

The Breaking of Babylon, part 2

Revelation 18

(preached Pine Grove 8/13/17; Sunday AM)

Introduction

Two husbands were discussing their marriages...

Though Bill's marriage was mostly good, he admitted to his friend Bob that he and his wife sometime argued...

And the worst part was that she often won the arguments...

Bob looked at his friend and said, "Well, listen here. I have figured out how to get in the last word in every argument that I have with my wife."

Bill's ears perked up and said, "Well, please tell me.."

Bob continued, "Well, as our arguments draw to a close, I simply look at my wife and say, 'Yes, dear.'"

We all experience the sinful desire to have the final say at times...

We want to get in the last word in hopes of winning the argument in our favor...

Well, that is also the hope of Satan and his demons...

They desire to have the last say in the the world..

They desire to wrestle control of the world away from God, and make it their own..

And if we didn't have the book of Revelation, we could easily conclude that their plan is succeeding...

To anyone who takes a close look at the affair of the world, it is easy to assume that Satan's power and influence is growing as God's influence is shrinking...

Yet, for those who study the Bible and especially the book of Revelation, we know that the Lord will have the final word in human history...

Though Satan's work will grow and flourish in the final 7 years of world history, God will have the final say in the world...

And that final say will include the destruction of the evil world system that has been created by Satan and head up by the Antichrist and false prophet...

And for the past few chapters, we have been watching the downfall of this evil system...

The first part to fall was the global system of false religion in Rev 17....

Then we began to see how the global government and global economy began to fall last week in chapter 18 as we looked at the fall of Babylon...

Now to review from last week, the word Babylon is an important one in the Bible....

It was first mentioned in Genesis 11 with the tower of Babel which was an attempt by the people of the world to join together and build a tower to God in an act of disobedience...

And ever since the tower of Babel, the name Babel and later Babylon has stood for a way of life opposed to God...

The Babylonians were the first group of people to conquer Israel and carry them off into captivity in 586 BC...

And though the Babylonian kingdom eventually fell, the evil system behind it has endured...

That is why it should be no surprise in the end of time to see a revival of an evil system and a city called Babylon..

On one hand, Babylon refers to the one world religion that will exist in the final 7 years of world history...

Chapter 17 says that the harlot symbolizing the false religious systems of the end times will be know as
**BABYLON THE GREAT, MOTHER OF HARLOTS
AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH...**

Yet, the name Babylon is not just assigned to the evil system and worldwide false religion of the end...

It also represents a real city located 50 miles south of Baghdad Iraq...

And we looked at the recent work that has taken place in Babylon in the past 25 years under the leadership of Saddam Hussein...

And though there is no way to know if these are indications of us being at the end of time, it certainly could indicate that...

Now, clearly much more work and infrastructure would need to be built in Babylon for it to be a world capital of the Antichrist...

But it is interesting to see the city begin to rise from the ashes recently...

Whatever the case, whether near or far future, the city of Babylon will be rebuilt and it will be the seat of the Antichrist's one world government...

And the distribution hub for the Antichrist's one world economy...

But as soon as Babylon rises to power in the final 7 years of world history, she will fall much quicker as God begins to have the final say in world history...

As we started our look at Babylon's fall last week in first half of Revelation 18 where we saw that the judgment coming to Babylon is a well deserved judgment....

I. A Judgment Deserved (1-8)

And we also saw that it was also be a judgment that is mourned by the people who grown rich from Babylon's popularity....

In fact, let's look back at the people who will be lamenting the fall of Babylon...

Let's read verses 9 to 19 again to remind us of the reactions of the evil people connected to Babylon...

9 “And the kings of the earth, who committed acts of immorality and lived [l]sensuously with her, will weep and lament over her when they see the smoke of her burning, 10 standing at a distance because of the fear of her torment, saying, ‘Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! For in one hour your judgment has come.’

11 “And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, because no one buys their cargoes any more — 12 cargoes of gold and silver and precious [m]stones and pearls and fine linen and purple and silk and scarlet, and every kind of citron wood and every article of ivory and every article made from very costly wood and [n]bronze and iron and marble, 13 and cinnamon and [o]spice and incense and perfume and frankincense and wine and olive oil and fine flour and wheat and cattle and sheep, and cargoes of horses and chariots and [p]slaves and [q]human lives. 14 The fruit

[r]you long for has gone from you, and all things that were luxurious and splendid have passed away from you and men will no longer find them. 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, 16 saying, 'Woe, woe, the great city, she who was clothed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and [s]adorned with gold and precious [t]stones and pearls; 17 for in one hour such great wealth has been laid waste!' And every shipmaster and every [u]passenger and sailor, and as many as make their living by the sea, stood at a distance, 18 and were crying out as they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What city is like the great city?' 19 And they threw dust on their heads and were crying out, weeping and mourning, saying, 'Woe, woe, the great city, in which all who had ships at sea became rich by her [v]wealth, for in one hour she has been laid waste!'

