

Babylon Is Fallen, Part 3

Scripture: Revelation 18:9-24

Code: 66-65

We return now to Revelation chapter 18, part 3 in this look at this chapter, under the title, "Babylon is Fallen." Revelation chapter 18. As you know if you have been studying prophecy with us, we're very much aware of the fact that the Lord God Almighty will have the last word in human history. He will have the last word with sinners who blaspheme His holy name. He will have the last word with the kingdoms of this world, the kingdoms of men, as well as the kingdom of Satan. And the Bible tells us that in the end of man's day, in the end of human history and human rule on the earth, God will bring furious judgment on this world. Promises of that judgment are all throughout the Scripture in what may well be the oldest book in the Bible, for example, Job chapter 21 and verse 30 says, "For the wicked is reserved for the day of calamity. They will be led forth at the day of fury."

The Psalms say in Psalm 9, "But the Lord abides forever, He has established His throne for judgment and He will judge the world." Psalm 96:13 says, "He comes to judge the earth." Isaiah the prophet said in chapter 59 verse 18, "According to their deeds, so He will repay wrath to His adversaries, recompense to His enemies." And so it goes. The seventh chapter of Daniel. And even when you come into the New Testament, Matthew chapter 3, John the Baptist talks about the fact that God is going to come in fiery judgment. Matthew chapter 7, "There is coming a day when the Lord will judge and many who think they will escape that judgment will in fact have to go through that judgment." Matthew chapter 13, Jesus teaches what are known as the parables of the Kingdom. And in the culminating parables there are angels who gather the ungodly from around the world for burning.

Matthew 24 and 25, there is the very teaching of Jesus regarding His return and the judgment associated with it. In the book of Acts, as the early church began to grow and as the gospel was preached, the Apostle Paul said in chapter 17 verse 31 that God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world. And perhaps the most fearsome of all judgment passages is found in the second epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians where he says God is going to repay and He's going to repay when Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus, and these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction. Second Peter 2:9 says, "The Lord knows how to reserve the godly, or rescue the godly, or preserve the godly from temptation and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment."

Then, of course, you come to the book of Revelation and it is loaded with judgment. From chapter 6 all the way through chapter 19 the theme is judgment. It ends in the return of Jesus Christ, the final

judgment of the earth and the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom.

Now we're right at the end of this series of chapters on judgment here in chapter 18, only one more to go and that describes the return of Christ itself. We have studied judgment now for months and months and months. The powerful imagery of judgment has been given to us through visions and through words from angels, through the things that the Apostle John saw and experienced while he was on the isle of Patmos in exile.

Some of the details are clear to understand. Some of them are very difficult. There will always be a sort of mystery, a sort of clouded reality in the prophetic literature about the end and we'll never be able to understand it as fully as those who experience it, anymore than those who prophesy the coming of Christ could fully understand everything they were prophesying. In fact, even the prophets, says Peter, looked into what they were prophesying to figure out what time and what person they were speaking about. There was a certain vagueness to the Old Testament prophet in even talking about the Messiah which he couldn't see and experience, and so there's a certain mystery and a certain vagueness in what we are hearing in this prophecy for the future which we cannot see. But though there are things clear and things unclear in terms of details, the main thrust is abundantly clear, there is coming a terrible time of judgment on sinners, on the earth before and at the return of Jesus Christ when He comes to set up His Kingdom in the world.

It is not difficult to understand that these judgments will culminate during a period of seven years, the seventieth week of Daniel, if you will. And that during that seven week, the second half, or the three and a half years, forty-two months, thirteen hundred and twenty days, all of those designations for it are given, in that period the judgment will escalate. And at the end of that three and a half year period will come a period known as the day of the Lord in which the full blazing fury of God will fall on this world and then comes Christ and His Kingdom.

Now the judgments that flow through those seven years are described in a series of seals, a series of trumpets and a series of bowls...seven seals, seven trumpets and seven bowls, all telescoping out of each other. The seventh seal yields the seven trumpets, the seventh trumpet yields the seven bowls. And they are the culminating judgments...the final seven bowls.

