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Standing Firm: Lessons From Babylon's Fall- Part 1

Revelation 18:1-24

I. Introduction

1. As we have considered previously, Babylon represents the world system that has (since the post flood time of Nimrod) and is functioning under its leader, the dragon. I want to note, again, that many interpreters suggest that the city, Babylon the great, is a composite of political Rome and religious Babylon. What's more, some interpreters view the city as being spiritual while others view it as a literal city.
2. In chapter 17, we read of a great civil war when the whore OR apostate church, having done her part in creating a universal church worshipping the beast, was destroyed by the kings. Chapter 18, occurring well after the events of chapter 17, speaks of the destruction of economic & political Babylon with those holding to a more literal hermeneutic saying it also includes the literal destruction of a literal city named Babylon.
3. Those holding to a literal destruction of a literal city that John refers to as "Babylon the great" hold to an ever-growing wide ranging views as to whether this city is New York, Jerusalem, Mecca, Rome, a rebuilt Babylon, or some other city. While acknowledging that there are cases to be made for some of these alternate views, I think the most plain reading of Scripture points us to a literally rebuilt Babylon.
4. Regardless of your view of whether spiritual or literal Babylon AND regardless of which city is in view, I hope that we can agree on the grand narrative John is presenting here. God is in charge, His judgment is sure and righteous, and that Satan's days (including those of the world system beholden to him) are numbered.

II. Revelation 18:1-3: The Verdict is Destruction

1. All the way back in Revelation 14 (8) we were given an announcement of the pending destruction of Babylon representing the religious, political, and economic world system. *In the opening verses of Revelation 17 and now here in chapter 18 we read of the actual destruction this same Babylon.* The first destruction (chapter 17) is of the whore (representing the religious part of the system) with the second destruction (chapter 18) being the scarlet beast (representing the political & economic element of this same system).
2. Destruction from the various judgments had touched every corner of the world. *Water and food supplies had been compromised as had been transportation, electricity, and many other life essentials.* In the midst of the difficult times, Babylon had shown as a beacon of hope for those at war with God. *She had been spared the some of the most extensive destruction that every other city (outside of Jerusalem) had experienced in God's judgments raining down.*
3. Yet, we read in **Revelation 16:10** that Babylon had not been spared of all judgment to this point as she too had become full of darkness using lamps (v23) to light her path. *It is in this darkness that an angel of God illuminates the earth with his presence in announcing Babylon's complete and utter destruction.* While this darkness is a literal absence of light, one can't miss the contrast of the angel illuminating the earth with glory being in such great contrast with the summary of Babylon's evil here in v 3, in playing out its spiritual adultery with the apostate church leading to worship of the beast through his political and economic system.
4. Turn with me to Isaiah 13:6-13. As we read this, please note the similarity of the language found in Revelation 18:2-3 along with the themes of idolatry and judgment found throughout chapter 18.

⁶Wail, for the day of the LORD *is* at hand! It will come as destruction from the Almighty. ⁷Therefore all hands will be limp, Every man's heart will melt, ⁸And they will be afraid. Pangs and sorrows will take

hold of *them*; They will be in pain as a woman in childbirth; They will be amazed at one another; Their faces *will be like* flames. ⁹Behold, the day of the LORD comes, Cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, To lay the land desolate; And He will destroy its sinners from it. ¹⁰For the stars of heaven and their constellations Will not give their light; The sun will be darkened in its going forth, And the moon will not cause its light to shine. ¹¹“I will punish the world for *its* evil, And the wicked for their iniquity; I will halt the arrogance of the proud, And will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. ¹²I will make a mortal more rare than fine gold, A man more than the golden wedge of Ophir. ¹³Therefore I will shake the heavens, And the earth will move out of her place, In the wrath of the LORD of hosts And in the day of His fierce anger.

- Isaiah 13:6–13

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5. Now look a little further in Isaiah 13, to verses 19-22:

¹⁹ And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, The beauty of the Chaldeans' pride, Will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. ²⁰It will never be inhabited, Nor will it be settled from generation to generation; Nor will the Arabian pitch tents there, Nor will the shepherds make their sheepfolds there. ²¹But wild beasts of the desert will lie there, And their houses will be full of owls; Ostriches will dwell there, And wild goats will caper there. ²²The hyenas will howl in their citadels, And jackals in their pleasant palaces. Her time *is* near to come, And her days will not be prolonged.” - Isaiah 13:19–22

A. In these verses, we see a complete annihilation of Babylon...[something that until chapter 18 of Revelation has never been fulfilled](#). We will come back to this later in chapter 18, but for now I wanted you to see the great similarities of language that no people would populate Babylon one day and for all time.

