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For the Joy...
Pastor David Dykes

INTRODUCTION

Revelation 17 describes what will happen when religious Babylon falls. There is a lot of symbolism in chapter 17. Today, we're going to see in chapter 18 that it is much more literal; there are not as many symbols. We came to the conclusion that religious Babylon is an apostate religious system centered in Rome—the city of seven hills—involved in world politics. I talked to you about how I believe that future Roman Catholic type system is going to be a one-world church by that time. It will absorb all the other denominations left behind after Jesus raptures the church. It's the system I am talking about—not individual Roman Catholics today but it's hard to read chapter 17 without seeing what's going to happen.

II. THE FAILURE OF ECONOMIC BABYLON

What we see in chapter 18 is not the fall of religious Babylon; it is the failure of economic Babylon. "Babylon" is a godless world system led by the Antichrist.

There have been some financial scares in the past, such as October 24, 1929, when the New York Stock Exchange crashed and in one day lost 12.8% of its value. That led into the Great Depression. Many lost their jobs and even committed suicide because of that economic collapse. Most of you remember what happened on October 19, 1987 when in one day the Stock Market fell not 12.8% but 22.6% in one day. Because of all of this preprogrammed computer selling, it fell 22.6% and in 1 day the New York Stock Exchange lost five hundred and sixty billion dollars on paper! That's more than the gross national product of France. Just this past week when the banks announced they were going to increase short-term loan interest rates, what happened to the Stock Market? Whoosh! Almost one hundred points down the Dow Jones Industrial Average. That lets you know our economic system is rather fragile. And the world ain't seen nothin' yet! Because chapter 18 of Revelation describes a future time when the whole world system is going to fall apart economically. There are four sections to chapter 18. We're going to look at them one at a time.

Revelation 18:1-3. "After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven. He had great authority, and the earth was illuminated by his splendor. With a mighty voice he shouted: 'Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great! She has become a home for demons and a haunt for every evil spirit, a haunt for every unclean and detestable bird. For all the nations have drunk the maddening wine of her adulteries. The kings of the earth committed adultery with her, and the merchants of the earth grew rich from her excessive luxuries.'

A. The cause of destruction

The first thing we see is the cause of the destruction. Why is this future commerce system going to fall? Our world is definitely moving toward a unified economic system. If they could, those in high places would make the entire world a one monetary system one system of exchange, because, let's face it when you are trying to do business in another country, you have to consider the fluctuating exchange rates and there are people who keep talking about the "New World Order" where economically there will be one monetary system. This envisions a time when that

has already taken place under the leadership of the Antichrist. However, the time is going to come when it is going to absolutely fall apart. Why? There are three reasons.

1. It is demonic

Number one, this economic system is basically demonic. Look at verse 2 it says, "She" that is this economic system "has become a home for demons. A haunt for every evil spirit." Earlier in the book of Revelation, the time is going to come when the bottomless pit of Hell is going to be opened and hundreds of thousands of additional demons are going to pour out and be a part of earth. You think it is bad now. It's going to be much, much worse during that time. Verse 2 says, "every unclean and detestable bird." When you read the parables of Jesus he talks about how many times bird symbolizes the work of Satan. When Jesus talked about the parable of the sower who sowed the seed and how birds came down and took away the seed. When Jesus interpreted that parable, he said, "The birds that take away the seed are Satan who comes and robs the word from the hearts of those who hear it." Elsewhere he talks about birds nesting and stealing seed in other places so it could be that this is a reference to that, the tremendous demonic influence during this time.

2. It is intoxicating

Another reason it's going to is because of its intoxicating nature. In other words, it was such a wonderful system; everybody who bought into it said it was so great they became drunk on it. It says in verse 3, "All the nations have drunk the maddening wine of her adulteries." An inebriated man loses his sense of judgement. It's hard for a drunken man to say, "This is right and this is wrong." It is hard for him to make discriminating decisions. John is saying the whole world has become drunk on this one-world system during this time. It is demonic in nature. It's intoxicating in nature.

