

Isaiah Wilson / General Adult

Revelation / Revelation 18:1–8

Introduction

Last week we finished [Revelation 17](#). We saw the angel explain the mystery of the beast and the woman. We saw the ten kings unite under the beast, make war against the Lamb, and get destroyed. We heard one of the most important verses in the chapter: *"The Lamb will triumph over them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings."*

Tonight we move into [Revelation 18](#). And the focus shifts again.

Chapter 17 was about identification. The angel was explaining who the woman is and what the beast represents. But chapter 18 is about **judgment**. It's not asking "who is Babylon?" It's announcing "Babylon is finished."

This chapter opens with a powerful scene. A mighty angel descends with so much glory that the whole earth is lit up. And the first thing out of his mouth is a declaration: *Fallen. Fallen is Babylon the Great.*

But before we get to the fall, God does something important. He speaks to His people. He warns them. He calls them out.

That's what we're going to focus on tonight. Verses 1 through 8. The announcement of Babylon's fall and the call for God's people to separate from her before judgment arrives.

This passage raises a question every believer has to wrestle with: **How much of Babylon is still in me?**

Read the Text: [Revelation 18:1–8](#) (BSB)

Revelation 18:1–8 BSB

¹ After this I saw another angel descending from heaven with great authority, and the earth was illuminated by his glory.

² And he cried out in a mighty voice: “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a lair for demons and a haunt for every unclean spirit, every unclean bird, and every detestable beast.

³ All the nations have drunk the wine of the passion of her immorality. The kings of the earth were immoral with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown wealthy from the extravagance of her luxury.”

⁴ Then I heard another voice from heaven say: “Come out of her, My people, so that you will not share in her sins or contract any of her plagues.

⁵ For her sins are piled up to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.

⁶ Give back to her as she has done to others; pay her back double for what she has done; mix her a double portion in her own cup.

⁷ As much as she has glorified herself and lived in luxury, give her the same measure of torment and grief. In her heart she says, ‘I sit as queen; I am not a widow and will never see grief.’

⁸ Therefore her plagues will come in one day— death and grief and famine— and she will be consumed by fire, for mighty is the Lord God who judges her.”

Walking Through the Text

1. The Angel's Arrival and Announcement (vv. 1–2)

Revelation 18:1–2 BSB

¹ After this I saw another angel descending from heaven with great authority, and the earth was illuminated by his glory.

² And he cried out in a mighty voice: “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a lair for demons and a haunt for every unclean spirit, every unclean bird, and every detestable beast.

This angel is impressive. He doesn't sneak in. He doesn't whisper. He arrives with such authority and glory that the **earth itself lights up around him.**

This is intentional. God is making a public statement. What is about to be declared is not a private opinion or a quiet prophecy. It's a formal, cosmic announcement.

And the announcement is staggering:

"Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great!"

Notice the double declaration. *Fallen. Fallen.* This is Hebrew prophetic language borrowed straight from [Isaiah 21:9](#), where the prophet cried out the same words over historical Babylon. The repetition is not accidental. It signals **absolute certainty**. This is not "Babylon might fall." It's not "Babylon is in trouble." It's *Fallen. Done. Finished.*

In prophetic language, God often speaks of future events in the past tense because His word is so certain it's as good as done. Babylon hasn't fully collapsed yet in the narrative. But the angel speaks as if it already has.

This is important for us. **What God declares, He delivers.** The gap between the announcement and the fulfillment doesn't make the announcement uncertain. It makes the waiting intentional.

Then the angel describes what Babylon has become:

"She has become a dwelling place for demons and a haunt for every unclean spirit, every unclean bird, and every detestable beast."

This imagery comes from the Old Testament judgment oracles. [Isaiah 13:21–22](#) and [Jeremiah 50:39](#) both describe fallen Babylon as a place haunted by wild creatures and unclean spirits. It's desolation language. It means **complete and total ruin.**

But there's something deeper here. Babylon didn't just *become* demonic at the moment of judgment. She had been demonic all along. The judgment reveals what was always true. What the world called glamour, power, and prosperity was actually a dwelling place for darkness.