From the sixth seal on we have probably the safest period or the safest place to designate the actuality of the day of the Lord. That term "the day of the Lord" is a familiar prophetic term. Both Old Testament and New Testament designate it a day when the Lord takes over and ends man's day, it's His day.

Now through chapter 16 we went with those judgments. The seals and the trumpets and the bowls, and really chapter 19 could have followed chapter 16, the last bowl judgment and Christ returns. But injected is chapter 17 and 18 to describe the condition of the world at the end that is being judged.

He backs up in chapter 17 and describes the final form of world religion, and chapter 18, the final form of world government. This is the form the world is in that is being judged in the time of the end. Now remember chapter 17 described Mystery Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and the Abominations of the Earth which describes the final world religious system that will be destroyed by the Antichrist as he demands all the world to worship him. And so when you get into chapter 18, there is no world religion anymore except Antichrist, his power, his kingdom, his throne and his worship. So chapter 18 then describes the final world government of Antichrist in which he alone is worshiped in which he rules the world with the power of Satan and all his demons. It is this government, this world empire that will be devastated by the final judgments, the final trumpet judgments and then all the bowl judgments and then the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

So in this chapter then John is giving us a final vision of the world system and the city which is its capital city, namely the city of Babylon. Now look at chapter 18 and you see there Babylon in verse 2 is mentioned, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great." Go over to verse 16, actually verse 10 first, "Woe, woe the great city Babylon, the strong city." Then verse 16, "Woe, woe the great city." Verse 18, "What city is like the great city?"

So here we have Babylon as a term to describe the final form of world empire under Antichrist, but also as a term to describe the capital city of that empire which is a rebuilt Babylon. Interestingly enough, it is in our very contemporary time that the city of Babylon has been rebuilt. It was in ruins as we know throughout history, but one very prominent figure in our world by the name of Saddam Hussein has set about to rebuild the city of Babylon. That became news to the world, you'll remember, because of the Gulf War. And when we got over there, we began to discover that Babylon was being rebuilt.

Charles Dyer has written a book called The Rise of Babylon. You might want to read it, it's a fascinating book. He starts the book by saying this, "Picture a cloudless late summer night along the banks of the gently flowing Euphrates River. Thousands of guests and dignitaries walk by torch light to the procession street leading into the city of Babylon from the north. They line the street flanked by massive walls to watch row upon row of soldiers with swords, spears, and shields, and helmets march pass on the procession street toward the Ishtar Gate. Interspersed among the ranks of soldiers are groups of musicians playing harps, horns and drums. Children carrying pomfrons(?), and runners bearing bowls of smoking incense. The crowds follow the last of the soldiers through the Ishtar Gate and into the city of Babylon for the concluding ceremony of the evening, a tribute to Ishtar, the mother goddess of Babylon."

He says, "A scene of pagan worship in the time of Daniel? No, a scene I witnessed in September of 1988 as a part of the Second International Babylon Festival held under the patronage of Saddam Hussein." He's rebuilding Babylon.

The "New York Times" international edition, October 11, 1990 says, "Under President Saddam Hussein, one of the ancient world's most legendary cities has begun to rise again. More than an archeological venture, the new Babylon is self-consciously dedicated to the idea that Nebuchadnezzar has a successor in Mr. Hussein, whose military prowess and vision will restore to Iraqis the glory their ancestors knew when all of what is now Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Kuwait and Israel was under Babylonian control."

Saddam Hussein in his passion to be the modern Nebuchadnezzar who was the original ruler of the Babylonian Empire has a desire to be what Nebuchadnezzar was. And what was Nebuchadnezzar? Well to redemptive history, Nebuchadnezzar is known as the destroyer of Israel and the conqueror of the world, and that's what Saddam Hussein desires. He is, as a part of his desire to fulfill a modern-day role of Nebuchadnezzar, rebuilding the symbol of the ancient power of Nebuchadnezzar, namely the city of Babylon. And it is, says Saddam Hussein, the symbolic center of his anticipated world empire.

As of February, 1990, over sixty million bricks had been laid in this reconstruction by Saddam Hussein. With his name inscribed on some of them, at the exact site of the ancient city. He has reconstructed the southern palace of Nebuchadnezzar, a theater, many temples, the throne room of Nebuchadnezzar, the Ishtar Gate. He plans the Hanging Gardens. In fact, he's made an offer of \$1.5 million to any Iraqi who can design the Hanging Gardens.

