



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Revelation 18:1-24

"A Rebuilt Babylon"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Our subject for today is going to be the final in our mini series within the Book of Revelation on Babylon, because as you know from the reading the Bible, chapters 17 and 18, actually part of 16 and part of chapter 19 as well, have as their topics Babylon, but particularly chapter 17 and chapter 18. And this is the fifth of our messages on seventeen and eighteen, in which we are discussing this rather difficult and in some ways very speculative topic particularly today, you will notice the speculative nature of the exposition of this chapter. But we are going to read now for our Scripture reading the entire 18th chapter, verse 1 through verse 24, and I hope you will follow along in your text as we read it.

"After these things (John writes) I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illumined with his glory. And he cried with a mighty voice, saying, Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! And she has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird. For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed acts of immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich by the wealth of her sensuality. I heard another voice from

heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and that you may not receive of her plagues; for her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. Pay her back even as she has paid, and give back to her double according to her deeds; in the cup which she has mixed, mix twice as much for her. To the degree that she glorified herself and lived sensuously, to the same degree give her torment and mourning; for she says in her heart, I SIT AS A QUEEN AND I AM NOT A WIDOW, and will never see mourning. For this reason in one day her plagues will come, pestilence and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for the Lord God who judges her is strong. And the kings of the earth, who committed acts of immorality and lived sensuously with her, will weep and lament over her when they see the smoke of her burning, standing at a distance because of the fear of her torment, saying, Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! For in one hour your judgment has come. And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, because no one buys their cargoes any more-- cargoes of gold and silver and precious stones and pearls and fine linen and purple and silk and scarlet, and every kind of citron wood and every article of ivory and every article made from very costly wood and bronze and iron and marble, and cinnamon and spice and incense and perfume and frankincense and wine and olive oil and fine flour and wheat and cattle and sheep, and cargoes of horses and chariots and slaves and human lives."

The term slaves, as you will note from the marginal notes in your Bible, is a translation of the word that means simply bodies. We sometimes use the word body in the sense of person, and this of course is designed to show how insignificant a slave is, just a body. We even use the expression, "What can a body do?" We mean by that a person, but the "slaves" is probably the sense of the word here. And human "lives" is literally the souls of men.

The fruit you long for has gone from you, and all things that were luxurious and splendid have passed away from you and men will no longer find them. The merchants of these things, who became rich from her, will stand at a distance because of the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning, saying, Woe, woe, the great city, she who was clothed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls; for in one hour such great wealth has been laid waste! And every shipmaster and every passenger and sailor, and as many as make their living by the sea, stood at a distance, and were crying out as they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like the great city? And they threw dust on their heads and were crying out, weeping and mourning, saying, Woe, woe, the great city, in which all who had ships at sea became rich by her wealth, for in one hour she has been laid waste!"

I would like for you particularly to notice the expressions in verse 8, "in one day," then in verse 17 "in one hour," and in verse 19 the same expression now verse 21,

"Then a strong angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "Thus will Babylon, the great city, be thrown down with violence, and will not be found any longer. And the sound of harpists and musicians and flute-players and trumpeters will not be heard in you any longer; and no craftsman of any craft will be found in you any longer; and the sound of a mill will not be heard in you any longer; and the light of a lamp will not shine in you any longer; and the voice of the bridegroom and bride will not be heard in you any longer; for your merchants were the great men of the earth, because all the 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 the earth."

I think it's very interesting to note that in verse 20, we read, "Rejoice over her, Oh heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, because God has pronounced

judgment for you against her. Those and the statement in verse 24 put together will make it quite plain, I think, that there is some justification for thinking that Babylon was not totally destroyed forever, when in the past it was reduced to largely a little mound in what is now that country of Iraq. May the Lord bless this reading of his word, and let's bow together now in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we give Thee thanks for the word of God and for the way in which it has ministered to us as the Holy Spirit has brought us in marvelous grace to the conviction of our sins, to the communication of new life and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are so grateful, Lord, that Thou hast touched our hearts and given us an understanding of what we are, and of the great provision that the Lord Jesus has made, and also to us a participation in it.