The fall doesn't change Babylon's nature. It exposes it.

2. How Babylon Got Her Power (v. 3)

Revelation 18:3 BSB

³ All the nations have drunk the wine of the passion of her immorality. The kings of the earth were immoral with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown wealthy from the extravagance of her luxury.”

Three groups. Nations. Kings. Merchants. That's everyone. Her influence is not limited to one corner of the world or one type of person. It's global. It's total. And it cuts across every level of society, from the highest political powers to the people running the trade routes.

But notice something about how each group is connected to Babylon. They don't all relate to her in the same way.

The **nations** are described as *drinking*. They have consumed what Babylon offered. They've taken it in. The word John uses here points back to [Jeremiah 51:7](#), where God calls Babylon "a golden cup in the hand of the LORD, making all the earth drunk." Babylon is not just a city. She is a source. She pours something out, and the nations drink it down.

What are they drinking? The wine of her immorality. And wine is not accidental imagery here. Wine does something to you. It lowers your resistance. It makes things seem better than they are. It makes you feel warm and full and comfortable. And if you drink enough of it, you stop thinking clearly.

That's what Babylon does to the nations. She doesn't conquer them with force. She **intoxicates** them. She makes her way of life feel normal, attractive, and desirable. And over time, the nations stop being able to imagine anything different.

The **kings** are described differently. They were *immoral with her*. This is the language of adultery. Of a covenant broken. Of a relationship that was never supposed to happen. In the Old Testament, Israel's prophets used this same imagery over and over. When God's people chased after foreign gods and foreign powers, it was called adultery. Because they had a covenant with God and they gave their allegiance to someone else.

The kings of the earth had a responsibility. They were put in authority to govern justly, to protect their people, and to be accountable to the God who gives power. Instead they got into bed with Babylon. They partnered with her corruption. They accepted her terms. They used her power and gave her their loyalty in return. And God calls it what it is: immorality.

The **merchants** are described as growing rich. Their connection to Babylon is the simplest and maybe the most honest. They didn't pretend to love her. They didn't dress it up in political language. They just saw the money. And they took it.

This is the economic engine behind Babylon's power. She creates a system where wealth flows, where luxury goods move across the world, where people at the top get rich while the system itself runs on exploitation. And the merchants benefit. They don't ask questions. They don't look too closely at who gets hurt. They see the profit and they keep moving.

Three groups. Three different relationships. But they all end up in the same place. Connected to Babylon. Shaped by her. Dependent on her.

And here is the thing we need to see clearly. **Babylon doesn't advertise what she is.**

She doesn't put up a sign that says "corrupt system, enter at your own risk." She presents herself as the source of everything good. She offers wine, not poison. She offers prosperity, not exploitation. She offers security, not bondage. The nations drink because the cup looks good. The kings partner because the arrangement looks profitable. The merchants trade because the money is real.

This is how Babylon has always worked. She sells something that looks like the real thing. And the seduction is effective because the things she offers are real things. Wealth is real. Comfort is real. Power is real. Security is real. The problem is not the things themselves. The problem is where they're coming from and what they cost.

The Greek word behind "immorality" in this verse is **porneia**. In Revelation, John uses it as a symbol for spiritual unfaithfulness. It's the language of giving to someone else what belongs to God. The nations, kings, and merchants haven't just made some bad financial decisions. They've transferred their allegiance. They've given to Babylon what was supposed to go to God.

And that's why this verse is the setup for everything that follows. The call to "come out" only makes sense once you understand how deep in people are. They're not just doing business with Babylon. They're drinking her wine. They're in her bed. They've built their whole lives around her system.

This is also why God has to warn His own people. Because His people live in the same world. They shop at the same markets. They work in the same systems. They breathe the same air. And the seduction that has captured the nations, the kings, and the merchants is the same seduction that can quietly capture the church.

The question is not whether Babylon is trying to influence you. She is. The question is whether you know it.