In the Washington Post of April 9, 1991, Amy Schwartz(?) wrote, "In the next few years, Director General of Antiquities, Dr. Moyad(?) Sieid(?) predicts the government will also re-dig and refill the city moat, close the city to all traffic and maybe rebuilt the ziggurat," that's the Tower of Babel.

Babylon is being rebuilt and that is to say the least an interesting reality, isn't it? Because in the end time it is apparent that the capital city of the satanic Antichrist's empire will be a rebuilt Babylon. We're then looking at this Babylon, both as a city and as a title for this final world empire and its destruction in this chapter.

Now let me just review very briefly. The first point we gave you was judgment pronounced, and we went through that in the first three verses...judgment was pronounced..."Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great," verse 2. We talked about how systematically the Babylon system is going to be devastated. The seals will devastate it, the trumpets will devastate it, the bowl judgments will devastate it, because those judgments fall on the sea, the land, the air, the light and the population which means man power. You affect the sea, obviously you're going to affect commerce and trade. You affect the land, you're going to do the same, you're going to affect crops, you're going to devastate that empire. Then you affect the air and the light and the stars, the stellar bodies. And then you kill people, masses of people, a fourth of the world and a third of the world and the man power, that system is

going to crumble. Its being dismantled systematically but it has a tremendous survival capacity because it is energized by Satan and all the demons. And it manages to struggle and struggle through that until there is a culminating and final devastation here in chapter 18.

So from judgment pronounced in verses 1 to 3, verses 4 and 5, judgment avoided. And here another voice from heaven says, "Come out of her, My people." I believe this is both a call to salvation, a call to those who are the chosen of God to come out and be spared the judgment and also a call to those who are believers who have heard the gospel and believed during that period but become enamored with the system. Get out before the wrath catches you. Get out before you die needlessly in this thing, rather than to go in to the enjoyment of the kingdom.

Now that brings us to the third point in verses 6 through 8, judgment defined...judgment defined. And we also mentioned this, judgment there is defined as the law of retaliation...Pay her back, give back double. Verse 7, "To the degree that she glorified herself and lived sensually to the same degree, give her torment and mourning." And then verse 8 describes plagues, pestilence, mourning, famine, burning with fire. Judgment there then is defined. It is defined as lex talionis, the law of retaliation, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. No opportunity for repentance anymore. Babylon will be destroyed. And we saw that a lot of that is drawn out of Jeremiah chapter 51. Verse 8 says, "In one day," and that shows the instant devastation. Verse 10 calls it one hour, this great city is going to fall. Verse 19 again repeats one hour, it's been laid waste. The idea means in a very sudden devastating quick period of time.

Now remember, the seals and the trumpets and the bowls all have been going on. But this is some special wrath that hits that city. Some special plagues that consume and incinerate the city as our strong God acts in judgment. So judgment was pronounced, avoided and defined.

Now let's come to verse 9 and pick it up where we left off. Judgment lamented...judgment lamented. They wouldn't cry over their sin but they'll cry over the loss of their city. They wouldn't mourn over their iniquity, though God gave them ample opportunity and God warned them and warned them and warned them and warned them and warned them in these judgments that have been just raining down on them for all these years, they will not respond to that. But when their city goes, which is the hub and the core and sort of the center city, sort of the focal point, the brains of the world empire, then they mourn.

Let's look at the lament, verse 9. "And the kings of the earth who committed acts of immorality and lived sensuously with her...that is with Babylon...will weep and lament over her when they see the smoke of her burning." First of all, we meet leaders, the kings of the earth. You remember now, there's one world empire and the Antichrist is ruling and Babylon is the heart and soul and capital city and core and brains of that world empire. And every other ruler and every other demagogue and every other leader in the world is somehow connected and wired in to that system and dependent

upon it. You remember there were ten kings, they were especially identified very likely for regions of the earth that would be divided up. And under them there would be other rulers. And when they see the capital city of Antichrist's empire burning, they really can begin to feel that they are losing this battle.

