

# **Judgment Of Babylon The Great**

(Revelation 18:1-24)

**Intro:** As noted last Sunday, Revelation 17 and 18 present a final parenthesis ( ) detailing the judgments that God will release upon Satan's religious and political systems during the Tribulation. Chapter 17 details the judgment of religious Babylon—the false religious system headed up by the false prophet; and chapter 18 describes the judgment of the great city, commercial Babylon, which will serve as the seat of Antichrist's worldwide empire.

This morning we will look at God's judgment on Babylon the Great in chapter 18. The Babylon depicted in this chapter is identified as a great city six times in verses 2, 10, 16, 18-19, and 21. While opinions vary, the future destruction of this great city seems to imply that the actual city of Babylon will be rebuilt on the Euphrates River in Mesopotamia. This great city will become the capital of Antichrist's universal political-commercial system.

It should be noted that Saddam Hussein began an extraordinary building project to reconstruct the ancient city of Babylon. He built a 295-foot tower to mimic the Tower of Babel built by Nimrod in Genesis 11. While the project has been stalled since Saddam's death, the United Nations recently announced plans to continue the rebuilding of Babylon. Will Babylon once more rise to become the world's financial and commercial center? More on this Wednesday night.

The 17<sup>th</sup> chapter of Revelation concluded with the Beast and his allies turning against the false religious leader and his apostate religious system (v. 16). They will make him desolate and naked, and will destroy his false religious system. According to verse 17, God will "put it in their wicked hearts to execute His purpose by having a common purpose of supporting the Beast, until the words of God should be fulfilled."

## **I. The Announcement Of Babylon's Judgment (18:1-3)**

### **A. The angel's announcement of judgment (vv. 1-2)**

Chapter 18 opens with another angel coming down out of heaven, having great authority and lighting up the earth with glory (v. 1). This angel is endowed with great power and authority to execute God's final judgment on Babylon. His coming illumines, lights up the earth with brilliant glory.

The angel's message of judgment is announced in verse 2

2 And he cried out with a mighty voice, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great!" The refrain "Fallen, fallen" is repeated for emphasis. This great and prosperous city will come under the terrifying judgment of God. As a consequence, Babylon will "become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird." It is only fitting that Babylon become the dwelling place and prison of demons and every unclean spirit. The reference to "birds," is probably a reference to the "dirty birds" in Jesus' parable of the mustard seed in Matthew 13:31-32. The birds represent demonic forces that eventually fill the apostate church. The reason for Babylon's judgment is recorded in v. 3

B. The reason for Babylon's judgment (v. 3-8)

1. The reason stated (v. 3)

3 "**For** all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed acts of immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich by the wealth of her sensuality."

The spiritual prostitution and intoxicating activity generated from Babylon will cause all the unsaved peoples, kings, and merchants of the earth to be judged because they all will have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality.

2. An appeal for believers to reject Babylonism (v. 4)

**In verse 4** John hears another voice from heaven issuing an appeal for believers not to participate in Babylon's sins, so they will not have to suffer her plagues. This is an appeal to believers of every age to avoid compromise with Satan's evil world system. There is an appeal being issued today by the Roman Catholic Church for all religions to reunite with Rome. The Lutherans, Methodists, and Kenneth Copeland's worldwide following of Pentecostals have embraced Pope Francis' message calling for ecumenical reunification. The one-world religious and commercial system is developing at break-neck speed. As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we must not be deceived by Satan's schemes. Keep looking up for Christ is coming soon!

This is also a warning to avoid the Babylonian philosophy of worldliness. What is worldliness? Kevin DeYoung suggest that “Worldliness is whatever makes sin look normal and righteousness look *strange*.” Worldliness may be defines as “Living for self and never being satisfied. Living not for God or His glory, but for the acquisition of more stuff.” Many Christians have adopted the worldly mindset of “Get all you can and can all you get?” Many churches and missionary organizations are suffering financially because God’s people have become so consumed with getting more stuff, they don’t have any money to support God’s work. A Christian with a Biblical worldview gives glory to God by giving financially to His work. How about you brothers and sisters, which worldview are you embracing: Babylonian or Christian?

The angel continues in verses 5-8 by listing three reasons for Babylon’s coming judgment: *remembrance, retribution, and retaliation*.

### 3. Three reasons for Babylon’s judgment (vv. 5-8)

*First, remembrance of Babylon’s sins (v. 5)*

**5** Babylon’s sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. Like Nimrod’s tower of Babel, Babylon’s commercial and political sins of independence and arrogance have reached up into heaven in man’s attempt to be like God. While God is longsuffering and merciful, He will ultimately judge the worldwide wickedness of Babylon.

*Second, Babylon will experience God’s retribution (v. 6)*

**6** “She will be paid back double according to her deeds. In the cup of wickedness and immorality, which she has mixed and made the nations to drink from, she will receive back twice as much. The biblical principle of retribution promises that God will repay the wicked people of this world. **Psalm 73 is a classic on this subject.** In Romans 12:19 Paul admonishes us to “Never take our own revenge, but to leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, **“Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord.**”

*Third, Babylon will experience God’s retaliation (vv. 7-8)*

**7** “To the degree that she glorified herself and lived sensuously, to the same degree give her torment and mourning; for she says in her heart, ‘I SIT AS A QUEEN AND I AM NOT A WIDOW, and will never see mourning.’

Babylon will be judged for rejecting God, and for pridefully elevating herself as the Queen of Heaven. She lived sensuously and luxuriously with the kings of the earth. **v. 8** “**For this reason** in one day her plagues will come, pestilence and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for the Lord God who judges her is strong.”

