

The Bowls & Babylon: Part 4

Revelation 18:9-19:6

ANNOUNCE

Christmas Eve 6:30

Second Sunday 17117 Us 71 st Joe

BIBLE PASSAGE

[Rev 18:9-24 NKJV] 9 "The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning, 10 "standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.' 11 "And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore: 12 "merchandise of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, fine linen and purple, silk and scarlet, every kind of citron wood, every kind of object of ivory, every kind of object of most precious wood, bronze, iron, and marble; 13 "and cinnamon and incense, fragrant oil and frankincense, wine and oil, fine flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and bodies and souls of men. 14 "The fruit that your soul longed for has gone from you, and all the things which are rich and splendid have gone from you, and you shall find them no more at all. 15 "The merchants of these things, who became rich by her, will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, 16 "and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls! 17 'For in one hour such

great riches came to nothing.' Every shipmaster, all who travel by ship, sailors, and as many as trade on the sea, stood at a distance 18 "and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What is like this great city?' 19 "They threw dust on their heads and cried out, weeping and wailing, and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city, in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth! For in one hour she is made desolate.' 20 "Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!" 21 Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore. 22 "The sound of harpists, musicians, flutists, and trumpeters shall not be heard in you anymore. No craftsman of any craft shall be found in you anymore, and the sound of a millstone shall not be heard in you anymore. 23 "The light of a lamp shall not shine in you anymore, and the voice of bridegroom and bride shall not be heard in you anymore. For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived. 24 "And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth."

[Rev 19:1-6 NKJV] 1 After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power [belong] to the Lord our God! 2 "For true and righteous [are] His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants [shed] by her." 3 Again they said, "Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!" 4 And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, "Amen! Alleluia!" 5 Then a voice came from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!" 6 And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!"

INTRO

Chapter 18 is a funeral scene. We find the deceased, Babylon, and the mourners (Kings, merchants, and sailors). There's also a group that is singing and rejoicing (all of heaven). You know, if you have a group of people partying at your funeral, you must have been pretty bad!

- Babylon had lived it up, shaking its proverbial fist at God, building herself as independent, wallowing in her luxury and wealth, becoming drunk on the wine of immorality, greed, and pride, and contaminating every nation along with her as she draws them into her spiritual adultery and physical decadence.

APPLICATION

Last week, we looked at the attitude of Babylon as summarized in verse 7:

"...for she says in her heart, 'I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.'"

Her pride and arrogance are reflected in her self-glorification, self-indulgence, and self-reliance.

As a result of the frightful stance she decides to take against God, God is about to desolate her and bring her pride to nothing. The warning then goes out to God's people. It's the warning that has always echoed to God's people from the Egypt of old to the godless culture of our world today, ***"Get out of her... touch no unclean thing!"***

11:12



materialistic bent, we can certainly see connections.

Interesting Stats:

- 300,000 items in the average American home
- The average size of the American home has tripled in size in the past 50 years. Even with bigger houses, 1 out of ten Americans rent offsite storage
- 25% of people with two-car garages don't have room to park inside them
- There's 7.3 sq ft of self storage in America for every man, woman, and child - every American could stand under the self-storage space
- 3.1% of the world's children live in America and own 40% of the toys consumed globally
- The average American woman owns 30 outfits; in 1930 it was 9

- Americans spend more on jewelry, watches, and clothing than on higher education
- The average American throws out 60 lbs of clothing per year
- Merry Christmas. I'm not here to make anyone feel bad. But let's face it, we all have become accustomed to having plenty. While there's nothing wrong with having plenty and enjoying it, we should always keep in mind that it's not promised to us, and with so much, to whom much is given, much will be required.

1 The Assessment of Babylon

BIBLE PASSAGE

8 "Therefore her plagues will come in one day--death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong [is] the Lord God who judges her. 9 "The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning, 10 "standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.' 11 "And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore: 12 "merchandise of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, fine linen and purple, silk and scarlet, every kind of citron wood, every kind of object of ivory, every kind of object of most precious wood, bronze, iron, and marble; 13 "and cinnamon and incense, fragrant oil and frankincense, wine and oil, fine flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and bodies and souls of men. 14 "The fruit that your soul longed for has gone from you, and all the things which are rich and splendid have gone from you, and you shall find them no more at all.

BIBLE PASSAGE

15 "The merchants of these things, who became rich by her, will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, 16 "and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city that

was clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls! 17 'For in one hour such great riches came to nothing.' Every shipmaster, all who travel by ship, sailors, and as many as trade on the sea, stood at a distance 18 "and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What is like this great city?' 19 "They threw dust on their heads and cried out, weeping and wailing, and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city, in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth! For in one hour she is made desolate.' 20 "Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!"

