

The Final Economic Collapse, Part 1

Revelation 18:1-5

80-195

As I have been mentioning the last couple of weeks, I know there are many people who are concerned about economic issues and the Word of God addresses them. Last Sunday night we looked at how to overcome financial stress out of Matthew 6, the teaching of Jesus there. And tonight I want to take you to the eighteenth chapter of the book of Revelation because in this particular chapter we come face to face with the final economic crash, the final economic crash.

Some of you lived through the Depression. Some of us have lived through several sort of mini-depressions, when people lost a lot of money, stock market or economic things changed one way or another. Certainly if you have lived in another country other than America you may have lived through an incredible, almost inexplicable inflation which has been rampant in our modern world in a number of places, the latest of which is the country of Russia where they have more money than they've ever had, and it buys less than it ever did. There have been times in our life time when countries, particularly around the time of World War II and before where pushing around money that filled a wheelbarrow just to buy enough groceries to feed a family for a day or two.

We are very dependent on money. We're very dependent on the economics of our societies in order to survive. We're perhaps nowadays more dependent than ever on things holding together since most of us have our money in a bank, most of us have it in a savings account or have it in stocks or some other non-liquid place. And I suppose that's why there's an elevated fear of the Y2K phenomenon when we hit the year 2000 and all the computers go haywire and nobody knows whose got what. Some people are living in mortal fear that somehow their bank account is going to get lost in the confusion of computers and that's why, I guess, they're storing cans of beans in the cellar or bunker somewhere, hoping to survive through that time.

I'm always amazed how resilient our society is. I remember reading years ago that in the 1915 era to 1920 or so, just before the mass production of the automobile, they were saying that if horses continue to multiply in New York City, the city would be fourteen feet deep in manure in two years. It's amazing how resilient people are. And all of a sudden the automobile came along and you remember the threats about population explosion and how that's been dealt with and we were going to run out of food, and we didn't do that. And the human ingenuity under God's wonderful creative providential control is pretty amazing, and I'm quite confident we'll slide by the Y2K phenomenon rather readily and it won't have a great impact on any of us, actually.

But there is coming in the future a final economic crash. And it is described for us in the eighteenth chapter of Revelation. And I think we are all curious about the current state of the world economically. And what has elevated our curiosity is a one-world economy. Up until really recent years there were economies in the world. There was an economy in this country and that country and the other country, and there was very little really coming together of those economies.

Well that isn't true anymore. We are living in a time of global commerce and a global economy. We have really one-world economy. We are told that great effect on the stock market occurs because of something that goes on in a nation across the ocean from us. We are all tied together. The dollar, of course, becomes a standard against which foreign currency is measured and it has tremendous implications on our dollar and our dollar has implications worldwide. We are in the midst of a world economy.

And that all fits into the final picture prophetically in the book of Revelation. We want to understand our financial future. We are interested in what's coming down the road because we're planning our future financially. We're interested in stock markets and interest rates and budget deficits and all of that. And, of course, that interest is exacerbated because it fills the newspapers, the magazines and endlessly is on the radio and television on those sort of ubiquitous cable channels where they discuss all things political and economic. More so than ever in the history of the world we live in a one-world economy and our own future is tied to what's going on all over the world. We are not isolated as a nation anymore. This general economy affects the entire globe and therefore our investments and our economics, our money and our future is in the control really of events and circumstances and people and nations over which we have very little, in fact no real control.

What about the future? Will this world economy continue? Will it even become stronger? The answer is yes. And the book of Revelation tells us that that will happen. There will be an increasing in materialism. The world is not going to go communistic, it's going to go capitalistic, even more than it is now. Capitalism will prevail. In fact, the world in the end before the coming of Jesus Christ will be in the midst of a one-world capitalistic bonanza. And that's quite amazing because the circumstances in the world are going to have been very, very difficult. As the book of Revelation unfolds the judgments of God being poured out prior to the day of the Lord, there is going to be an awful lot of chaos in the world, but amazingly the world will survive with some measure of economic prosperity. And so as we look ahead we will see capitalism continue to prevail. Communism sort of came and went, it was a bad economic experiment. We all know that. It will not be a factor apparently in the significance of the last days economy. Capitalism, materialism will reign and it will be in that form the one-world economy that we're going to meet the judgment of God in Revelation chapter 18.

