apart from eternity past, "Come to faith in the Savior and come out of that system." But the point is to get out of it before it falls, to get out of it before you get caught in it because if you get caught in it, you're not going to be able to enter into the Kingdom and experience the coming of Christ which, of course, would be a glorious reality. Get out before you get caught in the fury. Get out before you get caught in the wrath that's going to fall on that place.

By the way, the prophets of old had said the same thing to the people leaving Babylon before the judgment fell. Isaiah 48:20, "Go forth from Babylon," said Isaiah, get out of there. The judgment of God is going to fall.

And then there is Jeremiah chapter 50 and 51 which deals with Babylon. Listen to what Jeremiah says in, I think it's chapter 50 early in the chapter, yes.."Wander away from the midst of Babylon and go forth. Get out from the land of the Chaldeans," verse 8. Over in chapter 51 and verse 6, "Flee from the midst of Babylon and each of you save his life." And I believe this looks historically at the destruction of Babylon, but I believe it looks prophetically at the end as well. "Do not be destroyed in her punishment, for this is the Lord's time of vengeance. He's going to reckon recompense to her. Babylon has been the golden cup in the hand of the Lord, intoxicating all the earth. The nations have drunk of her wine. Therefore the nations are going mad." That sounds so much like the Babylon of the end time that engulfs the world. "Suddenly Babylon is fallen and been broken, wail over her, bring balm for her pain. Perhaps she may be healed. We applied healing to Babylon but she was not healed. Forsake her and let each go to his own country for her judgment has reached to heaven and towers up to the very skies." The judgment is so severe. Get out.

Chapter 51 of Jeremiah, verse 45, "Come forth from her midst, My people, and each of you save yourselves from the fierce anger of the Lord." You can see how much this vision in chapter 18 of Revelation draws upon the warnings of the Old Testament prophets about the final destruction of Babylon. Do not allow yourself to get caught up in that judgment.

And so back to verse 4, "Come out of her, My people, that you may not participate in her sins." That's the first thing. Get out of there so that you're not caught up in the iniquity of the place, first of all. So that you're not engulfed in the sin that is there. Be separated.

And secondly, "So that you are not caught up in the plagues that come when God brings final judgment."

Separate yourself from her sin, separate yourself from her all together that you may not receive her plagues. Now some would say that her plagues is a reference back to the bowl judgments of chapter 16 which are called "the plagues." It may well that they are references that that's exactly what is in mind here. But I would tend to think that it can't just be that. And the reason it can't just be that is because the seven bowls are the final judgment. And the seven bowls are all over the whole world. And if they're coming all over the whole world, there wouldn't be anywhere to escape to. But it is clear in this text that some people leave the city of Babylon and stand at a distance and look at it so that whatever is happening is happening at Babylon specifically.

So while it may be that in some ways obviously these final bowl judgments that come in the last few days, and perhaps weeks of man's day, may be in view as part of the plagues that hit Babylon. What is really in mind here is some very specific warnings because if it was the final judgments of the bowls, then there wouldn't be anywhere to go anyway. It does indicate then that there's going to be a judgment of the capital city of Babylon before the final judgment falls on the whole world. And so believers are warned...Get out, get out before your judged, get out and separate yourself from the iniquity. Who does that remind you of back in Genesis? Lot. Get out. Do not imbibe the spirit of Babylon. Leave.

This is a clear call for those who are the Lord's, to separate themselves from the system of the world which is to be destroyed. This kind of call has come in every generation. As I said, you can go back to Genesis chapter 19 and you will find the very same call being made to the people of God in a very similar situation of an area about to be destroyed, Sodom and Gomorrah and the other cities of the plain. You find it in Numbers also, chapter 16 where you have the destruction of Dathan and Abiram. And, of course, the devastation that God brings there and warns people to stay aside from that judgment.

You have in Matthew 24, and I'm not going to read all of these because we don't have the time to do that, but in Matthew chapter 24 you remember in Jesus' message on His Second Coming, in verse 16 He says when the abomination of desolation hits Jerusalem, what are you supposed to do? He says, "Let those who are in Judea...do what?...flee to the mountains," get out of there.