And we pray Lord, for each individual in this auditorium, that we may not leave this auditorium without the sense of the possession of eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ who shed his blood at the cross at Calvary that sinners might be saved.

We are grateful for all of the other blessings, Lord, which are ours, and we pray that throughout this week that we may make progress in our own spiritual lives that our communion with Thee may deepen and that our usefulness in the work that Thou art doing may also go forward.

We especially pray for the sick. We pray that Thou will minister to them, that Thou will encourage them and supply their needs and Lord, if it should please Thee, give healing. And for others who have other problems and have requested our prayers, we pray particularly for them as well.

We are grateful that we can turn to a sovereign God in heaven and know that Thou art well able to do all of the things that mercy and loving kindness would do for us. How unworthy we are, but how worthy Thou art. We pray Thy blessing upon us as we

sing, as we hear the word of God, may our time together be a fruitful time for all of us.

We pray in Jesus name. Amen.

[Message] The subject for today is really something like, "Will Babylon be rebuilt?" or "A Babylon Rebuilt?" This is the concluding study, as I mentioned earlier, of our mini series entitled, "Babylon and the Bible." And without doubt it is one of the more significant themes in the word of God. In fact, it has been called, "The most important of the scriptural themes associated with a city," and the reason I know that's true is I heard a fellow say that over the radio this morning at 7:30 to 8:30 on WRR. I didn't have it in my notes here, but I remember he said something about that, and I respect his authority, so I'm setting it forth again for you. [Laughter] We have seen in our brief study that Babylon had its origin in a kind of church state union under Nimrod, in defiance of God as set forth in Genesis chapter 11.

Babylon's history to its fall was the history of some ups and downs as a world power, but ultimately when Cyrus the Persian took the city of Babylon, described for us from the standpoint of divine revelation in Daniel chapter 5, Babylon at that time fell, and then in surprising fact, persisted for a lengthy period of time after that. And another characteristic of Babylon is the fact that the religion of Babylon or Babylonianism continued to persistently penetrate Christendom and ultimately came into the Roman Catholic church as the professing church, and further, some of the things that characterize Babylonianism have persisted down through the centuries, not simply in Romanism, but also in Christendom as a whole, and therefore in Protestantism.

We have seen some of the things, and I have mentioned some of the things that we have been talking about, and there is a great deal of legend connected to Babylon and the story of Babylonianism. For example, some of the legends include the fact that when Nimrod departed from the place of revelation and came into the land that was known as Babylon, he is reported to have married a girl by the name of Semiramis. Semiramis is

supposed to have conceived and bore a son whose name was Tammuz. And going back to the promise of Genesis chapter 3:15, where God said, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. It shall bruise thy head, and thy shall bruise his heel."

Semiramis is said to have claimed that she was the woman of the promise and that her son, Tammuz, was the seed of the woman. While the civilization repudiated God and could not illuminate the knowledge that had been given to them through the divine revelation, Semiramis, again by legend, is supposed to have set herself up as a high priestess of the Babylonian religion, a religion that centered in the worship of the woman, them other and her child. The sign of the Babylonian religion was a woman who held a baby in her arms and was known as the mother/child cult. She took for herself the title, "Queen of Heaven." And those of you who read the Bible will recognize that in the Book of Jeremiah references made to the idols that the prophet had to deal with and one of the names was the "Queen of Heaven" of them.

She became, therefore, according to legend, a mediatrix and a redemptrix between God and man, a new way of approach, not through the blood sacrifice, but through the priestly ministry of the mother and the child, came into being. According to legend, when Tammuz came to young manhood, he was slain while hunting a wild boar. Semiramis gathered a number of the virgins that had been set aside to this religion and after a forty day period of prayer and fasting, she said that Tammuz had been resurrected from the dead by the power of his mother, the Queen of Heaven. Thus the forty day period became an annual time of mourning and sacrifice throughout Babylon.