I couldn't tell you anything about the future of the economy. I couldn't tell you anything about the stock market, nobody seems to be able to do that. I can't do any predictions just out of the air and based on looking at worldly circumstances, but I can tell you what the Bible says. And that's what we want to do as we look at Revelation chapter 18.

And I guess all that to sort of say that the general point here is the entire world economy is going to be devastated in the end. That's where it's going.

As you come to Revelation chapter 18 we need to get a little bit of an understanding of what's going on here. We have in Revelation 18 the final world economy under the name Babylon. You'll notice in verse 2, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great." Babylon the great that is going to fall as described in Revelation 18 is the final world economic system. Now this is going to happen prior to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. For those of you who may find this new, the book of Revelation is a book about the coming of Jesus Christ. It is a book last things. It describes the end of the world, the end of the age as we know it, the end of human history. The Bible teaches that human history will end when Jesus Christ who died and rose again and then ascended to heaven and is there now, when He

returns to the earth some day in the future to judge sinners and to establish His kingdom, that will be the end of man's day. That will be the end of human history as we know it, when Jesus comes back and sets up His own earthly kingdom which lasts for a thousand years. And He will reign on the earth as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Before, however, Jesus comes to establish His kingdom, He will bring judgments on the earth. He will bring massive judgments on the earth described in Revelation 6 through 19. In chapter 19 He returns and that is the final holocaust of judgment called the Day of the Lord, the Day of God's wrath after which He establishes His earthly kingdom.

The first time Jesus came He was a baby born in a manger. The next time He comes He comes as a great King. The first time He came He came in humility, almost obscurity. The second time He comes He comes in a proud manner in the sense that He comes to take back what is rightly His. He takes...He brings the title deed to the earth and the entire universe and takes it back. The first time He came He was merely mocked. The second time He comes He will be crowned with majesty. The first time He came He was put on a cross. The second time He comes He will reign from a throne. The first time He came He ruled, as it were, with a reed. The next time He comes He'll rule with a rod of iron.

And so, make no mistake, history is really His story. The world is destined to climax in the end of man's day in the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. He will come bodily. He will come in visible form. He will come actually. He will come in great power. And He will come in great glory. Revelation 19 describes that coming. It describes it in detail.

But Revelation 6 through 18 gives the details of the judgments that lead up to His final coming. Chapters 20 to 22 then follow up by describing what happens after He has arrived. So we're looking at chapter 18 now, and it's the chapter just prior to chapter 19 which describes His coming. And this particular chapter focuses on the destruction of the world economic system.

And I suppose it might have seen a little obscure 25, 50 years ago or anytime prior to that, to imagine a world economy. It was pretty much a matter of national economies, having their own identity, and being somewhat self-contained. Here we are living at the first time in the history of the world when there has been a single global economy. And this suits perfectly the picture of the book of Revelation and leads us to believe that we are much closer to this than probably any of us might realize. This then is the last chapter before the description of Christ's return and gives us a look at the end of man's materialistic economic identity.

It is frankly the most complete picture of the world at the end of man's day. In chapter 17 is described another world order also called Babylon. But chapter 17 describes a religious Babylon. And what that tells us is at the end of age before the coming of Jesus Christ there will be two dominating world institutions: one will be economic and the other will be religious. There will be a one-world church and a one-world economy.

There will be a one-world religion, as described in Revelation 17, and there will be a one-world economy. Obviously the world religion it focuses outside itself, it focuses on the supernatural, what is believed to be the supernatural by those people who are caught up in that one-world religion. In actuality they are worshipping Satan. The final form of world religion will be a universal one-world

worship of Satan. They will be led to the worship of Satan by an individual described in the book of Revelation as the Antichrist...the Antichrist. He's actually called the beast in the book of Revelation, we know him as the Antichrist. He will be assisted by another one called the false prophet, a prophet who will influence the whole world to worship the Antichrist who in effect will be leading right into the worship of Satan himself. So the final form of world religion is described in Revelation 17.