As long as Babylon was still intact and the brains were still there and the center, the focal point was still in operation, maybe they thought there was a possibility of triumph. But when the city begins to burn and they begin to see the smoke of her burning, then they weep and lament. This means the destruction of the capital of Antichrist's world government, it strikes a fatal blow at the very head. It chops off the head, the control center of the whole world economy and is, in fact, a symbol of the fall of the world.

Now notice how these kings are described. They are described as those who committed acts of immorality and lived sensuously with her. That is also the way they were described back in chapter 17 verse 2...having committed acts of immorality and become drunk with the wine of her immorality. That's the way they were described in verse 3 of chapter 18, the kings of the earth committing acts of immorality with her and the merchants of the earth becoming rich by the wealth of her sensuality.

It is looking at Babylon like a prostitute with whom the rulers of the world have committed their immorality and lived sensuously. They have literally tied all their passions into this system. So when she burns, they lose their harlot, they lose their lover. They will weep...literally to sob and lament, to pound the chest over her when they see the smoke of her burning.

It isn't the first time God ever did this. He did it to Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities of the plain. He did it to Tyre and He did it to Edom. And He's going to do it in a greater way to Babylon. And when they see...and how will they see? Easy enough, they can watch it on CNN, simple enough. They'll see and all over the world they'll weep.

Verse 10, "Standing at a distance." They don't want to get near it because of the fear of her torment. This indicates, now mark it, that this is the city. If the Babylon that was burning was the whole world, you couldn't stand at a distance from it, right? So it's geographically located. And that's another reason why it is reasonable to understand that the city goes before the system is totally wiped out in the return of Jesus Christ. The city burns and as it burns they realize this is a preview of what is to come.

Back in chapter 16 verse 19, the seventh bowl and Babylon the great was remembered before God to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath. And every island fled away and the mountains were not found. Listen, that's...that's not the city, that's when the whole system goes because that's the reshaping of the whole globe. So this happens somewhere before that seventh bowl which is the last judgment and then Christ comes. It's that judgment that occurs, for example, you'll back in verse 16

at the time of Armageddon.

So this is the destruction of the city at some point before the destruction of the whole world. They stand at a distance because they don't want to get close, lest they get caught in this torment. In fact, it well could be that those that are standing at a distance, follow this, are kings and their armies on their way to...where? Armageddon. And they stay away from Babylon. They're still there watching and standing as the city burns.

Then that may be part of the motivation for them to go to Armageddon. They're led there by demons. There's going to be a great coming together. Perhaps they think it's going to be a last effort to rescue the world and they wind up, as you well know, warring with each other and destroyed by the coming of Christ.

So this city destruction in chapter 18 really comes before the destruction of the seventh bowl that I pointed out in chapter 16. So all the rulers say, "Woe, woe the great city Babylon, the strong city, it has survived." Why do they call it a strong city? Well it's still around. After six seals have fallen, the seventh seal was opened, the six trumpets blew and all the horrifying judgments that came out of that, the seventh trumpet was blown, the six seals, or at least five of those..bowls rather, five bowls have been poured out and this place is still surviving. This is a strong city. This is well fortified and well protected, but in one hour your judgment has come. And the kings and rulers of the world whose economies and whose life was dependent upon that, who had put all their passions and all their hopes and all their ambitions and all their dreams for survival into that one city, into that brain trust, now are disillusioned and disappointed and they are sobbing and pounding their chests, as the city is destroyed.

The second weeping group is in verse 11. And this is the businessmen. They're a part of this deal, too. And the merchants, or businessmen of the earth, weep and mourn over her because no one buys their cargoes anymore. The salesmen all go bizerk cause nobody buys anything. And so they begin to join the weeping and they weep and mourn over her. It's purely monetary. They can't meet their quota. They can't sell their stuff. They're really upset because business has gone bad. Talk about materialistic, they don't seem to be weeping and lamenting over their souls. They're weeping and lamenting over their wallets. And John lists twenty-eight categories of stuff. Frankly there's nothing here to cry about...fourteen in verse 12 and fourteen in verse 13. And I'm not going to take you through a word study of every one of these, but I'll make a comment.

