Series: How the Story Ends

**At last, Jesus brings justice!**

Revelation 18:1-11, 20-24. March 5, 2017

Intro: Why we need to know how the story ends.

* Revelation 1:9 *I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.*

1. Babylon is the serpent dressed in culture. (vv.1-2)

a. Spotting Satan in the garden was easy.

* Genesis 3:1 *Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden’?”*

b. Babel showed the power of cultural sin.

* Genesis 11:4 *Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.”*

c. Babylon became a symbol of pride, greed, oppression and immorality.

* Daniel 4:30 *and the king answered and said, “Is not this great Babylon, which I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty?”*
* vv.1-2 The spirit of Babylon is empowered by the serpent.

d. The spirit of Babylon is alive today!

Q. How are cultural sins harder to deal with than personal sins?

Q. What are some of the cultural sins you recognize in the culture where you grew up?

Q. What are some of the cultural sins you recognize around you now?

Q. What’s needed to avoid stumbling into cultural sins?

2. Many will sing a requiem, mourning Babylon’s demise.

(vv. 2-10)

a. The seemingly invincible spirit of Babylon will one day be decisively judged.

* v.2 God pronounces a funeral for Babylon.
* v.5 Babel tried to build a tower to heaven, Babylon’s sins are heaped as high as heaven.
* v.7 Babylon is too proud to see her end.
* v.8 God’s judgment on Babylon will be sudden and terrible.

b. Babylon’s judgment will bring crushing loss to those who give her their allegiance.

* v.9 All who compromise with Babylon to get ahead will wail at her loss.
* v.10 Loss will be compounded by dread and fear of judgment for all who trust in Babylon.
* Revelation 3:17 *For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.*

Q. Why does Babylon believe she is invincible? Why are we tempted to think the same thing about our own culture’s power and influence?

Q. This chapter is filled with the pain and mourning of people who regret the fall of Babylon. Who will feel this pain the most? Why?

3. Some will sing a hymn, celebrating Babylon’s destruction.

(vv. 20-24)

a. Babylon’s judgment will bring long-awaited relief to the faithful.

* v.20 *Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets*

b. Babylon’s judgment will allow human flourishing without the serpent’s deception.

* vv.21-24 Art, industry and family will be liberated from Babylon’s power.

c. Babylon’s judgment will be celebrated by those who have separated from the spirit of Babylon.

* v.4 God commands people to separate from Babylon lest they share her fate.
* 1 Peter 2:12 *Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.*
* Keller: “There are plenty of people who, though they may actually be converted Christians, but because of the way in which they are conducting their lives, because of their personal ethics, because of their relationships, because of the way in which they do their business, shoddy business, bad business, unhelpful, and selfish, they’re participating in the systems of Babylon.”

Q. Why would godly people rejoice at the fall of Babylon?

Q. Some have misunderstood the command to *“Come out of her”* in v.4 as a call to a monastic life, separated from society. What does it mean to be ‘in the world but not of the world?’

**Notes:**