

The Fall of Babylon

Revelation 18:1-24

Both "Babylons" are in view in this chapter. Ecclesiastical Babylon, described in ch. 17, is seen having "fallen" (in the first "is fallen" of vs. 2), and political and commercial Babylon is described in this chapter and is found in the second "is fallen" of vs. 2.

We cannot be certain whether the literal city of Babylon is in view here, although I believe it is, and we cannot be certain that "that great city" of chapter 17 (vs. 18) is Rome, although I believe it is. What we can be certain about is that at the end of the Tribulation God will destroy Babylon, and there will be nothing left of it at all to be seen in the Millennium. That destruction is what is in vision in this chapter.

This chapter has in view the one-world economic system that we first saw mentioned in chapter 13 with the institution of the mark of the beast. This system will be destroyed with the destruction of Babylon. It is most likely the destruction of Babylon that is used by the dragon and the beast to draw the armies of the earth together to battle the Lord, and the forces of heaven in the Battle of Armageddon.

There are three main sections to this chapter, although they are all the same paragraph and all part of the same vision.

I. BABYLON WILL BE JUDGED – VS. 1-8

A. The first verse begins with the phrase "after these things I saw" – this is pointing to the indication that this portion of the overall vision of John receiving the Revelation is different than

that of ch. 17

1. This is significant in one's interpretation of the Babylon of ch. 17 and the Babylon of ch. 18
2. If this is either a continuation of the previous chapter or a deeper explanation of the events at the end of that chapter, then this phrase would not be here
3. The events about to be described are to be seen as markedly different and peculiar from the previous portion of this vision

B. It mentions "another angel" – that is, it's different than the one in ch. 17 – could be one of the other 7 angels from ch. 16 or just simply another angel from heaven – there are three things about this angel that are significant

1. He came "down from heaven" – indicating where his authority came from
2. He has "great power" – or great authority – also indicates he is one of the higher-ranking angels
3. The most unusual of the statements regarding this angel is that "the earth was lightened with his glory" – there's no reason to believe this is not literal so it would appear that the entire world witnesses this great angel coming to declare the end of Babylon

C. Vs. 2 gives a brief description of the fallen Babylon – the second fallen Babylon, that being the commercial and political Babylon – the city itself

1. It is said to become "the habitation of devils" – the residence of demonic forces after the fall – most likely because they were there during the time of its rise to power
2. "And the hold of every foul spirit" – or the

prison for the demons

3. "And a cage of every unclean and hateful bird" – the word "cage" is the same Greek word as that of "hold" and is referring to a prison – again, referencing the demons (here, seen as an "unclean and hateful bird")

Isaiah 34:11-15 (chapter dealing with Armageddon)

(11) But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it: and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness.

(12) They shall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom, but none *shall be* there, and all her princes shall be nothing.

(13) And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof: and it shall be an habitation of dragons, *and* a court for owls.

(14) The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr shall cry to his fellow; the screech owl also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest.

(15) There shall the great owl make her nest, and lay, and hatch, and gather under her shadow: there shall the vultures also be gathered, every one with her mate.

D. The reason for Babylon's destruction (again, remember that this is right at the time of the Battle of Armageddon) is given in vs. 3

1. Similar terminology used here for commercial Babylon as was used in ch. 17 in relation to ecclesiastical Babylon – showing the impact of the global reach of the beast and the false prophet

2. The entire world was intoxicated with Babylon and many were made rich by her – this is literal – they will be made rich at the expense of those that don't take the mark of the beast, in part. Even though the earth, literally, has changed, and most of what is known at the beginning of the Tribulation no longer exists, the beast will reestablish commerce and riches (at least, to some extent) and establish all of this from the revived city of Babylon.

E. Vs. 4-5 are very important verses here, as well as a very important truth taught throughout the Bible

1. This verse teaches separation – the need for separation for God's people is found from Genesis (literally – with Adam and Eve) to Revelation – it has never changed (Gen. 19:12-13; Num. 16:26-27; Is. 48:20; 52:11; Jer. 50:8; 51:6; 2 Cor. 6:17)

Genesis 19:12-13

(12) And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring *them* out of this place:

(13) For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it.

Numbers 16:26-27

(26) And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins.

(27) So they gat up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side: and Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood in the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little children.

Isaiah 48:20

(20) Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans, with a voice of singing declare ye, tell this, utter it *even* to the end of the earth; say ye, The LORD hath redeemed his servant Jacob.

Isaiah 52:11

(11) Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean *thing*; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD.

Jeremiah 50:8

(8) Remove out of the midst of Babylon, and go forth out of the land of the Chaldeans, and be as the he goats before the flocks.

Jeremiah 51:6

(6) Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this *is* the time of the LORD'S vengeance; he will render unto her a recompence.