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III. Revelation 18:4-8: Called to Holiness

1. First up is v4 with God calling His children out of Babylon. [Some have suggested, and it might well be the case, that v4 gives us a time stamp of the middle of the tribulation with the mark of the](#)

beast being employed to pressure the world to idolatrous worship of the beast and his master, the dragon. Regardless, there are three great lessons God is bringing into view today, including:

- A. **He is a Good, Good, Father.** God loves and desires to protect His children;
 - B. **Run FROM Temptation.** (1 Cor 10:13). The ways of the beast are great temptations to all people, even those professing God;
 - C. **No Compromise!** That is, follower of God are to have NO part in evil, but to instead find our identity and purpose in the things of God;
2. It's this last point, **No Compromise**, that we will close with today as we journey through Chapter 18. *As to why...well, because compromise is also a very big issue in our day.* While the pressures to conform in the days of the tribulation will be beyond our comprehension, they are enormous in our day as well. *As has been since the time of the Babylonian system founded by Nimrod, false doctrine, sensuality and sexual immorality, and idolatrous worship of self, materialism, wealth, and power continue to be enemies on-ramp to encourage our compromise.*
- A. Today, many of us are increasingly experiencing pressure from our families, in the workplace, at school, and through other social, government, and commercial institutions to bend the knee in acquiescence to *OR even agreeing and celebrating with philosophies, behaviors, and life choices warring against God and His word.*
 - B. I can't help but note the Apostle John's end-times words about the "Compromising Church" of Pergamos in **Revelation 2:12-17**. *In this letter, Jesus spoke of their holding to false doctrines along with having stumbling blocks via their idolatrous worship and sexual immorality.* What's more, the Apostle Paul spoke of the "Compromising Church" in his second letter to the church in Corinth as we read in 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1...turn there with me.

¹⁴ Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? ¹⁵ And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? ¹⁶ And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: *“I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.”* ¹⁷ Therefore *“Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.”* ¹⁸ *“I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty.”* **7** Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. - 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1

C. These words echo loudly in our culture today and beg the question of what will it take for us to believe in and respond to the righteous and judging God of the Bible? **For those thinking “this would never be me”, I give you a word of great caution...**many before have said these same words and its apparent that many after will as well.

D. Christian, God has given us a high calling to be holy as He is holy (1 Pe 1:16; Ephesians 1:4)...that is, we are set aside by God for God and His good purposes (Psalm 4:3; Ephesians 2:10). Further, as we recently studied in the book of Colossians, He has told us that our practice of holiness comes as part of the knowledge we gain from a maturing relationship with Christ Jesus, our Messiah. What’s more, in the clear light of what Paul says in **2 Corinthians 7:1** of our holiness being connected to the fear of the Lord, **Proverbs 1** reminds us that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.

So God, again and again and again, calls us, no matter how enticing promises and things appear, to roundly reject the compromises offered by the world and the enemy. **It is as though**

the words spoken in Revelation 18:4, “Come out of her (the worldly system spawned by Babylon)”, are personal for each one of us.

Revelation 18:1-24 – Part 1

Standing Firm: Lessons From Babylon’s Fall

Discussion Prompts

Don’t be shy or embarrassed, this is a safe place to talk, learn, and grow. All of us should walk with an attitude of grace and Godly love in encouraging one another to contribute to our shared growth in the Lord.

For more discussion questions helping your faith to grow, please download the sermon documents typically posted the day after each sermon on the watch tab of our App or website.

1. Given the amount disagreement about whether the Babylon in chapter 18 is an actual city and/or represents a system and/or is actually New York, Mecca, Rome, Babylon or some other city, what can we hope to gain from studying this chapter? How can it inform our faith? Finally, what can we share about chapter 18 that may strengthen the faith of believers?
2. List the 5 greatest compromises evident in the church today. As a practical matter, what can we do help ourselves and others see and reject each of these compromises?
3. Create a working definition of holiness AND fear of the Lord that a 3rd grader can understand.

Revelation 18:1-24 – Part 1

Standing Firm: Lessons From Babylon's Fall

I. Introduction

- The grand narrative of this chapter is “God is in charge”...not mankind, not the beast nor the dragon.

I. Revelation 18:1-3: The Verdict is Destruction

- This Babylon, representing the political and economic system toward the end of the tribulation period, will not be spared.

Additional Scripture References: Re 16:10; Is 13:6-13, 19-22

II. Revelation 18:4-8: Called to Holiness

- No Compromise
- What does it take for someone to believe...even the horrors of God's promises fulfilled in the end times is not enough for many to surrender their lives to Him.

