

Date: July 8, 2012

Revelation 18: 1-8 (ESV)

¹After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was made bright with his glory. ²And he called out with a mighty voice, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast.

³For all nations have drunk the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her luxurious living." ⁴Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues; ⁵for her sins are heaped high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. ⁶ Pay her back as she herself has paid back others, and repay her double for her deeds; mix a double portion for her in the cup she mixed.

⁷ As she glorified herself and lived in luxury, so give her a like measure of torment and mourning, since in her heart she says, 'I sit as a queen, I am no widow, and mourning I shall never see.' ⁸For this reason her plagues will come in a single day, death and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for mighty is the Lord God who has judged her."

I. Introduction to Chapter 18

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As chapter 17 described the fall of religious Babylon – that end times false system of worship – chapter 18 now describes in sweeping detail the destruction of the city which will apparently be the central hub for world commerce in the last days – Babylon the Great. If one had to select a city today which fulfills the role of commercial capital of the world, , New York City would come to mind, or perhaps Brussels, London or Tokyo, but Babylon, Iraq, a city that has decayed for centuries and was being rebuilt by Saddam Hussein before his demise, would not even make the list. It is for that reason that many misinformed people believe chapter 18 is referring to NYC, possibly because so many are desperate to find the USA in end times prophecy. However, it is not there by name or by inference, so you can draw your own conclusions from that.

This chapter, I believe, is a description of the destruction of a literal city, not just the destruction of a system which is symbolized by the city. Babylon, Iraq, is also the ancient site of the Tower of Babel account in Genesis 11, the place where man's first major conspiracy to defy God took place, and we looked at that story in our last lesson.

It is a chapter of well deserved punishment and judgment, of righteous wrath being applied to those who are so desperately wicked that no repentance is possible, and none is offered to them. The time of God's vengeance has arrived, His patience is exhausted, and it is now time to mete out physical punishment

which will be followed by eternal damnation – justly deserved. Occasionally, I hear preachers inadvertently confusing the 2 deaths – physical and eternal. Of course, they are related, but are different in a huge way. I especially hear this when the death of babies is involved. Yes, babies die physically, and Romans 5 attributes that to Adam’s sin, which every person born except Jesus has inherited. That is not an argument for the eternal disposition of those babies though.

II. The Bright Angel

v. 1

The 5th Bowl Judgment (Rev. 16:10-11) brought deep darkness to the earth, and if it is still in force here, the illumination created by this bright angel would attract attention around the world from people desperate for some sort of light to break through the horrific darkness that has enveloped them.

The “after these things” of verse 1 tells us that this is a new vision being given to John. As chapter 17 described the fall of religious Babylon, chapter 18 now depicts the fall of commercial Babylon. The Antichrist’s world system is crumbling before his eyes. The angel descending is “another” like the one from Rev. 17:1 – some say this Christ, but it is just another angel. The angel descends visibly from heaven, showering the earth with glory and light, with the full authority of heaven, and he cries out in a loud voice, which no one will be able to ignore, “fallen is Babylon the Great.”!

III. The Fall of Babylon

vv. 2-3

This judgment was predicted in Rev. 14:8 and is now being described. It is reminiscent of **Daniel 2:44-45** as God’s Kingdom, this stone is now arriving to shatter Antichrist’s kingdom into tiny pieces so that it can be replaced by Christ’s eternal Kingdom. According to Rev. 16:17-19, this is part of the 7th Bowl Judgment and will be much greater than the temporal OT destruction of ancient Babylon described in **Isaiah 21:9**.

In v. 2, John describes the reason for this centralized destruction of Babylon – it has become a dwelling place for demons and a haunt for unclean spirits, unclean birds, and detestable and unclean beasts. Remember the demons released to indwell locusts and the demonic hordes of Revelation 9, and those cast out of heaven when Satan was expelled in chapter 12? Now, they are all gathered here, the world capital, awaiting orders from Satan, the place to which God has drawn them so that His judgment can have greater effect.

The mention of unclean birds symbolizes total destruction – birds of prey, scavengers, those who eat carrion, awaiting a feast of flesh which will soon be ready for them – cf. Rev. 19:17-18 – where birds are called to eat the flesh of the millions of fallen warriors, kings and soldiers who will die at Christ’s command. Armageddon is now not very far off in time.

Another reason for Babylon's destruction (v. 3) is found in this city's sexual immorality and luxurious living. This could be a reference to actual sexual immorality per se, but is also definitely tied to spiritual immorality or idolatry which the whole world will be practicing and reveling in. Always present since the fall, idolatry will rise to a crescendo here alongside lust and covetousness, and we are even seeing the budding of this 'fruit' in our lifetime.