Now that's not hard to anticipate because we are seeing the world of religion melding more and more and more and more together into one great world religion. Books are being written today that tell us we ought to embrace the Muslims, we ought to embrace Roman Catholicism, we ought to embrace Mormonism, we ought to embrace all of these who really just view God in different terms but are really one form of religion directed at the same deity, or deities, as the case may be. So we're watching as there is this melding together of all these world religions. And that is described for us in Revelation 17.

Now prior to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ these two systems co-exist. The world religious system exists and the world economic system. The religious system described in Revelation 17, that's for another time to discuss. And the economic system described in chapter 18. They co-exist.

But finally before the Lord comes the economic system, the world economic system and the materialistic system of chapter 18 can no longer tolerate the partnership. The world economic system no longer wants to allow the religious system to exist. And so according to the book of Revelation the economic system destroys the world religious system. And all you have left is this Antichrist, materialistic world economy of chapter 18. So by the time you get into chapter 18, if you're just kind of flowing in chronology here, you've seen the demise of the final form of world religion. It has literally been obliterated. It has been destroyed. According to verse 16 of chapter 17 it has been made desolate and naked. It has been eaten up and burned up with fire. And all that is left is the Antichrist and his materialistic world government system. Religion, in effect, is just absorbed into that. It no longer exists, as it were, side by side.

So in chapter 18 you're looking at the final form of the world. It will be, in some ways, irreligious, although Satan will still be in control of it. And it will be an economic system. It will be the world flourishing economically just before the Lord Jesus comes in final judgment. Evil will have reached its apex, evil will have...iniquity will have become filled up in every sense. Rebellion against God and Christ will be at its utter and absolute pinnacle. They will be, according to Revelation 16:11 which also looks forward to that final time, blaspheming the God of heaven. They will be blaspheming the God of heaven. The judgments that the Lord brings they just reject and instead of turning to the Lord they will blaspheme Him.

Now remember, by the time you get to the end of the...of the time known as the Great Tribulation described from Revelation 6 through 19, by the time you get to the end of that the world has suffered through immense judgments on the part of God, devastating judgments. Described in that part of Revelation is a series of judgments first described as the opening of certain seals which unroll a scroll and describe a judgment. Seven seals are unrolled and out of those seven seals comes seven trumpet judgments all describing frightening, terrifying judgments that come upon the earth. And out of the seven trumpet judgments comes seven final bowl judgments, big saucers dumping their final judgment in a rapid-fire succession at the very end of that age. So the world will have gone through many of those judgments.

In fact, by the time you get to chapter 18 the world has experienced darkness...darkness. The judgment of God has brought about a supernatural darkness on the earth. So they have really been hammered by the judgment of God by the time you come to chapter 18 but they're still trying to carry on their business under the reign of Antichrist. The religious Babylon has been destroyed, the Babylon of chapter 18 remains, the materialistic, commercial world empire of Antichrist. But in chapter 18 it is going to be destroyed.

So we come then to chapter 18, really come to the last picture. This is the world system as it exists in the last three and a half years of the Tribulation. There's a seven-year period before Christ comes described in the Old Testament and the New Testament. That seven-year period is divided into two parts, the first half is a period of tribulation and trouble and judgment, but the second half is the Great Tribulation when the judgments begin to get more and more intense.

So this system will flourish in very difficult times when frankly divine judgments of incredible proportions are being poured out all over the earth, frightening kinds of judgments. Judgments that are so frightening, a hundred-pound hail stones are coming out of the sky, for one. Fire falls on the earth. There are floods that drown people. The sea is turned to blood. The freshwater becomes poisonous. A fourth of the earth perishes under some of the plagues. A third of the remaining earth perishes. The people on the earth perish. Some of the other judgments produce that. It's a...it's a frightening inexplicable devastating worldwide holocaust of judgments.

