

Revelation Chapter 18

Commercial, Political Babylon is now in view. The destruction of religious Babylon described (in Rev. 17), and commercial Babylon here (in chapter 18), will decisively rid the world of the major evils that have plagued the human race for about 5000 years. We have already seen the destruction to be unleashed on ecclesiastical or religious Babylon in the beginning of the Great Tribulation period.

But the destruction of the commercial and governmental systems will not take place, however, until the end of the Great Tribulation. Some Bible scholars do not distinguish between the destruction of chapter 17 and that of chapter 18, but mold them altogether. The following six reasons establish that they are not the same.

1. "After these things" (Rev 18:1), this expression indicates that the events described (in chapter 18), will not take place until after the events of chapter 17 have been fulfilled.
2. "I saw another angel coming down from heaven" Events of chapter 17 were introduced by "one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls" (Rev 17:1). The angel referred to (in chapter 18), is obviously not the same as the one who introduced the events of chapter 17. Therefore, we can expect the same sequence of events that have happened throughout the book of Revelation: When an angel fulfills his responsibility, another distinct judgment takes place on the earth.
3. The names in the 2 chapters are different. The name in chapter 18 is simply "Babylon the Great" (Rev. 18:2). True, the Babylon destroyed in chapter 17 has the name, "Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Prostitutes and of the Abominations of the whole Earth" (Rev. 17:5). But the only similarity is the location, Babylon. When both titles are used fully, the contrast of these two Babylons is clearly seen.
4. Babylon the prostitute of chapter 17 will be destroyed by the kings of the earth (Rev. 17:16). The Babylon of chapter 18 will be destroyed by the cataclysmic judgments of God.
5. The kings who destroy the Babylon of chapter 17 rejoice. In the Babylon of chapter 18, the kings and merchants lament and weep for her (Rev. 18:9-15).
6. If chapters 17 and 18 take place during the last days of the Great Tribulation, there will be no place for the Antichrist and the False Prophet to do away with all religions and substitute the worship of the Antichrist's image as described (in chapter 13).

Verses 1-3: That the city "Babylon" in chapter 18 is the same as the whore or harlot in chapter 17 is shown by:

- (1) The parallels between the two (compare 17:1-6, 15-18 with 18:2-3, 6-8, 12, 18-24);
- (2) The identification of the harlot as the "great city" in 17:18;
- (3) The summary of Babylon's judgment in 19:2-3; and

- (4) The fact that the imagery in both chapters comes from Old Testament references to Tyre, Nineveh, and Babylon (compare Isa. Chapters 13, 14, and 23; Ezek. chapters 26-28; Jer. chapters 50-51).

The language of chapter 18 is highly figurative. The phrase "after these things" shows that chapter 18 is a further revelation concerning Babylon: the results of her destruction. (In verse 2), her doom is announced: "Babylon the great is fallen" (compare Isa. 21:9). The reference to "devils" (demons), and "every foul spirit" shows the total destruction and utter desolation of the harlot system. "All nations": The "merchants of the earth" have become wealthy through the apostate, idolatrous system centered at Rome.

Revelation 18:1 "And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory."

Then John saw another angel coming down from heaven. Whether "another angel" is one of the seven angels who had the seven vials, we are not told. But it seems doubtful, for this angel is distinctive, with such "great authority" that he lights the earth with his glory.

"Earth was lightened with his glory": The fifth vial (16:10), will have plunged the world into darkness. Against that backdrop, the sudden, blazing appearance of another angel (not the same as in 17:1, 7, 15), will certainly rivet the world's attention on him and his message of judgment on Babylon (compare 14:8).

In the last lesson we saw that the beast, and his system, and the great whore were revealed. Here in chapter 18, we will see the judgment that comes from God poured out on them. This "angel" (in verse 1), was sent from heaven. This "power" spoken of here is power that God has endowed on this angel for the execution of this punishment. This "angel" has been in close association with the Light. We see here that this powerful Light of Jesus, even though second hand through the angel, still lightens the earth.

Revelation 18:2 "And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird."

"Babylon the great is fallen" (compare 14:8; see note on Isa. 21:9), the verse from which these words come. The Greek text views the results of this as if it had already taken place (see note on 14:8). But the seventh vial is being referred to here and it is yet to come at this point (16:17-21). When it comes, devastation and annihilation will take place, leaving the place to demons.

The message of this angel who cries with a "mighty voice" is this: "Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great!" Since chapter 18 seems to describe the destruction of a literal commercial city, the governmental capital of the world during the Tribulation, we naturally ask ourselves the question, "Where is that city?" Again, Bible prophecy students are not in agreement. Some suggest the city of Rome, and some years ago suggested New York City because he felt it was the commercial center of the world. Some who believe we should take the Scriptures literally whenever possible are inclined to believe that the city of Babylon will be rebuilt.

