

Political Babylon

Revelation 18 – July 25, 2021

Chapters 17 and 18 describe the final fall of the global commercial/political world led by the Antichrist.

Three and a half years have passed since the destruction of the one world church, which paved the way for the idolatrous worship of Antichrist. In this chapter,

1. The angel from heaven details the destruction of commercial and political Babylon, the headquarters [seat] of Antichrist and the false prophet.
2. Where is this seat? There are many speculations, from the site of Babylon being rebuilt as a city, to Rome, Jerusalem, a city in Europe, NYC and others.

- a. What we do know it that it will be godless system.

- b. It is mostly likely an, city with global control.

- It is called a city five times in this passage (Rev. 18:10, 16, 18, 19, 21)

- c. It is a hub; the Antichrist's capital city and it will represent a commercial empire.

- d. Apparently, the Antichrist will be able to build the great commercial empire the world as ever seen in the midst of devastating judgments revealing the Antichrist's incredible power.

3. It is a very somber chapter for it is not only

- a. The destruction of Satan's last and greatest empire

- b. It is also the demise of unsaved humanity who repeatedly refused to heed the numerous warnings of God [7:3-4; 11:3; 6:9; 14:6-7].
 - c. With the destruction of Babylon – the symbol of all that is rebellious toward God, the stage is set for the triumphant return of the Lord Jesus Christ.
4. Some Bible scholars do not make a distinction between these two Babylon's, there are six reasons why these two chapters are not the same.

Rev. 18:1 After this. .	Events in chapter 18 will come after the events in chapter 17, indicating two separate events
Another angel	The angel of Revelation 18 is different than the angel of 17. Therefore, the angels are introducing different visions.
Different names	The harlot is not mentioned in this chapter, only Babylon the Great. Two different aspects of Babylon's existence.
Source of destruction	The kings of the earth destroy the harlot in Revelation 17:16. The political-commercial Babylon the Great is destroyed directly by God.
Different	The kings conspired together to destroyed religious Babylon. The kings wail when Babylon

reactions	the Great is destroyed – Revelation 18:9, 11
Different times	It seems the harlot is destroyed earlier after the Antichrist recovers from a moral wound – Rev. 13:12c.

So, after the events of chapter 17, another angel from heaven announces the judgment of Babylon the Great.

1. This angel may be the one who predicted Babylon's fall earlier [14:8]. Three important characteristics are given about this angel.

a. He has great authority [v. 1]

This angel comes from the very presence of God. He acts on God's behalf and is given great authority by God to do His will.

b. He illuminates the earth with his glory [v. 1b]

This angel will make his appearance sometime after the fifth bowl judgment is released upon the earth [16:10]. His dramatic appearance will bring brilliant light to a darkened empire, causing the earth dwellers to tremble and fear at the sight of this glorious heavenly messenger.

c. He has a loud voice [v. 2]

Everyone will hear and no one can ignore his message of judgment. His message will add to the terror of his appearance - a message of woe to Antichrist and his followers.

TWO REASONS FOR BABYLON'S JUDGMENT

1. **It is a place of demonic activity** [v. 2]

- a. Babylon has become the dwelling place of all that is wicked and godless. This corrupt city will be a melting pot not only of demons and evil spirits but also of unredeemed men.
- b. The threefold description of the inhabitants of Babylon is a reference to fallen angels in their various characteristics as demons and evil spirits.

2. **A place of utter wickedness** – Revelation 18:3

- a. All nations have been influenced by Babylon’s evil practices [religious idolatry, sexual perversions, demonic influences, etc.], causing the world to commit fornication with her, forsaking everything that is right in God’s eyes
- b. The inhabitants of the earth will prosper through their evil association with Babylon. Money will become their god, and they will become rich, selling their souls to Satan in order to acquire temporary pleasures.

FINAL EXHORTATION: Revelation 18:4-5

“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. ⁵ For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.”

- 1. Another voice from heaven - Come out of her. This is grace.
Stop partaking of her sins. Soon there will be no escape.
- 2. Notice a similar warning – Revelation 14:9-10

Judgment Defined [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**.”

An angel calls for God to take vengeance on the sins of Babylon, similar to the prayers of the tribulation saints [6:9-10]. Enough warnings have been given; now is the time for God's vengeance and Babylon's destruction.

1. Reward her sinfulness – v. 6a

Babylon is deserving of her destruction. She is to be paid back for her wickedness. The angel's pleas based on the Old Testament principle of retaliation [Ex. 21:23-24; Deut. 19:21].

