

Wednesday Teaching Series  
Revelation 18

The Book of Revelation  
Lesson #17- The Great Babylon-Part 2

Revelation 18: One of the most fascinating of all eschatological chapters in the New Testament.

Review of 17

- A. Angelic announcement to John of the impending judgment of the Great Harlot that rode on the beast and who caused the kings of the earth to commit fornication.
- Metaphorically called Babylon (prophetic center of all evil, godlessness, and spiritual compromise).
  - Descriptively viewed as Rome (city of seven hills) which was the great threat to the 1<sup>st</sup> century church to which John wrote his eschatological vision.
  - This evil force was soon to be judged.
- B. “Babylon”, “Great Harlot”, “Mystery of Babylon”, and “Rome” are all used interchangeably because they speak literally, metaphorically, and in a futuristic manner.

Robert Mounce: *“Prophecy by nature resists being forced into any particular time sequence. It guarantees the ultimate issues of God’s redemptive program which will be completely fulfilled when the end comes.”*

- C. This Babylon which in chapter 17 was judged, is the Roman empire of John’s day but also represents the final religious/political entity that will be used by the anti-Christ (whose spirit is now at work) to oppose the work of God and the building of His kingdom.

3 Section dirge or lament over the city of Babylon:

## I. Babylon Declared Desolate (18:1-8)

### Two Parts

#### A. Angelic announcement of Rome's fall

*After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. 2 And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! 3 For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury." Revelation 18:1-3 NKJV*

1. To the persecuted believers this sounds impossible.
2. God is about to answer the cry of the martyrs under the altar in the 5<sup>th</sup> seal.

*When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. 10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" Revelation 6:9-10 NKJV*

NOTE: Again, Babylon has always been symbolic of opposition to the advance of the kingdom of God. As it has fallen in the past, so will it be destroyed in the future. That is the main reason Babylon is used metaphorically.

3. The city will lie desolate and become the haunt for evil spirits and unclean creatures.
4. Reason for the fall is Babylon's tempting nations to fornication.

#### B. Call out of the city

*And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. 5 For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. 6 Render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her. 7 In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, 'I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.' 8 Therefore her plagues will come in one day — death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her. Revelation 18:4-8 NKJV*

1. A call to leave the city.
  - a. Literally 1<sup>st</sup> century church (more than geographical; don't participate in its sinfulness).
  - b. To the church today: "come out from among them."
  - c. End time call; flee the city!

NOTE: There is always the temptation to compromise as Christians in order to ease the tension of living in a hostile environment (we are citizens of heaven).

2. Two reasons to separate: (v. 4)
  - a. Don't share in sin
  - b. Don't receive her judgment
3. Babylon will reap what it has sown.

NOTE: The arrogance of godlessness

*In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, 'I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.' Revelation 18:7 NKJV*

*And you said, 'I shall be a lady forever;' So that you did not take these things to heart, Nor remember the latter end of them. & "Therefore hear this now, you who are given to pleasures, Who dwell securely, Who say in your heart, 'I am, and there is no one else besides me; I shall not sit as a widow, Nor shall I know the loss of children'; Isaiah 47:7-8 NKJV*

(Humiliation of literal Babylon)

(ILL) professed their doom: Belshazzar

READ: Daniel 5:-17-30

GOD WILL BRING DOWN REBELLION!

18:8 "and she will be utterly burned with fire for strong is the God who judges her."

## II. The Lament of Kings, Merchants, and Seaman (18:9-19)

3 Dirges rose over the fallen city of Babylon

A. The Kings of the earth who shared in her luxury.

*"The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning, 10 standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.' Revelation 18:9-10 NKJV*

1. Those who once admired the great cities potential now marvel at its downfall.
2. The city which seemed so powerful has now fallen.

B. The merchants of the earth.

*"And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore: 12 merchandise of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, fine linen and purple, silk and scarlet, every kind of citron wood, every kind of object of ivory, every kind of object of most precious wood, bronze, iron, and marble; 13 and cinnamon and incense, fragrant oil and frankincense, wine and oil, fine flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and bodies and souls of men. 14 The fruit that your soul longed for has gone from you, and all the things which are rich and splendid have gone from you, and you shall find them no more at all. 15 The merchants of these things, who became rich by her, will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, 16 and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls! 17 For in one hour such great riches came to nothing.' Revelation 18:11-17a NKJV*

1. The collapse has caused financial ruin (Wall Street).
2. Rome was excessive in luxury and extravagant in trade.
3. What was longed for is now gone (v.14).

C. The Mariners

*Every shipmaster, all who travel by ship, sailors, and as many as trade on the sea, stood at a distance 18 and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What is like this great city?' 19 'They threw dust on their heads and cried out, weeping and wailing, and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city, in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth! For in one hour she is made desolate.' Revelation 18:17b-19 NKJV*

1. Dust on their heads as an act of sorrow.
2. Power of one hour (good or bad).

D. Call for heaven to rejoice

*"Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!" Revelation 18:20 NKJV*

### III. Babylon Destroyed

*Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore. 22 The sound of harpists, musicians, flutists, and trumpeters shall not be heard in you anymore. No craftsman of any craft shall be found in you anymore, and the sound of a millstone shall not be heard in you anymore. 23 The light of a lamp shall not shine in you anymore, and the voice of bridegroom and bride shall not be heard in you anymore. For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived. 24 And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth." Revelation 18:21-24 NKJV*

NOTE: A view of the self-destruction of Babylon (Rome).

- o 6 x 21-23; the phrase "never...again"
- o A doom song introduced by a symbolic action.

A. Just as the stone is hurled down, so will Babylon be.

1. A huge milestone
2. Plunges into the depth of the sea; disappearance of Rome "this with violence....."

*And at once Jesus gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea. Mark 5:13 NKJV*

3. Stone does not fall; it is hurled.
4. Sudden and spectacular judgment of God upon the arrogant city but ultimately upon the entire anti-Christian world.

B. Effects of the violent overthrow.

1. Streets never again filled with music; silence reigns
2. trading ceases (no more craftsmen)
3. Cessation of food

NOTE:

*Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones and the light of the lamp. Jeremiah 25:10 NKJV*

4. Absence of light
5. Joy of matrimony has gone (implications today?)

C. Reasons for the judgment:

1. Arrogance of the merchants (23)
2. Deception of the nations; leading the world to believe that (Rome) was the eternal city; the answer to all.

\*Again...what a picture of today!

3. Blood of Christian martyrs (24)
  - a. In Jewish thought blood of innocent victims cry out for vengeance.

*And He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground. Genesis 4:10 NKJV*

- b. Martyrs under the altar (Revelation 6)

**Conclusion:** This judgment against Rome (Babylon) was for John also the eschatological judgment that would bring history to its close.

1. The forces exemplified by Rome will in fact be those forces which will play a main role at the end of time.

*The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants — things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John, Revelation 1:1 NKJV*

\*But also what will be 1:19

2. The fall of Rome described the final judgment that will usher in the eternal state.
3. Living in a world dominated by the oppressive practices of Rome; John portrays the end time in figures taken from that setting.
4. We must interpret the same figures on the eschatological setting toward which we are rapidly moving.
5. Last great goal of society will demand that Christians wear the mark of the beast.
6. Genuine believers will remain true to the Lordship of Christ.
7. Religious persecution will follow.
8. Eschatological Babylon will collapse in defeat and the Lamb will return to claim those who have been faithful to the end.
9. The first readers, like us, were led by the prophetic spirit to understand that the oppressor would surely be destroyed.
10. The future is not desolate, but filled with the joyful expectation of the vindication of their faith.
11. John's message came at just the appropriate time.