

Revelation 18 – Babylon, the False World System

Verse 1

And I saw another angel coming down from heaven having great authority, and the earth was illumined with his glory.

This is clearly a different angel from the one mentioned 17:1.

What follows in chapter 18 is a different revelation from chapter 17. While chapter 17 emphasized religious Babylon, chapter 18 emphasizes political-economical Babylon.

We can view the chapter in four scenes:

- 1 – The announcement of judgment (2-4)
- 2 – The call for separation (5-8)
- 3 – The anguish and lament of judgment (9-19)
- 4 – The heavenly rejoicing over Babylon's fall (20-24).

Scene 1 – The announcement of judgment (2-4)

Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great – Fallen is repeated for emphasis.

This prophetic word comes from Isaiah 21:9. Ancient Babylon fell to Cyrus the Persian in 539 B.C. However, it appears that Babylon will be rebuilt and become a center of commerce during the tribulation period. *She has become...*

- A dwelling place of demons
- A prison of every unclean spirit
- A prison of every unclean and hateful bird

Each of these descriptions refer to fallen angels who appear to headquarter and be held captive in Babylon against their wills.

For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality – Babylon's immoral influence is worldwide.

The kings of the earth... - Political self-interest!

The merchants of the earth have become rich – Materialism is rampant.

Scene 2 – The call to believers to separate from her false system (4-8)

Another voice – Apparently another angel

Come out of her my people that you may not participate in her sins and that you may not receive her plagues – Tribulation believers will be hurt by the coming judgment unless they remove themselves from Babylon.

Her sins have piled up as high as heaven – Her sins, like the bricks used to build the tower of Babel (Genesis 11) have reached up to heaven.

God has remembered her iniquities – Because He is righteous, God cannot excuse sin.

Pay her back even as she has paid...mix twice as much for her – The cup she used seduce others (verse 3) will now be

used against her. "This is a judicial pronouncement against a sinful civilization that has reached the ultimate limit of evil."

To the degree that she glorified herself and lived sensuously, to the same degree give her torment and mourning... Her selfish, prideful, and defiant attitude will be punished. (A similar warning against this type attitude is issued to the church at Laodicea (3:17-18).

In one day her plagues will come – This may be a literal day but can also express suddenness. She will collapse suddenly, not decline gradually.

Her destruction is certain because, "*The Lord God who judges her is strong.*"

Scene 3 – The anguish and lamentation of those affected (9-19)

The kings of the earth, the merchants of the earth, and every shipmaster, passenger and sailor:

- Will weep and lament over her
- Will stand at a distance because of fear
- Will say, "Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon...in one hour your judgment has come.
- Cried out as she saw the smoke of her burning
- They threw dust on their heads and were weeping and mourning

Seven categories of trade that are abolished -Precious metals and gems, clothing, furnishings, spices, food, animals and implements, and people

Scene 4 – Acclaim and Celebration (20-24)

Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets – All the angelic host and all believers can now rejoice as God has pronounced His verdict and vindicated them by punishing their oppressors (19:2).

And a strong angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying thus will be Babylon – Note the parallel prophecy in Jeremiah 51:63-64.

- Music* – will not be heard in you any longer
- Craftsmanship* – will not be found in you any longer
- Commerce* – will not be heard in you any longer
- Light* – will not shine in you any longer
- Rejoicing* – will not be heard in you any longer

Why? Three reasons are given:

- 1 – Men exalted themselves
- 2 – Babylon seduced and deceived the nations
- 3 – Babylon slew the saints

The blood of God's servants martyred for their testimonies lies at the feet of this system!