APPLICATION

Once the slogan of Babylon might have been, "Life, Joy, and Plenty." Within one day, something cataclysmic turns Babylon into death, mourning, and famine.

- The final judgments of God seem to be characterized by fire. God initially judged the world by water but will judge the world by fire in the end. She will be utterly burned, with no sign left of her former glory. The smoke will be visible on the global scene to the point that those whose fortunes were built on Babylon's back will not go anywhere near her. Many believe that this could point to nuclear fallout and radiation.

Well, If this was a funeral, John gives us a peek at the mourners at the service. All those who benefited materially and financially from this commercial system are in shock at its sudden and final downfall. They weep, only because now they are poor.

- Isn't it tragic that the world will mourn over the loss of their material wealth and success, but they refuse to mourn over the loss of their souls? They will weep and sorrow over their distance from Babylon but don't shed a tear over their distance from God.
- This makes it clear what God they really worshipped all along.

Notice three groups have three assessments of Babylon:

1. **Kings of the earth**
2. **Merchants of the earth**
3. **Every Shipmaster**

Kings of the earth - fornication and luxury. The kings were figuratively in bed with Babylon, doing shameful things behind closed doors in order to benefit themselves. Now they won't go near her when she is under God's judgment.

Merchants of the earth - grew rich from buying and selling her merchandise. The Merchant is a specific word. Not a retailer or a tradesman. These are the CEO's and business heads (Gates, Bezos, Musk, etc.). Wherever Babylon is, she is the source of innumerable merchandise, natural resources, and technological resources. Notice the long list of her resources:

- *Jewelry (gold, pearls, precious stones)*
- *Opulent Clothing (Linen, purple, silk, scarlet)*
- *Trades materials (Wood, stone, bronze, iron, marble, ivory)*
- *Perfumes (Incense, fragrant oil, frankincense)*
- *Food (Wheat, flour, cattle, sheep)*
- *Weapons (horses and chariots)*
- *Humans (human trafficking, sex slaves, working slaves) - Human trafficking garners approximately 245 billion annually, including forced marriage, forced labor, child trafficking, and sex trafficking. the majority is from sexual exploitation.*

14 "The fruit that your soul longed for has gone from you, and all the things which are rich and splendid have gone from you, and you shall find them no more at all.

Fruit your soul longed for:

- **[Mat 6:21 NKJV] 21 "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**
- What do you want more than anything in the world? What would it be that you think, "If I just got that, everything would be good!"
- **[Pro 23:4-5 NKJV] 4 Do not overwork to be rich; Because of your own understanding, cease! 5 Will you set your eyes on that which is not? For [riches] certainly make themselves wings; They fly away like an eagle [toward] heaven.**

Shipmasters - transporters of goods. Babylon is a hub for overseas trade. Those in ships can look from a distance and see the smoke rising up from her destruction.

They all stand at a distance. They are all in unbelief at the instantaneous nature of the judgment. They are all weeping because of their own losses.

BIBLE PASSAGE

[Rev 3:17 NKJV] 17 "Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'--and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked--

2 The Annihilation of Babylon

BIBLE PASSAGE

21 Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore. **22** "The sound of harpists, musicians, flutists, and trumpeters shall not be heard in you anymore. No craftsman of any craft shall be found in you anymore, and the sound of a millstone shall not be heard in you anymore. **23** "The light of a lamp shall not shine in you anymore, and the voice of bridegroom and bride shall not be heard in you anymore. For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived. **24** "And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth."

APPLICATION

Millstone - a direct fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy against Babylon.

[Jer 51:60-64 NKJV] **60** So Jeremiah wrote in a book all the evil that would come upon Babylon, all these words that are written against Babylon. **61** And Jeremiah said to Seraiah, "When you arrive in Babylon and see it, and read all these words, **62** "then you shall say, 'O LORD, You have spoken against this place to cut it off, so that none shall remain in it, neither man nor beast, but it shall be desolate forever.' **63** "Now it shall be, when you have finished reading this book, [that] you shall tie a stone to it and throw it out into the Euphrates. **64** "Then you shall say, 'Thus Babylon shall sink and not rise from the catastrophe that I will bring upon her. And they shall be weary.' " Thus far [are] the words of Jeremiah.

Millstone - We also recognize this word from the teachings of Christ found in Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

Jesus said, "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

This world system has turned many away from the truth. It has killed the saints and made martyrs of all who claim the name of Jesus. Now God will have His justice. The Lesson: Don't mess with God's kids because one day, Dad is coming home, and he has a big stick with Him!