And yet in the midst of all of that it's business as usual as the Antichrist who is a powerful influencer is able to somehow keep people doing what is economically productive. So in the middle of these incredible judgments of unthinkable, unimaginable proportions, it's business as usual in the world. You have heaven collapsing, stars falling out of the sky crashing into the earth, a third of the earth burned up in chapter 8, a third of the trees burned up, the green grass burned up. A mountain, probably some kind of a meteor or something thrown into the sea, and the sea becomes like blood, every third of the creatures in the sea perish, die, a third of the ships are destroyed. A star falls out of heaven like a torch and hits the rivers and the springs of water and causes them all to become bitter. A third of the sun, a third of the moon, a third of the stars are smitten which throws everything into chaos. The tides all change. The process of planting and growing things all changes. But in that time they must come up with some kind of artificial light because they keep on going with business as usual the best they can in the midst of all of that incredible judgment.

They'll be aided by Satan and by his demons. There will be an exploding population of demons on the earth. Revelation chapter 9 says that during that time the key to the bottomless pit was given to an angel who came down from heaven. He opens the bottomless pit and out of the bottomless pit come forth the demons. They come across the earth so there's the demons that are now bound in the pit are released and they run the course of the earth doing the work of Satan. And somehow in the midst of all that judgment things keep moving on. Man is very resourceful. And we've come a long way from primitive times. We've got immense capabilities scientifically to make things happen in a world where everything has gone crazy. And aided by the power of Satan and his vast host of demons, in spite of the astounding judgments...and if you want to see the most astounding judgments you have to go back to chapter 16 and see these incredible judgments, the final ones of which don't happen till the final destruction of the commercial Babylon. We won't do that tonight, that's for another time.

But in the midst of all of this horrifying judgment leading up the final bowls which, I think, are poured

out in the final weeks of the time of tribulation, but for that last three and a half years there is severe judgment going on, as I read to you from chapter 8, the system just keeps moving. And you come to chapter 18, you come to this commercial Babylon, the final world system and the city which is his...which is its capital.

Now just another comment or two before we look at the text. When you see the word Babylon in verse 2 naturally you're prone to ask immediately, "Is this the literal city of Babylon? Is it the literal actual city of Babylon? Or are we really talking about just the term Babylon being used to describe a final world economic system?"

Well, I'm not sure I can answer that dogmatically because Jerusalem is referred to in the book of Revelation as Sodom and Egypt and Jerusalem is not Sodom and Egypt, it's not Sodom and it's not Egypt. Sodom is a different city and Egypt is a different place. But Jerusalem is called Sodom and Egypt because Sodom and Egypt were symbols of iniquity, symbols of idolatry, symbols of destruction. And Jerusalem had become...will become idolatrous and it will become a place of idolatry in the end times and it will become a place of God's judgment. And so, God does rename places because the name carries some significant meaning as to the identity of that place. And it may be that we're not talking actually about the city of Babylon in the future, but we're talking about a Babylon-like world system. The name Babylon, of course, takes you way back, doesn't it, to the Tower of Babel...the massive effort at idolatry, building a ziggurat, rejecting the true and living God. And those people then defiant in the face of God would build their own way to heaven, build their own idol, worship the way they wanted to worship. So Babylon sort of becomes the symbol of anti-God activity. That's what it was back in the book of Genesis when they built the Tower of Babel.

And by the way, out of Babel, you remember, out of the idolatry of Babel God judged them by changing their languages. Remember that? And then scattering them all over the globe. And this is a sad thing to realize but it's true, it was the Tower of Babel and its idolatry that caused all the false religions of the world because those people who were idolatrous got scattered all over the globe and just took their idolatry with them. Babylon is the mother of all harlots, of all spiritual harlotry. It is the mother of all anti-God religion. It all came out of Babylon, got scattered all over the globe. It could be...it could be that the center of the world economic system would be the actual city of Babylon which is in Iraq. And by the way, the Iraqis have rebuilt the city of Babylon which is fascinating to me, absolutely fascinating. They have rebuilt the city of Babylon. It is to them a ceremonial city and they hold great ceremonies and events in that city. And they have reconstructed it to be a jewel in the desert, the city, the actual location of ancient Babylon. It could well be that that very place, that very city of Babylon will be the center of the world system.

