

Read: Revelation 18:1-20

‘Then I heard another voice from heaven say: “Come out of her, my people, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues.” **Revelation 18:4**

What are the things that you feel you couldn't live without? For me it has got to be coffee (I'm a bit of a coffee snob) and, I'm sad to say, my phone! Before you judge me, absolutely I can't live without my family either, but I'm thinking more 'things' than 'people'!

The world we live in provides more to distract, busy-us-up and absorb our time, focus and energy than at any point in history. I'm not saying that all of this is intentionally bad for us, in fact many things promise to be good for us and are, in the marketer's eye, something we cannot exist without. Take my phone, for example – in theory it helps me to connect more easily, be more available, be more organised, but at the touch of a button, with the help of Instagram, I can see both how amazing others' lives are and perhaps how much mine is lacking. That's before I mention how much time can vanish when I give it my attention!

How does this relate to Revelation 18? Well, we see the fall of Babylon, a picture of the world at its worst; full of evil and people profiting from the excesses that it offers, as well as hear how people will lament it's fall. Yet in the midst of destruction and chaos, what is revealed is the glorious reality of what Jesus' death and resurrection means for us, His followers. The writer informs us of a voice that speaks out of heaven that commands God's people to leave Babylon so that they would neither share in her sins nor destruction.

The fantastic news is that because of the cross and empty tomb we can share in Jesus' victory over death, sin and evil, walking in a way that doesn't conform to patterns of this world (Romans 12:2). Do I need to drink less coffee and bin my phone? If they stop me becoming more like Jesus and cause me to fall in love with Babylon then I really need to address their place in my life.

Let us pray: *Lord Jesus, thank You that we can live in the victory of Your death and resurrection. Help us to identify the things that stop us from living in the fullness of life that knowing You brings, and to leave them behind to walk in Your freedom. Amen.*

Ben Green, Diocesan Youth Adviser.