

## Revelation 18 “Bye, Bye Babylon”

### **BABYLON: THE MAE WEST OF THE BIBLE**

Mae West was one of Hollywood’s naughty girls. (August 17, 1893 – November 22, 1980)

It was said “**she climbed the ladder of success – wrong by wrong.**” Here are few quotes from Mae: *“I use to be Snow White... but I drifted.”* *“Marriage is a great institution, but I’m not ready for an institution yet.”* *“I only like two kinds of men – domestic and foreign.”* And finally, *“I’ve been in more laps than a napkin.”* Mae West was a woman who became a star by being a slut.

[The Britney Spears... Lindsay Lohan... Miley Cyrus... Kim Kardashian... Paris Hilton of our day.](#)

Well, in Revelation 17 we find the Mae West of the Bible – a biblical bad girl - a spiritual slut - a decadent, immoral, unfaithful woman. In verse 5 she receives the very unflattering name, **MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.**

*“The whore of Babylon”* is the false religious system the Antichrist uses to gain ecclesiastical sanction for his rise to power. In the Great Tribulation this naughty girl will be the spiritual system that deceives the world into worshipping Satan. In the words of Mae West, the whore of Babylon will say to the world, *“Come up and see me sometime.”* And sadly, the world will accept her invitation.

The harlot of Babylon will include the institutional church once the true church has been raptured. **It’ll incorporate the occult, astrology, humanism, paganism - as well as, all the world religions - into one eclectic doctrine - a universal religion.**

Its only creed is, “Believe in anything but Jesus”. It’s tolerant of all ideas, but true, biblical Christianity... **WE ARE THERE!**

Sadly, evangelical churches today are also sanctifying sorcery... Positive confession, visualization... any attempt to manipulate reality through psychic gymnastics is forbidden by God. It's called the New Age - but it's an old lie. **Embracing homosexuality and abortion... Cultural Christianity is an oxymoron...**

**Great Depression... free trade... peacekeeper missile**

**crash landing... student teacher... silent scream**

**good grief... tight slacks... near miss**

*Jumbo Shrimp... Sensitive man*

## WHY A HARLOT CAN'T TRUST A BEAST

In 17:8 John sees a beast “that was, and is not, and yet is” - this is the revived Roman empire. She rises in the last days in the form of a 10 nation confederacy headquartered in the capitol of Rome. Verse 9 further identifies this beast with “seven mountains” – *Rome is known to this day “as the city on seven hills.”*

It's interesting, that today, for the first time since 400 AD the old Roman empire has once again come together. It's reassembled in the form of a united Europe.

In 17:7 John implies the harlot will come to power on the back of a revived Rome. But here's the lesson she learns – go to bed with the devil and you'll never wake up.

That's what happens to the harlot. The political leader, the Antichrist, uses this false religion to come to power, but afterwards he turns on the harlot.

*Hamilton gives us a great thought to leave Chapter 17...* Think with me about his image of the world as a prostitute. Men go to prostitutes to pay to have a “husband and wife” kind of experience, but no amount of money buys the true joys of marriage.

Those who go to prostitutes may purchase a physical pleasure, but it is stripped of all the relational and emotional richness that is only to be found in marriage.

Now think about how John uses the image. Unbelievers are trying to purchase from the world system what God offers for free, if they will commit to a

relationship to him.

## **GO TO GOD TO HAVE YOUR NEEDS MET, NOT THE WORLD'S SPIRITUAL RED-LIGHT DISTRICT. PRAY**

**May we all stand together and give honor to God's word as we read together. Revelation chapter 18** 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." **4** 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. **9** "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.' **11** "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.’ 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.’ **20** “Rejoice over her, O heaven, and *you* holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!” **21** 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.”

As we see... Revelation 18 promises that godless worldliness will be judged, calling the worldly to repent and calling believers to separate themselves from the world’s idolatry.