At the conclusion of that forty day fast, a feast was observed in honor of Semiramis and Tammuz and they made the egg the sacred symbol of Tammuz. It was a symbol of life after death and was exchanged on that feast day set apart after the forty day fast. In mid-winter, on the celebration of the birthday of Tammuz, they erected evergreen trees as a symbol of the eternal life of Tammuz. This particular form of religion, again by

legend, the truthfulness of it is somewhat questionable, in Phoenicia, it spread over the area and in Phoenicia the names were changed to Ashtaroth and Tamus, but the same religion was carried on. The name Ashtaroth was changed to Ishtar, from which we get Easter, and from Phoenicia the religion was carried abroad by that sea faring people into Egypt, where the name of the mother and child was Isis and Horus. And those names were changed to Aphrodite and Eros in Greece, and in Rome the name of the mother and child became Venus and Cupid. In each place it was the same religion that had been instituted in Babylon, salvation through the mother/child cult.

Now, there is a lot of legend about this, and I would suggest that you take all of that with a grain of salt, but probably lying back of it there is some element of truth. Charles Reade, an English author who wrote, what some have called one of the greatest, if not the greatest of the English novels, wrote *The Cloister and the Hearth*, and in the midst of *The Cloister and the Hearth*, he makes reference to these things suggesting that he himself believed these things. I'm quoting now from *The Cloister and the Hearth*, the "kissing of images, and the Pope's toe, is Eastern Paganism. The Egyptians had it of the Assyrians, the Greeks of the Egyptians, the Romans of the Greeks, and we of the Romans, whose Pontifex Maximus had his toe kissed under the Empire. The Druids kissed the High Priest's toe a thousand years B.C."

He says Tully, and I think he was referring to Marcus Tullius, Caesar or Cicero. "Tully tells us of a fair image of Hercules at Agrigentum, whose chin was worn by kissing. The lower parts of the statue we call Peter are Jupiter. The toe is sore worn, but not all by Christian mouths. The heathen vulgar laid their lips there first, for many a year, and ours have but followed them, as monkeys their masters." He goes on to speak about, "our infant baptism is Persian, with the font and the signing of the child's brow. Our throwing three handfuls of earth on the coffin, and saying dust to dust, is Egyptian. Our incense is Oriental, Roman, Pagan; and the early fathers of the church regarded it with

superstitious horror, and died for refusing to handle it. Our holy water is Pagan, and all its uses," Mr. Reade says in one of the exchanges of that great novel.

Did we discover purgatory? He said, "On the contrary, all we really know about it is from two treatises of Plato, the Gorgias and the Phaedo, and the sixth book of Virgil's Aeneid. 'I take it from a holier source: St. Gregory,' said Jerome sternly. 'Like enough,' replied Colonna dryly. 'But St. Gregory was not so nice; he took it from Virgil. Some souls, saith Gregory, are purged by fire, others by water, and others by air. But peradventure, you think Pope Gregory I lived before Virgil, and Virgil versified him. But the doctrine is Eastern, and as much older than Plato as Plato than Gregory. Our prayers for the dead came from Asia with Aeneas. Ovid tells that when he prayed for the soul of Anchises, the custom was strange in Italy.'" All of this illustrates that fact that there was a great deal of tradition in connection with ancient religions, but a lot of it is traced back ultimately to the city of Babylon.

In a sense, Babylonianism exists even if there were no relationship to a specific city, but we have been suggesting that Babylonianism and Babylon the city went together at one time, and they do perhaps underline, perhaps go together again in the future. We do not, of course, know with any kind of certainty, and what I am going to suggest to you, as far as interpretation, is somewhat speculative, and I hope that you will regard it as that. If someone can show me that I am wrong, I will simply say that I have speculated a bit on my knowledge of the word of God, and if you can show me something better, then I hope that I will have the grace to accept that.

