

# Revelation 18

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[ 0 : 00 ] And her plagues will come in a single day, death and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire. For mighty is the Lord God who has judged her.

And the kings of the earth who committed sexual immorality and lived in luxury with her will weep and wail over her when they see the smoke of her burning. They will stand far off in fear of her torment and say, Alas, alas, you great city, you mighty city Babylon, for in a single hour your judgment has come.

And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn for her since no one buys her cargo anymore, cargo of gold, silver, jewels, pearls, fine linen, purple cloth, silver, scarlet cloth, all kinds of scented wood, all kinds of articles of ivory, all kinds of articles of costly wood, bronze, iron, and marble, cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, oil, fine flour, wheat, cattle, and sheep, horses and chariots, and slaves, that is, human souls.

The fruit for which your soul longed has gone from you, and all your delicacies and your splendors are lost to you, never to be found again. The merchants of these wares who gained wealth from her will stand far off in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning aloud.

Alas, alas, for the great city that was clothed in fine linen, in purple and scarlet, adorned with gold, with jewels and with pearls, for in a single hour all this wealth has been laid waste.

[ 1 : 41 ] And all shipmasters and seafaring men, sailors and all those who trade as on the sea, stood far off and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning.

What city was like the great city? And they threw dust on their heads as they wept and mourned, crying out, Alas, alas, for the great city, where all who had ships at sea grew rich by her wealth, for in a single hour she has been laid waste.

Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, for God has given judgment for you against her. Then a mighty 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 be no more.

And the sound of harpists and musicians, of flute players and trumpeters will be heard in you no more. And a craftsman of any craft will be found in you no more.

And the sound of the mill will be heard in you no more. And the light of a lamp will shine in you no more. And the voice of bridegroom and bride will be heard in you no more.

[ 2 : 56 ] For your merchants were the great ones of the earth, and all nations were deceived by your sorcery. And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who have been slain on earth.

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. You may be seated. Thank you, Sarah.

Well, as Dave said, my name is John Dennis, and I am one of the pastors here at Holy Trinity. Dave and I set out about 11 years ago together to plant some congregations and some churches in Chicago.

And this is the first congregation that we planted. And about a month ago, or about a year ago, we just had two congregations, two services.

About a month ago, we had three. And about last week, we had four services. And Lord willing, on Easter, God will allow us to have five services in different places.

[ 3 : 57 ] So our hope is that the gospel is actually growing. I just want to say thanks to David and Arthur for sharing the pulpit today. And say it's an honor for me to be able to preach here today.

Last week, Pastor Jay began with a question at the beginning of the sermon. And his question was, what do John and Jeremiah have in common?

And he went on to explain that he was not talking about the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah, but he was talking about Jeremiah Wright. And he went on to say this. The answer was that, this is what they had in common, that their preaching exposed and critiqued the existing powers of the day.

The Jeremiah Wright's preaching got him into hot water, and so did John's. Same question could be asked, also of Jeremiah the prophet as well.

What do John and the prophet Jeremiah have in common as well? And the answer is that both of their preaching, in the same way, got them into trouble.

[ 5 : 08 ] The prophet Jeremiah was thrown into stocks first, and that's not like financial stocks, for those of you who were in the Board of Trade before. I was thrown into stocks, and then thrown into a dungeon, and then eventually thrown into a well.

For what? For prophesying against the powers of that day, particularly in Judah. And his message was pretty simple.

His message was that Babylon would one day come and swallow up Jerusalem, and that God's people would be deported from Jerusalem into Babylon.

He was telling, in a sense, a tale of two cities, not of Paris and London under the French Revolution. He, the prophet Jeremiah, and John the apostle, are both telling the tale of two cities.

One earthly, and one heavenly, so to speak. One called throughout history, Jerusalem, what Augustine called the city of God, what the psalmist called the city of God, and Babylon.

[ 6 : 25 ] And the two in the book of Revelation represent two systems of service, two systems of human power, which are opposed to one another.

