An Inevitable Fall — Delivery Transcript

Revelation 18 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, July 17, 2022 · *Mystery Babylon*

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You can open them to the book of Revelation. Revelation is the last book of the New Testament if you're new to the Bible or new to Bible study. I'm not sure quite what happened to our TV here. You might want to check that out later if you get a chance. Otherwise, note number one on your blank is HDMI 1. No, I'm just kidding. Anyway, as a church, we've been going through the book of the Revelation. If you're new to Broadview, we typically work through books of the Bible and we pick the last one.

About a year or so ago after COVID and 2020 and all this other stuff, a lot of people had interest in the end of the world because a lot of people were talking about the end of the world and what's the end of the world going to look like. And it has been a journey through this book. And the book of the Revelation is what's called apocalyptic literature, so it uses a lot of symbols, a lot of pictures, a lot of crazy sounding, crazy looking images. But it does all that to convey literal important truths about the end of the world.

And I joked last week that when you got to Revelation chapter 17, it was one of the most difficult, most outlandish, kind of most crazy-sounding, crazy-looking passages in the book of the Revelation, but I misled you. That's really not the case. In fact, Revelation chapter 17 has nothing on Revelation chapter 18, which is where we're at today. So it's quite an interesting passage that hopefully after we expose ourselves to the imagery and the pictures that are there, can drill down into the key truths that those pictures are trying to convey.

But before we do that, just by way of introduction to the book of the Revelation, for those of you who are new, I read someone the other day that said you could really summarize the book of the Revelation as a tale between two cities. And for those of you who are taking notes, it really is a tale of two different cities. You have Zion, which is the city of God, or you

might call it the New Jerusalem, and it's not just a geographical location, but it represents a people. It represents kind of a movement of sorts.

And so you've got the people of God, those who reject the beast or the Antichrist, as sometimes people call him, those who refuse the mark of the beast, those who follow the Lamb, and those people are contrasted against this other group called Babylon, this other city named Babylon. And it is like Zion, it is a geographical center, in that it has a physical representation on the earth. I really believe there will be a city, maybe not called Babylon, but that represents what's described as Babylon here in Revelation 18. And that city also represents a people, a movement of sorts, and that is the people of the beast, those who follow what we sometimes call the Antichrist, a godless, God-hating, God-rejecting man over a godless, God-hating, God-rejecting government filled with godless, God-hating people in submission to that figure.

And we've seen this developed as early as Revelation chapter 13. We saw it developed even more in Revelation chapter 17. We did a deep dive on that last week. If you're a real kind of a Bible nerd type person, you'll love last week's sermon. If you're not, you'll hate last week's sermon. So just kind of forewarning. This is less Bible nerd mode and a little bit more applicable. What I want you to do is just to imagine a city like that in your mind's eye. Imagine Sin City, and I don't just mean by that Las Vegas.

It could be any city that you think of as a center for financial and social and spiritual corruption. Yeah, maybe it's New York City, maybe it's Los Angeles, maybe Austin, Texas, you know, just imagine the city could be Mecca, could be some international city that you think of. Imagine a city full of degradation, full of corruption, full of spiritual idolatry. And then imagine that geographical center utterly abolished, just sand floating in the air, meets its utter demise, whether a nuclear weapon or just ceasing to exist. That's really the picture that Revelation chapter 18 draws of this city.

The city of Babylon. And the key truth that comes out of Revelation chapter 18, in your notes if you're taking notes, the key truth I think that is drilled home is that God's judgment is coming soon. And it's not, you know, it's not popular to talk about judgment, and certainly for preachers to talk about judgment, it's almost cliche. But it really is the message of Revelation chapter 18 that there is a God who exists, that God has a standard that we deviate from. That deviation is called sin. And God punishes sinners for their sin, and that judgment is coming soon.

Babylon, a representation of what that looks like when it happens. And so since God's judgment is coming soon, the time for repentance is now. And I want to for those of us in this room this morning who maybe find ourselves living in ways that we know displease the Lord, or maybe ways that don't even measure up to your own standard, this morning is an opportunity from the Lord to change your mind, to change your direction and recover and

pursue God's original design for your life. So with that in mind, the reason I ask you to picture a Babylon in your own mind is because I really believe that in our own day and age we are living in Babylon.