There is a similar description of this very same thing in Isaiah:

Isaiah 21:9 "And, behold, here cometh a chariot of men, [with] a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground."

Here we see the fall of the great apostate church. We also see the fall of these ten evil nations. God is not mocked. God wins the war. God has given up on them completely. Now judgement comes. Babylon is a very wicked group, but they are not the world. They are the church gone bad. For a while the world and the apostate church were walking hand in hand. The evil ten nations, at last, have turned against this apostate church, both Catholic and Protestant. This is the church that has committed spiritual adultery. Iraq is physical Babylon.

This "...strong voice... came from God. This apostate church God doesn't even claim any more. The real Christians are already in heaven. Now we see even this watered-down church fall, and that leaves the way open for every unclean spirit that exists. Demons control.

In (Rev. 18:10, 16, 18, 19, and 21), you find reference to this Babylon being a city. (In verse 2), the angel cried mightily and said "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen". The "literal" interpretation would dictate that indeed this Babylon is a city. But I do not believe this is so! If you read (Rev. 17:18), you see: "And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the Kings of the earth."

The "woman" was the corrupt religious system and not a city. The same applies here. Commercial Babylon is a corrupt commercial, social and political system that will be destroyed at the end of the Tribulation (go back and read the 6 reasons given before verse 1 of this chapter again).

Revelation 18:3 "For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies."

"Wine of the wrath of her fornication": Religious Babylon (chapter 17), lures the nations into spiritual drunkenness and fornication with false gods (17:2, 4); commercial Babylon (chapter 18), seduces the unbelieving world into a materialistic stupor, so that the people of the world will become drunk with passion because of their relationship with Babylon.

"Kings ... merchants": Political rulers and corporate leaders alike are swept up in this worldwide system of commerce (14:8; 17:2).

Remember in chapter 16 we saw the actual destruction of commercial Babylon. At the end of this chapter I will show it to you again so you can make sense of what is taking place.

The corruption may have had its beginnings at the city of Babylon, but believe me it has spread to every corner of the earth. It will not be until the earth is totally destroyed that this evil will be no more. Those who mourn are those who are losing their ability to deceive the nations any longer.

Looking ahead at what it says in:

Rev. 18:23: "for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived".

So, you see this is not a city but a very corrupt system that is being destroyed by God by his Judgment to prepare for the coming Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Verses 4-8: Believers must be separate from the harlot system, or else they may be found to share in "her sins" and thereby "receive" part of her judgment. "God hath remembered her iniquities": The day of judgment for sin has arrived. The "double" judgment emphasizes full punishment for her sins (compare Jer. 16:18; 17:18; 50:29). That she calls herself a "queen" and "no widow" shows her arrogant self-confidence (compare Isa. 47:7-8). She sees herself as beyond any possibility of personal "sorrow". But the humbling of the harlot (compare Luke 14:11), will involve "torment" and "sorrow". "One day" may be a literal day or a symbol for the suddenness of the destruction. The "fire" may also be either literal fire or a symbol of the judgment of God (compare Jer. 51:25-58). It is reminiscent of the burning of Rome in A.D. 64 by Nero.

Revelation 18:4 "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

"Come out of her, my people": God will call His own to disentangle themselves from this evil system. This may also be God's calling the elect to abandon the world system and come to faith in the Savior. In either case, the message is to abandon the system before it is destroyed (compare 2 Cor. 6:17; 1 John 2:15). The judgment of God on that society living in sinful, arrogant self-indulgence can be avoided. Compare Isaiah's and Jeremiah's message to their people to leave Babylon (Isa. 48:20; Jer. 50:8; 51:6-9, 45). In both cases, the message is to abandon the system.

Read (2 Cor. 6:14-17) below, for a good example of this:

(14) Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

(15) And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

(16) And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in [them]; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

(17) Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean [thing]; and I will receive you,

True believers, who are still in this type of church, are very foolish. God through this "voice from heaven" is saying, "Come out of her my people". This is not speaking of Rome, but the

apostate church. His people are the church. He leaves no doubt what a person should do if they are caught in these apostate churches.

You see, even though you are not committing sin, as such. You are committing sin by association. The Bible tells us over and over not to be unequally yoked with those of unbelief. If you do not remove yourself, you are guilty of her sin. In (verse 4 above), we read that her plagues will come to you as well.

If your church preaches that Jesus was not born of a virgin, or the Red Sea did not part, that Jonah was not actually swallowed by a whale, or if your church recognizes homosexuals and lesbians as equals, and does not condemn it as sin, you had better get out. No one or nothing should be put ahead of God. There is no mediator between man and almighty god except Jesus.