But in contrast, what Jeremiah says, the book of Revelation teaches the opposite of what the prophet Jeremiah came to say. It teaches that the city of man is the one that will be destroyed, and it's the city of God, the new Jerusalem that will triumph.

If you have a Bible, take a look for a minute at Revelation 14 and verse 8, and you'll see what Pastor Jay referenced last week.

The refrain that we hear in our passage, which is, fallen, fallen is Babylon the great. And then you hear a similar statement in chapter 16 and verse 19, where it says, the great city was split into three parts.

And the cities of the nations fell, and God remembered Babylon the great to make her drain the cup of the wine of the fury of his wrath. And then in chapter 17 and verse 5, you read about the prostitute.

[ 7 : 47 ] On her forehead was written a name of mystery Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes, and of earth's abominations. And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs, of the martyrs of Jesus.

What we saw last week is these two brides, these two women, and today what we have before us is not two women, but these two cities that I've already referenced, these two cities which are picked up again in Revelation chapter 20 and 21, the city of God.

What Revelation chapter 18 tells us is that this human urban complex of relationships, of power and of luxury and sexual immorality, that it will be destroyed.

Certainly. Certainly. That it will be destroyed. Suddenly. That it will be destroyed with great sadness and great completeness.

I'm going to ask you to bow your head with me and pray and then we're going to look closer at the text. Let's bow our heads in prayer. Father in heaven, we do bow before you and ask that you would speak to us through your word.

[ 9 : 10 ] We thank you that your word is living and active. We pray that even as the angel spoke in that day to John, that that angel's voice and your voice would be the one that's heard and not a human voice, that your word would be heard from the text as you speak.

And that you would give us a vision of these two cities and in particular a vision of the great destruction that is coming one day, the destruction of Babylon.

We pray this in Christ's name. Amen. The very first thing I want you to see is the certainty of the fall of Babylon. And if you have your Bible open, take a look at verses one to three, which describes this sort of human urban enterprise, which is opposed to Jesus and the certainty of its falling.

It says, after this, I saw another angel that's picking up from the angel imagery and symbolism from 17.1 and 17.15. And then chapter 18, verse 1.

It says, I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority. And the earth was made bright with his glory. Maybe you can picture it.

[ 10 : 32 ] It's almost as if the sun is now rising on the earth or searchlights are searching the earth. There's this incredible brightness as this angel appears and John sees as he's imprisoned on the island of Patmos off of Turkey.

He sees this great light and the angel calls out with a mighty voice, Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great. It hasn't happened yet, but from the angel's perspective, it's so certain that he could say it in the past tense.

He can say that Babylon will absolutely, certainly fall. Well, that word would come as some sense of comfort to the first readers of the day.

You can imagine what they would hear as they hear these words preached or as they listen to this message, knowing that perhaps, as some scholars think, that the word Babylon or the imagery of Babylon is actually a code word for Rome.

They hear that in some day their oppression will cease and the victory of the dark will be overcome.

[ 11 : 44 ] God will judge. Even as Jerusalem was swallowed up by Babylon in the past, Babylon, that system of opposition to the rule of Jesus, the symbol of that, will also be swallowed in judgment.

Here's how sure it is. Verse 2, She has become a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast.

I wish you could have heard Joseph Kim preach a couple weeks ago because when he started preaching, he got into it a little bit and then at some moment he became Michael Jackson doing Thriller or something.

I don't know exactly why. And he was speaking about God's judgment on, actually, it was a moment when Jesus was delivering the demons out of Legion and he just sort of started into that.

That's the scene here. It's a scene of sort of zombies and demons. It's, well, in sort of urban human terms, it's like driving through Englewood and seeing what used to be there.

[ 12 : 50 ] What isn't there anymore? Seeing that someone used to live there and now it's all empty lots. It's just filled with birds and rats and leaves and things like that. That's the vision of Babylon.