2. Double her punishment – v. 6b

Babylon's sins are overflowing, piled high as the heavens. Therefore, the angel calls for God to double her punishment in equal measure according to her works.

In the Mosaic Law, wrongdoers were required to pay double restitution for their crimes. Double refers to fullness or completeness [Ex. 22:4, 7, 9; Isa. 40:1-2; Jer. 16:18; 17:18].

3. Double her wrath from God – v. 6c

In the same cup Babylon used to deceive the nations [Jer. 51:7; Rev. 17:4], God will give her a double portion of His wrath [14:10; 16:19]. There will be no mercy when God's wrath falls on Babylon.

4. Give her torment and sorrow – v. 7a

“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.”

God will match the punishment with her crimes. She will receive torment [torture] and mourning [the result of torture]. God will judge Babylon for the sins listed in this passage:

a. She glorified herself - she was proud – v. 7b

- b. She lived sensuously - a life without restraints
- c. She is guilty of self-sufficiency - overestimated her power

5. Judgment will come quickly – Rev. 18:10, 17, 19

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.

¹⁷ **For in one hour** so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off,

¹⁹ And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! **for in one hour is she made desolate.**”

- a. God will show no mercy on Babylon, and no one can thwart God's
- b. All the power of Antichrist and his evil demons will not be able to deliver Babylon from God's divine judgment. Her complete destruction will come instantly - in one day, never to be resurrected again.
- c. God will destroy Babylon with complete devastation through death, famine, and fire. Her vaunted strength is no match against the power of God.

Judgment Lamented [18:9-19]

During the tribulation, sinners will refuse to mourn over their sin. Even though God's judgments will cause untold death and devastation, they refuse to repent over their sins; yet they mourn over the glorious city of Babylon - the loss of their wealth, pleasures

and security. It is the weeping of temporal pleasures instead of the repentance over their immortal living.

There are three groups that are named in the mourning over Babylon. The kings of the earth, manufacturing/retailers—merchants and transportation industry.

You must pause here to think of where we are in history. This passage is speaking of a global enterprise were the government (kings of the earth) along with the global corporations and transportation industry are teamed together in creating a system that corrupted itself to the core.

1. The kings of the earth – v. 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”

- a. This group would also **include the ten kings** that ruled with the Antichrist and who gave their power to the beast. All their hopes and expectations are shattered with the destruction of Antichrist world headquarters.
- b. The kings will greet the news of Babylon’s demise with **uncontrolled wailing** and lamentation. All the luxuries and prosperity they have enjoyed in Babylon now come to a crashing end.
- c. **Think of it from John’s point of view in 90 AD.** **Covetousness** which idolatry was rampant in the Roman empire. The worship of money possessions and so on were obvious.

For example, **Rome had gone to the limits in extravagance.** The Caesars would spend fortune on a single meal demanding the most exotic and rare dishes for their personal consumption.

Nero, who ruled from 54-68 AD decorated his banquets with roses from Egypt costing in today's currency approximately \$70,000 a meal. He never wore the same piece of clothing twice. Most of his outfits cost 40,000 each.

Caligula who ruled Rome in 31 -41 AD demanded meals of hummingbird and flamingo tongues. He had pearls costing \$200,000 dissolved in wine to drink. He ate and the livers of Pike fish and the brains of peacock and so on.

- d. As the kings of the final empire look upon Babylon's destruction, they realize the enormity of the situation and great terror grips their hearts. They stand far off for they realize judgment has come, even fearing their own judgment is near. Their only hope is that Antichrist and his armies [who left before destruction hit] will be able to defeat the Lamb of God in the valley of Armageddon.

2. The merchants of the earth – v. 11-16

“And the merchants of the earth **shall weep and mourn over her**; for no man buyeth their merchandise anymore.”

- a. These are the businessmen who have prospered by the economic success of wealthy Babylon. Now with her destruction, all normalcy has come to a devastating halt.
- b. The economic prosperity is seen in the 28 common commodities of the ancient world that were a source of their financial gain and luxurious living.
 - 1) Gold
 - 2) Silver
 - 3) precious stones
 - 4) pearls
 - 5) fine linen
 - 6) purple

- 7) silk
- 8) scarlet
- 9) All thyine wood
- 10) All manner vessels of ivory
- 11) All manner vessels of most precious wood
- 12) Brass
- 13) Iron
- 14) Marble
- 15) Cinnamon
- 16) Odours
- 17) Ointments
- 18) Frankincense
- 19) Wine
- 20) Oil
- 21) Fine flour
- 22) Wheat
- 23) Beast
- 24) Sheep
- 25) Horses
- 26) Chariots
- 27) Slaves
- 28) Souls of men.

c. These items will never be found again for Babylon has been stripped of her wealth and beauty.