By the way, it's a similar list to Ezekiel 27 verses 12 to 22 where over half of these same things also occur. These were typical items of business interchange and exchange in the ancient world. And, of course, John is seeing into the future but he's seeing into the future from a perspective that is comprehensible to him, goods familiar to him which are representative of the kind of things that will be bought and sold in the future, if not in some cases the same things.

For example, verse 12..."Gold," we understand that, that's still a major issue and a major commodity. "Silver and precious stones and pearls and fine linen," that, by the way, that term linen most likely refers to a costly Egyptian cotton. And if you're in to cotton, you know that even to this day the finest cotton still comes from Egypt. "Purple and silk," by the way, silk was so expensive that it was banned by Tiberius Caesar. "And scarlet," some kind of colored garment. "And every kind of citron wood." That word "citron" ought to give you a little idea. It's a north African wood that came from a citrus tree and it was valued primarily because of its color. It used to be used for inlay on doors and pieces of furniture. And very costly things like ivory, special kinds of costly wood, bronze, iron, marble and everything that those things constructed. That's furniture. Every article made from those things with their woods and inlaid woods and bronze and iron and marble. This is the economy of the world.

Now you know what this tells us? That in spite...get this now...in spite of the seal judgments and the trumpet judgments, and the bowl judgments, up to now it's business as usual. It's amazing. Now that will tell you something about human ingenuity, won't it? In a collapsing world, crops being destroyed, seas being destroyed, fresh water being destroyed, they're making it. And they're still doing business somewhere along the line. I mean, it's got to be having a hard time surviving, but human ingenuity is quite remarkable. I mean, they're still moving this stuff around the globe.

Verse 13, "Cinnamon," that's perhaps different than what we know as cinnamon, a different...perhaps a different kind of spice. He mentions...oh by the way, whatever this cinnamon is, there's a mention of cinnamon in Exodus 30 verse 23 to be used in holy oil. Proverbs 7:17 says that it was used for perfuming the harlot's bed. And the Romans used whatever this was for cosmetics.

Spice is a fragrant plant used for perfume, also used for the hair. It was made from a shrub found in India and Africa. And then he mentions perfume, obvious. Frankincense, that's a gum rosin that was used for fragrance, came from south Arabia. And wine and olive oil, we understand. And fine flour and wheat and cattle and sheep and cargoes of horses and chariots.

Are you ready for this? That's a word that means four-wheel wagons. Probably Ford Explorers.

And then it adds, "Slaves and human lives." My, selling human beings. You'd think the world was through doing that, wouldn't you? Nobody is buying their slaves anymore. It may be that it's talking about the employment issue. Nobody is hiring. But it seems more than that. It seems that one of the ways this Antichrist's system is going to survive in the end is by slave labor. It wouldn't be hard to accomplish in a satanically controlled dictatorship, would it? It would either be work or...what?...die.

The heart of all of this is in Babylon. Donald Grey Barnhouse commented on this by writing, "It's very interesting to note the union of the merchants and the kings in the wailing over the destruction of Babylon. In ancient times, government and business were not united as they are now. Kings ruled

apart from the bourgeois, who carried on the business of the world. Business began to move into government at the time of the French Revolution and the upheaval in industry that followed the invention of the steam engine and the growth of modern commerce put the merchants into the government as never before where they stand today alongside the politicians and with common interests. It is to be noted that the wailing is for the luxuries of humanity, no necessities are mentioned."

Interesting, business and government coming together. Well we're seeing that right now, aren't we? That's the way it will be in the end. They'll be totally dependent on each other. And here they are weeping and mourning not for something that is necessary but for something that is a luxury.

Verse 14, "And the fruit you long for has gone from you." All the possessions, all the luxuries, all the wealth for which you lusted...that's the word...has gone from you. You're stripped of it. God bankrupts the system. Once Babylon is destroyed, it's probably a computer center, too. Once that whole banking center of the world is destroyed, everything begins to disintegrate because you know by that time that everything is going to be done through some kind of worldwide computerization, right? It's not going to be a cash world. And when the brains go down, the whole thing goes down. And all the things that people lust for are going to be taken from them.