Empty, in a sense, but filled with these creatures, demons, unclean spirits, every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast.

And then he gives the reason for the certainty of the judgment. Verse 3, For all nations have drunk the wine of the passion of our sexual immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed immorality with her.

And the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her luxurious living. Why this certainty of judgment? It's this idea that all of those who had power, the ones that are mentioned here, the kings and the merchants, and then all of the nations as well, they've been using their own power for self-indulgence.

The word they use there is sexual immorality, but the imagery is of this drunkenness. Being drunken with sexual indulgence. Being drunken with their own power.

[ 14 : 03 ] Babylon is an image here, but it's also a tool. It's a tool for self-fulfillment. And the reason, part of the reason that John is prophesying this judgment or hearing the judgment from the angel is because that city must be destroyed.

Probably the most vivid way that I could describe this kind of complex of the human urban enterprise that is absolutely opposed to God.

Absolutely opposed to the rule of Jesus Christ. I'll tell you about a time when we were in Nairobi, Kenya and I was staying in a hotel on the edge of a slum and there's a little river going out behind our hotel room and for a moment there sounded like someone was in my bedroom in the shower or something.

There's this loud screaming, screaming, screaming, screaming. And I was totally disoriented, probably a little jet lagged, had no idea where the sound was coming from. I started trying to figure out where is this sound coming from and the pulsing of the screaming just kind of kept getting louder and louder as desperate.

It sounded sort of agonizing and so I got up. Maybe three minutes had passed before I was sort of fully awake and then I looked out my window and I could see across the alley into another rooftop and there's a woman just kind of lying crumpled on the steps in a different apartment building and then some man who was obviously not there to protect her who was just walking past her smoking cigarettes every once in a while saying something to her.

[ 15 : 48 ] The only thing I could think was I just lived through or heard this woman being sexually abused by this man.

What the angel is speaking against is not some sort of light-hearted sexuality. He's speaking against this kind of oppressive sexual indulgence in the city of Babylon, in the city of Chicago, in the cities of our world of Cape Town or Johannesburg where we don't normally see that happening but it's exposed to the sight of the angel.

what the New Testament teaches and what the Old Testament teach what Revelation teaches in this passage and in the book of Revelation is that there are these two systems or philosophies on power, money, luxury, and sexuality and that one of the systems says I'm going to use my money, power, luxury, sexuality for self-indulgence.

That's what he's calling the city of Babylon here and that there's another system which is a system of rule under the person of Christ which says I will submit my power, submit my money, submit my sexuality, submit even luxury to the rule of the person of Jesus Christ.

In a sense he's saying that the Christians are the ones who live for the city of God even while they are living in the city of man.

[ 17 : 37 ] There's one, the city of man says this in terms of power, it says you want to play, then you have to pay. And the other one says no, if you want to enter into this kingdom, you follow the one who gave up power, namely the Lord Jesus Christ.

So the first thing I just want to show you is that John says that this human urban enterprise, this kind of complex of self-serving and oppressive sexuality, power and wealth is going to be destroyed with certainty.

The second thing I want to show you is not just that the destruction is going to come with certainty, but that it's going to come suddenly. That it's going to happen in a day.

That the human urban enterprise, the symbol of it, which is opposed to Jesus, is going to come about suddenly. That's in verses 4 through 8. I don't mean to lighten the mood too much.

I just want to share a quick illustration before I move into that. There's a children's book by a guy named Colin McNaughton. If you have little kids, it's a great little book. It's called Suddenly.

[ 18 : 50 ] But it's about this little pig who has, his name is Preston, and he has absolutely no idea that there's this fleshly, toothy, aggressive wolf which is coming after him.

And what happens throughout the, it's just a humorous little kids book, but what keeps happening is Preston keeps having these narrow misses with this wolf who keeps running into the bully, who keeps getting run over by a car, and then eventually is flattened by this huge truck.

