

When The Stock Market Crashes For The Last Time

by J. Mike Minnix

TITLE:	When The Stock Market Crashes For The Last Time
BIBLE BOOK:	Revelation 18 : 1-19
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SUBJECT:	Money; Stock Market; Finances
OBJECTIVE:	Dr. Minnix shares a message on the false hope many people have in money, retirement accounts, homes, possessions and things in general. The only hope of the world is Christ and Christ alone. One day the stock market will crash for the last time and that crash is described in the Bible. If it happened today, would you be ready?

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Introduction

We come now to Revelation 18 and a look at the fall of Babylon. The title of the message today is when The Stock Market Crashes For The Last Time. For the past 6 months, we have watched the American stock market disintegrate. Billions and perhaps trillions of dollars of wealth has been lost in this country in the last few weeks alone. The world markets aren't doing any better. Some blame Allan Greenspan. Some blame the loose housing loan market created by Bill Clinton in the mid-nineties. Still others blame President George Bush.

Let me share something with you, whoever is responsible and for however long it lasts, this economic downturn is a sobering wake up call to America. This helps us to see how vulnerable we really are. Remember that the roaring 20s ended with the snoring 30s. The economy went to sleep in America for almost 20 years. But I want you to know that one day the markets of this world will collapse for the last time. The systems of government, false religion and economics upon which so many are building their lives will come tumbling down.

Many years ago people used buckets for various chores and tasks. They would bring vegetables from the garden in a galvanized bucket. Water was drawn up from a well and carried to the home in a bucket. A mason would carry bricks in a bucket. In those days there were no plastic buckets, and the metal ones were expensive. Buckets were used for a very long time and occasionally a bucket would become so old and worn that the bottom would fall out while someone was using it. You can imagine the frustration if a person was hauling water from the well when suddenly the bottom of the bucket gave way and water splashed all over the feet of that person. It could be even more annoying if there were bricks in the bucket when it ruptured. When the bottom drops out of the financial bucket, there is a lot of hand wringing that takes place.

One day something far more disturbing is going to occur. In due time the bottom is going to fall out of heaven and it is going to come crashing down upon this earth.

In Revelation 18 we read about the fall of city named Babylon. Of course, there is no city in the world today by that name, so just what does this mean? When we study the Bible, we learn in Genesis 10

that Babylon was an ancient city established by a man named Nimrod. Then, in Genesis 11, we read about the Tower of Babel. The Tower of Babel was a tower built by people who thought they could ascend to heaven and make a name for themselves. It was a man-centered attempt to take the place of God. But it utterly failed. God confused their languages so that they could not work together and the place was called Babel. Symbolically, Babylon has become the world system which is man-centered, defies God, seeks pleasure, possessions, and power as the end to the meaning of life. In essence, it is the rule and reign of the Antichrist, the one who will seek to take God's throne and replace Jesus as the Lord of the Universe.

One day Jesus is coming again. He will bring Babylon down for the last time. The Stock Market will collapse and all the systems of men will crumble. The songwriter correctly penned the words:

On Christ the solid rock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand
All other ground is sinking sand.

The poet put it like this -
Only one life, twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.

But many people are building their lives on sinking sand. Remember, Babylon is not just the name of a city, it is a system, it is a Satanic system. Babylon is the code name for the system the Anti-Christ will use in his attempt to overthrow Christ. All those who live their lives based on this system are living sinking sand. All Christians who live while dabbling in this system are failing to live faithfully for Christ.

Are you living on Babylon time? Are you living according to the Anti-Christian Babylonian system?
Lets take a test and find out.

I. The Trust Test

Revelation 18:1-4

You will note that those who live according to the Anti-Christ are trusting in three things. They trust possessions, power and pleasure. These are addictive things in this life. Satan's desire is to get you involved in worldly pursuits and, thus, keep your mind off of Christ. This leads the lost person to be indifferent to the Savior. This leads the saved person to be indifferent to service.

What can we really trust in this life? Money? Health? Friends? Your job or business? Your home or possessions? There is nothing inherently wrong in this things, but they cannot be trusted. They are all made of sinking sand.

Your money can be lost, your home destroyed, your health fail your friends can desert you or perish before you. Only Christ can be trusted. In John 10 Jesus speaks of holding the believer in His hands. He tells us that nothing can take us out of His hands.

