

Revelation 18:1-24

A. The Death of Babylon (18:1-8)

1. Language of Lament used as a way to pronounce judgment; e.g. Isa. 16:7-11.
2. Dwelling place of unclean birds—when cities became depopulated there was no way to prevent animals from coming in. Prophets in OT used this as a form of judgment for many cities (Isa. 13:20-22; Jer. 50:13; 51:29, 37).
3. Dwelling place of demons (Isa. 13:21); spirits of the detestable are imprisoned there.
4. Babylon only relates to other people for her own personal gain.
5. Babylon is a wine cup used to intoxicate the nations and drive them insane inviting mourning over Babylon and the flight of God's people (Jer. 51:6, 45).
6. The judgment comes when Babylon's sins are piled up to heaven (18:5).
7. Delay of judgment until the measure of judgment is full over several generations (Gen. 15:16, Matt. 23:36; Luke 11:50).
8. Those who destroy Babylon will be repaying her double for her sins (18:6) as literal Babylon had once been God's agent in judging God's people double for their sins (Isa. 40:2)
9. Arrogance reflected in 18:7; opposite of humble obedience.

B. Die Hard: Crying Kings, Mourning Merchants (18:9-20)

1. Kings (Roman Client Kings) and Merchants who profited and participated in Babylon's adulterous relations will mourn over her demise—but will do so at a safe distance because they fear her torment (18:10); **the world's love is self-interested; not self sacrificing.**
2. "Woe! Woe!" is repeated by the merchants in Revelation 18:10, 16, 19.
3. Rome was the mightiest material empire.
 - a. According to Kraybill, *Imperial Cult and Commerce*:
"In less than one year the usurper Vitellius wasted the equivalent of more than 20 million dollars, mainly on extravagant food. 'Delicacies like peacocks' brains and nightingales' tongues.'"
 - b. Grain—400,000 lbs. of grain was shipped annually to the capital city. People in Rome got there "dole" of free grain while people in the provinces had to pay high prices and sometimes had none. Africa and Egypt were the largest producers.
 - c. Imperial Cults—if you did not belong you did not work.
 - d. Gold and Silver—Rome owned mines in Spain.
 - e. Precious stones—were imported mainly from India.
 - f. Citron Wood—imported from Morocco—tables made from Citron wood were one of the most expensive fashions.
 - g. Elephant tusks—ivory table legs; Syrian Elephant was almost driven to extinction.
 - h. Sea merchants would greatly mourn Babylon's demise.

C. Vengeance for the Saints (18:20-24)

1. God's command to Jeremiah (Jer. 51:63-64) connection to Rev. 18:2, c.f. Mark 9:42.
2. God's judgment of Jerusalem by Babylon left Jerusalem desolate; c.f. Rev. 18:22-23.

D. Contemporary Significance:

1. Coming out of Babylon: The call to holiness. Immersing oneself in God's Word rather than in the world's values.
2. Intergenerational effects of sin and its remedy:

If this is true (1 Sam. 15:2; 2 Sam. 21:1-6; Matt. 23:30-32) what should we consider in our own lives?

God's grace can enable us to transform the legacy of our past, but we must do so by confronting and overcoming it rather than ignoring it.

3. Stewardship—We should all strive to become more conscientious about using our resources according to what matters most to God's heart.
4. Dual Citizenship.