And he comes out of the hospital all like this. In a sense, the saints of God, which we're going to see in this passage, are like these sort of innocent ones who have actually been slaughtered, but who are unaware, in a sense, of the destruction that is coming on Babylon in the days to come.

That illustration sounded a lot better when I wrote it down than when I just said it, just so you know, okay? Verse 4, Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues,!

For her sins are heaped high as the universe. Part of what he's saying here is, what the voice of the angel is saying here, is that when God looks at the city, he doesn't see all the surface things that we see.

[ 20 : 19 ] You can go to the University of Chicago and look at the great faux gothic spires and say, that's strong? That has a sense of history to it?

You can see the gargoyles that are just sort of menacingly sitting there doing whatever gargoyles do when they're carved in stone. But that when God looks at the world, he sees beyond that, he sees pride.

intellectual pride. That he sees the human heart. That's why it says, for her sins are heaped as high as heaven. When God sees Chicago, he sees the rape, he sees the murder, he sees the anger, he sees the pride, he sees the gangbanger, he sees the white father of three who goes off into the massage parlors.

He sees it all. He sees it in Chicago and LA and New York and Paris and Dubai. He sees it everywhere and it's taller than skyscrapers to him. It's as heaped as high as the heavens.

That's what it says. That the sins are heaped as high as the heavens. Verse 5, and God has remembered her iniquities. In other words, verse 6 is now saying that payback is coming as she herself has paid back others and repay her double for her deeds and mix a double portion for her in the cup that she has mixed.

[ 21 : 56 ] As she has glorified herself and lived in luxury, so give her a like measure of torment and mourning. Since in her heart she says, I sit as a queen, I am no widow, and mourning I shall never see.

In other words, she's filled with pride. But then look, verse 8, for this reason her plague will come upon her in a single day, suddenly.

Death and mourning and famine, and she will be burned with fire. For mighty is the Lord God who has judged her. Take a look at chapter 18 and verse 10. Alas, you great city, for what?

For in a single hour your judgment has come, like a car or a bus, and you step across the street, and it's there.

In a moment, judgment, that's how judgment will come. Verse 17, for in a single hour all this wealth has been laid waste. Verse 19, for in a single hour she has been laid waste.

[ 22 : 58 ] According to John, the end will come suddenly. Probably all of us have been watching the Dow Jones average, watching it go up and mostly down, right?

And what's scary is not how far down it goes, not how fast it goes, but how far down it goes. It's like a roller coaster ride, and you get up in the morning and you feel like it's clank, clank, clank, clank, clank, only to come to the top, and you know that you're going down.

That's what John is saying here, speaking of this kind of suddenness of its falling. When the Old Testament prophets and Jesus himself speak of the day of the Lord, what do they say it's like?

What does he say it's like? The day of the Lord will come and it'll be like what? It'll be like a thief in the night. Nobody knows. Nobody expects it. You get an alarm system for that, right?

It'll be suddenly. One of the newspapers, one of the West Loop and South Loop newspapers is talking about this new kind of mugging that's going on right now where there's a big guy, a huge guy comes up and he does a little bear hug and the other person grabs a cell phone and grabs a wallet and grabs whatever you can get.

[ 24 : 22 ] You're not ready for that. You're not expecting that. The day of the Lord will come suddenly. That's why the second voice in verse 4 is the voice of warning saying, get out.

Look at verse 4. Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in our sins. If you know your house is going to be invaded, they probably get out or arm yourself or something.

If you know your house is going up in flames, there's only one thing to do and that is get out. Come out of it. What does that mean for us?

It means you should move to the suburbs of Chicago. Right? I mean, that happens to us, doesn't it? We say, I can't take it anymore.

I can't take that somebody was mugged at such and such a location. I cannot take the city anymore. That's what people say. And so then what do we do? We move. We get out, right?

[ 25 : 26 ] I don't think that's what John was saying here. At least I hope that's not what you're saying here. People live in the city. We live in the city for different reasons. What he's saying is the people who live in Babylon, who live in the city that they live in, but are dwelling in Babylon, are using the city for themselves.