Additional Scripture References: 1 Co 10:13; Re 2:12-17; 2 Co 6:14-7:1; 1 Pe 1:16; Eph 1:4; Ps 4:3; Eph 2:10; Prov 1

5-Day Devotional

Revelation 18:1-24

Standing Firm: Lessons From Babylon's Fall – Part 1

Day 1: The Call to Come Out

Reading: 2 Cor 6:14-7:1

Devotional: God's call to "come out from among them and be separate" isn't about isolation, but consecration. Like the saints warned in Revelation 18:4, we're called to reject the seductive systems that war against God's holiness. This separation begins in our hearts—examining what influences shape our thinking, what entertainment feeds our souls, and what compromises we've justified. God's love compels this call; He knows that partnership with darkness brings destruction.

Today, ask yourself: What worldly systems have I entangled myself with? Where am I compromising truth for comfort? The Good Father beckons you to freedom, not condemnation. His way leads to life abundant, not the hollow promises of Babylon's glitter.

Day 2: The Fear of the Lord

Reading: Pro 1:1-7, Ps 4:3

Devotional: The fear of the Lord is not terror, but reverent awe that transforms how we live. When we truly grasp God's holiness and justice—as Revelation 18 reveals in Babylon's judgment—we understand that our choices matter eternally. This healthy fear becomes the foundation of wisdom, guiding us away from compromise and toward consecration. God has set you apart for His purposes, marking you as holy ground.

This isn't earned through performance but received through Christ's righteousness. Yet our response matters. Will we honor this calling or treat it casually? Let reverence for God shape your decisions today. When temptation whispers, remember: He is both loving Father and righteous Judge, worthy of our complete devotion.

Day 3: Holiness in Practice

Reading: 1 Pet 1:13-25, Eph 1:3-14

Devotional: "Be holy, for I am holy" sounds impossible until we remember it's God's work in us, not our striving for Him. Holiness isn't about perfection but direction—consistently choosing God's ways over the world's patterns. In Revelation 18, Babylon falls because she chose pride, sensuality, and idolatry. We face similar temptations: materialism masquerading as success, sexual immorality dressed as freedom, self-worship disguised as empowerment. But you've been chosen, redeemed by Christ's precious blood, and called to reflect His character.

This happens through daily surrender—reading His Word, rejecting compromise, and depending on His Spirit. Holiness isn't joyless restriction; it's liberation into your true identity. What specific area is God calling you to consecrate today?

Day 4: Running From Temptation

Reading: 1 Cor 10:1-13, Jam 4:1-10

Devotional: God always provides an escape route from temptation, but we must choose to take it. The Babylonian system thrives on gradual compromise—small concessions that accumulate into captivity. Perhaps it's entertainment that normalizes immorality, workplace pressures to hide your faith, or social media that feeds comparison and pride. God's warning to flee Babylon applies now: don't negotiate with temptation, run from it.

This requires brutal honesty about our vulnerabilities and intentional boundaries to protect our hearts. Remember, God is faithful; He won't allow testing beyond what you can bear. But faithfulness requires partnership—you must actively resist the devil and draw near to God. What temptations are you trying to manage instead of fleeing? Today, choose the escape route God provides.

Day 5: No Compromise

Reading: Rev 2:12-17, Dan 3:1-30

Devotional: The church at Pergamos compromised truth for cultural acceptance, embracing false doctrine and immorality. Today's pressures mirror theirs—conform or face consequences. Yet Daniel's friends chose the furnace over compromise, discovering God's presence in their faithfulness. Revelation 18 reveals compromise's ultimate end: judgment and destruction. But standing firm brings divine vindication and reward. This doesn't mean being harsh or unloving; Jesus was full of grace and truth. It means refusing to bend core convictions when the world demands allegiance to its idols.

Your workplace, family, or community may pressure you to celebrate what God calls sin or hide what He calls truth. Will you stand? God isn't calling you to fight culture wars but to live as His holy witness. Where is God asking you to stand firm today, trusting Him with the consequences?

Small Group Study Guide

Revelation 18:1-24

Standing Firm: Lessons From Babylon's Fall – Part 1

Opening Prayer: Begin your time together by asking God to open your hearts to His Word and give you wisdom to apply His truth to your lives.

Opening Question: Share one area where you've felt cultural pressure to compromise your faith in the past year. How did you respond?

