

# Weeping Over Babylon

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*Revelation 18:9-19*

## INTRODUCTION

- A. Illustration about Greyfriars Bobby, *Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations*, #11909.
  - 1. There is not a one of us who has not experienced grief similar to that poor little dog's.
  - 2. Each one of us has experienced days where we did not know where we would get the strength to go on.
- B. Tonight's text speaks of intense grief.
  - 1. Babylon is pictured as having fallen, and those who profited from Babylon are seen as in deep grief.
  - 2. Tonight, we want to examine the grief of the world over the fall of Babylon.

## THE MAJESTIES OF THE EARTH WEEP, vv. 9-10

- A. The kings of the earth, who committed fornication and were wanton with Babylon, will weep and wail over her when they see the smoke of her burning. v. 9.
  - 1. The kings of the earth would be the client kings in Roman states who achieved their position and power from Rome.
  - 2. They committed fornication and were wanton with Babylon — again, the idea of these kings' committing fornication with Babylon is the idea of their carrying out the emperor cult in their various states.
  - 3. They will weep and wail over Babylon.
    - a. Weeping is to vent loud expression of grief this is crying to the utmost.
    - b. Wailing is the beating of the breast as a token of anguish.
    - c. These kings are in the deepest grief, and they are outwardly expressing that deep, deep grief.
  - 4. The kings of the earth will grieve when they see the smoke of Babylon's burning — tire was a sign of a city's collapse in the Ancient Near East.
- B. The kings will stand far off, in fear of Babylon's torment, and say. "Alas! Alas! Thou great city, thou mighty city, Babylon! In one hour has thy judgment come," v. 10.
  - 1. These kings will stand at a distance and watch Babylon's fall, for they fear her torment — these kings don't want to get too close to Babylon, because they fear being caught up in her judgment.
  - 2. The kings refer to Babylon as the great city — Rome was a city with immense power; a city with Rome's power would not rise on the world scene for nearly a millennium.
  - 3. Rome's judgment has come in one hour.
    - a. The expression "one hour" is used four times in Revelation.
    - b. Each occurrence of "one hour" means "a short time."
    - c. Thus, Babylon's fall and her judgment occurred in a short period of time.
- C. These kings mourn over Babylon's fall because they have just lost their power.
  - 1. These kings gained their position and power just because of Rome.
  - 2. Now that Rome is gone, political adversaries will be able to gain power.
- D. In this passage, we may find a powerful lesson on leadership.
  - 1. These client kings were power hungry; they wanted all sorts of power for themselves, and they wept when they lost that power.
  - 2. We need to be ever so careful about power in the church.
    - a. There has never been a congregation that did not have someone trying to gain power.
    - b. Let us not be power hungry!



1. God has never appreciated people's taking great luxury upon themselves at the expense of others.
  - a. "Hear this word, you cows of Bashan, who are on the mountain of Samaria, who oppress the poor, Who crush the needy, Who say to your husbands, 'Bring wine, let us drink!'" (Amos 4:1).
    - 1) The women of the Northern Kingdom loved luxury and ignored those in need.
    - 2) Therefore, they would face God's judgment (4:2-3).
  - b. "Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy" (1 Tim. 6:17).
2. There is nothing wrong with being wealthy — very wealthy, even — as long as others care for; as long as others are not oppressed by one's riches.
3. Let us be more concerned with spiritual matters than money matters! Let us watch out for the welfare of the poor!

## **THE MARINERS OF THE EARTH WEEP, vv. 17b-19**

- A. And all shipmasters and seafaring men, sailors and all whose trade is on the sea, stood far off and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning, "What city was like the great city?," vv. 17b-18.
  1. These mariners would have been the ones who actually carried out the trade the merchants established.
  2. They stand at a distance — they don't want to get caught up in the judgment of Rome.
  3. They ask the rhetorical question, "What city was like the great city?" The idea is that no city was like Rome in her splendor, her glory, or her luxury.
- B. These mariners threw dust on their heads, as they wept and mourned, crying out, "Alas, alas, for the great city where all who had ships at sea grew rich by her wealth! In one hour she has been laid waste," v. 19.
  1. These mariners threw dust on their heads — a sign of deep mourning in the Ancient Near East.
  2. These mariners weep because they had grown rich by her wealth. They had gained many riches through Rome, but now that she has fallen they will not gain that wealth.
  3. In one hour she has been laid waste — in a short period of time Rome had been laid waste.

## **CONCLUSION**

- A. The Roman Empire fell just as God said it would. Its luxury came to an end just as God said it would.
- B. One day this earth will fall just as God says it will. Its luxury will come to an end just as God says it will. Are you ready for that day?