That we're not there to serve the city. We're not living in the city of God and serving this city, the one that's around us. We're just using it. Why do people move to the city?

Because you make money in the city, right? You can fulfill whatever kind of sexual pleasure you want in the city, right? He's not talking about a geographic relocation here.

He's talking about a spiritual relocation. He's saying, when he says come out, when the angel says come out, he's not saying have a geographic, find a realtor, and start looking in the suburbs.

He's saying, find a realtor, find someone who will show you the way to the kingdom of God. Come out of the value system of Babylon. You can't serve two masters.

[ 26 : 44 ]    Serve one master. You remember what God told his people in Babylon while they were there? In Jeremiah chapter 29, I just want to show that to you.

If you have a Bible, turn to Jeremiah chapter 29, verses 4 through 7. Because this is what it looks like to come out of Babylon while staying in Babylon.

This is what it looks like to live for the city of God while you're still living geographically in the city of man.

Thus says the Lord of hosts, this is Jeremiah 29 verse 4. Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem, the prototypical city of God, to Babylon.

This is what you're supposed to do in Babylon. Build houses and live in them. Plant gardens and eat and eat their produce.

[ 27 : 52 ]    Take wives and have sons and daughters. Take wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage that they may bear sons and daughters and multiply there and do not decrease, but seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile and pray to the Lord on its behalf for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

What he says is that when Babylon swallows up Jerusalem that God's people actually serve Babylon in some very simple ways.

It sounds absolutely counterintuitive by gardening, by finding a wife and saying let's settle down and raise some children and let's instruct our children in the ways of God.

actually says by multiplying, by spreading out, right? By planting churches so to speak, spiritually speaking, planting churches saying let's infiltrate the city with the people of God.

Let's preach the gospel to the city, yes live in a sense against the city even while we remain in the city. What he wants, what God wants is worthy for the earthly city, is transformation so that it is more like the heavenly city.

[ 29 : 26 ]    That's the prayer Jesus taught his disciples to pray. Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

God wants some people who are willing to build a city in the city. The city of God within the city of man.

In a sense what Holy Trinity is, is a city within the city. It's a city of God's people within the city of man.

and in the end, the city of God wins. It's a city of praise and redemption and worship and self-sacrifice, a city of Christ, a church within the city of oppression and rape and murder and corruption.

we have a vision for the multiplication of God's people in Babylon. We have a vision for people to stay geographically long term, build houses, have children, to move out spiritually from Babylon into the city of heaven while remaining in the earthly city until he returns.

[ 30 : 53 ]    Downtown, we're getting all kinds of people moving to our downtown congregation from Michigan. Why? Because they're closing Michigan down right now, kind of. That's not very funny, but that's basically what's happening.

Detroit is like verses 1 to 3. It's like a haunt. All the manufacturing jobs are gone, so people are streaming in.

What is Pilgrim's Progress? It's a relocation allegory of someone relocating from the city of destruction, to the city of God, to the city of heaven.

What the angel is saying is relocate from the city of destruction to the city of God while you still can. So two things so far. Not only will the city of man fall certainly and fall suddenly, but verses 9 to 20, it will fall.

It will fall sadly. It will fall with great mourning. In one sense, this destruction of this human complex, of all these relationships that are opposed to the rule of Jesus Christ is extremely sad.

[ 32 : 01 ] Take a look at verse 9. And the kings of the earth who committed sexual immorality and lived in luxury will weep and wail. Why? Why? Because they're really compassionate guys.

Right? No, because all their investments are going down. This is like them watching Bear and Stearns. just two bucks now. Maybe \$10 a share.

This is the fall. This is a vision of the fall of the global economy and a reaction to it. Of all the investments, all earthly investments, no more.

That day is coming. Verse 10, they will stand far off in fear of torment and say, Alas, alas, you great city, you mighty city, Babylon, for in a single hour your judgment has come.