I really don't know why but reading years ago in Arnold Toynbee, the great historian. He said that he believed that Babylon would some day become the world's natural population center because of its wonderful central location. I don't know why he said that. I also know that Babylon has a role in prophecy. The prophet Isaiah in chapter 13 and 47, the prophet Jeremiah in chapter 50 and 52, and the prophet Ezekiel in Ezekiel 26 and 27 all prophesied the destruction of Babylon. And they described elements of the destruction of Babylon which didn't come to pass in any prior destruction of that city. I'm not going to take the time to go through all of that, but Isaiah described patterns of destruction of Babylon that did not occur when ancient Babylon was destroyed. And Jeremiah, for example, said that the Arabian would be afraid to pitch his tent there, and it would be the abode of dragons empty without inhabitants and no one would ever live there. Well that didn't happen and it is inhabited by some people. Babylon never was violently overthrown, as Isaiah said it would be. It just

sort of slowly declined over many centuries.

But the city of Babylon originally was the first place ruled by violence in Genesis. It was founded by Nimrod, a wicked man. It was once the world's capital. It was the place where false religion was first conceived. It was the place of world dominion under Nebuchadnezzar. So Babylon stands for idolatry and world dominion and violence and ungodliness. And a Babylon will rise again. And maybe it...maybe it will be centered in that Iraqi city.

But is more than just that city. It represents the character of the age, the violent idolatrous ungodly place of world domination. Babylon of chapter 18 is a synonym really for the Antichrist world empire which has become by chapter 18 materialistic and economic, having absorbed the religious system of chapter 17.

Now all of that's the background. Let's look at the chapter and now we'll get right into the judgment. The judgment is pronounced in the first three verses, we're going to finish this up next week, I hope, but I want to take my time because it's such powerful material here and this is God's Word to us on the future. Judgment is pronounced in the first three verses.

"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 became a dwelling place of demons, a prison of every unclean spirit, 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."

Now we learn a lot of things in those verses. We learn that an angel comes down to pronounce judgment, first of all. We hear John telling us, "I saw another angel coming down from heaven." Not the same angel that we see in chapter 17 but another one. And this angel has great authority, or power, the word is the same, great power. Maybe this angel has been delegated from God the right of execution in this point. He has delegated authority from God to act in God's behalf and he does that over in verse 21. "The strong angel took up a stone like a great millstone, threw it into the sea saying...Thus will Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence and will not be found any longer."

So here comes this angel either acting as God's...God's executioner or simply bringing the message of execution. Now it says that in verse 1, the end of the verse, the earth was illumined with his glory. The earth was illumined in his glory, with his glory. That's important to say because in chapter 16 verse 10 there was an angel pouring out the fifth bowl who poured it on the earth and the earth became darkened and people were gnawing their tongues because of pain and blaspheming the God of heaven because of their pain and their sores, but they still didn't repent of their deeds.

Toward the end of that three and a half year period the earth goes dark. And Babylon would go dark with it. And all of a sudden it's lit in verse 1. And he cried out with a mighty voice, verse 2, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great." The relief of the light in the darkness will turn to terror at the voice of doom. And by the way, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great" is a direct quote from Isaiah 21:9, direct quote. The prophet said it would happen and here John the apostle saying what the prophet said hasn't happened up until this time but it will happen in the future...fallen, fallen is

Babylon the great. The statement is a picture of established ruin. It views the results of judgment as if they had occurred already. The judgment hasn't come when he says it but he says it as if it's already happened.

It was 539 B.C. a nearer event which God showed the prophets when God brought judgment on Babylon in the past. But this is far, far beyond that. This will really culminate in the seventh bowl, the final seventh bowl which actually occurs after this fall of Babylon though it's mentioned earlier in chapter 16. There are times when you get little previews of what's going to happen at the end and then it goes back and covers the ground in between, and that's the case in chapter 18. It's describing the fall of Babylon which...the final form of which is occurring under the seventh bowl described in chapter 16 verse 17 and following...lightnings, earthquakes and so forth. And Babylon is remembered before God to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath. Every island fled away, all the mountains were not found. God just levels the entire globe and that's when the hundred-pound hailstones come down and so forth. That's the final desolation and annihilation. That never has happened. That didn't happen at any time in Babylon in the past. That is future.