## Chapter 17 Religious Babylon

## Chapter 18 Commercial Babylon

There are definite similarities between Babylon as described in Revelation 17 and Revelation 18. Both are under the rule of Antichrist, they both have ruling queens; both are filled with blasphemy; both hate the saints, and shed their blood; **BOTH ARE ASSOCIATES WITH KINGS IN FORNICATION**; and both are under judgment and destroyed.

However, there are also some significant differences:

Religious Babylon (Rev. 17)	Commercial Babylon (Rev. 18)
1. Mystery Babylon	1. Great Babylon; Babylon the Great
2. Symbol: a harlot woman	2. Symbol: a great city
3. Identified with Rome (inland)	3. Identified with a port city
4. Woman, whore, and mother	4. Habitation, great city, market place
5. Guilty: religious abominations	5. Guilty: greed, self-indulgence
6. Destroyed by a political power that previously supported her	6. Destroyed by a sudden act of God

**I think it is best to see them as intertwined, yet somewhat distinct.**

This breadth in prophecy shouldn't surprise us. Think of what the Old Testament says about the first coming of the Messiah:

- Micah said that Messiah would come out of Bethlehem (Micah 5:2)
- Hosea said that Messiah would come out of Egypt (Hosea 11:1)
- Malachi said that Messiah would come to the temple (Malachi 3:1)
- Zechariah said that Messiah would come to Zion (Zechariah 9:9)
- Isaiah said that Messiah would come to Galilee (Isaiah 9:1-2)

Which of these is true? They are all true. So it isn't strange at all to say, "Babylon is falling" and to mean it in two senses (religious Babylon and commercial Babylon) at two different times (the middle of the Great Tribulation and the end of the Great Tribulation).

**BARNHOUSE** commercial Babylon is symbolic, like religious Babylon.

"When the Lord was here on earth He spoke of the great hatred that 'the world' had for Him and His own (**John 15:18,19**). What is this world but a combination of religion, government and commerce? In other words, Babylon in all its parts stands for that which Christ called 'the world.'"

**Johnson "In portraying the destruction of a (symbolic) city, he describes God's judgment on the great satanic system of evil that has corrupted the earth's history."**

**All right here we go... Revelation chapter 18** After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. **This angel coming down from heaven is so "fresh" from Gods presence that he glows.** **2** And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, **Robertson notes, "the phrase is "repeated like a solemn dirge of the damned."** and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! **BIRDS ARE ASSOCIATED WITH SATAN IN MATTHEW CHAPTER 12.**

Listen to Hughes... "The fall of Babylon is a dramatic reversal that paradoxically unveils reality. It seems that Babylon is an important place inhabited by glorious people, but the fall of Babylon is like the removal of the veneer. The demons, unclean spirits, birds, and hated beasts befit Babylon's rejection of God. This fulfills what Jeremiah prophesied in Jeremiah 51:37, "Babylon shall become a heap, A dwelling place for jackals, An astonishment and a hissing, Without an inhabitant." Rejecting God is rejecting what is pleasant, and the rejection of what is pleasant results in fellowship with what is unpleasant. Are you living in a way that matches the clean and holy presence of God? Or are you living in ways that fit you for fellowship with demons and unclean beasts?"

In 18:3 the angel explains why Babylon is punished in this way.

**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." **Verse 3 tells us the Antichrist will secure the world's allegiance by making his subjects rich. In the end, the world sells out principle for profit. People compromise spiritually to gain financially.**

*Still today, Babylon trades in the souls of men. Madison Avenue is also out for our souls. **Don't be had by the ads.** God, not gold, will satisfy your spirit.*

The kings have gone to bed with Babylon, and their merchants have profited by serving as the purveyors of her smut. The rest of chapter 18 will show the demise of Babylon and the merchants and kings lamenting her.