And it may not be this Babylon that we're about to look at in Revelation chapter 18. But the spirit of Babylon is at work in our culture. The things that animate Babylon in Revelation chapter 18 are the same things that animate our own culture today. And in learning how to be on guard against the Babylon that is to come, we can learn how to guard ourselves against the Babylon that's at work today. So let's read Revelation chapter 18 starting in verse 1. "After this I saw another angel with great authority coming down from heaven, and the earth was illuminated by his splendor.

He called out in a mighty voice: It has fallen, Babylon the Great has fallen! She has become a home for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, and a haunt for every unclean and despicable beast. For all the nations have drunk the wine of her sexual immorality, which brings wrath. The kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown wealthy from her sensuality and excess." Now, for those who weren't with us last week, Babylon represents a city.

This city is a hub for what he describes as harlotry or spiritual adultery is really what he means by that. It's just a center of false religion, godlessness, immorality, and the like. And what you see here is this Babylon, this great city, has fallen and this fallen Babylon is bringing down with her all of these other actors. You've got kings of the earth, you've got merchants. And we'll see a little bit later on, shipmasters and so on and so forth. And so it's just this picture of an economic powerhouse brought to its knees and bringing down the rest of the world with it.

And I don't know about you, if you notice when we were reading those passages, the lines started to look a little bit different than earlier in the book of the Revelation. They were kind of punchy. The genre changed, the cadence of the lyrics kind of— and the reason for that is because Revelation chapter 18 you could think of as a song. It's kind of like a funeral dirge. Have you ever heard the word funeral dirge? Like you remember when you're watching those movies and something super super sad happens and then the Irish a cappella, super slow, sad song comes in, after Batman has the great fall, and the super sad song hits.

That's a dirge. A dirge is a slow, sad song, usually played at a funeral or some kind of memorial. And that's what Revelation chapter 18 is. It's a super sad, sad song. And people are weeping and mourning, but the people who are weeping and mourning are not the people of God who've been persecuted and killed by this beast, this Babylon, but it is the people of the world mourning the fall of their queen, and that queen is Babylon. So if you're taking notes, it's a sad song. It's a sad song sung by this mighty angel, meaning no one misses this song.

This angel's presence fills the earth. It says the whole earth is illuminated by its glory. It talks about the fall of Babylon in past tense, even though it hasn't happened yet. We're going to see in chapter 18, verse 4, God's actually calling for his people, Come out of Babylon, get out of there, as if it hasn't fallen yet. And yet this angel in chapter 18, verse 2 is saying it has fallen. Past tense. And the reason he's talking about it in those kinds of terms is because for this angel, Babylon is as good as dead.

It is as if it's already happened because the way that she has been living has all but guaranteed her demise. And if you're into like Greek and all that super nerdy stuff, it's what's called a proleptic aorist, which means an aorist is a completed action in the past, but proleptic means it's a future past action. It's an action in the future that's as good as it's already been completed, even though it hasn't happened yet, because of the immorality and godlessness of this Babylon that is to come. And so it's a sad song about a certain fall of a condemned city.

Sad song about a certain fall of a condemned city. And I don't know if you notice the use of these terms like unclean beasts and unclean animals. Uses the word haunt over and over again. The word haunt means like a prison. Think of a haunted house as a place where ghosts are— I'm not saying I actually believe in ghosts, but if I did, a haunted house would be a place where unclean spirits or unclean demonic spirits are trapped. They cannot get out of there. That's what Babylon has become. It's become a prison for the demonic.

It's become a prison for everything unclean. Unclean animals in the Old Testament were the animals you wouldn't want to eat because if you watched what they ate, you wouldn't want to be eating them because of what they'd been eating, kind of thing. You know, kind of like wild boars or vultures, you know, they pick up the flesh and they clean up the trash, creatures of the night, those kinds of things. That's the vibe you get of this Babylon. Anybody watch the Stranger Things on Netflix? You know, the Upside Down is full with— I can't recommend it from here, especially season four, you got to look— crazy.

But the Upside Down is Babylon. It is full of the creatures of the night, it is full of grotesque animals, it is full of the demonic, it is broken, it is dilapidated, it is glory that is destroyed. It's the Upside Down. That's Babylon. And this song is a sad song about the certain fall of that once glorious city, but now it is condemned. No longer in service. And the reason is because of a series of unholy or corrupt alliances. And you saw them listed: the kings of the earth, the nations of the earth, and the merchants of the earth.