So the angel pronounces this fallen, fallen and then describes why. "She has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison of every unclean spirit and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird." In other words, this whole entire satanic world enterprise is simply infested with demons, infested with unclean spirits. All the emissaries of Satan, all the demons that have roamed the earth since their fall near the time of the creation, all of the demons that were once bound in the pit and have now been released, as we saw in Revelation chapter 9, the earth is the haunt for all demons, all of the emissaries of Satan. One third, you remember, Revelation 12 says of the holy angels fell, well all one third now are all over the earth. It is a prison of every unclean spirit. Literally the final form of the world government, the world economy will be infested with demons from one end to the other. And he adds a prison of every unclean and hateful bird. That's sort of an analogy. As the prophets looked at the destruction of Babylon they saw its utter desolation and when you look at utter desolation in ancient times, when there was a desolation of a city or there was a desolation of an army, it was the carrion birds, of course, that came in and ate the flesh of the dead, the scavenger birds to chew on the carrion. And all that he sees as sort of symbolic of the demons and the unclean spirits who feed on the ignorant unbelievers who are in the kingdom of Antichrist. It's just a place of demons and unclean spirits who are just devouring the bodies like...like hellish birds.

The word, by the way, for bird, orneau(?) from which we get ornithology, the study of birds, is an old word. It's used only here and in the nineteenth chapter of Revelation. It is a word that is used as well to depict evil spirits hovering over the city like birds waiting to eat their prey. So, the final form of the one-world government will be controlled by hell itself. Hell's powerful presence will dominate, influencing and controlling people in the system of Antichrist under the direction of Satan. It is true that literal Babylon did become desolate, did become occupied by scavenger birds and unclean animals in the past, but this is something way beyond that, way beyond that.

People still have no fear of God and no faith in God because they're still worshiping the Antichrist. They believe he's going to deliver them from everything. They have literally given their souls to him. He's going to find a way out. They're still engaged in Antichrist worship. The false church has been devoured. The false religious system has been devoured and there's only one ruler, only one object of worship, that's Antichrist. Somehow he maintains the materialism of the world, to some degree, with the help of demons.

Verse 3 tells us how extensive this kingdom is. The judgment is pronounced on the whole world, all the nations are connected, all the nations are linked. "They have all drunk the wine of the passion of her immorality." Again this is analogous language, very graphic language. They're all drunk. The whole world, follow this, the whole world is in a materialistic drunken stupor. They're all swept up indulging in the sins that go along with it. This is like...this is like a drunk who has given himself to every passion, to every prostitute, to commit every act of immorality, to do anything that's sensual. It just pictures the world seduced by Antichrist, seduced by Satan, engaging itself in...in a form of fornication, prostitution, drunkenness with passion. The whole world is drunk with riches, drunk with lust, drunk with luxury, drunk with its...its merchandising, its materialism.

Now he singles out everybody drunk with the passion of her immorality, that is to say the one-world system covers the globe. He identifies particularly the kings of the earth. The kings of the earth have made alliances. They literally have committed fornication with the Antichrist who represents Babylon. The kings of the earth have committed their acts of immorality. They have become, as it were, the harlots of the Antichrist. He has seduced the kings of the world and so they've dragged their nations into this alliance...one-world government, one global economy, probably one-world currency as we learn a little earlier in the book of Revelation. The Antichrist controls everybody with what is described as the mark of the beast. This...this kind of thing could happen today because everything is fed into computers and if someone controls all of those they can, in effect, control everything.

Not only do the kings of the earth bring all their nations into this alliance, but the merchants of the earth all join. You might say that it's a unionized world and the head of the union is Antichrist. The whole world is engulfed in this. We're heading faster and faster toward this one-world economy. All the alliances of all the leaders of all the nations who keep coming together, coming together, coming together, and all the merchants who realize if they want to be successful they've got to globally market their products. Everybody gets involved. Everybody is prostituted to this satanic Antichrist world system.