## II. The Reaction To Babylon’s Judgment (18:9-19)

Three different groups will weep and lament over Babylon’s destruction: kings, merchants, and mariners. All three groups will pronounce a double woe in describing Babylon’s catastrophic and sudden judgment (vv. 10, 16, and 19). I would encourage you to mark these **woes** in your Bible.

*First, kings* (vv. 9-10)

**9** “And the kings of the earth, who committed acts of immorality and lived sensuously with her, will weep and lament over her when they see the smoke of her burning, **10** standing at a distance because of the fear of her torment, saying, ‘**Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! For in one hour your judgment has come.**’

The reaction of the kings of the earth, who will weep and lament over Babylon’s destruction is emphatic in the Greek. “Weep” and “lament” both mean “to cry out aloud in anguish of soul.” The emphatic repetition of “woe” portrays the hopeless wailing of a lost humanity that has rejected Christ. Dr. Walvoord writes: “How sad is the hour of judgment when it is too late for mercy” (“Revelation” in *BKC*, vol. 2, 263).

*Second, merchants* (vv. 11-17a)

**11** “And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, because no one buys their cargoes any more; **12** cargoes of gold and silver and precious stones and pearls and fine linen and purple and silk and scarlet, and every kind of citron wood and every article of ivory and every article made from very costly wood and bronze and iron and marble, **13** and cinnamon and spice and incense and perfume and frankincense and wine and olive oil and fine flour and wheat and cattle and sheep, and cargoes of horses and chariots and **slaves and human lives** (souls). **14** “And the fruit you long for has gone from you, and all things that were luxurious and splendid have passed away from you and men will no longer find them. **15** “The merchants of

these things, who became rich from her, will stand at a distance because of the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning, **16** saying, **‘Woe, woe, the great city, she who was clothed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls; 17a for in one hour such great wealth has been laid waste!’**”

The merchants of the earth weep and mourn as they witness the destruction of Babylon the great city, which had brought them incredible wealth. They had accumulated gold and silver and precious stones and pearls, and costly garments in the form linen and purple and silk and scarlet, furniture made from costly woods, bronze, iron and marble. They traded in costly spices incense, perfume, and frankincense. They consumed and sold the finest wine, olive oil, fine flour, and wheat. They traded cattle and sheep, and cargoes of horses and chariots and **slaves and human** (souls). Notice the inhumane practice of trafficking slaves and human souls. These wicked merchants dehumanize men and women created in the image of God. They deserve the fierce judgment of God to come.

*Third, mariners* (vv. 17b-19)

And every shipmaster and every passenger and sailor, and as many as make their living by the sea, stood at a distance, **18** and were crying out as they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, ‘What city is like the great city?’ **19** “And they threw dust on their heads and were crying out, weeping and mourning, saying, **‘Woe, woe, the great city, in which all who had ships at sea became rich by her wealth, for in one hour she has been laid waste!’**”

Every shipmaster and sailor, and as many as make a living from moving merchandise on the seas, will weep and lament saying, **‘Woe, woe, the great city, in which all who had ships at sea became rich by her wealth, for in one hour she has been laid waste!’**

While all the kings, merchants, and mariners of the world will weep over Babylon’s destruction, the people of God are admonished to rejoice, v. 20

**20** “Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, because God has pronounced judgment for you against her.”

There is great rejoicing in heaven on the part of the saints and apostles and prophets, because God has pronounced judgment against Babylon the great city, for all the suffering it had inflicted upon God's people.

Babylon, the great city will be thrown down with violence, and *will not be found anymore*, verses 21-24. These frightening words are *repeated six times* in these closing verses. Follow along as I read these verses.

### III. The Destruction Of Babylon (18:21-24)

**21** And a strong angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "Thus will Babylon, the great city, be thrown down with violence, *and will not be found any longer*. **22** "And the sound of harpists and musicians and flute-players and trumpeters *will not be heard in you any longer*; and no craftsman of any craft *will be found in you any longer*; and the sound of a mill *will not be heard in you any longer*; **23** and the light of a lamp *will not shine in you any longer*; and the voice of the bridegroom and bride *will not be heard in you any longer*; for your merchants were the great men of the earth, because all the nations were deceived by your sorcery. **24** "And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who have been slain on the earth."

Conclusion:

Walter Scott, in his marvelous *Exposition of the Revelation*, concludes:

"Joyless, dark, and silent, Babylon stands out as a monument to the utmost vengeance of God. Wickedness had sat enthroned in the midst of *that* profess- edly bearing the Name of Christ; but at last, when she had filled to the full her cup of iniquity, God rises in His fierce anger, His indignation burns, and Baby- lon falls to rise no more. Her destruction is irremediable. The chapter closes with a reiteration of the bloody character of the system" (Walter Scott, *Exposition of the Revelation of Jesus Christ* [Fleming H. Revel, Westwood, NJ], 373).

Applications:

1. Riches acquired in life can never provide eternal or abundant life.
2. Riches can be destroyed or lost in a moment of time.
3. Life can be snatched away from us in a moment and we have either eternal separation as unbelievers, or loss of rewards as believers.

4. The appeal of God's Word for us brothers and sisters is to acquire happiness and eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ. If you have never placed your faith in Jesus Christ, asked Jesus to come into your heart and to forgive you of your sin, won't you accept Him this morning as I close in prayer?

Closing Prayer:

Closing Song: *I Stand In Awe Of You*