1 Timothy 2:5 "For [there is] one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;"

We should not bow down to graven images of anyone or anything. We read in Exodus 20:4, one of the Commandments of God.

Exodus 20:4 "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness [of any thing] that [is] in heaven above, or that [is] in the earth beneath, or that [is] in the water under the earth:"

Be careful how you worship. Be careful about the things of God. Know who Jesus is and why you worship Him. Be thoroughly convinced in your heart. Do not listen to someone telling you what the Bible says. Read and study it for yourself. God will reveal to you what it is saying, if you are earnestly trying to learn. Even check out what I am saying. Do not be easily swayed by anyone. Be wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove.

The righteous God of the universe has not overlooked the sins of the elite power brokers who have used commerce and government for centuries to live luxuriously at the expense of others. The commercial, social and political systems of the Antichrist will receive double judgment for their sins.

Revelation 18:5 "For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities."

“Remembered”: (see 16:19). God does not remember the iniquities of His people (Jer. 31:34), but does remember to protect them (Mal. 3:16 – 4:2). For unrepentant Babylon, there will be no such forgiveness, only judgment.

Babylon's sins will pile up like a new Tower of Babel, but unlike the ancient tower, her sins will reach as high as heaven.

Then an angel states that God has remembered her sins. He will take note of them as He did that earlier monument to man's sinful, arrogant, prideful rebellion at Babel.

It is always good to remember that all of Revelation was addressed to the church. God gives us warnings and gives us time to repent. Even now, here, when He has already passed judgement on this apostate church, He is crying out for individuals to come out of this apostate church. Jesus calls us all to righteousness and holiness in Him. It is up to us to answer that call.

Verses 6-7: "Reward her": The angel calls for God to recompense wrath to Babylon in her own cup to repay her according to her deeds (see note on 17:4). This is an echo of the Old Testament law of retaliation (Exodus 21:24), which will be implemented by God (Rom. 12:17-21).

Revelation 18:6 "Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double."

"Double": Has the sense of "full", or "overflowing". The punishment will fit the crime (compare Jer. 16:18).

"Cup": The cup of wickedness from which so many have drunk (14:8; 17:2, 4, 6), will call for the cup of wrath (14:10; 16:19).

This "reward her" simply means will recompense or repay commercial Babylon according to her works. All of those who are involved and are guilty will suffer double judgment as the cup is filled twice for her for what she has done to the Saints (see article "[Babylon the City](#)").

She will reap what she sowed.

Revelation 18:7 "How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow."

"And am no widow": A proud, but empty, boast of self-sufficiency, also made by historical Babylon (Isa. 47:8; compare 1 Cor. 10:12).

This is describing 3 sins she is guilty of.

- (1) "She has glorified herself" meaning she was proud;
- (2) "She lived Deliciously" meaning she pursued self-gratification; and
- (3) "I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow" meaning she was not only proud but boastful.

That proud boast echoes that of ancient Babylon who said "I will be a queen forever" and I will not sit as a widow, nor know loss of children. Now read that boast (in Isaiah 47):

Isaiah 47:7-8 "And thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever: [so] that thou didst not lay these [things] to thy heart, neither didst remember the latter end of it." "Therefore hear now this, [thou

that art] given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I [am], and none else beside me; I shall not sit [as] a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children."

Revelation 18:8 "Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong [is] the Lord God who judgeth her."

“Her plagues”: These could include those (of 16:1ff), but must be the special destruction of the city as well, described as “plagues and mourning and famine”.

“In one day” (see verses 10, 17, 19). The special judgments on Babylon take place in a brief period of time. (Daniel 5:30), records that Babylon of old fell in one day.

(Isaiah 47:9). “But these two [things] shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, [and] for the great abundance of thine enchantments”.

This is saying that Babylon's destruction will not be progressive. The wicked city (system), will be instantly destroyed. (Dan 5:25-28, 30), records a similar fate that befell ancient Babylon; the city fell the very night that God wrote its doom on the wall of the king's palace.

Babylon's doom is certain and cannot be avoided. No one can change God's plans or keep Him from accomplishing what He purposed to do as Nebuchadnezzar discovered above in Daniel. Or in this case his grandson Belshazzar (Dan. 5:13-30).

Verses 9-20: This section records the lament over Babylon’s destruction, not her sin, by those who were part of her system.