Sermon Recap: This week we explored Revelation 18 and the final fall of Babylon—the world system opposed to God. We learned that:

- God's judgment is certain and righteous
- Babylon represents religious, political, and economic systems under Satan's influence
- God calls His people to separate from compromise with the world
- Holiness is our calling as followers of Christ

Key Scripture References:

- Revelation 18:1-8 (Primary passage)
- Isaiah 13:6-13, 19-22
- 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1
- 1 Peter 1:16
- Revelation 2:12-17 (The Compromising Church of Pergamos)

Discussion Questions: Did the Holy Spirit prompt any questions with you? Start with those.

1. What does Babylon represent in Revelation 18? How does understanding Babylon as a "world system" help us apply this passage to our lives today?
2. Read Revelation 18:4. What does God mean when He calls His people to "come out of her"? Is this a physical or spiritual separation—or both?
3. Compare Isaiah 13:19-22 with Revelation 18:2-3. What similarities do you notice? What does this tell us about God's consistency in judgment?
4. The sermon identified three lessons from verse 4:

- a. God is a Good Father who protects His children
- b. Run FROM temptation
- c. No Compromise with evil

Which of these three speaks most powerfully to your current situation? Why?

5. Pastor Jim mentioned pressures to compromise "from families, in the workplace, at school, and through social, government, and commercial institutions." Where do you personally feel the greatest pressure to bend the knee to worldly philosophies?
6. Read 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1. What does it mean practically to be "unequally yoked" with unbelievers? How do we balance biblical separation with Jesus' call to be "in the world"?
7. The sermon referenced the church of Pergamos (Revelation 2:12-17) as the "Compromising Church." What were their specific compromises? Do you see any parallels in the modern church?
8. Pastor Jim said, "For those thinking 'this would never be me,' I give you a word of great caution." Why is it dangerous to think we're immune to compromise? What safeguards can we put in place?
9. Holiness is described as being "set aside by God for God and His good purposes." How does this definition differ from how the world views holiness? How does it differ from how you've previously understood it?
10. Proverbs 1 tells us "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge," and this connects to our holiness (2 Corinthians 7:1). What does it mean to "fear the Lord" in a healthy, biblical way? How does this fear lead to holiness?

Key Takeaways:

1. God's judgment is certain – Babylon's fall reminds us that every system opposed to God will ultimately be destroyed.
2. Separation is necessary – God calls His people to come out of worldly systems and refuse compromise.
3. Holiness is our identity – We are set apart by God, for God, and this should shape how we strive to live.
4. Compromise is subtle – The pressure to conform is real and ongoing; we must remain vigilant.

5. The fear of the Lord protects us – A healthy reverence for God helps us resist temptation and pursue holiness.

Practical Applications: Query the group for applications first...you may explore one or more of those.

1. Identify Your Babylon:

- Spend time in prayer asking God to reveal areas where you've compromised with worldly values.
- Write down specific behaviors, relationships, or habits that may be pulling you away from God.
- Confess these to God and ask for His strength to "come out" of the world and be set apart.

2. Audit Your Influences:

- Evaluate your media consumption (social media, streaming services, news sources, podcasts)
- Ask: "Is this drawing me closer to God or closer to Babylon's values?"
- Make one concrete change to reduce worldly influence.

3. Practice Biblical Separation

- Identify one situation where you're tempted to compromise (workplace, family gathering, social setting)
- Develop a specific plan for how you'll stand firm in that situation
- Share your plan with an accountability partner from this group

Closing Prayer Points:

- Thank God for His patience and His call to holiness
- Confess areas where we've compromised with the world
- Ask for courage to stand firm in the face of cultural pressure
- Pray for the church to be uncompromising in truth and love
- Request wisdom to discern between being "in the world" and "of the world"

Discussion Questions
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4. How does the concept of Babylon as a world system opposed to God manifest in our modern culture, and where do you see its influence most prominently today?
5. In what ways might believers today be tempted to compromise with worldly systems for comfort, acceptance, or economic security, similar to those who remained in Babylon?
6. What does it mean practically to 'come out of her' in our current context, and what sacrifices might this call to separation require from us?
7. How can we distinguish between being 'in the world but not of the world' versus compromising with systems that war against God's values?
8. The sermon mentions pressure from families, workplaces, and institutions to conform to philosophies opposing God's word. What specific pressures do you face, and how do you navigate them?
9. Why do you think God's judgment on Babylon is described with such finality and completeness, and what does this reveal about His character and holiness?
10. How does the fear of the Lord, as mentioned in connection with holiness, differ from worldly fear, and how should it shape our daily decisions?
11. What role does our knowledge of God and maturing relationship with Christ play in our ability to resist compromise and pursue holiness?
12. The churches of Pergamos and Corinth struggled with false doctrine, idolatry, and sexual immorality. How are these same issues challenging the church today?
13. If you knew with certainty that God's judgment on worldly systems was imminent, what changes would you make in your life starting today?