And you know, there's...there's a process that leads up to this. If you're going to have a commercial system, you're going to have a global economy, a worldwide materialistic system you need a lot of things. You need the sea because you need the sea for cargo trade and shipping and all of that. You need the land because you need to be able to grow things. You need the natural resources of the land, like oil and whatever else, minerals. You need the land so you can build factories and you need the land so you can transport goods. You also need the air. You need the atmosphere for light. You need photosynthesis for growth. And you need manpower. You need manpower for production. You need manpower for consumption. You need somebody to produce the product and somebody to consume the product. The whole final form of the world system then is dependent on the sea, the land, the air and the people.

And what is really amazing is by the time you get to the end of the time of the Tribulation, by the time you get to the last three and a half years of the Tribulation, all of those things are starting to be devastated, absolutely devastated. In the judgments of chapter 8 which are familiar to us, they come out of the seventh seal, they are the seven trumpet judgments that come over the last three and a half years, as I read earlier you have a third of the sea becoming polluted, a third of the life in the sea dying, a third of the ships destroyed. And then you have the same thing happening on the freshwater, a third of the freshwater is lost. And then a third of the sun, and a third of the moon, a third of the stars are smitten. And as I said, that's just chaotic everywhere. So God in His judgment has struck the sea. God in His judgment has struck the land. God in His judgment has struck the air.

And not only that, but you've had a third of the people on the earth destroyed and already a fourth of them destroyed in an earlier judgment. Everything that man depends upon is being devastated. By the time you get into chapter 16 and the bowl judgments come at the end, they hit the sea, they hit the land, they hit the air and they hit the people again.

And I think one of the things that...that must hold the system together is that Satan, Antichrist, and all of these hellish demons are somehow able to keep things together, somehow able to convince people that they're still in charge. They must find some solution somehow. The system, of course, is being hit hard. It's being hammered hard. But people instead of turning to God stay in the system and blaspheme God.

You live in a world today where people are putting more and more faith in their money, aren't they? More and more faith in material things. But the day is going to come when Satan is going to take care of that. He's going to take over the whole system, and he's going to operate it with his demons, and even as the world collapses around them under the judgment of God.

You say, "Well are they going to know it's the judgment of God?" Yes they'll know it's a judgment of God. You say, "How they going to know that?" First of all, they're going to know it because the book of Revelation says that they're going to be told. Who's going to tell them? Well for one thing a hundred and forty-four thousand Jews, twelve thousand from every tribe are going to be selected to go across the world and preach the truth. For another thing, two witnesses, two witnesses are going to go to the city of Jerusalem and they're going to proclaim the truth, they're going to proclaim the judgment of God and they're going to be slaughtered before the world's view, the world...the whole world is going to see them. Which probably means television. And they're going to leave them lying dead in the city streets so they can gloat over them. And you can be sure CNN will cover it. And the whole world is going to see them, the Bible says in Revelation 11. And then all of a sudden while some poor reporter is standing there commenting on these dead bodies lying in the street they're so glad to get rid of cause they were going around preaching the judgment of God...they're going to rise to their feet and stand up.

Furthermore, if you didn't...if you somehow missed the two witnesses and you haven't heard from the 144,000 witnesses, there will be the salvation of so many people as Revelation 7 says, from every tongue and tribe and nation and all over the face of the earth that they're also going to be proclaiming the gospel. And if they happen to miss you there's one other great evangelist God's going to send, He's going to send an angel across the sky who is going to write the gospel in the sky for everybody to see. They'll know what's going on. But instead of accepting the gospel and accepting the truth, they'll blaspheme God and hang on to the dominion of Antichrist. They'll put their faith that somehow he can solve these problems. They'll try...of course Satan will have another explanation for what went wrong with the sea, the land, the air and where the people...how it is that all the people perished, and Satan will be convincing enough because of the unbelief of the hearts of these people to hold them captive. They will be blind to what is going on around them and swept away in a final judgment. That's judgment pronounced.

