

Empire's Demise (Seven Bowls)

Revelation 15:5 – 18:24

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In a vision, John saw empire flourishing on earth. Its power and opulence were enticing, intoxicating. Though the façade of empire was attractive and seductive, its core was rotten. It was arrogant and had an insatiable desire for dominance. It reveled in oppression, brutality, and greed. Its fingers of influence stretched far and wide, insinuating themselves into every corner of profitable venture.

Empire victimized its own citizenry with the help of local officials in search of political advancement. It used wealth and the promise of wealth to attract interest, not unlike a prostitute wearing fine clothing and gaudy jewelry to beguile clientele. And the driving force behind it all was Satan and the demonic realm.

The vast majority of people were submissive to empire. But Christ-followers were called to resist its ruinous influences and to combat them by sharing the good news of Christ's victory. Believers could not be complacent, and thereby complicit, with the arrogance and cruelty of empire.

Then John saw the sudden and unexpected demise of the worldwide economic system and the political structures supporting it. Empire's violent tendencies had destroyed it from the inside out. Those sympathetic with empire, those dedicated to it, who had profited by association with it, mourned its downfall and distanced themselves as quickly as possible for fear of suffering a similar, well-deserved fate. Meanwhile, the system's demise was celebrated by those it had oppressed.