II. A Judgment Lamented (9-19)

In verse 9, the kings of the earth will mourn at the fall of this evil city...

And why is that?

Good business often liens the pockets of the politicians, and that will clearly be the case in the end times..

Kings, presidents, world leaders will all be aligned with the Antichrist and they will grow rich as he centralizes the economies of the world...

You see, governments have always kept their noses out of business but all that has changed in the last century with more and more government regulations..

To the point that governments dictate the successes and failures of many businesses...

In the end times as world governments unite and world economies unite, the world's money will fill the bank accounts of the world's leaders....

But as the Lord begins to judge Babylon and smoke begins to rise over this wicked city, world leaders will weep and mourn..

The second group of mourners is found in verse 11...

The merchants of the world will also lament the fall of Babylon...

These are the businessmen of the world who have been made rich through the sales of their products in and out of Babylon to the entire world...

You can see their products listed in verses 11-13...

Gold, silver, precious stones and pearls, which are the precious metals and stones of jewelry will sell no more...

Then you see the linen, purple, silk and scarlet in verse 12 that refer to the luxurious clothing industry...

Then you see citron wood, ivory, marble, iron which all refer to the construction industry...

Then the food industry follows in verse 13..

Cinnamon, spice, wine, olive oil, flour, wheat, cattle, sheep...

Then the fall of the transportation industry, seen as horses and chariot..

Finally, we see the fall of the service industry seen as slaves and human lives at the end of verse 13...

So think about all the major businesses of the world...

Jewelry industry, clothing industry, construction industry, food industry, transportation industry, and the service industry...

If you thought the housing crash of 2006-2012 was bad, wait until all the businesses of the world crash with the fall of the one world economy...

No wonder these business men are mourning...

Then we saw the final group in despair over the fall of Babylon and this was the shipping industry in the middle of verse 17...

Though the kings profit and the merchants profit, so do the people who take the products to the world...

And that is the shipping industry...

So they mourn as well in verses 17-19...

Now, we mentioned last week how sad it is to see these world leaders, businessmen and sailors mourning over a city but not mourning over their sin...

Yet, that is the deceptiveness of sin...

It is so pleasing to your flesh that you cry when you can't do it anymore...

When you should be celebrating...

And so the judgment of Babylon will cause many to mourn, especially those who love their sin more than they love the Lord...

But as most of the world mourns the judgment of Babylon, all of heaven celebrates the judgment of Babylon...

III. A Judgment Celebrated (20)

Look at verse 20...

20 Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you [w]saints and apostles and prophets, because God has [x]pronounced judgment for you against her."

Though we have seen this before in the book of Revelation, we are reminded that those in heaven celebrates the fall of evil cities and evil people...

Now, the Scriptures are clear, the Lord takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but there is clear joy for the righteous...

Think about all the Christians over the years who have been killed for their faith in Christ..

Think of all the people who endured persecution of evil men....

The fall of the evil world system...

The fall of the false religions of the world..

The fall of a world government and economy will be a time to rejoice...

Though none of us will want to see evil people perish,
we do want righteousness to prevail...

If you are a true believer, you are ready for evil people
and plans to come to an end...

The church has suffered enough...

The name of the Lord has been blasphemed enough...

So heaven is told to break out in joy...

Now, who all is is heaven?

Well, you have the church that has been raptured out
before the tribulation...

You have thousands upon thousands of angels...

You have Christians who have been killed in the
tribulation...

You have 24 elders around the throne and 4 living
creatures near the throne....

So heaven rejoices when Babylon falls..

Listen to what one preacher said about the passage..

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.

I am ready for that kingdom..

I am ready for righteous leadership..

I am ready for evil to be dealt with and sin to end...

If there is ever a reason to rejoice, it is in that day...

So, we have that the fall and judgment of Babylon is deserved and lamented and a cause for joy...

There is but one more thing to see in Revelation 18 and that is...

IV. A Judgment Delivered (21-24)

Let's read verse 21..

21 Then [y]a strong angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "So will Babylon, the great city, be thrown down with violence, and will not be found any longer.

Millstones are large round stones that are used to roll over grain or corn to grind it up...

Millstones have been around for centuries and some are still used today...

For the people in John's day, they represented the heaviest of objects...

So John see a strong angel pick up a millstone and toss it into the sea...

Now we all know that a small rock hits the water and sinks straight to the bottom....

So the picture is of a large rock being flung into the sea created this violent picture in our minds of large splash and then a complete disappearance of it into the darkness of the sea..

This is how Babylon will fall...

A violent tumbling to the point that it completely disappears..

And the first result of Babylon's destruction will be silence...

Look at verse 22...

22 And the sound of harpists and musicians and flute-players and trumpeters will not be heard in you any longer; and no craftsman of any craft will be found in you any longer; and the sound of a mill will not be heard in you any longer;

These are the sounds of entertainment and industry, and they buzz all the time in the great cities of the world..

