

The Collapse of Babylon (Message #41)

Revelation 18: 9-24

October 29, 1929 has become known as “Black Tuesday.” Black Tuesday is known for being the worst day in the U.S. stock market. Throughout the 1920’s stock prices reached new heights, more than quadrupling in value. But on Black Tuesday the bubble burst, and by 1933 prices were down about 80% from the heights of the late 20’s. The great crash of 1929 plunged the U.S. into what is known as “The Great Depression.”

Between 1930 and 1933, about 9,000 banks failed. Production in U.S. industry hit rock bottom and left millions of Americans out of work, and the rest, struggling to survive. A proud nation found itself filled with soup lines, hobos, and shanty towns. A few Americans remain who remember those difficult times, but the Great Depression will pale in comparison to what awaits the global economy at the end of the Tribulation. We began a look at these events last week and tonight we will continue as we consider: [The Collapse of Babylon](#).

I. The Reaction to the Collapse (9-20) – Unlike Black Tuesday, this economic collapse won’t be isolated in a single nation or region. We are seeing a global economic market forming in our day. When the US Stock Market is down it has global effects. The economies of the world are becoming intertwined and more dependent upon each other. Antichrist will develop a one world economy during his reign. This portion of Revelation reveals the reaction of the world as the global economy crashes. Notice:

A. The Response of Monarchs (9-10) – Keep in mind that the nations of the world have surrendered their sovereignty to the authority of Antichrist. They have put all of their eggs in one basket and have looked to him to provide economic stability for the entire world.

- These have been the best of times. World leaders have lived in a season of prominence and popularity. Their approval ratings have been through the roof. The world is under the illusion that this new found government has found the solution for all the world’s problems. But in a moment of time, in the span of one day, all of their hopes and aspirations come crashing down.

- The kings of the earth [bewail](#) the fall of Babylon. They literally will “*mourn and sob aloud*” for the destruction of their wealth. They will [lament](#) over Babylon’s collapse, “*an action of beating upon the breast in utter disbelief and mourning.*”

- Can you imagine the chaos the world will endure as heads of state around the world realize that the money and prosperity has collapsed and the world economy is literally broke? These men will run scared as the very system that established their power has been destroyed. The monarchs aren't all.

B. The Response of the Merchants (11-17a) – v.11 – And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: The collapse of the global economy will cause the ruin of free trade and enterprise. During the Tribulation businessmen and entrepreneurs will enjoy a season of unmatched prosperity. These will be days of great excess in the business world. As the market collapses, these men will also mourn the loss of Babylon. She has been the track for which their economic machines have run. There will be no money to purchase any of their goods. The goods that brought them wealth have been reduced to worthless merchandise. The Bible lists some 30 items that will be affected by the global collapse, but in them we see the utter desolation of the economic enterprise. Notice:

1. The Loss of Luxurious Items (12) – The items listed here are those reserved for the rich and famous, those who live lives of excess and luxury. These items will no longer be affordable, even by the wealthiest. In a moments time the wealthy of the world will become beggars in great need.

- The luxuries of this life will be worthless in that day. All of the riches that men have accumulated cannot buy health, happiness, or stay the hand of God. Those merchants who deal in these items will be out of business.

2. The Loss of Lowly Items (13) – These are the common, everyday items that men need to survive, the necessities of life. The common things of life will be unaffordable with no market for their sale. The very things that men take for granted, those things that are necessary to sustain life will no longer be available.

- Can you imagine a world where, on a global scale, men can't bring home a loaf of bread, where a mother can't afford to buy milk for her baby, where aspirin and spices are beyond men's ability to buy? These days will one day become a startling reality as the basic needs of life are beyond reach to all who dwell upon the earth.

3. The Loss of Lustful Items (14) – The things that the soul lusted to have will no longer be available. Those things that brought pleasure to the lives of men, the extras and novelties, the finer things of life that man enjoyed. The days of carefree, abundance for all have quickly faded away.

4. The Loss of Lucrative Items (15-17a) – The merchants of the world will stand in awe and utter despair as they watch the source of their wealth disappear before their eyes. The days of abundant profits and lucrative deals have ended, leaving only shattered dreams and troubled memories of prior days. The ride they were on had been a profitable one in the scope of material gain, but it has been destroyed and they are left to face the wrath of God broke and miserable. The lure of riches became their god and now the true and living God has struck the very heart of their affection and devotion.