In 2 Corinthians you have the same principle. Second Corinthians chapter 6, "Do not be bound together with unbelievers, what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Come out from their midst...verse 17...and be separate." He's quoting from Isaiah as well. "Touch not what is unclean."

You have it in 1 John. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." You have it with Noah, a people who were brought of a civilization to be destroyed. You have it in the warnings that were preached to Ninevah. Get out of that place because God is going to destroy it.

Don't be seduced by the world. Don't be seduced by its iniquity in any age and in every age, and particularly in the last age. Wherever there is idolatry, wherever there is prostitution, wherever there is self-glorification, wherever there is pride, wherever there is complacency, wherever there is reliance on wealth, wherever there is indulgence and pleasure, wherever there is violence, there is Babylon. And God will judge.

Verse 5 says, "For her sins have piled up as high as heaven and God has remembered her iniquities." The word "piled" means literally glued together, or welded together. Her sins have collected themselves and they have piled themselves up like a...like a new tower of Babel. The ancient Tower of Babel didn't reach the heaven, but the sins of Babylon will. The sins of Babylon will. And God has remembered her iniquities.

Go back to verse 19 of chapter 16. The great city was split into three parts and the cities of the nations fell and Babylon the great was remembered before God to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath. Now this may well be when the specific judgment on Babylon really reaches its final fury at that point.

"Of His own," God says, "I will forgive their iniquity, I will remember their no more," Jeremiah 31:34. But for unchanging, unrepentant Babylon, no forgiveness, only judgment. So get out.

So where is the world going? It's headed toward a worldwide economic boom, centered in a rebuilt Babylon. For a while there will be a religious system, a false religious system worldwide. It will be destroyed by the Antichrist who will demand that the world worship him as God. That will happen at the midpoint. And then his one-world government will dominate everything, it will be built on one issue, lust for luxury. It will be capitalism gone bizerk and God will destroy it and He'll start by destroying the capital city.

Lets come to a third feature in this vision...judgment pronounced, judgment avoided, and judgment defined. Let me just define this judgment a bit for you, in verses 6 through 8, as much as I can comprehend what is here. This is what verse 6 says, and by the way, here the judgment described is described with the angel now speaking not to John but to God. "Pay her back, even as she has paid, and give back to her double according to her deeds. In the cup which she has mixed, mix twice as much for her to the degree that she glorified herself and lived sensuously, to the same degree give her torment and mourning for she says in her heart, `I sit as a Queen and I am not a widow and will never see mourning.' For this reason in one day her plagues will come, pestilence and mourning and

famine and she will be burned up with fire for the Lord God who judges her is strong."

And here the angel turns to God and says..."Give it to her, God. Pay her back." The saints have so prayed for millennia that God would destroy the wicked world system. The saints under the altar back in chapter 6 were praying that way. No doubt through the whole Tribulation and the Great Tribulation the saints have been crying out for judgment. And now the angel joins the call. And here is the echo of the Old Testament law called lex talionis, the law of retaliation or as you know it, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. Pay her back. It's time for vengeance. It's time for destruction. Enough period of grace has gone by, enough preaching has been done. It's time for destruction. Enough period of grace has gone by, enough preaching has been done. The whole world has heard, they've heard and heard and heard and heard and continually they have refused to believe.

To quote Psalm 28:4, "Requite them according to their work and according to the evil of their practices. Requite them according to the deeds of their hands. Repay them their recompense." In the words of Psalm 137, very similar to that Psalm, we read, "O daughter of Babylon, you devastated one, how blessed will be the one who repays you with the recompense with which you have repaid us." And listen to this one, "How blessed will be the one who seizes and dashes your little ones against the rock." Frightening language, isn't it? Blessed is the God who smashes your children. Pay her back what she deserves. She has desecrated truth, dishonored God, rejected Christ, give her what she should get.