In a cemetery in England stands a grave marker with this inscription: SHE DIED FOR WANT OF THINGS. Alongside that stone is another which reads: HE DIED TRYING TO GIVE THEM TO HER. In a laughable and yet tragic manner these epitaphs suggest the folly of living and working only for this world's goods. Yet, that is what some are doing.

II. The Testimony Test

Revelation 18:5-7

The testimony of the Babylonian system is found in verses 5-7. The sins of Babylon will one day reach their zenith. They will reach to the throne of God. This reminds us of Nineveh. God said of that city that her sins had reached all the way to heaven and He was ready to bring judgment. Sodom and Gomorrah had sins that reached up to heaven and God sent judgment. But the inhabitants of the

Babylonian system, the life built on self and sin, cannot see the coming danger. Look at the testimony. I will not mourn. Riding high on sin and self, the people in this system just cannot see the coming day of sorrow and judgment. The testimony is one of defiance of God. The testimony is one of denial of God's Word. The testimony is one of going on in sin and refusing to listen to what the Lord is saying.

Two roaches decided to visit their favorite restaurant, so the story goes. While the larger of the two finished his meal, the smaller one said, "You would not have believed the house I just left. It was spotless. The lady must have been a clean-aholic. Everything was shiny-the sink, the counters, the floors. Everything was sparkling." The other roach stopped his munching, looked at his companion annoyed and said, "Do you have to talk like that while I'm eating?"

Those living according to Babylon, do not want to hear about judgment. They scoff at coming judgment. They wince when they hear a preacher speak of hell, though the Bible mentions hell as many times as it mentions heaven.

One popular TV preacher has never mentioned the word hell on his program in over 20 years on the air. A Baptist minister met with him at lunch in a conference one day and asked why he never spoke of judgment and hell. The minister smile with a wink and said, "The people don't want to hear it, the people don't want to hear it."

Our testimony must be that we believe Jesus is Lord, that He died for our sins, that He was buried, that He rose from the grave, and that He is coming again! Our testimony must be that He died to save us from the awful terrors of punishment, which is total and everlasting separation from God because of our sins. Our testimony must be that hell would be our home if Christ were not our Lord. Is that your testimony today?

III. The Time Test

Revelation 18:8, 10b, 17, 19b

The third test is what I call the time test. Note in the selected verses how time is emphasized. The reason for this is the fact that when judgment comes, it will happen in a moment. I want you to think of something with me today. Think of anything you have that money cannot buy and time, disaster or death cannot take away from you. Money? A disaster could wipe you out in a moment. Health? Illness or death could change your life in a hour. I remember visiting the hospital some years ago to see a young woman who had been in car wreck. The day before she had been full of life. She was beautiful, young and had her entire life before her. A freak accident, however, changed all of that in a few moments. She ran off the road in her car. Her head hit the top of the car. By the time I got to the hospital, she had learned that she was paralyzed for the rest of her life. She could not move her legs. She could not move her arms. As I bent over her to pray, she cried out, Preacher, please pray that I will die.

A few weeks later she committed her life to Christ. Though required to live out her life without feeling in her extremities, she became a vibrant Christian. She was elected Homecoming Queen at her school. She gave her testimony anywhere anyone would listen. She would say, It took a horrible accident to wake me up to the meaning of life. Don't let this happen to you.

What do you have that time cannot take from you. Your home? It can be gone in a moment. I remember one day in North Carolina that I was cutting grass in my backyard. Storm clouds had begun to gather in the distance but the sun was still shining where I was. Suddenly at of the sky came bolt of lightening that shook the ground. Jayne told me to get off that mower and come in the house. She took our son and went in the back door. I decided that I could finish the yard first. After all, I only needed to cut a few more strips of grass. Then, suddenly, lightening was everywhere. I mean, it all happened in a moment. I leaped from the mower and ran into the house. When curled up in the hallway and listened as the most violent lightening storm I had ever witnessed literally exploded all around us. We could hear the lightening hitting trees in our yard and cracking them in two. Finally the storm passed and we went out to survey the damage. It was horrible to see the destructive nature of that storm. Then we heard the word. We had avoided the worst of it. A tornado had touched down just a few miles from our house. We rode over to see the results. Entire homes were literally gone. A business that sat on the corner of two roads was missing. There was nothing left but the foundation. A path through some trees gave evidence of the fury of that storm. In a few minutes, the work of entire

lifetimes had been erased by the wind.