If what we have been saying is true, then Babylon's future is the future of a rebuilt city with a vast religious, commercial political system controlling the world; the religious arm, ultimately being overthrown by the political arm, and the beast finally, the anti-Christ, finally reigning over the whole of the world. Now some of those things we know directly from the word of God, other ways by which this may happen are speculated.

The final question that has puzzled biblical interpreters is, "Where will the headquarters of this vast, final, world power be?" Will it be in Rome? Will it be in some other city? Will it be in Jerusalem or will it be in Babylon? Now, is that likely in view of the city of Babylon today? We know some things about Babylon that are rather interesting, and I will mention a few of them in just a moment. But one would have to agree; even though one might not agree with all that I am going to throw out for you to think about that this country where Babylon is today, in Iraq between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, is a country that is very, very fertile. Many have said that if proper organization and use of the resources that are there could be made, it would be one of the great places on the face of the earth.

In the article on Babylonia in one of the dictionaries of the Bible, these words are found. "The country at present is comparatively unproductive," this was written twenty-five or so years ago, "But under firm and enlightened rule would be one of the most fertile regions in the world." Now, the evidence of the word of God, I think, interpreted carefully would lead to the expectation of rebuilding, but if that is not true, then we would have to settle for Babylonianism persisting and Babylonianism existing in the last days as the religion related to the beast's world wide empire, and perhaps, Babylon having the sense that it sometimes had in ancient writings of the city of Rome, because for the apostles there is some evidence, questionable but some evidence that they regarded Babylon to be a symbolic term for the city of Rome.

Now, what I'd like to do in the few moments we have, we really ought to have an hour and twenty-five minutes instead of twenty-five minutes, and I'll probably steal two or three minutes as is customary on Sunday morning. We don't have much time; I'm going to have to survey what I want to say to you rather rapidly. And first of all, I want to say a few words about the teaching of Isaiah and Jeremiah on the topic.

Now I would like for you to turn with me to Jeremiah chapter 51, and let me read a few verses beginning with the 5th verse through the 8th verse or rather through the

ninth verse. Now, while you are looking, Jeremiah 50 and Jeremiah 51 are two chapters that have to do with Babylon. Isaiah has several chapters that have to do with Babylon such as chapter 14. Babylon forms a large Old Testament subject. Now here in Jeremiah chapter 51, in verse 5 he writes,

"For neither Israel nor Judah has been forsaken by his God, the LORD of hosts, although their land is full of guilt before the Holy One of Israel. Flee from the midst of Babylon, and each of you save his life! Do not be destroyed in her punishment, for this is the LORD'S time of vengeance; He is going to render recompense to her. Babylon has been a golden cup in the hand of the LORD, intoxicating all the earth, (You will remember the golden cup in the hand of the harlot sitting upon the beast in chapter 17.) the nations have drunk of her wine; therefore the nations are going mad. Suddenly Babylon has fallen and been broken; Wail over her! Bring balm for her pain; perhaps she may be healed. We applied healing to Babylon, but she was not healed; forsake her and let us each go to his own country, for her judgment has reached to heaven and towers up to the very skies."

One notices the reference to the Tower of Babel there, and also the statement in verse 5 of chapter 18, "For her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities." Now when Babylon was overcome by Cyrus, and the Medo-Persian Empire broke the Babylonian empire, the history of Babylon after that was something like this, maybe summarized in this way, "In 538 BC was the time when Babylon was overcome and defeated. When Cyrus took Babylon, he did not destroy the city, but rather beautified it. He made it, actually, his capital. And so, the idea that Babylon was suddenly destroyed then, does not fit the facts of history.