Verse 11, and merchants, not only the political rulers, that is the kings, but the financial brokers as well, the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn for her.

[ 33 : 01 ] Why? Again, not because they're compassionate guys, but they're broke. The city was the thing they used to get what they wanted. They weep because, verse 11, no one buys their cargo anymore.

The cargo of gold, silver, jewels, pearls, fine linen, purple cloth, silk, scarlet cloth, all kinds of scented wood, all kinds of articles of ivory, all kinds of articles of costly wood, bronze, iron, and marble, cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, oil, fine flour, wheat, cattle, sheep, and horses, and chariots, and then, and slaves, that is, human souls.

Slavery could be, these are people who are happy to trade physical people for money, not caring what happens to them.

Could be sex slavery like Nicholas Christophe talks about, writes about in the New York Times, it could be North American race-based slavery, but what they're sad about, is the prophets gone.

When Babylon is gone, the prophets gone. Verse 15, they weep and mourn, look at verse 17, the second half, and all the ship masters and seafaring men, sailors and all whose trade is on the sea, including this oppressive slave trade, they stood far off and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning, what city was like the great city?

[ 34 : 36 ] In other words, you can make a buck in the city, right? You can go into the ports and do whatever you want to in the ports in the city. These guys aren't great lovers of architecture and things like that.

They may have been, but it was to their own profit. Verse 19, and they threw dust on their heads and they wept and mourned crying out, alas, for the great city where all who had ships at sea grew rich by her wealth, for in a single hour she's been laid waste.

The kings mourn, the merchants mourn, the ship masters and the seafaring men mourn, sailors mourn. This is not a mourning lot. Like guys on Wall Street, they're not real emotional guys, are they?

Sailors, this is talking about sailors. Guys with tattoos on their arms, taking their bandanas off and wiping their eyes. They're weeping because they're getting hit in the pocketbook because the source of wealth has been stripped from them.



On that day, there's no more pay to play. There's no more scratching to the top of the city. There's no more luxury. There's no more cinnamon. There's no more Starbucks.

[ 35 : 48 ] There's no more business class. There's no more using the luxury of the city for self-promotion. There's no more city. When Babylon falls, there's no more city-based sexual indulgence.

There's no more strip clubs. There's no more phone sex. There's no more burlesque places. There's no more porn flicks. There's no more fulfilling my sexual desires by the city.

It's all gone. So grown men are weeping because he took my money away. He took these women away from me. He took my luxury away. They're weeping.

Something absolutely shocking that happens in our text. You hear all this weeping and crying and mourning the sailors and merchants and kings and then what? Someone's singing. All these people are crying.

Oh no! He's taking it away! And then somebody starts singing a little chorus over here. How great is my God! Someone starts singing hallelujah.

[ 36 : 53 ] Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Who is that singing? Verse 20. It's the saints and the apostles and the prophets that is the followers of Jesus Christ the New Testament apostolic leaders and the Old Testament prophetic leaders.

Verse 20. Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets for God has given you judgment against her. The message of the Bible is not that we need to be more good.

It's that we need to be rescued from the great day of judgment that is coming. But that a rescue is possible.

Revelation 5 9 and Revelation 7 9 that Jesus has purchased with his own blood a people for God's possession.

take a look at Revelation 5 9. I just want you to see that. There's a lot of wailing going on but there's a lot of singing going on in the city of heaven.

[ 38 : 12 ] When no one was found worthy to open the scroll they sang a new song the angels did and they said worthy are you to take the scroll and open its seals for you were slain and by your blood you purchased you ransomed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and you've made them a kingdom of a kingdom and priests to our God and they shall reign on the earth.

I have this kind of silly picture in my mind of you've seen those maybe Marx Brothers old silent movies and there's always that scene where one of the guys is standing in front of this house and one of the walls of the house falls over and he is totally oblivious and he just happens to be standing in the right spot and the window goes right over his head and it just sort of collapses all around him and he's sort of unscathed.