New York City is known as the city that never sleeps, but it is also the city that never hushes...

We lived 20 miles north of Los Angeles but even our little suburb never slept...

There were always sounds around us, mostly sirens and police helicopters...

Babylon will be a city full of sounds...

Sinful entertainment will fill the streets as people party while the world collapses around them...

It will be similar to the story of how the musicians played on the deck of the Titanic while it sank into the icy waters of the North Atlantic...

But Babylon will also be filled with the sounds of business, but all will go silent as the city is judged in an instant...

But the silence will also be joined by darkness...

Verse 23...

23 and the light of a lamp will not shine in you any longer; and the voice of the bridegroom and bride will not be heard in you any longer; for your merchants were the great men of the earth, because all the nations were deceived by your sorcery.

By this point in the tribulation period, the world will most likely be in darkness...

Asteroids crashing into the earth will have kicked up enough dust to crowd out the sun most likely...

But we also know that God will darken the sun in judgment as well...

But Babylon will have maintained its lights despite world darkness....

However, those city lights will be extinguished as God's destroys the city in a rush of judgment...

The cities of cities at the end of the world will become a ghost town in a matter of minutes...

Yet, the judgment will be delivered because it is deserved...

Let's look at verse 24...

24 And in her was found the blood of prophets and of [z]saints and of all who have been slain on the earth."

Just in case you begin to sympathize with the fall of Babylon, the Lord reminds us why the city should fall..

Simply because the city and the people in it had were the worst of sinners, even to the point that they killed the people of God and spilled their blood in the streets...

It is amazing to me that the loudest voices of our day call for tolerance and coexistence among the world's religions...

But guess what?

That call for tolerance and love extends to everyone but Christians...

The same will be true in the final years of the earth...

The people who worship false gods will live in peace, but the worshippers of the one true God will be killed in the streets..

So the judgment of Babylon will be well deserved and it will be immediately delivered...

Conclusion

So what does that mean for you today?

#1 - If you are consumed with riches, you will be eventually consumed by God.

The city of Babylon will be the picture of human greed..

As the Antichrist fills his bank accounts with the money of the world, Babylon will be a symbol of people's obsession with materialism...

I understand an unbeliever's obsession with riches...

They are trying to fill the hole in their lives with dollar bills instead of Christ...

But I never understand the person who claims to know Christ but is obsessed with material things...

Yet, there are professing Christians who have the biggest house, the best clothes, the shiniest cars...

Look, there is nothing sinful with wealth...

God gives wealth to some believers so they can bless others...

But so many believers only bless themselves with their wealth and their martialism consumes them...

More, more, more for me, me, me is what they think...

Yet, Jesus clearly spoke on this issue...

Don't lay up treasures on earth where they can be lost,
lay up treasures in heaven where they will endure
forever...

And he also told this shocking parable where a man of great wealth in Luke 12...

16 And He told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man was very productive. 17 And he began reasoning to himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?' 18 Then he said, 'This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 19 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." 20 But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night [if] your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?' 21 So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

Look, Babylon was the city built on great wealth, but it fell in an instant...

And there are many greedy people who die at the height of their wealth...

Make sure you aren't one of them...

If God has blessed you with wealth, get busy sharing it not storing it up beyond what you need...

A second thing to take to heart in Revelation 18 is this...

#2 - If are someone who always has to have the last word, you will not get the last word with God.

It amazes me the number of people who think they will talk their way into heaven...

The arrogance of someone to think that they can change God's mind with their words...

To think that the one way to the Father doesn't apply to them is the height of spiritual pride...

Yet, there are plenty of people in the world and maybe in this building today who think that they will get the last word with God...

They think they will present their good works before God and he will bend the rules for them to get into heaven...

They think that they will present the amount of money they gave to the church and God will smile and let them in...

They think that they will tell God about how bad life has been to them and God will sneak them in the back door...

Let me remind you this morning....

That you will not get the last word with God...

The city of Babylon thought it was invincible, but God got the last word..

And you may think that you are an exception to the gospel...

You may think that you don't have to repent and believe in Christ to be saved...

You may think that your good works will be enough for you or your money will be enough for you or your family's faith will be enough for you...

But it won't.

God's word is clear...

Heaven is only for those who have turned from their sins and put their complete faith in Jesus Christ...

God has spoken the way to heaven and He doesn't need your 2 cents on why you don't think that applies to you...

God have given the first word on salvation and he will get the last word on salvation, so you better make sure you know what His word says, obey it, and keep your mouth shut...

Babylon will be talking about how great it is right up until the moment it is destroyed....

But God will get the last word...

World history is headed to the destruction of evil systems and evil people...

Make sure you aren't part of them...

Turn to Christ today...

Open your mouth and confess him as the Son of God and the Lord of your life...

And obey His word and follow his commands...

And let your mouth be used to praise God and worship God and speak of his greatness...

For the true believer, we don't get to get the last word in...

We simply need to wait for God to speak it of us...

Let us pray.