

APOCALYPSE: The Global Market Destroyed!

Revelation 18

Pastor Jason Dennett's Notes

- I. The Voice of **CONDEMNATION** (18:1-3)
- II. The Voice of **SEPARATION** (18:4-8)
- III. The Voice of **LAMENTATION** (18:9-19)
- IV. The Voice of **CELEBRATION** (18:20-24)

I. The Voice of **CONDEMNATION** (18:1-3) - *"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.'"*

- The phrase "is fallen, is fallen" not only adds dramatic effect to the announcement, but suggests a dual judgment: **spiritual Babylon**, "the harlot," in Rev 17, and **commercial Babylon** here in Rev 18. This thought is amplified in Rev 18:6 when God announces that Babylon will receive "double" for her many sins.
- The church, the bride of the Lamb, is the habitation of God (Eph. 2:22); Babylon, on the other hand, is the **habitation of Satan** (Rev. 18:2). Furthermore, John called the city "a cage of every **unclean and hateful bird**" (Rev. 18:2). In Christ's Parable of the Sower, He also used the birds as a picture of Satan (Matt. 13:31–32).
- This judgment has come because the Babylonian "system" has polluted the whole world. As in the judgment of "the **harlot**," the sin is that of "**fornication**" or idolatry. The system intoxicated the people of the world with all the riches and pleasures it had to offer. It catered to those who were "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (2 Tim. 3:4).

II. The Voice of **SEPARATION** (18:4-8) - *"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."

- John offered 2 reasons for God's people separating themselves from the Babylonian system.

The first is that they **might avoid pollution**, becoming "partakers of her sins" (Rev. 18:4). "Neither be partaker of other men's sins" (1 Tim. 5:22). The word means "joint fellowship or partnership."

The second reason is that they might be **spared the terrible plagues** He will send on Babylon. God had patiently endured the growing sins of the evil system, but now the time had come for His wrath to be poured out. He would treat Babylon just as she treated His people.

- What specific sins of Babylon would God judge?

We have already noted Babylon's evil influence on the nations of the world, seducing them with **idolatry**.

Another sin that will be judged is **pride**: "She hath glorified herself!" (Rev. 18:7)

She saw herself as a queen who could never be dethroned, and this false confidence and pride could never be accepted by the Lord (see Isa. 47 for the parallel, especially vv. 7–9).

A third sin is Babylon's **worship of pleasures and luxury**. To "live deliciously" (Rev. 18:7) is to live proudly in luxury while others go without. It means to make possessions and pleasures the most important things in life, and to ignore the needs of others.

- In all ages, God's true people have had to separate themselves from that which is worldly and anti-God.

- When God called **Abraham**, He ordered him to get out of his country (Gen. 12:1).
- God separated the **Israel** from Egypt and warned the Israelites not to go back.
- The church today is commanded to separate itself from that which is ungodly (Rom. 16:17–18; 2 Cor. 6:14–7:1).
- **Christians** in every age have had to heed the warning of 1 John 2:15–17. How easy it is to become fascinated by the things the world has to offer. Like a person taking a sip of wine, we can soon find ourselves drinking deeply and then wanting more. The world system that opposes Christ has always been with us, and we must beware of its subtle influence.
- **During the Tribulation**, the world's system will satisfy the desires of the earth-dwellers who follow "the beast" and reject the Lamb. But we must remember that worldly things never permanently satisfy or last. (Jn 6:27)

III. The Voice of **LAMENTATION (18:9-19) - "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.”

- This describes the **mourning of the merchants** as they see Babylon go up in smoke and all their wealth destroyed. The image here is that of a prosperous ancient city that is visited by many ships. The wealth of the city provides for many nations and employs many people. It is worth noting that not only do the merchants lament the fall of Babylon (Rev. 18:11), but also the kings of the earth (Rev. 18:9).
*These verses have led many bible students to ask the question: "Is Babylon a **CITY** or will it be a **SYSTEM**?"*
- The word translated “**wail**” (Rev. 18:9) means “a loud lamentation” as opposed to silent weeping. Note that the merchants are not feeling sorry for the city, but for themselves: they have lost valuable customers! God had brought an end to their life of luxury and wealth. Even their employees weep (Rev. 18:17–18).
- John gave an **inventory of commodities** that brought wealth to these kings, merchants, and shipmasters. Gold, silver, and precious stones led the list. Then he described costly garments (see also Rev. 18:16) and items made of different materials.
- Last on the list, and most disturbing, is “**slaves and the souls of men**” (Rev. 18:13). It has been estimated that one third of Rome’s population was enslaved; and it was not unusual for 10,000 human beings to be auctioned off in one day in the great slave markets of the Empire. There were probably over 60 million slaves throughout the Empire, people who were treated like pieces of furniture, bought and sold, used and abused. Is John suggesting that there will be a return to slavery? (Rev 13)

IV. The Voice of **CELEBRATION (18:20-24) - “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."

- In contrast to the lament of the kings and merchants is **the rejoicing of heaven's inhabitants** that Babylon has fallen. How important it is that God's people look at events from God's point of view!!
- During the first half of the Tribulation, as "the beast" rises to power, spiritual and commercial Babylon will work together in opposing the Lord and His people. It will seem that God does not care; but at the right time, **the Lord will vindicate His people** and destroy both "the harlot" and the great city. God is patient with His enemies; but when He does begin to work, He acts suddenly and thoroughly.
- It should break our hearts, knowing that lost sinners are condemned to eternal punishment. But the joy in this section centers on **God's righteous judgment**, the fact that **justice has been done**. It is easy for comfortable Bible students to discuss these things in their homes. If you and I were with John on Patmos, or with the suffering saints to whom he wrote, we might have a different perspective. We must never cultivate personal revenge (Rom. 12:17–21), but we must rejoice at the righteous judgments of God.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

- "What is it that can get me very sad, or could make me wail in **sadness?**"
- "What is it that can get me very happy, or could make me walk spiritually in **rejoicing?**"
- "Do you realize that the LORD is in **SOVEREIGN** control over **ALL** the events of history, all the events of the future, and all the events of your life **TODAY?**"
- "Are you **IN LOVE** with this world's **MATERIALISM, GREED, and COVETOUSNESS?** Are you worshipping **CHRIST** or commercialism? Are you chasing money...or the **MASTER?**"

Are you living for **YOUR** kingdom here...or **CHRISTS KINGDOM** then?