One other point for tonight, judgment avoided. Verse 4, "And I heard another voice from heaven," John says, "saying, Come out of her, My people, that you may not participate in her sins and that you may not receive of her plagues for her sins have piled up as high as heaven and God has remembered her iniquities." Judgment avoided.

The judgment of God is going to come on this morally bankrupt worldwide government, this worldwide economic system living in arrogance, living in some form of luxury, living in some form of self-indulgence. Judgment is going to come but not everybody has to fall under that judgment. "I heard another voice saying...Come out of her, My people."

Those of you who belong to the Lord, get out. See, all through this time of judgment in the time of the Tribulation God is saving people. He's saving people out of Israel. In fact, at the death of the two witnesses and the resurrection of the two witnesses a revival breaks out in Jerusalem and many are saved. There will be people saved, as I said, according to chapter 7 from every tongue and tribe and nation of the world. Many are being saved. Many will be martyred for their testimony. And in the end in this final world government there will be God's people there. And probably their friends and family are going to try to get them to just go along with what's happening. He says get out. Break your alliances. Don't get caught when the wrath falls.

I think this...it's hard to know precisely, specifically who He's talking to, but certainly we can say He is talking to any believers who are somehow caught up in this to separate themselves, keep yourselves pure from sin. Don't get caught up in materialism. Don't get caught up in loving luxury. Don't get seduced by the evil world system in any age, this one or the last one. And He certainly could be talking to those who aren't yet converted but are His by choice, His by election and calling them to saving faith. Wherever there is idolatry, wherever there is prostitution, wherever there is self-gratification, wherever there is pride, wherever there is complacency, wherever there's an anti-God attitude, wherever there's reliance on wealth, wherever there's indulgence and sinful pleasure, wherever there is violence there is Babylon in some form. God says get out, come out from among them and be ye...what?...separate for her sins are piled as high as heaven.

They're literally welded together in one huge mass that comes up, as it were, as far as to God. And I think that's a little play on the Tower of Babel. The Tower of Babel isn't going to reach as high as heaven, it didn't reach as high as heaven, but the sins of Babylon will. And God will remember those iniquities. But of His own, He says, Jeremiah 31:34, "I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sin no more."

So, a worldwide economic boom will come. It will flourish. It will consume the whole world, a one world global economy built on lust for luxury, materialism. Capitalism will reach its apex under Satan and Antichrist. It will be hammered by judgment from God but it will survive until finally God pronounces its doom. And that ultimate doom will come when Jesus returns to destroy what is left of the vestiges of an already destroyed world economy.

May I make a suggestion and you've got to work this out in your own life? Lay up your treasure in heaven, lay up your treasure in heaven. I don't know about you but I don't want to have any money in Antichrist bank. And I know you need to prepare for the future and I know it's important to save and I know you need something for retirement to live on and I know you need something to provide for your children and perhaps their education in the days ahead. And that's all well and good and I think the Lord wants you to be wise with that. But don't get caught up in the love of luxury and the love of material things. And don't get seduced by making more and more and more until you have way more than you can possibly use and you're going to find that the more you have, the less likely you are to let go of it. Don't get seduced. It's all coming down. This world hasn't seen anything like the final economic crash...the details of which you'll have to come next week to hear. Let's pray.

Father, this...this is so fascinating to know that You have charted carefully the course of human history. It's not just plunging willy-nilly, helter-skelter down some unmarked path. It's not just careening helplessly into a nebulous future, but history is Your story and it's moving inexorably exactly in the direction that You said it would. Father, we just pray that You would give us wisdom, give us sensitivity, make us faithful, don't let us get seduced by the love of things. Help us to know that it all burns, it all ends up, as it were, in the coffer's, Satan, should we be alive in that day. We thank You that You've promised us that we will be delivered from that, but many of Your people will be there. And, Lord, as we live in this day, help us not to fall into the seduction of temporal loves, temporal things but may we be passionate about Your kingdom and heavenly treasure. O Lord, how rich we are. You have shown us the past, You have continually shown us the present in Your Word and You've shown us the future and we are responsible to live in light of this great truth. Use it in our lives in Christ's name. Amen.

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