Dinner Conversation Starters

Revelation 18:1-24

Standing Firm: Lessons From Babylon's Fall – Part 1

1. Babylon's Representation

"In the sermon, Babylon is depicted as a symbol of the world's political and religious systems. What are some ways we might see similar influences in our own world today, and how can we recognize them?"

2. Judgement and Righteousness

"The message emphasized that God's judgment is sure and righteous. How can we apply this understanding of God's justice in our daily lives, especially when we face situations that seem unfair?"

3. Call to Holiness

"The pastor spoke about being called to holiness and rejecting compromises with the world. What are some examples of compromises we might face, and how can we encourage each other to stay committed to our values?"

4. Influence of False Doctrines

"False doctrines were mentioned as a danger, both in the past and today. Can you think of any teachings or beliefs in society that might lead us away from our faith, and how can we guard against them?"

5. Learning from the Past

"Throughout history, people have rationalized their actions by saying, 'This could never be me.' How can we learn from past mistakes and ensure we remain steadfast in our faith and principles?"

Family Conversation Guide for Children & Early Teens

Revelation 18:1-24

Standing Firm: Lessons From Babylon's Fall – Part 1

AGES 5-7: SIMPLIFYING THE MESSAGE APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Understanding Good Choices**: Teach children the importance of making good choices that align with what is right, just like how God wants us to choose His ways over the world's temptations.

Discussion Questions: "What can you do to be a good friend, even if others are not making the best choices?"

Listen for examples of kindness and fairness in their friendships.

"How do you know if something, like a show or a game, is a good choice for you to play or watch?"

Encourage them to talk about asking parents or thinking about what they learned in Sunday school.

AGES 8-12: BUILDING UNDERSTANDING APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Recognizing Influences**: Help children recognize the influences in their lives, whether from friends, media, or school, and discuss how they can make choices that reflect their faith and values.

Discussion Questions: "Can you think of a time when someone asked you to do something you felt wasn't right? How did you handle it?"

Discuss strategies for standing up for one's values in peer settings.

"What do you do when you feel pressured to join in on something that doesn't feel right, like a conversation or an online trend?"

Talk about tools like discussing with a trusted adult or friend and making choices that make them proud.

AGES 11-15: DEEPENING THE CONNECTION APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Navigating Peer Pressure**: Guide teens in understanding peer pressure and the importance of setting boundaries, both online and offline, to maintain their personal integrity and faith.

Discussion Questions: "How do you approach situations where your friends might encourage you to act against your values, especially on social media?"

Encourage them to share experiences and discuss practical ways to uphold their beliefs.

"What is a strategy you use to evaluate whether new information or trends online align with your faith and personal values?"

Explore ideas such as researching credible sources, praying, or seeking advice from mentors.

Tips for Parents

- Be patient and listen: Give your child time to think and respond.
- Relate to everyday life: Use real-life examples and stories familiar to your child to make abstract concepts more tangible.
- Encourage questions: Let your son or daughter know it's okay to ask questions, even if things don't make sense right away.
- Share personal insights: Tell a personal story about a time you experienced these themes, adapting as needed for age appropriateness.

Family Conversation Guide for Gen Z

Revelation 18:1-24

Standing Firm: Lessons From Babylon's Fall – Part 1

1. Standing Up for Your Beliefs

Biblical Application: James 4:7 says, "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." With friends and peers, remember to submit to God first and resist pressure to conform to ungodly behaviors.

Scenario: During a group outing, your friends decide to engage in activities that conflict with your Christian values.

Discussion Question: "In what ways can you apply James 4:7 to resist participating in these activities without losing the opportunity to witness God's love to your friends?"

2. Fostering Godly Connections

Biblical Application: 1 Corinthians 15:33 warns, "Do not be misled: 'Bad company corrupts good character.'" Focus on building relationships that encourage and support your faith journey.

Scenario: You're developing a friendship with someone whose values and actions differ significantly from yours.

Discussion Question: "Considering 1 Corinthians 15:33, how can you set boundaries in this relationship while still showing Christ's love and grace?"

3. Cultivating a Healthy Online Presence

Biblical Application: Philippians 4:8 advises, "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things." Apply this when engaging with or creating digital content.

Scenario: You frequently browse through social media where posts often challenge your self-image or provoke negative emotions.

Discussion Question: "How can Philippians 4:8 guide you in curating your feed to reflect positive, uplifting, and truthful content?"