3. It is immoral

Number three he says, "it's immoral in nature" because, "the kings of the earth committed adultery with her and the merchants of the earth grew rich from her excessive luxuries." It means there was one class of people who became incredibly wealthy as a part of this economic system. Now don't think this economic system is a *fair* system. It never says it's fair—it just says it's effective. What's happening to the middle class in our world, especially in third world countries? In Mexico, Central America and South America, you find basically two classes of people: the very wealthy and those living in poverty. There are those who are saying this is going to happen in America and Europe eventually. This economic system will not create not several classes; it creates two classes. There are the incredibly rich and those living in poverty who are enslaved by it. So the system itself is immoral. The angel comes out and says, "It's going to fall! It's going to fall!" and this is why it's going to fall. This is the cause of this destruction.

Verse 4-8. "Then I heard another voice from heaven say: 'Come out of her, (meaning the system) my people, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues; for her sins are piled up to heaven, and God has remembered her crimes. Give back to her as she has given; pay her back double for what she has done. Mix her a

double portion from her own cup. Give her as much torture and grief as the glory and luxury she gave herself. In her heart she boasts, 'I sit as queen; I am not a widow, and I will never mourn. Therefore in one day her plagues will overtake her; death, mourning and famine. She will be consumed by fire, for mighty is the Lord God who judges her.'

Revelation 13 says the Antichrist and the false prophet are going to have a sign put on their heads and without it they won't be able to buy or sell. That could be one of these bar code systems people use in the future to scan and get your identification. They are going to have *absolute control* over the economic system. What we need to remember is that even during this time there are going to be those whom we call "tribulation saints" those who are faithful to the end and this is the second section of this.

B. The call for separation

Verses 4-8 talk about a call for separation. In verse 4 John says, "All of you faithful people you saints tribulation saints come out from among her and be different be separate!" That is good advice then and it is good advice today.

Look at 2 Corinthians 6:14. Let's see what the New Testament says about how we ought to be different than those around us who are unbelievers. It sounds exactly like what John is telling them in Revelation 18. "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers." I believe that means in one instance, if you are a Christian, you are not to marry a non-Christian. If you are married to a non-Christian, the Bible says there is something you can do about it. You make the most of it in most cases but if you are not married, and you are interested in marrying a person and that person is not a Christian, the Bible says you are not to be yoked together with that person.

I also think that means you need to be very careful about your business relationships. I have known a lot of heartaches and a lot of problems that have arisen because a Christian got in business with a non-Christian. They were yoked together by a contract and it led to all kinds of problems. It also means intimate friendships. Am I saying that you shouldn't have any friends who are non-Christians? No. In fact, I think every one of us ought to cultivate friendships with non-believers in order to build a bridge to tell them about Christ and do it not to put a notch in the handle of your spiritual revolver but do it because you care for them and Jesus cares for them. There are only a certain number of intimate friendships you will ever develop in your life where you yoke together in friendship. The Bible says a Christian should only do that with another Christian. What do righteousness and wickedness have in common or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? (that's another word for "the devil") What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? He keeps asking these questions. He says as a Christian you ought to live differently. You ought to be different and come out from among them and be separate to be different.

As a Christian, is there any difference between your lifestyle and the lifestyle of a nice, honest, lost man? There ought to be. I heard about a church one time that was looking for a pastor. It was a rather liberal church, into the social gospel. Somebody said, "Well what kind of pastor are you looking for?" They said, "Well we are looking for a pastor who is a good mixer with the world."

The Bible talks about Christians not being good mixers but being good separators. Being different is an admonition to us even today.

The word "Babylon" comes from the Old Testament. They tried to build a tower that would reach up to God. Archeologists believe it might have been up to 600 feet high, as tall as the Space Needle in Seattle. Finally, something does pile up from Babel to reach heaven, but it's not the building—it's their sins. "Your sins have piled up to heaven," We learn something here about the nature of God. The Bible says God will forgive your sins and remember them no more. God is a perfect forgiver when it comes to forgetting your sins you placed on the blood of Jesus. He has taken those sins and put them as far as the East is from the West. The Bible says he has put them behind his back: He remembers them no more. The Bible says God has taken your sins and buried them in the depths of the sea BUT the same God who is perfect at forgetting forgiven sin says he always remembers unforgiven sin. All the unforgiven sins of this world system pile up to heaven. That is why God says, "Come out from among her and be different." In verses 7-8, it says that day is going to come, although this system is boasting and saying, "We'll never fail! We'll never fail! This is the perfect economic system!" He says it's going to fall apart in one day!