All of them compromised because of their dealings with Babylon. Just like today we have trade with New York City, we have trade with Ukraine, we have trade with Russia, we have trade with all these different nations. The picture here is that Babylon was a super corrupt center of commerce and these maybe not so corrupt kings and nations and merchants had soiled themselves, they had compromised themselves spiritually and ethically in order to do

business with Babylon. And now she's not just going to take herself down, but she's going to take down the rest of these fools with her.

It's a sad song about the certain fall of a corrupt city, full of unholy alliances. And because Babylon is as good as dead, what you see in verse 4 is God calling out to his people, get out of there. Come out of her. Look at it, verse 4: "Then I heard another voice from heaven: Come out of her, my people, so that you will not share in her sins or receive any of her plagues." "For her sins are piled up to heaven, and God has remembered her crimes. Pay her back the way she also paid, and double it according to her works.

In the cup in which she mixed, mix a double portion for her. As much as she glorified herself and indulged her sensual and excessive ways, give her that much torment and grief. For she says in her heart, 'I sit as a queen; I am not a widow, and I will never see grief.' For this reason her plagues will come in just one day— death and grief and famine. She will be burned up with fire, because the Lord God who judges her is mighty." And so this is the Lord giving a grave warning to his people who are in Babylon.

Notice he doesn't warn the people who are not his in Babylon. They've made their choice. Their fate is sealed. But he is calling to the followers of the Lamb, the people of the book, those who would not say, I bow to the beast. I'm not part of this system, and yet I'm living in the city. And that describes, I think, a lot of people today who maybe you'd say, I'm not all about Babylon. I don't hate God. I don't reject God. I'm a Christian. I go to church on Sundays, and yet you're still living in that city.

You kind of got a foot in and a foot out. You're compromised. You're lukewarm. You're kind of playing both sides of the fence. And this is a warning from the Lord to those of us who find ourselves in that kind of a place: wake up, get out of there. It's dangerous. The time of God's judgment is soon. The time for your repentance is now. Now why is it that Babylon is able to draw so many Christians in, whether it's this future Babylon that Revelation is talking about, or whether it's that city you had in your mind, the Las Vegases, the San Franciscos, the Meccas of the world that are full of idolatry and false religion.

Why is it so alluring? How does it draw so many, even Christian people, into its trap? That's, I think, a question that Revelation chapter 18 raises. And we saw the same dynamic in Revelation 17. We saw how false religion exploits our natural desires to disorder our love for God, how we all have a craving for food and sex and power and we all have this appetite that is always hungry. And Babylon's exploiting those natural desires to disorder our love for God, to say, doing it God's way will not make you happy, do it this other way instead.

And so it draws us into that trap. We saw how Babylon uses her influence to normalize sin. Hey everybody else is doing it. All the kings of the earth are doing it. All the merchants are doing it. Can't be that bad if everybody else is doing it. And then she uses her power to

silence any dissent so that anyone who would warn of the danger of Babylon, they're basically taken offline, silenced. All of those things are reasons why Babylon draws even Christian people in. But what you see, I think, in this text is two additional reasons right there in verse 7 for why Babylon hooks us.

And the first reason is because of our appetite or our addiction to desire, and you might say selfish desire. All of us have appetites, but there seems to be ingrained within every human being a me monster. If you wonder what the me monster looks like, just have children, and then you'll see the me monster. All about me. You guys remember that Toby Keith song? Talk about you usually— I want to talk about me, want to talk about I, want to talk about number one, oh my, me, my, what I think, what I like, what I know, what I want, what I see.

I like talking about you, you, you, you usually, but I want to talk about me. That's the spirit of Babylon. And listen, every human being has that me monster in them. You may pretend you grew up, which none of us actually grew up. It's still in there. It's all about wanting to satisfy the self. And you see this in the text because it says she "glorified herself and indulged her sensual and excessive ways." That's the neon light flashing of Babylon. Hey, come to me and I'll make it about you. I don't know about you, but I like people who make it about me.