These verses consist of three laments over the fallen city of Babylon, from the perspective of kings (verses 9-10), merchants (verses 11-16), and seamen (verses 17-19; compare Ezek. chapter 27), followed by a call for rejoicing on the part of God’s people and His angels (verse 20). The “kings” (of verse 9), are not the kings (represented by horns of 17:16), but rather various earthly kings who have participated in the Babylonian system. The laments picture utter chaos on the earth at the end of the Tribulation period. The “merchants” will find nothing to buy or sell. “In one hour”: The destruction will come suddenly and quickly (verse 17). The world’s pagan economic system will collapse. “They cast dust on their heads” as a sign of mourning and sorrow (verse 19; compare Job 2:12; Lam. 2:10; Ezek. 27:30). “God hath avenged you on her”: God at last judges the Babylonian system for its treatment of God’s people, particularly those who are martyred during the Tribulation (compare 6:9-11). Verse 20 shows heaven’s perspective on the judgment.

Revelation 18:9 "And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning,"

“Kings”: The political leaders of the world will weep because the loss of their capital city will signal the doom of Antichrist’s empire, and with it, the source of their power (compare verse 3; 17:2).

“Bewail her, and lament for her”: Bewail means to weep, and “Weep” means “to sob openly”. “Lament” translates the same Greek word used to express the despair of the unbelieving world at the return of Christ (1:7).

This will no doubt include the 10 kings of the earth who rule Antichrist's kingdom under his authority as well as the rest of the world's leaders.

The destruction of the Antichrist's political and economic power will strike a fatal blow to his empire. The fall of Babylon will be a symbol of the fall of the entire evil world system.

And again, Babylon is pictured as a harlot whose death causes her lovers to weep and lament over her.

Revelation 18:10 "Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come."

This "standing afar off", could mean those who heeded and came out of her. It really doesn't matter where. It may be all of these cities and many more, or it might not be a literal city at all. I really believe this is both an evil system and many evil cities as well, being destroyed.

The one hour simply means the judgment will happen rapidly just as verse 8 predicted (compare verses 8, 17, 19).

Revelation 18:11 "And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more:"

These mourners are the merchants of the earth who will weep and mourn over Babylon because no one will be able to buy their goods anymore.

Whatever economy there had been will end and so will any semblance of normalcy on this devastated planet that was already in serious trouble brought on by the divine judgments of God.

Verses 12-13: Over half of their commodities appear in the list of (Ezek. 27:12-22).

Revelation 18:12 "The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,"

“Purple”: This refers to garments laboriously dyed with purple dye extracted from shellfish. Lydia (Acts 16:14), was a seller of such expensive garments. A distinctive mark of the Caesars was their purple robes.

“Thyine wood”: Wood from North African citrus trees, highly valued because of its color, which was used to make extremely expensive pieces of furniture.

“Marble”: Marble, imported from Africa, Egypt, and Greece, was widely used in Roman buildings.

It appears that these are classed in several types:

- (1) Personal items of jewelry;
- (2) Articles used for furniture;
- (3) Nice smelling and tasting things;
- (4) Food;
- (5) Animals;
- (6) Souls of men.

What significance this has, I do not know; unless, it means worldly things. Most of these are things a person could do without if hard times came and you had to, even maybe the food for a while.

This "souls of men", is one of the more interesting. In the days of the old Roman Empire, they sold people as you would animals. Perhaps that is what is meant there. They thought no more about selling a person than they did a pair of shoes.

It appears to me, in all of this that trade has just about ceased, period. Probably, all the plagues and wars have just about stopped everything.

Revelation 18:13 "And cinnamon, and odors, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men".

“Ointments” (compare Matt. 26:7, 12; John 12:3).

“Frankincense”: A fragrant gum or resin imported from Arabia and used in incense and perfume (SOS 3:6; Matt. 2:11).

Slaves, and souls of men”: The slave trade, long banned by the civilized nations of the world, will reappear in Antichrist’s debauched commercial system.

Revelation Chapter 18 Questions

1. In verse 1, describe the angel that came down.
2. Who has this angel been near in heaven?
3. He cried with a loud voice saying what?
4. Who had Babylon become the habitation of?
5. Where in the Old Testament, do we read of the fall of Babylon?
6. What is this fall of Babylon? Two things.
7. Is Babylon the world? Explain
8. Who controlled fallen Babylon?
9. All _____ have drunk of the wine of the wrath.
10. The _____ _____ _____ have committed fornication with her.
11. Which churches are part of the apostasy?
12. When this church goes bad, what does God tell the people to do?
13. Name several things taught that should trigger you to leave your church.
14. Who is the only mediator? Give the scripture.
15. What are we told in Exodus 20: 4 about images?
16. What are at least five things we should be careful to do to make sure we are worshipping correctly?
17. Where had Babylon's sins reached?
18. Jesus called us all to what two things?
19. What braggadocios remark had Babylon made?
20. What do we see in this remark?
21. When will the plagues come on Babylon?
22. Who bewails her?
23. Why?
24. Where does judgement begin?
25. Why do the merchants weep and mourn?

26. Name some of the things that will not be sold any more.
27. Give them six classifications.
28. What was responsible for just about all commerce stopping?