Verse 9-19. "When the kings of the earth who committed adultery with her and shared her luxury see the smoke of her burning, they will weep and mourn over her. Terrified at her torment, they will stand far off and cry: 'Woe! Woe! O great city, O Babylon, city of power! In one hour your doom has come!' The merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her because no one buys their cargoes any more—cargoes of gold, silver, precious stones and pearls; fine linen, purple, silk and scarlet cloth, every sort of citron wood, and articles of every kind made of ivory, costly wood, bronze, iron and marble; cargoes of cinnamon and spice, of incense, myrrh and frankincense, of wine and olive oil, of fine flour and wheat; cattle and sheep; horses and carriages; and bodies and souls of men.'

They will say, 'The fruit you longed for is gone from you. All your riches and splendor have vanished, never to be recovered.' The merchants who sold these things and gained their wealth from her will stand far off, terrified at her torment. They will weep and mourn and cry out: 'Woe! Woe! O great city, dressed in fine linen, purple and scarlet, and glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls! In one hour such great wealth has been brought to ruin!

Every sea captain, and all who travel by ship, the sailors, and all who earn their living from the sea, will stand far off. When they see the smoke of her burning, they will exclaim, 'Was there ever a city like this great city?' They will throw dust on their heads, and with weeping and mourning cry out. 'Woe! Woe! O great city, where all who had ships on the sea became rich through her wealth! In one hour she has been brought to ruin!

C. The cry of mourning

The third section talks about the cry of mourning, because so many will be saddened by the collapse of this economic system. Basically, it is all the wealthy people, the merchants. It talks

about the merchants who sell these things and the mariners who shipped these goods. It is as true today even as it was during John's time, that most of the world's cargo is shipped by sea. That will probably always be true, because it is the cheapest way to carry large amounts and weights of cargo. Notice what happens. It says all these goods are going to be spoiled. Then in verses 11-13 it starts mentioning them. You may not be surprised by any of them but think about those last two in verse 13: "bodies and souls of men." That ought to tell you something about this economic system. It ought to tell you a body; even a soul is worthless to the Antichrist! The only thing the Antichrist and his economic system consider is the bottom-line. Jesus Christ said, "What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his soul? He said, "A soul is worth more than anything!" but the devil says, "No a soul and a body is worth about what gold and silver, pearls and fine linen are worth." That's the difference between the world system and Jesus' system.

Lenin said as he was teaching Communism, "We may have to kill two thirds of the world's population in order for Communism to be accepted worldwide but that is worth the price." He said, "It is worth killing two thirds of the world's population if the remaining one third will be Communists!" Doesn't that sound like this? Let me tell you what Jesus is like. Jesus said, "There were 100 sheep and one of them wandered off." God is like this. He leaves the 99 and goes searching for that one lost sheep, which represents one lost person. To Jesus, a soul is of infinite worth and value, but to this system it is worth absolutely nothing. It bothers me that we are moving closer to that every day. Our very nation has come to the point where we say an unborn baby is nothing but a mass of tissue. There's an economic consideration involved in that mass of tissue. It's going to cost me something so because it is just a piece of tissue, I'll get rid of it! I love what Mother Teresa said this week at that prayer breakfast where President and Mrs. Clinton were sitting 15 feet away from her. She said, "Any nation that practices the worst kind of violence which is abortion will suffer the worst kind of violence." She said when Mary was pregnant with the Lord and she came to visit with her cousin, Elizabeth, and Elizabeth said, "The baby within my womb leapt for joy." Mother Teresa said, "Isn't that wonderful! The first one to proclaim the coming of the Messiah was an unborn baby." Isn't it interesting the book of Revelation says the time is going to come when a soul and a body is put on the same value level as other commodities? We're heading there faster than I like to think.