Listen to what Jeremiah said, Jeremiah 50 and verse 15, "Raise your battle cry against her on every side, she has given herself up, her pillars have fallen. Her walls have been torn down. This is the vengeance of the Lord. Take vengeance on her. As she has done to others, so do to her." Verse 29, "Summon many against Babylon, all those who bend the bow. Encamp against her on every side. Let there be no escape. Repay her according to her work, according to all that she has done, so do to her, for she has become arrogant against the Lord, against the holy One of Israel." Chapter 51 verse 24, "I will repay Babylon and all the inhabitants of Chaldea for all their evil that they have done in Zion before your eyes, declares the Lord." Verse 56, "The destroyer is coming against her, against Babylon, and her mighty men will be captured, their bows are shattered for the Lord is a God of recompense, He will fully repay." Strong language.

But the angel is merely echoing the sentiment of the psalmist and the sentiment of the prophet. The psalmist often prayed for the destruction of the enemies of God, the enemies of righteousness. So did the prophets speak of it. And now the angels call for it.

Though as Christians we are to be kind to our enemies, we're to love them, we are never to repay evil for evil, we are to never...we are never to take vengeance against them, we are to pray for them, we are to do good to them. That does not eliminate God's final vindication of Himself and of His own in judgment. It doesn't change that. Romans 12 affirms the Old Testament truth that God is a God of

vengeance who will indeed repay sinners for their sin. Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord. Leave room for the wrath of God, Romans 12:19.

And, in fact, listen to this, back to verse 6, "Pay her back even as she has paid and give back to her double according to her deeds." Literally in the Greek text it says "double the double things." That's important. Double has been her iniquity. Her iniquity is like a tower that reaches all the way to heaven. It is excessive. It is overflowing iniquity. So You, God, double the double things. Too late for repentance. There has been ample opportunity for that, plenty of times when people could have repented. The judgment of Babylon is reached to the skies and we tried to apply healing, says Jeremiah, but she wouldn't be healed.

This then is a judicial pronouncement against a sinful civilization. Now what does "double" mean? Double is really in a sense equal to full. The sin has been double in the sense that its overflowing iniquity. Give back an overflowing punishment. Listen to what it says in Exodus, for example, in chapter 22 and I'll show you how this is set on an Old Testament base. "If a man gives his neighbor or goods to keep for him and it is stolen from the man's house, if the thief is caught, he shall pay double." Verse 7 says that. Back in verse 4, if he steals an ox, or a donkey, or a sheep, he shall pay double. Down in verse 9, every breach of trust, whether an ox, or a donkey, a sheep, or clothing, for anything lost about which one says...this is it...the case of both parties shall come before the judges. He whom the judges condemn shall pay double...double.

God ordained a double penalty way back in the Mosaic law. In Isaiah we find this kind of double judgment reiterated. Listen to Isaiah 40 verses 1 and 2. "Comfort, O comfort My people, says your God, speak kindly to Jerusalem and call out to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity has been removed, that she has received the Lord's hand...listen...double for all her sins." You know what Isaiah is saying? God even punished Israel double. The day is coming when the double punishment is over and the comfort of belief and faith and the Kingdom will take the place of punishment. Double means full. It means complete, as the sin deserves.

Listen to Isaiah 61:7. "Instead of your shame you will have double portion. Instead of humiliation, they will shout for joy over their portion. Therefore they will possess a double portion in their land, everlasting joy will be theirs." What does that mean? That's the positive side, double means complete, full, overflowing on the joy side. Double is just the way to describe something that is complete, overflowing, abundant, abounding. And that's how God gives graciously and that's how He gives in vengeance.

Listen to Jeremiah 16:18, "I will first doubly repay their iniquity and their sin because they have polluted My land, they have filled My inheritance with the carcasses of their detestable idols and with their abominations." There it is again. Double judgment.

Jeremiah 17:18, "Let those who persecute Me be put to shame, but as for Me, let Me not be put to shame. Let them be dismayed. Let them....let Me not be dismayed. Bring on them a day of disaster and crush them with a twofold destruction." Boy, that's so strong. But it is the same God who pours out overflowing double blessing.

Zechariah 12...pardon me...9:12, "The day is coming that I will restore double to you." It just means that's the consummate thing that God will do. And the punishment has to fit the crimes. The crimes were severe. The iniquity was piled high even till it reached heaven and the judgment has to fit it.