Anybody else like people that make it about them? Yeah, that's why I got married. At first he made it about me. At first she made it about me. Then things changed. Well, we all have that me monster. We all have that sense of self-glory, hey, hey, feed my ego, stroke my ego, make me feel important, make me feel wanted. And that's not necessarily a bad thing. I mean, that was given to us by God. We were created for glory, but we'll never find that glory by exalting ourselves. We'll only find that glory by exalting Christ and recovering his design and his righteousness.

That's how the me monster is finally slain. But what Babylon does is say, No, that's never going to work. No, let's make it about you. Let's center the universe around you. Let's make everything all about you and people buy it hook, line, and sinker, even believers. They kind of bifurcate their lives, the church world and the secular world. And in the secular world it's all about me, and then on Sundays I kind of make it about God for just a little bit, but ultimately it's about me. And that's the spirit of Babylon, that's why she's attractive, because we're addicted to desire.

We're addicted to ego. We're addicted to that self-exaltation. And I think Satan knows if he can gorge our souls on that junk food long enough, then we will just grow numb to our need for God. You get a certain level of wealth, I don't need God anymore. You get a certain level of popularity, I don't need God anymore. You get a certain level of everybody respects you and likes you and thinks you're all that. Well, I don't need God. I don't need Him to help me out because I have everything that I need.

That's the spirit of Babylon. And it hooks even Christian people and draws it, draws them into her tangly web. So we're addicted to desire. The second reason you see in this text is we're allergic to fear. And you see this, maybe counterintuitively, there in verse 7 where she says in her heart, "I sit as a queen; I am not a widow, and I will never see grief." This is basically Babylon saying, if you stay with me, love, everything will be fine. If you'll just toe the line, fall in line, submit to me, do it my way, you will be protected and safe.

And there is no better word to the human heart than protected and safe. We are allergic to fear. We don't like it. We don't like instability. We don't like insecurity. That's why we're always chasing a certain number on our savings account. Does anybody else have a number like that? So long as it's at a certain number, then there's this muscle right there behind your spleen that relaxes a little bit. As soon as that number goes away, you get all worked up and all uptight. What is that? That's fear. That's fear.

You'll have material prosperity. You'll have safety. You'll have a big house. You'll have a nice car. You'll have lots of friends. You'll have social stability. And a lot of people want that so bad, they'll say, well, I'm not going to do it God's way. I'm not going to follow God's design because that feels unsafe. I don't know. Sometimes God acts in ways that I don't understand. Sometimes God asks me to do things that don't feel very safe in my life. He calls me to hard things. And so I'd rather go to Babylon.

I'd rather be involved in stability and peace. In fact, in First Thessalonians chapter 3, verse 5, or chapter 5, verse 3— I can't remember— the immediate days before Jesus returns, it says that they're preaching peace and security. Peace and security. Peace and security, and then suddenly calamity falls. And so this city is preaching that message. Hey, follow me, do it my way, and you'll be safe. And that is a seductive message. This is the way all sin works, by the way. It's the sweetness test and the stability test. Where do you go to in life for sweetness?

Where do you go to in life for stability? Whatever that thing is, whoever that person is, if it is someone other than the Lord Jesus Christ, if it is something other than the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven, that's idolatry. You've been baited and hooked, Babylon's reeling you in, and it's dangerous, dangerous, dangerous. That's why God is saying, come out of her. She's about to fall. And in fact, she does fall. Look at that in chapter 18, verse— I think it's verse 8. Her plagues visit her in just one day.

Though Babylon thought herself invincible, her demise was swift and severe. And death and grief and famine follow a judgment of God through fire, and the Babylon that once seemed strong and invincible is now laid to waste by a truly mighty God. After that happens, Revelation talks about the response of the people in Babylon to her fall. So Revelation 18 opens with a sad song, followed by a grave warning that ends in God's judgment. And after that judgment comes the response. And it's a long passage, chapter 18, verses 9 to 20.

Super long. We're going to read it, but before you get lost, I just want you to think three categories. You've got the kings, the merchants, and the sailors. Okay? Kings of the earth, the merchants of the earth, and the sailors. Three different groups; each of them respond to the fall of Babylon in three different ways, and I want you to try and note the similarities of each group's response. Alright, you ready? Let's start with the kings, chapter 18, verse 9. The kings of the earth who have committed sexual immorality, and by that I think it means idolatry.