The people here who are singing, some of them were not unscathed in the city of Babylon, some of them were murdered, but in this scene when everyone else is wailing, singing, they're singing because they have been rescued.

The Old Testament looks forward and says, yeah, a day is coming, a day of judgment with certainty and suddenness and sadness, and Jesus Christ shows up and he says, judge me.

Let me be the one who is judged with absolute certainty and with suddenness. and with mourning. Let me be the one. So that I can take the Babylon in a sense out of the people of God so that they can enter.

[ 40 : 06 ] Revelation chapter 21 verse 22 talks about this washing and those who enter into the city gates are those who have washed their robes in what? In the blood of Jesus Christ.

In Hebrews it says that so Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify people through his own blood. The gospel teaches that there are two destinies, two cities, one composed of people who are sexually immoral, power abusers, luxury seekers who were and now who have been changed by faith in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and the other which has not been changed.

And they have two different reactions when they see Babylon go down. One says, yes, we win. They remember when the Babylonians crashed in upon Jerusalem.

They remember those days, but they say in the end, the people of God win. One reaction is mourning and the other reaction is rejoicing. that's next week, actually.

That's where they start singing. Chapter 19 verse 1 is next week. There's a statement in the city of God where Augustine talks about holding on to the things that you have sort of loosely in this world when the stock market crashes in a sense.

[ 41 : 42 ] It doesn't affect you that much. When the stock market goes up, it doesn't really affect you that much. Most of your investments are not in this world. Most of the investments are in the next world, in a sense.

Sometimes what happens is sometimes preachers, sometimes maybe especially conservative preachers, like to be able to say, see, that happened and that was God's judgment.

Whatever it is. some earthquake, some tsunami, some terrorist attack. We know that was God's judgment. Augustine says this, he says you can't really tell what's God's judgment yet.

He says that in the mingled web of human affairs, God's judgment is present though it cannot be discerned. Yeah, God is judging all the time, but you can't tell exactly what is his judgment.

And then he goes on and he says, in this present time, we learn to bear with equanimity the ills to which even good men are subject, and to hold cheaply the blessings which even the wicked enjoy.

[ 42 : 52 ] In other words, we're kind of waiting until the end when God sorts it all out. And then he goes on and he says, but when we shall have come to that judgment, the date of which is peculiarly called the day of judgment, and sometimes the day of the Lord, we shall recognize the justice of all God's judgments.

What he's saying is, on the day when Babylon actually falls, everyone will understand. Those who have not repented will realize this is God's judgment, and those who have repented will say, this is God's salvation.

He's saving me out of this judgment. the angel saying that the fall of Babylon is certain that it's sudden, that it's sad, but he's also saying that it is complete.

Take a look at the finality of the fall in verses 21 through 24. Then a mighty angel took up a stone before the angels were just speaking, now they're throwing a stone like a great millstone, that's huge circular stone used to mill grain.

The point is that it's enormous, like an SUV sized stone. And he threw it into the sea, that is into this place of chaos, this place of humanity saying, so will Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence and will be found.

[ 44 : 19 ] And here are the two key words I want you to see, no more. Total, complete, utter destruction. Yet sudden, yet certain, yet sad, but it's final.

God's judgment is irreversible when it comes. Like a house that burns down, you can't just pick up the ashes and the pieces and try to build something else. Or like, and this is what, or like a soul that is, has been damned, at some point, it's final.

There's no more repenting. That's this day that he sees. There's a day that's final. Thank you musicians for playing.

Thank you Stephen and Ben and Jerome and Claire. There's a day when music is gone from the city of man. Look at verse 22. And the sound of harpists and musicians, of flute players and trumpeters, will be heard no more.

That is, in this earthly city, the city of Babylon. There's a day when the music dies. There's no more House of Blues. Can't buy a ticket to CSO or the Lyric Opera.