A further look at this verse, verse 6, that would be enough to leave us with enough of an impression, but he adds, verse 6, "In the cup which she has mixed, mix twice as much for her." God deals in double measure. What did the psalmist say? "My cup runneth over." What did Jesus say? "Give and it shall be given unto you, pressed down, shaken together and running over." That's how God gives His good gifts, and that's how He gives His judgment.

Take the cup...take the cup of wickedness and make it a cup of wrath. Take the cup which she has mixed with wickedness and mix wrath in it. Give her back wrath in her own cup. This is the sixth reference in Revelation to the cup of wickedness and the third reference to the cup of God's wrath and they're both in this verse the same cup. And that language is also borrowed from Jeremiah 51 verses 7 and 57.

Then look at verse 7. "To the degree that she glorified herself and lived sensuously, to the same degree give her torment and mourning." And again the angel calls on God a third time saying the same thing a third way. To the degree that she glorified herself, lived for her own pride, for her own willful headstrong purposes. It's just pride. Give her back for her pride. God hates pride. He won't tolerate it. He sends people to hell because they will not glorify Him as God but worshiped themselves. He caused Herod to be eaten by worms one day because he did not give God glory. According to Jeremiah 13, His eye may weep with tears, but He will destroy the proud. James said He gives them no grace to the degree that they have been proud, to that degree give them torment and mourning. Make their hell equal to their crime.

Secondly, the first thing is that they have glorified themselves. The second, lived sensuously or luxuriously. For self-glory and self-gratification, give them what they deserve. To that same degree of their sin of self-glory and self-gratification, give them torment, basanismon. Frightening word, you know what it means? Torture...torture them, God. It's hard to imagine an angel asking God to torture people, but it's true. Give them torture. But the word is even beyond that. It means the torture and the grief that the torture produces. It is the pain in the torture that is bound up in basanismon. Give them the pain of torture. Make them weep and lament and mourn.

And then there's a third sin here, not just self-glorification and self-gratification, but verse 7 says, "For she says in her heart, `I sit as a Queen, and I am not a widow and will never see mourning.'" That is self-sufficiency, an over-estimation of one's power. By the way, that boast is taken directly out of Isaiah chapter 47. When Isaiah looked down in prophetic vision to the future, he saw this same boast. Listen to what Isaiah 47:5 says, "Sit silently and go into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans, for you will no more be called the queen of kingdoms." Verse 7, "Then you said, `I shall be a queen forever.'" That's what Babylon said. That's not reality. Babylon said I am a queen. Verse 8 of Isaiah 47, "I shall not sit as a widow. I am and there is no one beside me." Self-sufficient, invincible and we are reminded of 1 Corinthians 10:12, "Let him who thinks he stand take heed lest he fall." Self-glorification, self-gratification, self-exaltation.

And verse 8 says, "For this reason...just stated...in one day her plagues will come." For this reason, just catalogued, self-glorification, self-gratification, and self-exaltation, in one day...and by the way, the word "one" is first in the Greek order emphasizing it. It will not be progressive, it will be instant. By the way, Daniel 5 records that Babylon as a city fell in one day. In the very hour, remember, when the handwriting was on the wall, "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN, you've been weighed in the balances and found wanting." In the very hour the handwriting was on the wall, the Medes and the Persians were coming into the city, weren't they? And by morning the Babylonian Empire had fallen, fell in a day, sudden destruction. and that's how it will be in the end.

Look at the end of verse 10. "In one hour your judgment has come." Look at verse 16, "Woe, woe, the city, she was clothed in fine linen and purple and scarlet and adorned with gold and silver and precious stones, for in one hour such great wealth has been laid waste." Verse 19, "Woe, woe, the great city in which all who had ships at sea became rich by her wealth for in one hour she has been laid waste." One day, one hour, her plagues will come.

As I said, it could include something of the effect of the bowl judgments because they do mention the city of Babylon, as I pointed out in chapter 16 verse 19, in connection with that seventh bowl. But I think these will be very unique judgments on this particular city. They're here described...pestilence and mourning and famine and burning...pestilence, mourning, and famine and burning. Pestilence, some kind of deadly disease. Following the pestilence comes terrible mourning. And then comes the famine. And then comes the burning.