He says in verse 14, "All things that were luxurious and splendid have passed away from you and men will no longer find them." Gone, and gone how long? Forever. And like the kings and the merchants watch and weep, so will the rest of the world. Verse 15, "The merchants of these things who became rich from her will stand at a distance because of the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning." There the merchants join the kings and they stay at a distance. And they start their weeping now, and may I say to you, they will never stop weeping because they'll weep forever and ever and ever in a place where there is endless weeping and gnashing of teeth. Because their passions can't be satisfied anymore, they'll weep and they'll weep that way in hell forever because their passions can't be satisfied.

So the leaders and the merchants weep. And they have the same dirge, verse 16 saying, "Woe, woe the great city, she who was clothed in fine linen and purple and scarlet and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls," that's all they can think about is all their stuff. And you keep thinking, don't you, about the words of Jesus, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?" It's all they live for.

They have heard the gospel preached by a hundred and forty-four thousand Jewish evangelists. They've heard the gospel preached by two witnesses who rose from the dead. They've heard the gospel preached by Jews and Gentiles who came to faith during this period. They've heard the gospel preached by angels flying through the heaven. They have heard the gospel preached, clearly they have felt the judgment of God, the heat of His fury. They have tasted of the things of the day of

the Lord. They know what is ahead. They have all of that experience and still they are utterly and totally consumed with those things which will perish and have no thought for their eternal souls. This is where the world is going, friends, to a kind of materialism that is almost inconceivable. And they weep and lament.

In verse 17, over all the fine linen and purple and scarlet and all that stuff, "For in one hour such great wealth has been laid waste." Now it must have been also that...follow this...that Babylon as a city was the distribution center for the world. Now that does make sense. Do you know that Babylon, don't you, is at the center of the world, at least the center of the world when God created the world and created the first inhabitable place in the world, He created the Garden of Eden and He put in it man and woman and that was the heart, that was right there where He wanted them, that was the special place. And that is in that fertile crescent where the city of Babylon will be in the future. And it's the hub of the world. Asia to the east and Europe to the west and Africa to the south, the great masses of world population right there. The great powerful labor forces of the world, right there. Seas all over the place. A river, place of access, and when that place is destroyed, all of the wealth stored there to be disseminated around the world is destroyed.

And this is reminiscent of James chapter 5. You might want to jot that down. "Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries which are coming upon you, your riches have rotted, 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 of Sabaoth. You have lived luxuriously on the earth. You have led a life of wanton pleasure. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter."

Boy, that certainly could be descriptive of those folks living in that time in the end. Matthew 16:26, "What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul." Now this requiem, this funeral dirge is going to have another group join, not just leaders and business men but here come some more folks. The distributors...the distributors in verse 17, "And every ship master and every passenger and sailor and as many as make their living by the sea stood at a distance." You see, moving the stuff around the globe is dependent upon ocean travel. You can't move all that stuff by air because it takes great massive ships to move oil and the tremendous dependence of oil worldwide for industry that we know today depends upon shipping, as you well know. And it takes shipping to move these huge goods and these huge volumes of goods. And every ship master and every passenger and sailor whose involved in the selling and the distribution of those goods, whose involved in the care of those ships, who operates in any function in that distribution process stand at a distance also. They want to stay away. And they watch.

In verse 18, "And they were crying out as they saw the smoke of her burning saying, 'What city is like the great city?'" Woe, woe...same response...if the city can't survive, nothing can survive cause there's nothing like the city. This is the strongest city there is on the face of the earth and it's going up in smoke. Back in chapter 13 verse 4, you know, when they were all enamored with the Antichrist, they said, "Who is like the beast? And who is able to wage war with him?" And now they say, "But what is like the city?" We have the strongest in the beast, we have the strongest in the city of Babylon and there goes Babylon.

And then in a typical ancient expression of grief, John sees these mourners do what many had done in a time of grief. Verse 18, "Standing at a distance they were crying out as they saw the smoke of her burning saying, 'What city is like the great city?' And they threw dust on their heads." That's an ancient expression of grief. You can read about it in Job 2:12, Lamentations 2:10, a sign of terrible grief and pain and agony was just to throw dirt all over yourself. And they were crying out, here they are weeping, sobbing and beating their breasts like everybody else...woe, woe, the great city in which all who had ships at sea became rich by her wealth. The universal pain, universal grief but what is clearly missing? Repentance, right? It's not "woe is me," it's woe, woe, the great city. Woe is my bank account. Woe, woe the great...you know, I tell you, we're not far from this kind of stuff. Our culture, every single week gets more materialistic and more preoccupied with the economy.