2 Corinthians 6:17

(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,

2. It is critical to the spiritual well-being of the child of God to be separated, as is stated in this verse, "that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues"
3. The definition of separation is given in the words "come out of" – there is no way we can

stay connected to the world and still be separated – to “come out of” means that we leave one to go to another – we can’t have it both ways

4. There is some question as what is meant by the term “my people” – but I think if we look at the context here, and consider the Bible’s use of the term “my people” it can be determined that the angel was calling to the people of God (both Jews and Gentiles) that had not taken the mark of the beast still living in Babylon to flee before destruction comes
 - a) This same thing happened as recorded in the verses we read earlier regarding Lot and his children and the children of Israel that were living in Babylon that had not returned to Israel after the captivity
 - b) There wouldn’t have been too many still living in Babylon at this point because most would have been put to death or starved to death, but, considering the size of the city there were still some that were living (most likely in secret)
 - c) The angel appears in the sky, and announces the destruction of Babylon, and calls for those that are part of the redeemed to run from the city or else be destroyed
 - d) By application, the same should be done by the believer today when it comes to the world – we should run from sin and the Devil just as fast as we can when he shows up (Prov. 6:5; 1 Cor. 6:18; 10:14; 1 Tim. 6:10-11; 2 Tim. 2:22)

F. The angel announces the destruction in verses 6-8 as being deserved, and, in fact, deserving of double the punishment that would be normal

1. This is because of the egregious sins of the city and the beast and false prophet
2. Vs. 8 uses similar terms as 17:16 but with a slight difference – here it says Babylon will be “utterly burned with fire” while the Babylon of chapter 17 is “burn her with fire” – the difference is in the word “utterly”
3. This destruction is seen as happening “in one day” – it will happen rapidly (I believe this to be literal) and all of the world will be in awe of what is happening

II. BABYLON’S FALL WILL BE MOURNED BY THE WORLD – VS. 9-19

A. The description here is pretty much straightforward – it relates to us the view of the nations that had become rich by following the Antichrist and now they see their world literally falling apart

B. This is the end of the world as they know it – and they are literally in mourning and weeping

C. Vs. 9-10 – The mourning of the kings of the earth – represents the nations as a whole (those mentioned in ch. 17)

D. Vs. 11-19 – the lament of the merchants of the earth – represents the economic system of the world, the people of the nations

E. One application for us today in these verses is the fact that we are not to put our trust in riches (Matt. 6:19-21; Job 31:24-28; Prov. 11:4; 16:16; 23:5)

Matthew 6:19-21

(19) Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and

where thieves break through and steal:

(20) But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

(21) For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Proverbs 11:4

(4) Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death.

Proverbs 16:16

(16) How much better *is it* to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!

Proverbs 23:5

(5) Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for *riches* certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven.

III. BABYLON'S DESTRUCTION WILL BE REJOICED OVER BY HEAVEN – VS. 20-24

A. The reason for this is because of the history of Babylon down through the ages and because they were the ones that destroyed Judah (the southern tribes of Israel)

B. Isaiah said that God would destroy Babylon and that it would never be inhabited again (Jer. 51:62)

Jeremiah 51:62

(62) Then shalt thou say, O LORD, thou hast spoken against this place, to cut it off, that none shall remain in it, neither man nor beast, but that it shall be desolate for ever.

1. However, that is in a portion of the prophecy dealing with “the Day of the Lord,” or His second coming, after the Battle of Armageddon
2. Jeremiah indicates that the destruction would be sudden, which Rev. 18 describes, and historically, the destruction of Babylon wasn’t sudden – in fact, facets of it, according to the dreams of Daniel, remained in each subsequent world power – all of which will be reproduced by the Beast in the Tribulation

C. Vs. 21-24 describe the utter, absolute destruction of Babylon, the city, and what it represents of the world

1. “A mighty angel” is seen casting a “great millstone” into the sea
 - a) The “mighty angel” here is most likely the same one as seen in 10:1
 - Revelation 10:1**
 - (1) And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow *was* upon his head, and his face *was* as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire:
 - b) The millstone represents the commerce that was about to come to an end with the destruction of Babylon
 - c) It also represents, as it clearly states in vs. 21, the violent destruction of Babylon
2. The completeness of the destruction is seen in the phrase “found no more at all” – a phrase used 7 times in this chapter (in various forms) – vs. 14, 21, 22 (three times), 23 (twice)
3. Verse 24 show just why this all happened – especially to Babylon, but, in a broader sense, to the world – it was because of the hatred and killing of God’s children

Jeremiah 51:49

(49) As Babylon *hath caused* the slain of Israel to fall, so at Babylon shall fall the slain of all the earth.

Conclusion: The end is upon the world at this point in the visions of Revelation. The point to be made in this chapter for us today is that prophecy will be fulfilled, and no matter what we believe or don't believe, that will not change. When it's all over, God will have His revenge on those that crucified His Son, and upon those that killed His children.