You say, "How can you tie in pestilence, mourning, famine, and burning into one day?" Well the day and the hour may be stretched a little bit. It is a day of judgment, it is an hour of judgment, it may actually be more than one sixty-minute period, or one twenty-four hour period, but it's going to be a brief period. The pestilence may come first, then comes the mourning, then comes the famine and instantaneously comes the conflagration and that's the one moment, the one hour when the city is completely consumed. But it's coming. And it won't be progressive, it's going to be instantaneous,

sudden judgment. Consumed...literally it burned up completely. I think it will be like an instant incineration, like Pompeii or Sodom and Gomorrah.

And why? "For the Lord...I love this...who judges her is strong." The system of Antichrist, no matter how powerful, with all the forces of men and demons, of earth and hell, is no match for God. Doom is certain.

So, judgment is pronounced. Judgment can be avoided. The judgment is defined or described for us. That gets us to a perfect point to stop because starting in verse 9 and running all the way through verse 19 we have judgment lamented. And now we go into the city as its collapsing and listen to how people react. Now again let me say, I may not have been clear on this, when it says it's going to be destroyed in a day and in an hour, we don't want to confine all of that to just a twenty-four hour period or a sixty-minute period. There...there will be things coming against Babylon and we've already talked about, things that came in the seven seals, and came in the seven trumpets, that will come in the seven-bowl judgments. There will be specific things that will come against the city like a pestilence that produces mourning, that brings a famine, that must be stretched over some period of time. And then there will come, I believe, a holocaust of burning that will consume that thing and that will be the...that will be the instantaneous explosion of incineration.

And this doom is certain. Another reason we have to give a little time in there is because we have to give a little time for the people to start weeping and mourning when they see this happen. So what we say is that whatever happens in this total incineration of Babylon isn't quite the end of the seven-year period, because some of these people who managed to get out of there and step back and watch it burn, are still around. So this has to happen near the end, but not quite at the absolute end. And it's hard to be more specific than that in chronology. When you go back to chapter 16 and it says, "Babylon the great was remembered before God to give her the cup of the wine of His wrath," and that's in connection with the seventh bowl which is the very end, it may well be that the seventh bowl doesn't necessarily do all the damage, but destroys the remaining system worldwide because every island flees away and the mountains are not found. But the capital city has to be destroyed and a little period of time for the world to react the way they do in verses 9 and following and we'll see that reaction, not next Sunday because we have graduation, but two weeks from tonight.

All right, let's bow together in prayer.

We feel like those who were commended by the Apostle Paul because they were noble enough to search the Scriptures to see if these things were so, and yet perhaps unlike them even in searching we find the mysteries overwhelming to us. We find these things like some of the teachings of Paul hard to be understood. And yet, Lord, the general drift of this is clear, sin will be judged and sinners will be damned and you will be righteous in doing that. We cry out to You to bring that judgment. We want a perfect world. We want Jesus Christ to reign. We want the righteous to prosper and sinners

to be punished. We want Your name to be honored and glorified and lifted up. We're weary of sin and iniquity, of pollution of Your world and Your universe by evil, both human evil and demonic angelic evil. And we can say with the saints, we're weary as well of the persecution and the martyrdom and the hostility against the faith and we would cry out for You to come in judgment. And we know that the angels as well long for that day when the Lord Jesus Christ, their great King, will be vindicated against His archenemy the devil and his angels. And, Lord, we know that in that hour of fierce and unbelievable judgment, You will be vindicated and You will be righteous and You will be all glorious, and Your Kingdom will come. We long for that reality.

We thank You that we know the Lord Jesus Christ. And though we shall not have to endure this time of Tribulation because of Your grace, we too await the coming of Christ and the glory of the Millennial Kingdom with great anticipation, for the fulfillment of the promise that You would send One who would reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. We look forward to the coming of our Savior and in the meantime we fall at His feet and bow as His subjects whose Kingdom is within us and some day will be in the universe manifest everywhere. And we a part of it. We thank You for our great hope in Christ, in His name. Amen.

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