They got sucked into that false religion. They got sucked into that licentious sexual lifestyle. The kings of the earth who committed those acts with her, they will weep and mourn over her when they see the smoke from her burning. They will look at this. They will stand not close, they will stand far off in fear of her torment, saying, "Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the mighty city! For in a single hour your judgment has come." So first it was in a single day, now it's in a single hour. After the kings come the merchants, in verse 11, the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn.

Same words. They will weep and mourn over her because why? No one buys their stuff anymore; no one buys their cargo. Babylon used to buy up all the stuff from all around the world. Now she's not buying anything. And look at all the stuff that she would buy. Look at this long list. Cargo of gold, silver, jewels, pearls, fine linen, purple, silk, scarlet, all kinds of fragrant wood products, objects of ivory, objects of expensive wood, brass, iron, and marble, cinnamon, spice, and all things nice, incense, myrrh, and frankincense, wine, olive oil, fine flour and grain, cattle, sheep, horses, and carriages, and then finally, slaves— human lives.

So the idea is that this rich, rich economy might have been on the backs of unjust slave labor. All of those things are now gone. Verse 14: "The fruit you craved"— merchants— "has left you. All your splendid and glamorous things are gone; they will never find them again." The merchants of these things who became rich from her will stand how far? Far off, in fear of her torment, just like the kings were far off in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning. Just like the kings weeped and mourned, saying, "Woe, woe, the great city, dressed in fine linen, purple and scarlet, adorned with gold, jewels, and pearls, because in a single hour such fabulous wealth was destroyed!"

And then the third group, the sailors: every shipmaster, seafarer, the sailors, and all who do business by the sea, they stood far off, just like the kings, just like the merchants. As they watched the smoke from her burning, and they kept crying out, "Who was like the great city?" They threw dust on their heads, it's a sign of mourning. And they kept crying out, weeping and mourning, same words that were used of the kings and the merchants. "Woe, woe, the great city, where all of those who have ships on the sea became rich from her wealth; for in a single hour she was destroyed.

Rejoice over her, heaven, and you saints, apostles, and prophets, because God has pronounced on her the judgment she passed on you!" Now there's obviously so much there. We don't have time to pull everything out of there. But I hope you noticed some of the similarities that in each case, whether it was the kings or the merchants or the sailors, each of them weep and mourn. It's the same word used in all three cases. Each of them weep and mourn and say something to the effect of, You were super awesome and now you're not and it happened so fast.

One hour and it was gone. I think one of the things that can teach us when it comes to why we shouldn't stay in Babylon, why we shouldn't entertain a sinful, a willfully sinful lifestyle, is because that life of sin is fun for a season. It can be really awesome. But there's an expiration date on any life of willful sin. It's fun for a season, but then the season ends. And notice it ends rapidly, suddenly. I can remember when I was living in sin and having a good time thinking to myself, well, I guess when God's ready to judge me, he'll kind of give some red flags and I can kind of like ease out of the sinful lifestyle.

You think crazy things when you're living in sin. But that's kind of what I thought. That's not how it works. The way it works is you're coasting, you're having a good time, you think you're invincible, you think maybe it's not even that big of a deal, and then suddenly, without warning, in one hour, it's all gone. It's destroyed. Your family's blown up. Your job is lost. Your social circle dissolved. That's how sin works. It's fun for a season, but then the season ends. And it is a sad, sad ending. The other thing I noticed is that whether it's kings or merchants or sailors, all three of them, it says that they stood far off.

Far off, and in the kings and the merchants, it says they stood far off in fear of her torment. And this is a reminder about a life of sin. When you're living in Babylon, when you, as a Christian, got sucked into the trap, you need to know that the friends you make in that season, they are what you call fair-weather friends. Because as soon as the music stops, as soon as the glue that held that friendship together, whatever sinful choice, whatever sinful lifestyle was holding that friendship together— when that goes, when that's destroyed, when God judges that, the friendships dissolve.

And I can remember this as well when I was living a way I shouldn't have been living, thinking these are my best friends. I'll have these friends for the rest of my life. And as soon as something bad happens, the friends disappear. Or vice versa, as soon as you decide, hey, I don't want to live this way any longer. I can't continue in this. I still want to be your friends, but I can't do this anymore. As soon as you stop doing whatever that thing was that was holding you all together, as soon as you stop, your friends go away.