Two hundred years later in 331 BC, Alexander was in Babylon, and he intended to make Babylon the capital of his world wide empire, but death at a very young age

prevented him from doing so." Strabo, an early historian of this era, is often quoted as saying around 25 AD, that "nothing was left of Babylon." But his words are misinterpreted, in my opinion. He writes, and these are the words of Strabo, "And now indeed Seleucia," that was the name that was given to Babylon at this time, "Seleucia has become greater than Babylon which," these are the words of Strabo, "which for the most part has become deserted," Ha de aramas ha palais [ph 27:58], the Greek term that was used. But notice, for the most part, has been deserted, not entirely, but the most part.

In 1 Peter chapter 5, in verse 13, Peter writing the epistle says that he was in Babylon when he wrote it. Commentators differ over this, and some of the commentators think that Babylon in this case is a reference to Rome, that is the symbolic term that the apostles may have used for Rome, because of the idolatry and wickedness that existed in the city at that time, and especially the persecution of the saints. And there is good reason to say that that might be the meaning.

On the other hand, if we take Peter's expression in a more normal sense, and he doesn't write symbolism in his book, in 1 Peter particularly, it's an epistle that he wrote, and it seems to me that there is good reason to think he expects us to understand that in the normal way, then he was in Babylon at that time. At any rate, in the 5th century, Theodoret, one of the early church fathers, well known, wrote many things, he says with reference to Babylon that it "was still inhabited," in his day. Today, if you go to Babylon the little city of Hilla, a population several decades ago of about twenty-five to thirty thousand, is on the site of ancient Babylon according to some archeological minds. As you know also, and as I've mentioned to you, Iraq, in recent years has been engaged in rebuilding Babylon.

Now, they are rebuilding Babylon, not to become the capital of anything, but to become a tourist attraction. In the June 25 issue of the *New York Time* last year there is a lengthy, full spread article on the building of Babylon anew. It's a lengthy article, if you are interested in it you might read it, but it's essentially an article in which it is stated that

Iraq is engaged in process of rebuilding it as a tourist attraction. There are pictures of the Ishtar Gate and others that have been rebuilt there, and also the walls that have been constructed, and so it's not as foolish as it might have seemed twenty-five or fifty years ago to say, "There is a possibility that Babylon would be rebuilt."

Now according to the biblical language, as we read in chapter 51, verse 8 of Jeremiah, and in other places as well, Babylon's overthrow is said to be sudden, not gradual, but sudden. Further, in Isaiah, it's stated to be in the "Day of the Lord." Now the Day of the Lord, as you well know, is a time of the future. The Day of the Lord has to do with a time when our Lord comes in his Second Advent; at least it is related to that time, perhaps, even inclusive of the kingdom that follows. But at any rate, it's a future day.

In Isaiah, it is stated that when Babylon is destroyed, then the Arabs will never pitch a tent there, and consequently it is only natural that some people would want to test that, and so W.E. Blackstone in the earlier part of this century, who was very familiar with the area, wrote in his diary that when he was in Babylonia he and his Arab guides made a test of that, or he made a test of his Arab guides, and he stated that he had asked the Arab guides to make a tent among the ruins, and there was no objection whatsoever to it. But the prophecy in Isaiah says that no one would make a tent there. So, there is indication, further indication, that perhaps we are looking at something that may be rebuilt.

Babylon's overthrow is said to be, according to chapter 50, verses 4 through 6 of Jeremiah, at Israel's restoration, at the time of the beast judgment according to Isaiah chapter 14, verse 4 through verse 27, as I say in the day of the Lord.

And finally, the description of Babylon's overthrow in the Old Testament, in Isaiah chapter 13, that description is accompanied by heavenly disturbances, and so what the Old Testament seems to say is that the destruction of Babylon is a destruction that will take place at the general time of our Lord's Second Advent.