The crown jewel of Antichrist's kingdom is gone forever. These merchants weep not for the sympathy for the city but because their material appetites can no longer be fulfilled [Mark 8:36]

3. The shipmasters, sailors, etc [vs. 17-19]

“For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, ¹⁸ **And cried when they**

saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! ¹⁹ **And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing**, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.”

- a. Along with the kings and merchants, now the shipmasters and sailors join this funeral dirge as they wail Babylon’s destruction.
- b. Just like the kings and merchants before them, they mourn the loss of their wealth and prosperity. Their cry is of pain, suffering and grief but not of repentance toward God. Their great [they thought] indestructible city has been reduced to ashes along with their hopes and dreams.

Judgment Enjoyed [v. 20]

“Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.”

In stark contrast to the world’s perspective on Babylon’s judgment, the redeemed in heaven are told to rejoice, especially the holy apostles and prophets, the two groups who have suffered much privation and persecution.

God has brought judgment upon Babylon for her cruel treatment of His saints. Babylon has finally gotten her just reward for her murderous crimes on God’s saints.

The prayers of God’s people have been finally realized [6:9-11] and God’s vengeance has fallen on mighty Babylon, who will never raise her ugly head again. She will never, ever deceive men again by her evil spirits and evil seductions. The inhabitants of heaven rejoice over God’s righteousness not the loss of souls.

Judgment Completed [vs. 21-23a]

“And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. ²² And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; ²³ And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee”

Babylon’s destruction will be so complete that she will disappear forever from the face of the earth.

1. A Great Millstone – v. 21

Another angel appears on the scene having a great millstone [four to five feet in diameter, a foot thick and very heavy; used to grind grain].

The angel throws the great millstone in the sea, depicting Babylon’s disappearance into obscurity. This image was given to illustrate the complete and swift destruction of Babylon.

2. A Violent End – v. 22-23

- a. She will experience a violent end beginning with darkness and demons, progressing from fire to flood and culminating in everlasting death.
- b. Her destruction will be so extensive that none of the normal activities of human life will ever take place in her again - no music, no commerce, no light and no pleasure [Isa. 13:19-22; 14:22-23; Jer. 50:13, 39; 51:37].
- c. Babylon who was once arrayed in scarlet and gold, now has only a millstone around her neck, pulling her deep beneath the sea.

Judgment Justified [vs. 23b-24]

“for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.” ²⁴ And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.”

In this portion of Scripture, three reasons are given for the justification of Babylon’s judgment:

1. Wealthy merchants – v. 23b

These successful businessmen used their wealth to gain positions of power and influence. They have lived lives of self-pleasure and opulence, ignoring and often oppressing the poor. Their love of money is their god but also their downfall.

2. Sorceries – v. 23c

- a. All the nations were deceived by Babylon’s sorcery. Her occult influences – deceptive miracles, witchcraft and magic, demon activity, false visions, and drug use will deceive the nations into worshiping another god.
- b. Babylon’s sorceries will be so seducing that the unredeemed will believe a lie [2 Thess. 2:10-11].

3. Persecutions – v. 24

- a. The false religions of the world have methodically murdered God’s people throughout history. The persecution of His saints has not gone unnoticed by Him. God’s righteous judgment is justified in light of her murderous and relentless persecution of God’s saints. Satan has systematically tried to snuff out God’s truth.
- b. The blood of God’s prophets and saints is vindicated by Babylon’s destructive end. Not only was Babylon the mother of harlots but she is also the mother of persecutions. Who she

could not deceive, she would pursue and murder. Her end was just for her ways were wicked.

Conclusion:

Babylon from its very beginning has been at the center of man's rebellion against God.

1. All the false religions and humanistic philosophies of the world have their roots in this Satanic-driven city. Babylon will once again raise her ugly head during the tribulation period.
2. Her meteoric rise to fame will be short lived and will come to a cataclysmic end - never to surface again.
3. Now that Babylon is annihilated [both in her religious and political forms] this sets the stage for the triumphant return of Jesus Christ and His one-thousand-year reign on earth.