D. The chorus of rejoicing

Number four. Finally, during all this these seven years of Tribulation, I've been waiting for it to turn positive. I've been waiting for this one word and here it is in verse 20: Rejoice!

Verse 20-24. "Rejoice over her, O heaven! Rejoice, saints and apostles and prophets! God has judged her for the way she treated you." Then a mighty angel picked up a boulder the size of a large millstone and threw it into the sea, and said: 'With such violence the great city of Babylon will be thrown down, never to be found again. The music of harpists and musicians, flute players, and trumpeters, will never be heard in you again. No workman of any trade will ever be found in you again. The sound of a millstone will never be heard in you again. The light of a lamp will never shine in you again. The voice of bridegroom and bride will never be heard in you again. Your merchants were the world's great men. By your magic spell all the nations were led

astray. In her was found the blood of prophets and of the saints, and of all who have been killed on the earth."

This final section talks about the chorus of rejoicing. Verses 9-19 were about the cry of mourning, but verses 20-24 speak of the chorus of rejoicing, because when the economic system fails, the merchants and the mariners are going to weep and mourn but those who are in heaven—and that includes us at this time and all the Tribulation saints—the Bible says we are going to rejoice because finally God is going to pour out his righteous judgement on these.

It is going to be a literal city, but we don't know which city it's going to be. Some say it will be Rome, some say it could be the ancient city of Babylon revived, which would be Baghdad in Iraq. Some say it could be New York City, because it is one of the leading economic centers of the world. It could be Tokyo. We simply do not know but all it says is there is this one city and suddenly it is going to disappear in its prominence the same way as when a 500 pound stone is thrown into the water and sinks out of sight. This city's prominence, its music, its beauty, its wealth is going to absolutely disappear. Then look what it says in verse 20 again: "We are to rejoice." It says in verse 20 that God has judged her for the way they treated the Tribulation saints those of us who were alive during any time of Christian persecution. Then it gives the reason in verse 24, "in her she was responsible for the blood of the prophets and the saints and all those who have been killed on the earth."

In verse 1 of chapter 19 there is really no break and I want to lead you into it, because it says, "After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting: 'Hallelujah!' 'Hallelujah!' appears 24 times in the Old Testament and 4 times in the New Testament. This is the first time it appears in the New Testament! And all four instances are right here! The word *hallelujah* means "praise the Lord." This is a time of rejoicing, because God's final plan is going to be put into motion. Revelation 19 is my very favorite chapter, because after all of this doom and gloom and judgement and plagues and trumpets and vials, during all of the time of Tribulation, FINALLY Jesus is going to come back in chapter 19 riding a white horse and at the Battle of Armageddon he is going to put an end to it! That's the reason why we can by faith rejoice and say, Hallelujah!

OUTLINE

NOTE: The first half of this outline is covered in "The Coming Meltdown of the World System, part 1":

I. THE FALL OF RELIGIOUS BABYLON (vs. 17:1-18)

A. "Babylon" comes from Babel (Genesis 10:11)

1. The woman = a city (vs. 18)
2. The seven heads = seven hills (vs. 9) and kingdoms (vs. 10)
3. The ten horns = ten nations (vs. 12) (See Daniel 2:36)
4. The water = many people (vs. 15)
5. The beast = Antichrist (vs. 8)

B. Religious Babylon is an apostate system centered in Rome (vs. 9); involved in world politics (vs. 2); possessing great wealth (vs. 4); persecuting Christians (vs. 6); which will be betrayed by antichrist (vs. 16).

II. THE FAILURE OF ECONOMIC BABYLON (vs. 18:1-24)

A. The cause of destruction (vs. 1-3)

1. Demonic
2. Intoxicating
3. Immoral

B. The call for separation (vs. 4-8)

C. The cry of mourning (vs. 9-19)

D. The chorus of rejoicing (vs. 20-24)