

Text: Revelation 18:1-24
Topic: Pride. Humility.
Series: The Book of Revelation

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The Problem with Babylon

Striving to be Different than the World we Live In

18:1 After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven. He had great authority, and the earth was illuminated by his splendor. 2 With a mighty voice he shouted: "Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great! She has become a home for demons and a haunt for every evil spirit, a haunt for every unclean and detestable bird. 3 For all the nations have drunk the maddening wine of her adulteries. The kings of the earth committed adultery with her, and the merchants of the earth grew rich from her excessive luxuries." 4 Then I heard another voice from heaven say: "Come out of her, my people, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues; 5 for her sins are piled up to heaven, and God has remembered her crimes. 6 Give back to her as she has given; pay her back double for what she has done. Mix her a double portion from her own cup. 7 Give her as much torture and grief as the glory and luxury she gave herself. In her heart she boasts, 'I sit as queen; I am not a widow, and I will never mourn.' 8 Therefore in one day her plagues will overtake her: death, mourning and famine. She will be consumed by fire, for mighty is the Lord God who judges her. 9 "When the kings of the earth who committed adultery with her and shared her luxury see the smoke of her burning, they will weep and mourn over her. 10 Terrified at her torment, they will stand far off and cry: "Woe! Woe, O great city, O Babylon, city of power! In one hour your doom has come!" 11 "The merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her because no one buys their cargoes any more— 12 cargoes of gold, silver, precious stones and pearls; fine linen, purple, silk and scarlet cloth; every sort of citron wood, and articles of every kind made of ivory, costly wood, bronze, iron and marble; 13 cargoes of cinnamon and spice, of incense, myrrh and frankincense, of wine and olive oil, of fine flour and wheat; cattle and sheep; horses and carriages; and bodies and souls of men. 14 "They will say, 'The fruit you longed for is gone from you. All your riches and splendor have vanished, never to be recovered.' 15 The merchants who sold these things and gained their wealth from her will stand far off, terrified at her torment. They will weep and mourn 16 and cry out: "Woe! Woe, O great city, dressed in fine linen, purple and scarlet, and glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls! 17 In one hour such great wealth has been brought to ruin!" "Every sea captain, and all who travel by ship, the sailors, and all who earn their living from the sea, will stand far off. 18 When they see the smoke of her burning, they will exclaim, 'Was there ever a city like this great city?' 19 They will throw dust on their heads, and with weeping and mourning cry out: "Woe! Woe, O great city, where all who had ships on the sea became rich through her wealth! In one hour she has been brought to ruin! 20 Rejoice over her, O heaven! Rejoice, saints and apostles and prophets! God has judged her for the way she treated you." 21 Then a mighty angel picked up a boulder the size of a large millstone and threw it into the sea, and said: "With such violence the great city of Babylon will be thrown down, never to be found again. 22 The music of harpists and musicians, flute players and trumpeters, will never be heard in you again. No workman of any trade will ever be found in you again. The sound of a millstone will never be heard in you again. 23 The light of a lamp will never shine in you again. The voice of bridegroom and bride will never be heard in you again. Your merchants were the world's great men. By your magic spell all the nations were led astray. 24 In her was found the blood of prophets and of the saints, and of all who have been killed on the earth." (NIV)

Attitude Toward Self

Babylon

The Counter-Culture

Attitude Toward Things

Babylon

The Counter-Culture

Attitude Toward Tomorrow

Babylon

The Counter-Culture

Application Questions

These questions are provided for your further study and application of today's message. It is recommended that you take time this week to write out your response to each of these questions. This will help to drive home the point of today's message and will help you to apply the principles to your life situation.

1. It is popular these days to believe that the problem with many people in our society and in our churches is a "low self-esteem". How does Jesus address the issue of "esteeming ourselves"? (See Luke 9:10-14, Mark 9:35; Matthew 18:2-4; Luke 22:26-27; note also Philippians 2:3-11.)

Pride is not always conspicuously godless! Spurgeon once preached, *"It is astonishing that [even] when we are at our prayers—when we try to make use of humble expressions, we are betrayed into pride."* He explains, *"[I have] found myself on my knees making use of such an expression as this: 'O Lord, I grieve before thee, that ever I should have been such a sinner as I have been. Oh that I should ever have revolted and rebelled as I have done.' There was pride in that!"* How is it, do you think, that Spurgeon detected pride in a prayer like that?

In what ways do you find pride and self-promotion creeping into your Christian activities?

2. Our world obviously thinks and lives independent from the God of the Bible. Yet, as Christians, we are called to recognize our minute-by-minute dependence on the Giver of life. How are you doing in seeing your life and existence as dependant on God moment by moment?

How do you think you might acquire and maintain a grateful and dependent attitude like that of King David in 1 Chronicles 29:10-16?

3. Materialism is a major problem in the political and religious system of the Tribulation—as it is today. What can be done to cultivate contentment in a world that constantly eggs us on to have "only the best" and "as much of it as possible"?

What can be done in your life to cultivate a heart that is generous with your stuff?

4. It is easy to get caught up in talking about the future with confidence and assertiveness. Why do you think that this is considered boasting in James 4:13-16 and how will you avoid doing this?