I really get weary of that stuff. We're breeding people for this mentality. All their hopes and dreams were built on the Babylon economy, on it being stronger than God. It won't be and the pain of their loss causes this reaction.

In one hour she's been laid waste. This was the city, the great city. No city like the great city and it went down in one hour. Not literally sixty minutes, but in one great hour of immediate judgment. Judgment lamented.

There's another view, number five, judgment enjoyed. Enjoyed? Enjoyed. Verse 20, "Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets because God has pronounced judgment for you against her." Wow. The angel speaks again, the same angel who started speaking back in verse 4, and the angel says, "Rejoice over her, O heaven." And he's talking to all of those who are in heaven. We met them, didn't we, earlier in chapters 4 and 5? Four living creatures, twenty-four elders, angels, glorified saints, martyred Tribulation saints. Rejoice, you saints, and apostles, and prophets, you missionaries, you preachers who got martyred and are pictured back in chapter 6 verse 9 to 11, and all you saints, all of you rejoice because God has pronounced judgment against her for you.

He promised vindication. He promised retribution. He promised vengeance for you. This is for you. The time of your pain is over. The time of your enduring this is over. For you He pronounced this judgment. Get happy, heaven, get happy.

You say, "Well how can they rejoice when these people are going to be damned to hell?" They can rejoice because righteousness triumphs, because Christ is exalted, because the kingdom comes and the people damned to hell with all their power and all their will and all the expression of their heart made their choice against every conceivable warning. This is the rejoicing that heaven waits for, beloved, even today, when sin is crushed, when sinners are destroyed, when the cursed earth is burned and a restored earth is made and Jesus comes and sets up His Kingdom and peace and righteousness reign.

And if you're a Christian you understand that because the Lord has endured humiliation long enough, and so have His people. And righteousness and justice and truth and purity have had enough abuse.

Then there's a sixth point, judgment completed...judgment completed, verse 21, "And a strong angel took up a stone like a great millstone." Millstone generally was a solid piece of rock, one foot in diameter, one foot, I should say, in width, five feet in diameter, used to grind grain. The strong angel is told to pick up a millstone. You'll also meet a strong angel in chapter 5 and chapter 10.

Now there's an interesting passage of Scripture, we're going to finish in just a moment, but I want you to go to Jeremiah 51 for a moment because it sets up this particular portion. Jeremiah 51, I'm just going to read verses 61 to 64. "Then Jeremiah said to Seraiah, `As soon as you come to Babylon then see that you read all these words aloud, and say, "Thou, O Lord, has promised concerning this place to cut it off."'" When you get to Babylon, you give this prophecy, God's going to cut this place off. "So that there will be nothing dwelling in it, neither...whether man or beast, but it will be a perpetual desolation, and it will come about as soon as you finish reading this scroll, you will tie a stone to it and throw it into the middle of the Euphrates and say, `Just so shall Babylon sink down and not rise again because of the calamity that I'm going to bring upon her and they will become exhausted.'" Obliterated, wiped out.

When you go to Babylon, make this prophecy, Babylon is going to be wiped out. And to demonstrate it, take a stone, throw it in the middle of the Euphrates, and that's just how Babylon is going to sink down. Seraiah was a prince who accompanied Zedekiah into Babylon. And he is told after reading Jeremiah's prophecies to take the stone and throw it in the river and demonstrate the sinking of Babylon.

And I really think that that's a very good explanation of this particular text in Revelation, you can turn back to it. Verse 21 again, "An angel took the stone like a great millstone, threw it in the sea. Thus will Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence, will not be found any longer, like a rock at the bottom of the sea, can't find it."

We would conclude then that the prophecy of Jeremiah has never been fulfilled yet, right? Because this ties right back to that prophecy which then speaks that there should be a rebuilding of Babylon. Many people wondered if that could ever happen. Here you are alive and it's happened.