Now, the teaching of Zachariah we have looked at, but I want you to look again at Zachariah chapter 5, and verse 5 through verse 11. So, would you turn to Zachariah

chapter 5, verse 5 through verse 11, and I would like to read again these verses and make a few comments about them. The final removal of Israel's sin of godless commercialism back to Babylon from the land is set forth here in these verses. In verse 5 of Zachariah chapter 5, we read these words, "Then the angel who was speaking with me went out and said to me, Lift up now your eyes and see what this is going forth. I said, "What is it?" Now wouldn't it be nice if you and I had an interpreting angel sitting by our side, or standing by our side whenever we read the Bible and we could read something, and we could say, "What is that?" And then we would have an inspired answer. Now everybody smiles, because we think it would be wonderful. May I suggest to you that you have something even better. You have the Holy Spirit who is your interpreter of the word of God. I would rather have him than the interpreting angel, although I must confess, I would like to have the interpreting angel too. [Laughter] I would like to have my own that is that's his interpreting angel. But the Holy Spirit is ready, and willing, and able to interpret the word of God for us. Well Zachariah said, "What is it?" And the angel said, "This is the ephah going forth. This is their appearance in all the land."

Now remember, the ephah was the largest Jewish measure for dry goods, the symbol of commerce. And Israel in the Babylonian captivity, being taken to Babylon had changed from a pastoral to a mercantile people, leading to the development of theft and perjury and all of the other kinds of things that transpired in the changing from the pastoral to the mercantile people. Amos writes about those sins that they have contracted from the Babylonian captivity.

Now we go on and verse 7 says, "And behold, a lead cover was lifted up; and this is a woman sitting inside the ephah. Then he said this is Wickedness! And he threw her down into the middle of the ephah and cast the lead weight on its opening. Then I lifted up my eyes and looked, and there two women were coming out with the wind in their wings; and they had wings like the wings of a stork, and they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heavens. I said to the angel who was speaking with me,

Where are they taking the ephah?" Representative of godless commercialism. "Then he said to me, To build a temple for her in the land of Shinar," that's Babylonia. You'll find that in the Old Testament in earlier chapters. "To build a temple for her in the land of Shinar and when it is prepared, she will be set there on her own base."

In other words, Babylonianism will ultimately find its way back to Babylon and there will be set upon its own pedestal, home again, seen in the greed of the beast and the kings who are associated with him in the final world empire; perhaps indicating that Babylon will be ultimately the capital of the empire of the beast. We cannot be altogether sure of that, but nevertheless there are some indications here that that may well be true. When that happens is the time when Israel is restored and returned to the possession of the promises of God that have been made to her.

It would be nice if we had time to turn to Deuteronomy chapter 8. When you get home today, read your Bible and read chapter 28 of Deuteronomy, because you have the whole history of the nation of Israel and these are just the parts of it. In Deuteronomy 28 it is said that Israel is going to be scattered into every land. It is said that they are to be separate from the nations; we know that from several prophecies in the Old Testament, for example Balaam's. They are like the Gulf Stream in the midst of the Atlantic Ocean. They are the Gulf Stream kind of people in the Atlantic Ocean of humanity. They are with us, but they are really not of us. Just like the Gulf Stream moves out from the gulf and our into the Atlantic, and ultimately comes up and warms the shores of western Scotland, so that in places like Inverewe Gardens, way to the north, tropical flowers can grow. So, Israel will dwell apart, Moses said, from the nations. Scattered to every land, yet separate. They will become the money lenders. Twice in that prophecy it is stated that they will lend money, money lenders. Someone has said that if you want to borrow a large sum of money, you could not borrow it without some ultimate acquiescence by the people of Israel.

At any rate, after that they will be persecuted, persecuted by all of the nation. Lord Byron wrote a little stanza about them, "Tribe of the wandering foot and weary breast, where shall ye fly away and be at rest? Birds of the air have nests and foxes cave, mankind is home, Israel but the grave." But persecution will not keep them from being preserved. They will be preserved. And many of the historians have wrote about the remarkable way in which Israel will be preserved. The historian Millman, writing about this, spoke of the ways in which they would, in spite of the fact that they had been persecuted, they would be preserved. After being preserved, Deuteronomy 28 says that they will be restored and ultimately shall rule and reign in the kingdom of God.