Let me ask you something? What do you possess that a storm could not take from you? Family? In that storm that passed over us, some people literally lost their family members. A couple years ago a family left church to drive home and a few minutes later they were all dead. A man driving a van ran a red light and crashed into their car. As I saw that on the news, I wondered, Was everyone in that car saved? Where they ready to meet God? Going to church is not enough. We must have something that time cannot take from us.

The Bible says that one day the Lord is going to bring judgment on Babylon. It will happen in an hour, in a day. If it happened in the next few minutes would you be ready to meet God?

When the Berlin Wall was torn down, scientists set back the hands on the so-called Doomsday Clock from near midnight to about 11:45 P.M. Scientists move the hands back and forth based upon their estimation of the danger present in the world at any given moment. Scientist may move the hands of that clock back and forth, but no one can move the hands of our personal clock when it comes time to meet God. Longfellow wrote,

Art is long and time is fleeting,
And our hearts though stout and brave,
Still like muffled drums are beating,
Funeral dirges to the grave.

Can you pass the time test? Do you have something that time cannot take and death cannot steal? Only Christ can give you something like that.

IV. The Terror Test

Revelation 18:10, 13

Note the terror as the judgment is observed. Those depending on the Babylon system will be filled with terror at the coming judgment. A Tennessee doctor was attending a man who was dying in an apparent heart attack. The man began to ask the doctor to pray for him. The told the doctor that he could feel himself slipping into hell. He cried for the doctor to please pray for him. The doctor, however, was not a Christian. He could not pray. But following that incident, he could not get it off his mind. It haunted him. He finally turned his life over to Christ. I heard him give his testimony on television. He told how he could not forget the terror on the dying man's face. He told how he had seen Christians die in peace and how that memory helped him see his need for salvation.

How about you? Is death a terror? Don't get me wrong, death is no picnic. No one wants to die. God made us with a desire to live. But the difference in living in Christ and living in Babylon can be seen in the terror factor. A Christian once said, I am not at all afraid to meet God. In fact, since I have been saved, I have looked forward to that day. The fact is, however, I would rather not have to go through death to get there. I think every Christian could say that. But the lost person is facing something worse than death. The Bible says that it is appointed unto man once to die and after that the judgment.

V. The Tears Test

There are two kinds of tears you can weep, tears of sadness or tears of joy. I remember a Vacation Bible School leader from a church some years ago. She came walking up a hallway toward me one day during VBS and she had a child by her hand. She and the child had tears in their eyes. Now that is not unusual at some VBS events. Children and teachers can feel so tired, so frustrated, so put out, that they will shed some tears, but on this day things were different. I could tell that the tears were not sad tears but glad tears. When she came up to me, she told me how the older child had accepted Jesus as Savior. Then with her tears increasing, she said, This is the first person I have ever led to Christ. With that statement and her tears, she got me started. Then there were three of us crying. But they were happy tears.

But, my dear friend, there is something called sad tears. Sad tears are shed over a wasted life. Sad tears will be shed at the judgment and beyond. The Bible says that those who die without Christ will

go out into eternity and there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Sometimes we Christians have tears in this world. But look at Psalm 30:5. Weeping may last for the night, but joy comes in the morning. Jesus saves the best till last. The devil gives you pleasure now and sorrow later. Sin has pleasure for a season but then the season runs out. With the Lord, there is a joy unspeakable and full of glory.

To which kingdom do you belong - that of the Beast or that of Christ? If you are resting on the foundations of Babylon, be warned that they are ready for collapse and will be destroyed!

Someone here today needs to flee from Babylon. You need to step out of the mire and put your feet on the Solid Rock, Jesus Christ. Trust Him today, He will give you a glorious testimony, give you a life that time cannot touch, take the terror out of death and grant you tears with joy!

Then some of us need to acknowledge afresh today that Jesus is our foundation. We are trusting in the market, but the Master. We are trusting in our health, we are trusting in the Holy One. We are not trusting government, we are trusting God. We are not trusting self, we are trusting the Savior. It is good for us to acknowledge this. It is good for us to renew our testimony and our commitment to the One who gave everything for us.