Verses 22-23 – We see that everything the world promised; joy, prosperity, happiness, and love, are all now completely gone.

Anymore - there will be nothing more to hear, see, or do once her destruction is complete.

- Joy disappears (Music)
- Success disappears (craftsman)
- Love disappears (Bridegroom and bride)
- Sorcery (Pharmacia) – **This term describes “sorcery, magic, . . . magic arts” and includes “the use of drugs of any kind for magical effect.” Isaiah lists her sorceries: enchantments, astrology, star-gazing, and monthly incantations (Isa. 47:12-13)**
 - **Often, behind worldly success is an underbelly of demonic, occultic practices of witchcraft, sorcery, and the like. We won't launch into Illuminati discussions, but don't let it shock you that behind some of the most opulent and luxurious successes in the world is unimaginable evil, calling upon demonic power and influence over the masses.**

Verse 24 – She was the source of death, and now she has died.

3 The Aftermath of Babylon

APPLICATION

While there is no more joy, life, music, or singing in Babylon, chapter 19 opens with joy, life, music, and singing in heaven! The beginning of chapter 19 flows directly out of Babylon's

judgment. While Earth is mourning, heaven is rejoicing (maybe like a football game). But while heaven is rejoicing over Babylon, the focus isn't Babylon; it's God, the Righteous Judge, the Savior, the Lamb, and the Lion!

A praise service erupts in the hallways of heaven, and oh to be there! Actually, I plan on it!

- Four times in this first half of the chapter we see the word "Alleluia!" In Hebrew, it comes from two words: Hallel (praise you) and Yah (the name of the LORD, the God of angel armies). You, praise the Living God!
- The first occurrence of the word Hallelujah in the OT corresponds with the context of its usage here: **"Sinners shall be consumed out of the earth, and the wicked shall be no more. Bless Jehovah, O my soul. Hallelujah!" (Ps. 104:35)**

BIBLE PASSAGE

[Rev 19:1-5 NKJV] 1 After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power [belong] to the Lord our God! 2 "For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her." 3 Again they said, "Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!" 4 And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, "Amen! Alleluia!" 5 Then a voice came from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!"

APPLICATION

Once again, as we've seen before, a chorus of praise and worship breaks out in heaven.

In Revelation, moments of praise have broken out toward God and the lamb on many occasions for many reasons:

- He has been worshipped for His **character**
- He has been worshipped for His **power**
- He has been worshipped for His **salvation**

- He has been worshipped for His **works**
- And now, He is worshipped for His righteous **judgment**

It might seem odd to rejoice in judgment, but when you think about it, judgment can have mourning and rejoicing. When a serial rapist or murderer finally comes to justice, there will be people who rightly rejoice. In the end, there won't be any question in anyone's mind as to whether or not God's judgment was fair and that everyone who received it fully deserved it.

We read the song that comes forth. I want to look at this heavenly scene and make some applications that we find from the praise in heaven.

(SLIDE) A. TRUE PRAISE IS A RESPONSE TO WHO GOD IS

One voice, great multitude - Many people are praising, but they are doing it with one voice.

“Alleluia (praise the Lord)! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God!

If you get even a glimpse of who God is, you can't help but respond in worship and amazement. We all know what that general sense of amazement feels like:

- **EXAMPLE – the first time I saw Big Ben in London or the Grand Canyon.**
- A person's worship will always be an indicator to me as to whether or not that person has their eyes opened to the reality of who God is.
- Worship doesn't stem from a great sound system, cool music, and good-looking people on the stage. You can respond emotionally to a performance, and music can help set the stage and attitude, but that's not the true test of worship. The true test is not how you respond to the music, but how you respond to Jesus, how you respond to the glory of God.

Music:

- We use music as a pathway to praise and worship in church. Why? Because it's a biblical thing to do. The scripture is filled with passages that speak of music and singing associated with the praise of God. Especially throughout the Psalms.
- Here at Grace, we have a musical style that you might or might not enjoy or be used to. That's understandable. I've been in churches where I don't like the music, but I always try to look beyond my music preferences and see Jesus!

- I've been in churches with a musical style I don't prefer, and the presence of God and the response of the people was amazing. I've been in churches with my favorite music sounding perfect and a room full of people who were as dead as a doornail, as though God was still dead.

WE have to be very careful not to always equate true worship just with good music. **Worship is an internal relational response of the heart, singing is merely an outward expression of the mouth.**

- Judging someone's worship by their music is like judging someone's personality because you don't like their clothes.