Oh, you're Goody Two-Shoes now, you're Mr. High-and-Mighty. They weren't really your friends. They were maybe commiserants. Misery loves company. Sin loves an audience. But they weren't truly there for you. There wasn't true love there. Because that's how Babylon

works. It's not about love. It's not about the other. It's all about the self. It's all about rejecting God's call to love and to be loved. So sin is fun for a season. The friends you make in sin are usually fair-weather friends. It's why the church, I think, is such a special, unique thing.

Because the church is not built on that kind of community. The church is not built on preferential things or social things or political things. The church is built on Christ. The church is built on the calling that Christ is to love one another, whether they're worthy of it or not. Love one another as I have loved you. Forgive one another as I have forgiven you. And that kind of thing lasts through high tides and low tides, sinful choices and non-sinful choices, because it's rooted in something deeper, rooted in something eternal, rooted in Christ, not Babylon.

It's rooted in Zion. That's why this, what we're doing right now, is so important, so special. You got to fan that into flame and resist the pull of Babylon, which tries to draw you away. The other thing I notice is these commodities that were listed, sugar and spice and everything nice and all the different things they list. All that vanishes in an hour. It reminds me right now of all the talk we have about the crash. Has anybody been watching CNBC here lately? Been watching CNBC on YouTube. I don't watch it on cable.

Almost every person I listen to on YouTube when it's on CNBC, they're talking about the crash, the recession. There's coming a big, big crash. They talk about the Great Depression. You talk about the 2008 Great Recession. They say another big crash is coming. Ultimately, you don't need CNBC to know there's a crash coming. Right here in Revelation chapter 18, it's talking about a big old crash. And all of those little bitty crashes before the big, big, big crash, those were all just types. Those were all getting us ready for the full final expression.

But when that full final crash comes, when the big bad Babylon falls, it will be so bad you will sell gold just for a piece of bread. That's how bad it'll be. And in that day when Babylon falls and the weeping and the mourning is all throughout the earth, on that day you will discover what's been true all along, and that is that the only truly precious commodity in this world is genuine faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It's not money. It's not a social sphere. It's not a super awesome career.

It's not a big, big house. It's faith. It's Christ. It's the one who is to come. It's the kingdom that is to come. And when everything hits the fan, that truth is going to become so real to people on that day they will wish they would have listened: that the judgment of God is coming soon and the time for repentance is now. Only through Jesus can you get true and lasting peace. Only through Christ is real security found. Only through him can you truly be satisfied. And only in him will your heart finally find rest, shelter, and peace.

On the day of God's judgment, God's people will rejoice because their endurance has brought about the reward of their faith. They endured the wrath of Satan and are now protected from the wrath of God. Chapter 18 closes with a final chorus, or final bridge, to the song. It says in chapter 18, verse 21, "Then a mighty angel picked up a stone like a large millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, In this way, Babylon the great city will be thrown down violently and never be found again. The sound of harpists, musicians, flutists, and trumpeters will never be heard in you again; no craftsman of any trade will ever be found in you again; the sound of a mill will never be heard in you again; the light of a lamp will never shine in you again; and the voice of a groom and bride will never be heard in you again.

All this will happen because your merchants were the nobility of the earth, because all the nations were deceived by your sorcery." That's the word pharmakeia. That's where we get our word pharmacy. The idea is drugs make things appear a certain way, even though they're not really that way. Sometimes they can mask the pain that's actually underneath the surface. The nations were deceived by her sorcery, her pharmakeia, and "in her was found the blood of the prophets and the saints, and of all those slaughtered on the earth." So hopefully you notice the theme, right?

Over and over again, never again, never again, never again. And it's so compelling because in chapter 17 what you saw was this Babylon woman riding a beast. That beast represented the evil empire, and the beast had seven heads, and we said that those seven heads represented past, present, and future expressions of that evil empire. Well, the same is true of Babylon. Babylon is always manifesting itself. There was ancient Babylon, there was the Tower of Babel, there was Egypt, there was Assyria. There is Las Vegas, there is Mecca, there's all these Babylons in our world today, and they always have a way of coming up and going down.

Great, great rise, great, great fall, but they always come back again. But now in this passage never, never again. Now it's the ultimate end of all and every second chance. There are no more second chances after this Babylon falls. And he uses the image of the millstone. And we don't talk about this because we don't— we have John Deere tractors, but back in the day they didn't have John Deere tractors. And so you would have this big old huge rock, and you would roll that rock over the heads of grain.