**4** 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. *The call to depart from Babylon and the worldliness that it represents is a theme repeated frequently in the Scriptures.*

**ISAIAH 52:11** *Depart! Depart! Go out from there, touch no unclean thing; go out from her, be clean, you who bear the vessels of the LORD.*

**JEREMIAH 50:8** *Flee from the midst of Babylon, and everyone save his life!*

**2 COR. 6:16** *And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.” 17 Therefore “Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.” 18 “I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the Lord Almighty.”*

Hamilton... “If you are not believing in Jesus right now, the words, “Come out of her, my people” are a call for you to abandon the sinking ship of the world and step onto the ark of salvation: trust in Christ. If you do not heed this call, you will do what the rest of verse 4 describes – you will partake of the sins and plagues of Babylon.”

**5** For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. *Revelation 18:6 gives a command to pay Babylon back, and then verses 7, 8 explain why.*

**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. *The ancient Greek word for render (apodidomi) means literally "to pay*

a debt" or "to give back that which is due." God will give to commercial Babylon exactly what she deserves.

**MIX DOUBLE FOR HER.** Double restitution was required in the Old Testament in cases of theft (Exodus 22:4-9). This perhaps is a commentary on how Babylon has made her wealth - through dishonest dealings.

*It may look as though sinners are going to get away with their crimes, but make no mistake about it, God will be just.*

**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.' "**Queen**" which implies luxury and excess, but she will meet "famine."

This means that to the degree that she has disregarded God and glorified herself, she will be punished.

**God gave her joy, and she celebrated only herself.**

*This passage presents a three-fold sin. First, self-indulgence (lived luxuriously). Second, pride (glorified herself ... sits as a queen). Third, avoidance of suffering (am no widow, and will not see sorrow). All these things are characteristic of worldliness and materialism.*

**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. **THE DESTRUCTION OF COMMERCIAL BABYLON WILL COME SUDDENLY, AND WITH COMPLETENESS (UTTERLY BURNED WITH FIRE).** **9** "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.' *Verse 10 tells us, her mourners "see the smoke of her burning, standing at a distance for fear of her torment." This is why some teachers believe that Babylon will get nuked. The observers have to stand at a distance for fear of the fallout. 18:24 tells us Babylon was guilty of the*



***blood of prophets and saints. The Antichrist will manipulate the world's worship by taking control of the buying and selling. For the sake of a dollar Babylon will go along.***

So important to listen up, "Notice how their grief does not result from the injustice Babylon did. Their grief does not spring from the lives they ruined in alliance with Babylon. They do not grieve about the way they dishonored God and led others to do the same.

This shows that they do not love Babylon. They love themselves. They are only mourning because Babylon will give them no more sensual and immoral favors.

Are you sad when you see sin punished? Why? Because you got caught? Because you won't get away with that way of sinning anymore? Or because you defamed God's glory and goodness, told lies about his character, and wasted opportunities to enjoy him? Are you concerned for those your sins hurt? Or are you only concerned for yourself?"

**11** "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**. This long list needs little explanation, except to note these are all luxuries, not necessities. They comprise of a life of worldliness. These items are all about having your "best life now".

***Babylon is all about living for yourself.***

Anything that we long for instead of God will be taken from us, and we will never find it again.

**THE ONLY WAY TO KEEP YOUR LIFE IS TO LOSE IT. "HE IS NO FOOL TO GIVE UP WHAT HE CANNOT KEEP TO GAIN WHAT HE CANNOT LOSE" JIM ELLIOT**

**BODIES AND SOULS OF MEN.** The profits of commercial Babylon have come through cruelly using others. They sold the “**bodies and souls of men.**” This idea has many applications, No doubt today's widespread prostitution, sex slavery and pornography.**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. **Ultimately, hell will be a place of unfulfilled desire.** **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.’ **In the end, Babylon goes belly up. In 60 minutes “Babylon the great” bites the dust. God mixes her a double shot of righteous wrath at the bar of divine justice. 18:17, “In one hour such great riches came to nothing...”**

Continuing verse 17 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.’ Again, little comment needs to be made on this, other than to notice that their sorrow at commercial Babylon's fall is selfish. **None of these responses have praised God for his justice.**

All stood far off, and though they lamented Babylon, they were clearly most concerned about what Babylon’s fall meant for their own self-interest.