If you get your eyes focused on man or on a church, you will be disappointed and will never be satisfied.

- Yes, there are biblical standards you need to have for your church and leaders, but you also must realize that with every church comes the human factor. Keep your eyes constantly on men, and you will always find something to complain about.
- In fact to prove the church isn't perfect, listen to this list of bulletin bloopers:

Bertha Belch, a missionary from Africa, will be speaking tonight at Calvary Memorial Church in Racine. Come tonight and hear Bertha Belch all the way from Africa.

"Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Don't forget your husbands."

"The sermon this morning: 'Jesus Walks on the Water.' The sermon tonight: 'Searching for Jesus.'"

The peacemaking meeting scheduled for today has been canceled due to conflict.

Next Thursday there will be tryouts for the choir. They need all the help they can get.

Don't let worry kill you. Let the Church help.

Thursday night will be a potluck supper. Prayer and medication to follow.

For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.

A bean supper will be held on Tuesday evening in the church hall. Music will follow.

Weight Watchers will meet at 7 PM at the First Presbyterian Church. Please use large double door at the side entrance.

B. TRUE PRAISE IS A RESPONSE TO WHAT GOD HAS DONE

[Rev 19:2-3 NKJV] 2 "For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her." 3 Again they said, "Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!"

In these verses all heaven is responding to what God is doing. They recognize the work of the Lord and they praise Him in response, but how about in your own life?

- God does work in our lives. Sometimes it's hard to recognize God's blessings in our lives because our expectations are not aligned with His.
- You can even praise God for your trials and testings because he is shaping you and molding you so that you can be a blessing to someone else.
- **EXAMPLE: Reminds me of the man who went on a nature walk. A bear began to chase him, so he climbed a tree. As he was climbing, he slipped down into the bear's arms. He prayed, "Lord let this be a Christian bear." The bear looked at him and said, "Lord, thank you for this food."**
- Acts chapter 3 - Peter and John heal a lame man. I love his recorded response. He went to the temple, *"Walking, leaping, and praising God."*

In all seriousness, has God been faithful to you? Has God worked on your behalf? Has God worked in your life? When was the last time you praised Him and said thanks?

TRUE PRAISE IS A HUMBLE RESPONSE

[Rev 19:4 NKJV] 4 And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, "Amen! Alleluia!"

"You can't have God being praised with a heart that's puffed!"

Notice the position that is taken in worship: The elders fall down in God's presence. Kneeling is a sign of true humility.

- When we worship, we should be filled with the overwhelming reality of God's greatness. We should bow our hearts in surrender to God.
- Pride is a terrible thing. Pride was the original sin that got Satan kicked out of heaven.
- I can't describe to you how many times my pride has caused damage. My unwillingness to submit or surrender my heart and attitude and actions to God has

created all sorts of problems throughout my life.

- Just because I'm the pastor doesn't mean I'm without my pride when it comes to worship.
- Pride is one of the greatest hindrances to the worship of God because it is rooted in self-worship.
- The amount of grace that will find you when you show some humility is overwhelming.
- God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.

C. TRUE PRAISE RESPONDS WITH PASSION

[Rev 19:5-6 NKJV] 5 Then a voice came from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!" 6 And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!"

Notice two things. 1.) The command 2.) The response

The praise at this point is not an option! Yes, God wants our worship and praise to come from our hearts as a willing sacrifice, but make no mistake about it, we are commanded to praise the Lord.

- The times we don't feel like it, we must do it out of obedience.
- Praise Him for the cross! Praise Him for forgiveness! Praise Him for His love! Praise Him all you servants of the Lord.

The response:

- Praise is for all believers regardless of denomination, musical preference, social status, race or age. Heaven will be the largest non-denominational worship service ever.
- Their praise sounds like mighty thundering and roaring waters! In other words, it was loud... not because the sound system was pumped, but because they were so passionate about their praise that they could not contain their voices.
- It doesn't matter if you can sing or not; if you have a mouth and a voice that works, you can praise God with it.
- **EXAMPLE – hearing that one bad voice in the crowd. Instead of criticizing someone for using their voice to praise God, why don't you try using yours? If you don't like hearing the person behind you, just sing louder than them.**

- It wasn't until I understood the heart of worship that the terrible voice sounded beautiful... and it sounds beautiful to the Lord.

CONCLUSION

Heaven will be one joyful celebration: A celebration of God's mercy and salvation, and His victory and judgment over the perversity, wickedness, and pride of the godless world. But we have all the reason on earth and heaven to join in with the heavenly chorus now and praise the Lord!