Napoleon had the dream of Babylon as a world capital, and so did the Kaiser. Nearly a hundred and fifty years ago, or two hundred years now, Napoleon Bonaparte said that "whoever held Babylon held the key to India and the world." And in the war office of Paris, a survey of the Euphrates valley made for Napoleon contained a plan for a new Babylon with keys, river walls, and other arrangements necessary for a large commercial city. Presumably his campaigns in Egypt and Palestine had this in view. He was thwarted of course, but nevertheless it may be that the anti-Christ will fulfill what Napoleon Bonaparte had as a vision in his day.

Our time is drawing rapidly to a close and I'd like to ask you to turn now to Revelation chapter 18. I'm counting on you having remembered some of the things that we have talked about in our previous studies, but in chapter 18 of the Book of Revelation, we have the description of one of the most marvelous events of all time, the destruction of the city of Babylon.

Now the first three verses, which have read, announce the overthrow of Babylon, and the words that particularly announce it are, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great." Incidentally, some have thought to make something over the fact that we read, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen," suggesting some have said, that one of the fallens has to do with the system, and one of the fallens has to do with the city. That, to my mind, is

speculation, but nevertheless it is somewhat interesting in the light of the fact that in the Book of Revelation we have, "Woe, woe, woe," three woes and yet those three woes are spelled out and related to specific events. If you like that kind of interpretation, well that's one for you. The call to separation and the announcement of the lamentation of the kings, the merchants, and the men is set out in the verses that begin at verse 4 through verse 19.

You will notice that we read in verse 9, "And the kings of the earth have committed acts of immorality and live sensuously with her, will weep and lament over her." Then in verse 11, "The merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her." And then finally in verse 17, "And as many as make their living by the sea, will weep over her as well." And finally, the chapter ends with a call to exaltation, verse 20 through verse 24, "Rejoice over her, oh heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, because God has pronounced judgment for you against her." And notice particularly the statement again, that in verse 24 "the blood of the prophets, and of the saints, and of all who have been slain on the earth are in her." And also in verse 20, "Rejoice over her, oh heaven and you saints and apostles and prophets, because God has pronounced judgment for you against her." In other words, what Babylon seems to represent, at the least, is the system which has been responsible for martyrdom of prophets, and apostles, and saints over the whole of the earth.

Now I'd like to point out something that I think is rather important. We talked about the destruction of Babylon, and we talked about the way in which it is described in the Old Testament in the Book of Isaiah, in the Book of Jeremiah particularly a number of chapters devoted to this, but in the Old Testament, it is specifically stated that Babylon, when Babylon is destroyed, will be destroyed suddenly. Now that I think is rather important. In the light of that, then a gradual destruction of the city does not seem to fit. As we've pointed out, Babylon existed for a considerable period of time after Cyrus overcame the city.

Now when we turn to chapter 18 in the Book of Revelation, we have this fact again mentioned. Verse 8, "For this reason, in one day her plagues will come, pestilence, and mourning, and famine." And then in verse 17, "In one hour such great wealth has been laid waste." And again in verse 19, "Woe, woe the great city in which all who had ships at sea became rich by her wealth, for in one hour she has been laid waste." So, putting the Old Testament together with the New Testament, it appears that they agree that the destruction of Babylon referred to in the Bible is to be a sudden destruction; in one day, twice here in one hour. So, further there is therefore, some reason for believing that the Babylon of Revelation 17 and 18 may be a city, and the destruction of Babylon in the past was not complete, but in the future, when the godless commercialism of the beast and the harlot sitting upon the beast, returns to Babylon, we are looking at a final, one hour destruction of Babylon when our Lord Jesus Christ comes again.