I don't...I don't know every detail of the future and what God's going to do, but this seems to me a reasonable understanding of this Scripture. It is a violent throwing down, quick destruction, final, complete, never to be found again.

Then verse 22, when that happens, "The sound of harpists and musicians and flute players and trumpeters will not be heard in you any longer." By the way, Babylon now is not an inhabited city yet, it is a ceremonial city where musicals are put on, theater, celebrations. Music is a part of it, a great part of it now and will continue to be in the future as it is in any great city. People need to be entertained. You can imagine that there will be a premium on entertainers during the Great Tribulation, can't you? Can't you imagine that people will want to laugh and find a party to go to and a way to escape and the party will be over. And then verse 22 says, "No craftsmen of any craft will be found in you any longer, and the sound of a mill will not be heard in you any longer." No more entertainment, no more industry, no music, no industry, no mill...no grain, no food, no nothing.

People that escaped to the outside will find nothing left. Obviously the people in it will go down with it. Verse 23, "And the light of a lamp will not shine in you any longer." By the way, the world's been dark. The world's been dark since the fifth bowl, chapter 16 verse 10, so the city had to be lighted another way than daylight. And the light, whatever the light of the lamp that lit the city was is gone. And then this interesting note, "The voice of the bridegroom and the bride will not be heard in you any longer." The primary usage of the rebuilt city of Babylon is as a wedding city, and it could be an allusion to that, although I think it's perhaps more likely just saying that the normal things of life stop.

Can you imagine...can you imagine dating during the Great Tribulation? Can you imagine proposing to some girl and saying, "I'd like to take you for my wife and live with you and find a little cottage with a picket fence and raise a little family?" I mean, but life goes on. But not anymore.

Then there is a final point. A seventh point, is that right? Judgment justified...judgment justified. Why all this? "For your merchants were the great men of the earth because all the nations were deceived by your sorcery and in her was found the blood of the prophets and of the saints and of all who had been slain on the earth." You know why the judgment was justified? Because the whole world went materialistic, first of all, corrupt leadership and the whole world was deceived by that corruption.

So what have you got? Corrupt leadership, worldwide sorcery and deception, and the massacre of the saints...God says that's enough...that's enough. In her was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who had been slain in the earth. Not only had corrupt leaders not only deceived

people, but the whole system was murderous against the saints, slaughtering them.

Look at verse 2 of chapter 19. In verse 1, "Hallelujah, salvation and glory and power belong to God," this is heaven singing the praises of judgment, "because His judgments are true and righteous for He has judged the great harlot who was corrupting the earth with her immorality and He has avenged the blood of His bond-servants on her." This Babylon system is going to be the killer of the prophets, the preachers and the saints.

Where is the world headed? It's headed to this. It's headed to judgment. And when judgment falls, it falls, first of all, on the city and then as we read in chapter 16, on the whole world system as God totally restructures the earth, every island disappears, the mountains are flattened out, hundred-pound hailstones crush the life out of people. And Jesus comes, destroys the armies of the world at Armageddon and sets up His eternal Kingdom. That's where it's going.

Listen to this, with the words of Jesus, Luke 12, this is a fitting conclusion. He told them a parable saying, "The land of a certain rich man was very productive, and he began reasoning to himself saying, 'What shall I do since I have no place to store my crops?' And he said, 'This is what I'll do, I'll tear down my barns and build larger ones and there I'll store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul...Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come, take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.' But God said to him, 'You fool, this very night your soul is required of you and now who will own what you have prepared?' Then Jesus said, 'So is the man who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.'"

What a fool, a world of fools perishes.

Father, we are so over-awed by this scene. And we understand where history is moving, where our world is going. While there is time, while there is opportunity, make us faithful to proclaim Your saving gospel. Lord, help us to reach out to those who perish. Help us not to be caught up in the materialistic preoccupations of this culture. I pray for anyone in this place who is building bigger barns and eating and drinking and being merry, gathering treasure to himself or herself and is not rich toward you, who is a fool and to whom you say, "You fool, tonight I'm going to require your life." In a sudden hour, like Babylon, it can all be gone.

Lord, may we be rich toward You and may our treasure be in heaven. We thank You for the gift of our Savior in whose name we pray. Amen.

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