James 4:4 says it plainly:

"You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Whoever chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God."

That's a hard verse. But it's the same warning John is giving here in different language. You cannot be drunk on Babylon's wine and walking in step with God at the same time. You cannot be in bed with the world's system and fully devoted to the King at the same time. At some point, you have to choose whose cup you're drinking from.

3. The Call to Come Out (v. 4)

Revelation 18:4 BSB

⁴ Then I heard another voice from heaven say: "Come out of her, My people, so that you will not share in her sins or contract any of her plagues.

This is the center of the passage. This is what God most wants His people to hear tonight.

Notice who is speaking. Not the angel. The text says *another voice from heaven*. This is likely the voice of God Himself — or Christ — speaking directly to His people. The angel made the announcement. Now God addresses His own.

And the first thing He says is not a warning. It's not a rebuke. It's a **declaration of belonging**.

He calls them **"My people."**

Think about where they are. They are in the middle of Babylon. Surrounded by her luxury and her seduction and her promises. And God looks at His own and says, *"You are Mine. Come out."* When He tells them what to do, He also tells them who they are.

That's important. The call to holiness is always grounded in identity. God doesn't say "come out so you can become My people." He says "come out *because* you are My people."

Separation from Babylon is not how you earn God's favor. It's how you live out the reality that you already belong to Him.

This language should remind us of three major Old Testament moments that every Jewish reader in John's audience would have recognized immediately:

1. The Exodus — God called Israel out of Egypt, out of a corrupt system that had absorbed them. They had been there so long they had taken on Egyptian ways, Egyptian gods, Egyptian thinking. The call to leave was a call to remember who they were.

2. [Jeremiah 51:6, 45](#) — "Flee from Babylon! Run for your lives! Do not be destroyed because of her sins." When historical Babylon was about to fall, God told His exiled people: don't go down with this city. Get out.
3. [Isaiah 52:11](#) — "Depart, depart, go out from there! Touch no unclean thing! Come out from it and be pure." This is the language of priestly separation — don't let the defilement of the system cling to you.

The pattern is unmistakable throughout Scripture. **When God is about to judge a corrupt system, He first calls His people to separate from it.** He doesn't want His people to be swept away in a judgment that wasn't meant for them. He always warns before He acts. He always makes a way of escape.

But we have to be honest about what "*come out*" does and doesn't mean.

It doesn't mean moving to a different country. It doesn't mean withdrawing from society, shutting off the news, and refusing to engage with the world. It doesn't mean you stop working, stop building relationships, stop living in a culture that doesn't share your values.

Jesus Himself prayed in [John 17:15](#), "*My prayer is not that You take them out of the world, but that You protect them from the evil one.*" God does not call us to a monastery. He calls us to a mission.

So coming out is not geographic. It's spiritual. It's a matter of allegiance.

And this is where it gets uncomfortable. Because we live in Babylon. We shop in Babylon. We work in Babylon. We scroll through Babylon every morning on our phones. We are immersed in a culture that carries Babylon's values, Babylon's priorities, and Babylon's cup — and the cup is always being offered.

What does coming out look like then? It looks like:

- Refusing to let Babylon define what success means for your life.
- Refusing to let Babylon tell you what your body is for, what your money is for, what your ambition is for.
- Refusing to let Babylon's fear drive your decisions when God's Word says something different.
- Choosing the Kingdom's priorities over the culture's priorities, even when the culture's priorities look reasonable, comfortable, and normal.

The Apostle Paul put it this way in Romans 12:2:

"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."

The word *conform* there is **syschēmatizesthe** — "don't be pressed into the mold." Babylon is always applying pressure. The question is whether we're resisting it or giving in to it. And most of the time, it doesn't happen all at once. It happens slowly. Gradually. Comfortably. A little compromise here. A little normalization there. Until one day you look around and realize you've been drinking from her cup for years.

2 Corinthians 6:17 makes the call unmistakably clear:

"Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you."