[ 45 : 32 ] There's a day when that's all done. Can't sit in Mandel Hall anymore. It's over. There's no more music. There's no more craftsmanship. Verse 22. And a craftsman of any craft will be found in you no more.

A day is coming, says John, when the architect won't practice anymore, when the economist is done writing, when the biologist is done doing research because there's no more bios.

And the sociologist is done doing sociology because there's no society. It's all over. Right now, there's 30, some architects and engineers have told me about 30% of architects and engineers are unemployed.

Unbelievable. this day is 100%. It's not going to happen anymore. You can't design any more buildings. Verse 22.

And the sound of the mill will be heard in you no more. Music, craftsmanship. Chicago's called a post-industrial city. When the steel mines went out, a lot of jobs went out for a lot of people.

[ 46 : 48 ] This is a post-industrial city, Babylon is. On this day, it's post-industrial. It's post-music. It's post-craftsman. It's post-light.

It's post-marriage. It's post-mercantile. Verse 23. And the light of a lamp will shine in you and no more. You're driving down Lakeshore Drive and it feels like you're in some weird Will Smith movie or something because the lights aren't on.

It's all becoming dark in Babylon. And the voice of the bridegroom and the bride will be heard in you no more. Nobody's getting married. No rice is being thrown or bubbles are being blown.

For your merchants were great ones on the earth and all the nations were deceived by your sorcery. And in her was found the blood of the prophets and of saints and all who have been slain on the earth.

That is all of the guilt for those who killed Jesus Christ, who killed the apostles. That's all there. the judgment of God is absolutely certain.

[ 47 : 56 ] It's coming. And one day it will be absolutely sudden. And people will be unalterably sad and mourn.

and it will be complete and final. Wow, so what do we do?

Right? What do you do about that? What difference does it make in our lives that God will destroy the human city? what difference does it make to a scholar or high school student or mother or an architect or teacher?

I just want to close with a few implications. One is what the gospel teaches, what the Bible teaches, I already said once, is that we need to be rescued. You cannot save yourself from the coming destruction.

Someone else has to save you. Jesus appears, John says, behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. In the city, guess what's in the city? In the new city, the heavenly city, the new Jerusalem.

[ 49 : 14 ] Revelation 22, 22, and I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb. He's there. He's the one that rescues.

We need to be rescued. Another implication, additionally, rejoice if you're a saint. Yeah, it's a day of terrible destruction, but it's actually a day for us to sing songs.

It's terrible to know the day of destruction is coming, but it's providential and revelatory that a day of salvation is coming and the means of salvation is coming as well.

next, beside us needing to be rescued and this idea of rejoicing, I'm going to say relocate.

If you're living in the city for yourself, then repent. I should. We need to. Why am I in the city anyways? Why am I near the University of Chicago?

[ 50 : 26 ] Why am I studying? Am I studying for the city of man or the city of God? Am I doing it to make money? Is that my primary aim? That's what he's saying. Those who are part of the city of Babylon, their chief aim is wealth and luxury and those things.

Why am I in the city? Put differently, while you're here, help us build an authentic city within the city.

A city of God, which is one that reprioritizes how power is used and gives it up. How sex is used and how luxury is used.

Let's pray that God would help us to live in the city of Chicago for the city of God, knowing that the city of Babylon will be destroyed.

May he help us to do that. I really want to end on rejoicing on chapter 19 in verse 1, because he has saved us.

[ 51 : 47 ] We're going to sing in a minute all I once held dear, talking about loosening those things that we want to hang on to but are also going to be destroyed, and the reprioritization of our lives to say, no, there's something else that is higher and more dear than that.

I'm going to pray and then we'll stand and sing. Father in heaven, thank you that you told us, that you showed us a vision of the coming destruction of Babylon.

And I pray for our church that you would help us in that vision that you gave to Jeremiah to be people who do the very basic things. Yes, of preaching, but also of loving and planting and marrying and raising children.

living for the city of God, even while we dwell in the city of man. Pray this in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Ž