If that is so, that would indicate that Babylon might well be the capital of the beast in the last days. But what we are talking about is largely speculative, and therefore I think it would be wise for an individual to say, "This is what I, perhaps speculate may take place." But we cannot speak with any kind of authority as this is the teaching of the word of God, at least I cannot. There are many, many Bible teachers who are fine individuals, who believe that Babylon is a reference to Rome, and others who believe that Babylon is not a reference to a city at all, but rather to a system. The last statement of verse 18 of chapter 17 would seem to suggest otherwise, where we read, "And the woman whom you saw, is the great city which reigns over the kings of the earth." So, we'll leave that as speculative.

If the antichrist comes, and ultimately when he comes, if he has his kingdom and his capital in Babylon, well then I'll smile, but I probably won't be here to smile with you. And you can say, "I remember way back then Dr. Johnson said something like that might happen." If it's not, well there are some things in the word of God that have not been made plain to most of us.

Let me close by making a few comments. The ultimate home of the system is, according to this speculation, a city; the union of the two, the object of the beast's greed. Rome, it has been said, is the largest corporation in the world, the Pope's shop, as I referred to earlier. And if it is so that the harlot rides upon the beast and the beast is to destroy the harlot, the system, then we can understand the motive of the beast's destruction of the religious arm of the last days, it is for greed. And the godless commercialism that characterizes Babylonianism will be manifested in that.

But let us not think, some of the Popes have called what they were engaged in a farce, in the past centuries ago, because they recognized what the church had become. But let us not think it is only Rome. Do you know, I have a friend who told me this personally, when he was at the University of Pennsylvania, he did research on the ownership of securities in Great Britain. And do you know what he told me? He said that, "From my research, I discovered that the greatest holder of British securities was the Anglican church." That was a remarkable statement, was the Anglican church. So, we do have wealthy religious organizations. That might well be the goal of the beast, for his greedy hands he would want to get hold of them. I am sure that Believers Chapel will be one of his objects as well.

The escape for the people of God is found in verse 4, "I heard another voice from heaven saying, come out of her my people that ye may not participate in her sins and that you may not receive of her plagues." Separation from the deeds and from the mood of Babylonianism is the call of the Holy Spirit of God. Some of the remnant were evidently there, and so God called them out in the Old Testament of that city and its godless commercialism, and in the future the same thing will hold true. And I will suggest to you that this is something for us to pay very careful attention to. In our day, the evangelical church has lost the sense of the worldliness that the Scriptures warn us against. Hardly anyone every says anything about worldliness, but the evangelical church is infected with worldliness. And that type of Babylonianism is one of our greatest enemies in our day.

"Come out of her, my people, that you may not participate in her sins, and that you may not receive of her plagues."

Of course, one of the greatest things about Babylonianism is its false gospel. I would like to just cite three statements concerning the atonement, made by the apostles. The Apostle John said, "He died that we might live through him." The Apostle Paul said, "He died that we might live for him." And the Apostle Paul said in another place, "He died that we might live with him." So, he died that we might live through him. He died that we might live for him. He died that we might live with him. The false communion of Babylonianism is simply a false imitation of the true communion of our Lord in the Holy Spirit. Let us remember that God is ultimately going to wind up the history of Babylonianism on the earth. I don't want to be a part of that system, myself. I hope you don't either.

Let me remind you that when it says that, "He died that we might live through him," we are talking about an atoning sacrifice for sinners. We all are sinners. We all are therefore, individuals who may partake of the gift of eternal life through that which Christ has done. May God cause you to recognize your sin, and may God cause you to recognize the peril in which you sit at the present time if you do not know Christ, and may you come to him. Flee to him. I hope that you do not leave this auditorium without the hope of eternal life through Jesus Christ.

Well, I see that I have stolen two or three more minutes. Let's stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father we thank Thee, and praise Thee for the word of God and for the way in which Thou has given us guidance through the Holy Spirit. We pray that we may continue to read and ponder the word of God, and seek to understand it, and give us Lord the grace and the motivation to guide our lives by the word and the Spirit for Jesus sake. Amen.