And it would break the outer shell of the grain and grind that seed into dust, into flour, and then you could use that flour to make bread. So the point is, during great seasons of harvest, the mill would be busy. The sound of the mill would be heard in your village. And the more the mill was heard, the greater the harvest would be. High tides, great times, prosperity, wealth. He's saying now the mill ain't crushing nothin', because there is no harvest. And the mill that you use for your prosperity is now going to be tied around your neck, and that big, huge rock is going to be thrown into the middle of the ocean.

And imagine what happens when a big, big rock is thrown into the middle of the ocean. What's going to happen to whatever's tied to that rock? It's going to sink to the bottom of the ocean, never to be seen again. And that's the point. There's this finality to this judgment. There is no more second chance after this judgment. There is no more, I'll— maybe next Sunday. Maybe when I have this question answered or that question answered. Maybe after we get married, I'll stop living in sin. Maybe if I finally get this job, I won't have to keep cutting corners or stealing from my boss.

Maybe when I'm in this income level— I'll always have these excuses and maybe next time, maybe the second chance, then I'll surrender to Jesus, then I'll commit my life to Christ. Maybe next time. And the point of the passage is there's coming a day where there is no more next time. There is no more second chances. God's judgment will be complete and final. The question is, will you be ready for that day? And if that day is not today, that means today is your second chance. That means today is the day where you can settle in your own heart and mind: faith in Jesus is the most precious commodity.

It's not the boyfriend, it's not the girlfriend, it's not the wealth, it's not the indulgence, it's not me, it's not my ego, it's always been Christ and Christ alone. And so as we enter into a time of response, what I'd like us to consider is which city we're living for. A tale of two cities: which city are you living in? Jesus said in Mark chapter 8, what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world, but he forfeits his soul? So what good is it if we live in Babylon?

We get all the money and all the toys, but we lose the thing we can't get back, which is our soul. "Whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." The day is coming. God's judgment is coming soon. So the time for repentance is now. I remember when I was living a way I shouldn't have been living, I would hear messages like this, and I would feel so convicted.

And I would wrestle with the Lord, and there were a lot of days where Satan won. And maybe that's you this morning. You're sitting there wrestling with the Lord. And I would plead with you, don't let him win. Let the Lord win today. Because if you will surrender to the Lord, if you will give up, leave Babylon. Pray, Your kingdom come, God, your will be done in my life on earth as it is in heaven. His kingdom is so much better. It's so much purer, so much more lasting. The longer you live in Babylon, the more you begin to discover it isn't what she promised to be.

She never delivers on her promises. Eventually, all she leaves you with is despair and brokenness and a hungrier appetite for more. The Lord Jesus speaks a better word. A word of forgiveness, a word of righteousness, a word of cleansing, a word of love, a word of belonging. And all of those things can be found when you repent and you believe. If you're

here this morning and you're not a Christian, as Taylor leads us through this song or whatever he's going to do, I want to invite you to come and give your life to Jesus Christ.

Say, I'm tired of living for Babylon. I'm tired of the broken promises. I want something better. And Jesus offers that to you. If you're a Christian living in Babylon this morning, my prayer is that the Holy Spirit would wake us up. We would see her for what she really is, and hear the words of our Father in heaven: Get out of her. Get out of there before it's too late. However the Lord leads you to respond, let's do that now. Father, we thank you for this time. We thank you for this text.

We thank you that history kind of repeats itself. We don't have to be geniuses to figure out what to do. We just have to look back. We have to listen up. So would you help us to learn from the Babylons of old what our current-day or future Babylon is going to say to us to try to deceive us into the life of sin. And instead of following her, would you wake us up this morning and help us to follow you? Help us to reject her design and to embrace your design.

To reject her word and to love your word instead. I pray for every person in this room who finds themselves dancing in the middle, playing both sides of the fence. Thinking it's not that big a deal, I can straighten up later. I'll sort it out after X, Y, or Z season. Would you open our eyes? Would you help us to see that today is the day you're calling us home? And that if we'll repent and believe, you'll cleanse us of our sin, you'll forgive us of all unrighteousness, and you will set us up on a new, straight path for your name's sake.

And so give us the courage to do what needs to be done in this moment. And we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.