C. The Response of the Mariners (17b-19) – The seas are also an avenue of great wealth. However, those who sailed the seas, carrying the goods that supplied the lustful appetites of a world enslaved to the grip of prosperity are also found in mourning. They had enjoyed times of abundance, but as their ships neared the port, the source of their affection lay in ruin with smoke filling the horizon. Their world revolved around the prosperity of their business and it has been removed. It is dangerous to place material gain and possessions on a level reserved for God!

D. The Response of the Multitude (20) – Here we find a contrast to the response found on earth. The heavens rejoice over the judgment of Babylon. Those who have suffered under the philosophy of those who denied the Lord have been vindicated by Almighty God. Their cries for strength and divine intervention have not gone unheard or unanswered.

- We may live in a world where believers are oppressed and persecuted, but as we found last week, God keeps a record and He will reward according to that which we deserve. Babylon deserved judgment and that is what she shall get. The remaining verses give us a glimpse of the severity of that judgment.

I. The Reaction to the Collapse (9-20)

II. The Reality of the Collapse (21-24) – The Tribulation is drawing to a close and God is about to bring utter destruction to the city of Babylon.

A. Her Collapse is Declared (21) – The angel casts a great millstone into the sea as a portrayal of what soon will come to Babylon. A millstone is very heavy and has absolutely no chance of floating in the sea. It would immediately sink to the bottom of the depths of the sea. Just as swift and sure as the millstone sank, so shall the destruction of Babylon become.

[Jer.51:64](#) – *And thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I*

will bring upon her: and they shall be weary. There will be no escape from the heavy hand of God's judgment.

B. Her Collapse is Defined (22-23b) – These verses reveal the severity of God's wrath. The phrase **no more at all in thee** is repeated four times, revealing the fullness of judgment. What has God said shall cease to exist?

1. No More Happiness (22a) – As judgment falls, music will no longer be heard upon the earth. Music is typically a picture of the happiness of the soul. We sing when we are happy. Music has a way of bringing comfort in times of distress. A soft lullaby has a soothing effect on a child, but there will be no singing, no lullabies, no happiness found upon the earth. Can you imagine the somber mood of a world without music or happiness? The reality of their fate has begun to set in and despair fills men's souls.

2. No More Honor (22b) - All of the industry and manufacturing of the earth has ceased to exist. The satisfaction of their success has been replaced with the realization that all that they lived for and served has come to naught. The ambitions and dreams of men who lived off of the misfortune others have been shattered with no hope of future enterprise. The very thing that brought honor to them has been removed as God strikes the heart of their desire. There is no hope for any future endeavors.

3. No More Hope (23a) – What a graphic picture of the wrath of God. The candle will no more give forth its light. The warmth and security of light will be removed. Men will live in the ultimate darkness of despair, separated from the mercies of God. I can't imagine the heaviness of the darkness of that day as the reality of judgment begins to set in on them.

4. No More Heritage (23b) – The days of joy and excitement at weddings will be no more. There will be no more young couples standing before an altar prepared to make a vow for a new life together with the hopes of building a family together. God began creation with the ordinance of marriage and now that holy ordinance will be no more. With the collapse of Babylon, all hope for the future will dissolve.

C. Her Collapse is Deserved (23c-24) – The men of this world have lived a lavish lifestyle, one of extravagance and excess. They have concerned themselves only with their wealth and the desire for more. They have slain the blood of many saints of God to ensure their continued success. They stand before God accountable for their actions.

- These verses are troubling to me. In them we see those who stand condemned before God. Jesus gave Himself upon a cross, bled and died for all men, these included, and yet they chose to forsake the grace of God for the pleasures of life. Their choice has resulted in eternal consequences.
- They have enjoyed the only pleasure they will ever know. Their eternal destiny was traded for a brief season of pleasure and prosperity. When mercy and grace are refused, judgment is all that remains.
- The Tribulation is coming, along with the fall of Babylon. All of those that subscribe to the philosophy of Babylon will face the judgment of God. It will be utterly impossible to claim that God was not just in His dealings. He gave us His Son, a sacrifice for sin, and those who chose to reject Him, have only themselves to blame.

As I looked at this passage, I was deeply reminded of what is coming for those who deny God in that day. I rejoice that I have been saved and will escape the terror of a holy God in wrath, but I am also aware that many have not trusted Christ. You may get tired of hearing it, but I urge you to search your heart and be absolutely certain of your salvation. If you are absolutely certain, I urge you to desire a burden for those who are not saved. Eternity is a long time to endure the torments of God's judgment. Would you like to come and ask Christ to save your soul or that God would convict sin in the life of a loved one? Why not come as the Lord leads?