

Revelation Chapter 18

(ESV)

The Fall of Babylon

18 After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was made bright with his glory. ² And 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.

³ For 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.”

⁴ Then 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;

⁵ for 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.’

⁸ For 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.”

18:1: Likely a different angel from the angels that poured out the seven bowls. (TLSB)

18:2: Fallen. Echoes 14:8...from John’s standpoint this is still in the future, but John describes it as completed. This is how strong our certainty and hope of that the LORD conquers all evil.

UNCLEAN: OT language. The unclean is of Satan and the demonic...in every instance intended to destroy.

“The historical city of Babylon, which oppressed the people of God and took them into captivity and exile, is the reference point for the Babylon of Revelation.” (LifeLight)

Isaiah (21:9) and Jeremiah (51:8) had also prophesied the fall of Bablyon while she was still in her glory.

18:2-3: “Sexual immorality” refers to a wide-range of moral failures. Remember idolatry always leads to immorality. Fundamental to immorality is use of God’s creation for selfish pleasure and manipulation, not serving, but using.

“Revelation 18:1-3 announces the fall of Babylon (the devil and his followers) while John and his readers (including us) find spiritual Babylon still at the height of her powers.”

But the Word is certain.

Consider Jeremiah’s certainty in respect to historical Babylon. Jeremiah 51:64.

Also, spiritual Babylon must ultimately fall.

Historical Babylon – John’s immediate manifestation witnessed Rome – spiritual Babylon before us today.

“Chapter 18 describes the fall from its announcement, to the reaction of the world, to the results and implications of that fall.”

Verse 2: “A haunt for evil...” She gives what the nations in their sin desire.

It’s where sin-seeking goes.

That is, Babylon is extraordinarily attractive to the flesh. Evil is called good, thus God’s people are to hate what is evil, and call only what is Good good.

18:4: “The people of God, who must live among her (we are in the world), are called upon by the voice of Christ Himself to come out of her (we are not OF the world)...just as Lot and his family were called upon to leave Sodom...”.

This is a moral-spiritual imperative for us.

When Babylon falls, it will be too late to separate oneself from God’s outpouring wrath (TLSB)

Luther: The Church is commanded to come out of Babylon.

18:5: Unrepentant sin is described as mounting, rising...reaching God’s judgment.

How important is daily confession for us? 5 C’s review.

There is a limit, and then God will permit no more.

“Vengeance is mine!” (Deut 32:35 and Rom 12:19)

18:6: “She will be paid back double for her evil, as will all who once knew God but turned away, and she will be forced to drink from the cup of her own abominations [Lewis’ picture of hell], to reap the consequences of her own actions.”

- **See however how the LORD promises His people in Isaiah 40:2**

18:7: Her pride exalts herself.

What does Jesus teach us about lifting oneself up?

18:8: The bowl judgments came in succession, but the final judgment is just that, total and final.

This is the only unforgivable sin. The result of blaspheming against the Holy Spirit. Rejecting the Gospel and living for sin. The difference between confessing and keeping (1st John discussion).

⁹ And the kings of the earth, who committed sexual immorality and lived in luxury with her, will weep and wail over her when they see the smoke of her burning. ¹⁰ They will stand far off, in fear of her torment, and say,

“Alas! Alas! You great city,
you mighty city, Babylon!
For in a single hour your judgment has come.”

18:9: The lamentation from judgment is not repentance, but over the loss of what brought their own wealth and well-being.

This is the difference between true contrition and getting caught.

They are mourning because they were caught and will no longer be able to indulge the flesh.

Discuss again the quality of confession and true repentance. There is an active awareness of crucifying the flesh (Galatians 5:22-24, 24 is neglected).

¹¹ And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn for her, since no one buys their cargo anymore, ¹² cargo of gold, silver, jewels, pearls, fine linen, purple cloth, silk, scarlet cloth, all kinds of scented wood, all kinds of articles of ivory, all kinds of articles of costly wood, bronze, iron and marble, ¹³ cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, oil, fine flour, wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and slaves, that is, human souls.

¹⁴ “The fruit for which your soul longed

has gone from you,
and all your delicacies and your splendors
are lost to you,
never to be found again!”

¹⁵ The merchants of these wares, who gained wealth from her, will stand far off, in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning aloud,

¹⁶ “Alas, alas, for the great city
that was clothed in fine linen,
in purple and scarlet,
adorned with gold,
with jewels, and with pearls!

¹⁷ For in a single hour all this wealth has been laid waste.”

And all shipmasters and seafaring men, sailors and all whose trade is on the sea, stood far off

11-17: LifeLight: “The merchants of the world lament the fact that the destruction of the city means that no one is left to buy their precious cargoes. At the height of Babylon’s power, no one who did not bear the mark of the beast could buy or sell. Now she who poured out her wrath on God’s people finds herself the recipient of God’s wrath, and those that profited from her luxury are themselves left destitute. She who had the wealth of the world is brought to ruin in but an hour.”

Review the mark and its connection to forehead and hand. 666 and Nero, but spiritual significance.

TLSB: “God’s original intent for mankind is horribly perverted whenever people are reduced to commodities” (verse 13)

18:14: Franzmann: “all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life” – all the sleek and splendid things they have settled for – are “of the world,” which “passes away” (1 John 2:16-17)

¹⁸ and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning,

“What city was like the great city?”

¹⁹ And they threw dust on their heads as they wept and mourned, crying out,

“Alas, alas, for the great city
where all who had ships at sea
grew rich by her wealth!
For in a single hour she has been laid waste.

18:18-19: “So also those who make their living from the sea, who deliver the cargo of the merchants. They, too, cry out in lament at the destruction of the great city, for they had become rich because of her wealth, and now she is ruined. They throw dust on their heads in lamentation, but not in repentance. Their sorrow is not over the evil in which they had a part but in the loss of the power they once had through her.”

²⁰ Rejoice over her, O heaven,
and you saints and apostles and prophets,
for God has given judgment for you against her!”

18:20: Why? Because this is also vindication and liberation for the righteous.

²¹ Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying,

“So will Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence,
and will be found no more;

²² and the sound of harpists and musicians, of flute players and trumpeters,
will be heard in you no more,
and a craftsman of any craft
will be found in you no more,
and the sound of the mill
will be heard in you no more,

²³ and the light of a lamp
will shine in you no more,
and the voice of bridegroom and bride
will be heard in you no more,
for your merchants were the great ones of the earth,

and all 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 earth.”

18:21-24: LifeLight: “To conclude the scene, another angel appears and throws a millstone into the sea, declaring that Babylon will be cast down with violence. Evil rots away the inside of those who perpetuate it, leaving only a shell that must eventually collapse of its own accord. But the destruction of Babylon comes about not because of its inherent rot, but because of God’s wrath.”