**20** “Rejoice over her, O heaven, and *you* holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!”

Guzik reminds us with this comment, “**Should God's people rejoice when judgment comes? Yes, but we don't rejoice in the destruction in judgment. Rather, we rejoice in the righteous resolution God's judgment brings.**” *By the way This is the first time in this book the command to rejoice is given!*

Babylon has abused the nations, and she will be punished for her pride and self-indulgence. Those she abused will not realize that they have been abused but will mourn her demise, while the righteous rejoice (18:9-20).

**21** 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.

reminds us of what Jesus said in [Matthew 18:6](#): But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea. This applies to Babylon in [Revelation 18](#), because she led others into sin. It is a terrible thing to sin unto yourself; it is even more terrible to lead others into sin. **Some day, this world system will pass away, like a great stone falls to the bottom of the sea.**

**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. **In graphic and poetic language, John describes how the industry and commerce of Babylon come to an end.** **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. Why does God judge them? He explains.

For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived. **Sorcery is the ancient Greek word *pharmakia*, which means, "to prepare drugs."** The lure of commercial Babylon is like a drug addiction, fed by deceptive advertising. **24** And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth." **GOD TAKES THE PERSECUTION OF HIS PEOPLE AS A PERSONAL OFFENSE. THOSE WHO ATTACK HIS PEOPLE REALLY ATTACK HIM.**

## COMMERCIAL BABYLON

Don't be deceived. Materialism will never satisfy. In the end the world's riches all come to nothing. Babylon goes bust. The world's system ends up bankrupt.

**Ecc. Chapter 3 verse 11...** Also He has put eternity in their hearts

Inside every person there's a tugging, a longing, a frustration that can only be satisfied by a touch of eternity. **This is the hunger of the human heart!** There's a "hole in our hearts" ... And neither **enjoyment** or **employment** can fill that hole.

St. Augustine prayed: "You have formed us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in You." We can say that eternity is in our hearts because we are made in the image of an **ETERNAL GOD**

Solomon... Our **Hebrew** became a **HEDONIST**. Solomon tries to find meaning in pleasure. He becomes a "**PARTY ANIMAL**". He "**Grabs for all the gusto**" - "*If it feels good, do it.*" Solomon puts on his Reebok's and lives their mad motto: "**Life is short-play hard**" and wow, did Solomon play hard... Solomon's palace in Jerusalem was a **perpetual party**. Once again, vanity... grasping at the wind.

**"IS THAT ALL THERE IS?"**

**WINE, WOMEN AND SONG!** Solomon partied hearty, but he found **NO PEACE IN HIS PLEASURE**, *no satisfaction in his sensuality*, *no contentment in his carnal cravings.* **IS THAT ALL THERE IS?"**

Life without God Solomon would say **"WE ARE BORN NAKED, WET AND HUNGRY. THEN THINGS GET WORSE."**

James will say that their desire for pleasure is demonstrating a friendship with the world that is incongruous with friendship with God... **as a matter of fact this hedonism makes you an enemy of God**

A 7-year-old boy on his way to his 6<sup>th</sup> heart surgery. out of the blue said to his dad...

*"Dad, I think I've learned what's most important in life.  
It's not toys or being busy with fun activities.  
It's relationships with the people you love - especially God."*

The most important things in life are not things at all.

*The THINGS that matter in life are not things at all . . . Do you have Things or do Things have you.*

The contemporary author Jessie O'Neill has diagnosed this spiritual problem. She calls it **"affluenza"** which is **"an unhealthy relationship with money"** or the pursuit of wealth.

"Wealth underachieves when it comes to bringing happiness and overachieves when it comes to bringing misery". **"Lord, burn eternity into my eyelids"** ... cirrhosis of the giver...

Do you live for what you were made to live for – God? Or do you live for what you were not made to live for and what will never satisfy you – yourself?

Will you go to the world's spiritual red-light district to seek your pay-per-pleasure with Babylon the whore? Or will you seek to enjoy the good gifts that God freely gives by thanking him and praising him for those gifts and enjoying them within the boundaries he has set for them?