“For all nations have drunk the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality” – self control and restraint as a result of conscience or through the conviction of the Holy Spirit is long gone, and the world, under the compulsion of the False Prophet, worships Satan (who is indwelling the Antichrist), and sinks into a morass of self-indulgence fueled and exemplified by its' leader. As we follow Christ and try to live moral lives, looking to the needs of others, those who worship Antichrist live immoral lives where it is likely that any sort of immorality is cherished and encouraged – this is lawlessness at its' most ugly and unrestrained.

IV. The Call vv. 4-6

According to this “another voice” from heaven, this judgment can still be avoided, even at this late hour. God still has people in the world He is saving, those who are elect, but as yet unrevealed. Perhaps, even up to now reviling and cursing God along with the rest until, at the decreed moment the gospel penetrates their hearts and they call out to Him for mercy, just as the thief on the cross did, in his final hours on earth. Notice [Matt. 27:44](#) & [Mark 15:32](#). Both thieves mocked and ridiculed Christ alongside the other people, but at some point, pre-appointed by God, light dawned and one recognized his foolishness, lostness and was saved – cf. [Luke 23:39-43](#). ③

So this last hour call compels those who “have an ear to hear” to come out of this world system and cling to Christ as their only hope for mercy. Final destruction and a victory for God is inevitable and only the hardest hearts at this point and the committed demons refuse to acknowledge Christ's lordship.

There will be powerful peer pressure and compulsion (especially fear of execution) for people to follow Antichrist during the Tribulation, so to have survived to this point without taking the Mark (because all who do will perish – cf. Rev. 13:8) is a miracle of God's preservation of His own / His elect.

This call to move aside from the judgment to come is found in account after account in the OT. The call to Lot to escape the destruction of Sodom & Gomorrah in [Gen. 19:12-13](#); and a call to flee the Chaldeans in Isa. 48:20; & to flee both the Chaldeans and Babylonians in Jer. 50:8-51:6 shows one way God protects His people when judgment is falling all around them. God's people are constantly to be coming out of the world system, not becoming entangled in it or enamored with it. – cf. I JN 2:15-17 – but are to flee its' lusts and temptations, as Paul exhorts in [II Cor. 6:14-17](#) & James in [James 1:27; 4:4](#).

To stay when the heavenly warning has been given to flee the destruction is tantamount to participating in the sins piled up in Babylon. Just like Lot's wife, longing to stay in the system, to relish the excitement of the pleasures of sin will result in death.

In v. 5, because of the extent of Babylon's sins, God's time has arrived and "God remembered". This does not mean He forgot – it means He has been patient, longsuffering, waiting until the iniquity is complete and they are ripe for judgment – cf. **Rev. 14:15**. The deeds of this city in particular have earned her special attention from God, so that while the world at large is being judged by the Bowls, local attention – "pay her double" – is being lavished on the capital, the throne of Antichrist and the gathering of demons who throng near Satan here at this place. Once God's people have come out, those whose sins God will not remember, those that remain will be judged without mercy!

V. The Four Major Sins of Babylon vv. 7-8

The sins of Babylon, of this entire godless system can be categorized into 4 classes:

1.) **Self-glorification** – v. 7 - living a life of luxurious excess; seeing herself as a queen, not as a widow (ie. doesn't need help from anyone); and unlikely to be mourning. She thinks she is in full control of her destiny. The kingdom Antichrist & the False Prophet set up will seem to be (for a time) unassailable & impervious to God's attacks. This is pride at its' worst as is exemplified by the description of Lucifer in **Isaiah 14:13-27**. ④
2.) **Finding satisfaction in luxury** – because she is blinded by self-glory, she luxuriates in her excess and wealth, truly believing she has now achieved it all – Satan finally has world control, worshippers, every sin imaginable available to him and his followers without cost (he thinks), and no interruption is expected, so satisfaction seems secure. See **James 5:1-6, 7,11**.
3.) **Haughty self-confidence** – Babylon really believes that there will be no final battle which she will lose. It is this self-confidence (arrogance) that will compel Antichrist to bring a human and demonic army against Jesus Christ at Armageddon, really believing he has a chance to win.
4.) **The Avoidance of Suffering** – this is closely tied to # 3 – victory can only mean no suffering and Antichrist is convinced that he will never be dethroned, and will never have to pay for his sin.

"For this reason..." (v. 8) as a result of this arrogance, sin and blindness to God's grace and power, Babylon will be destroyed in a single day. I believe this is a literal single day. God is paying her for her deeds – cf. **Jer. 50:14-15, 29; 51:24,56**. God's vengeance, expressly limited to God in **Rom. 12:19-21**, is now unleashed full force on Antichrist's capital and He will judge the city with fire which will bring with it death & mourning, along with famine and great loss of wealth – the very thing Antichrist self-confidently felt protected from!

All of Satan's power, combined with all the demons gathered at Babylon, will not be enough to spare her from this judgment which God has determined for that specific day in the future.

Next lesson – Lesson # 58 Rev. 18: 9-20 Mourning Over The Fall of Babylon