The promise attached to separation is communion with God. You come out of Babylon so you can more fully be with Him. **The call to leave is also an invitation to draw near.**

4. The Weight of Her Sin (v. 5)

Revelation 18:5 BSB

⁵ For her sins are piled up to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.

Two devastating statements in one verse. And each one deserves real attention.

"Her sins are piled up to heaven."

The Greek word here is **ekollēthēsan** — literally "glued together" or "heaped up in layers." Picture a massive pile, layer after layer, stacked so high it reaches the sky. Her sins are not isolated incidents. They are **an accumulation**. A long history of rebellion, exploitation, corruption, and bloodshed, pressed together into a monument of guilt that now reaches the throne of God.

This is intentional imagery and it's loaded with Old Testament meaning. It takes us all the way back to Genesis 11 and the Tower of Babel. Remember what Babel was. Humanity gathered together, built a city, and said, *"Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves."* It was not a tower to worship God. It was a tower to **replace** God. To build a monument to human achievement and self-sufficiency.

Babylon's sin tower is the same thing. Every act of pride, every exploitation of the poor, every act of spiritual adultery, every drop of innocent blood — all of it has been building, layer by

layer, into something that says *"We don't need God. We are our own gods."* And now it has reached heaven.

And God has noticed.

"God has remembered her iniquities."

This phrase is easy to misread. It doesn't mean God had amnesia and suddenly recalled something. It's not like God was distracted and finally looked up. This is **courtroom language**. In the Old Testament, when God "remembers" something, it means He is now acting on it. He is moving from patience to judgment. The case has been building. The evidence has been accumulating. And now the verdict is being rendered.

Think about what this means. For generations, Babylon has operated with apparent impunity. She has exploited people and called it commerce. She has seduced nations and called it influence. She has shed innocent blood and called it power. And from the outside it looked like nothing was happening. It looked like she was getting away with it.

But God was watching the whole time. He was not absent. He was not unaware. He was not powerless. He was **patient**. 2 Peter 3:9 says the Lord is not slow in keeping His promises — He is patient, not wanting anyone to perish. God gives time for repentance. He withholds judgment because He is merciful.

But patience is not the same as permission. And patience is not the same as indifference. God's patience has a limit. And when Babylon's sins reach heaven, when the tower is complete, God acts.

This should both comfort and sober us.

It should comfort us because it means **injustice is never the final word**. The systems that exploit and oppress and abuse may look untouchable right now. But God sees. God remembers. And God will act.

It should sober us because it means **no sin is hidden**. Not Babylon's sin. Not ours. Everything that has been done in darkness will be brought into the light. The same God who remembers Babylon's iniquities is also the God before whom we will all stand.

Ecclesiastes 12:14 says:

"For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil."

The Tower of Sin is being built one brick at a time. And every brick is seen.

5. The Justice of Her Judgment (vv. 6–7)

Revelation 18:6–7 BSB

⁶ Give back to her as she has done to others; pay her back double for what she has done; mix her a double portion in her own cup.

⁷ As much as she has glorified herself and lived in luxury, give her the same measure of torment and grief. In her heart she says, 'I sit as queen; I am not a widow and will never see grief.'

When you first read this, it can sound extreme. It can sound like God is being harsh or even vengeful. But that reaction usually means we haven't fully understood what Babylon has done or how deeply she has wounded God's people.

So let's be clear about who Babylon is in this text. She is not just a city that made some bad choices. She is a system, a world order, that has:

- Exploited the poor, reducing human beings to line items in a trade ledger.
- Corrupted the nations, intoxicating them with immorality and spiritual adultery.
- Persecuted God's people, shedding the blood of prophets and saints.
- Built an empire on injustice and dressed it up in gold and jewels and purple robes so it looked like prosperity.
- Deceived the whole world with her sorcery, making evil look attractive, calling darkness light.

Now read verse 6 again. "*Pay her back double for what she has done.*"

The "double portion" language is rooted in the Old Testament principle of **lex talionis** — the law of proportional retribution. It doesn't mean twice as much as she deserves. In the Hebrew legal and prophetic tradition, "double" was sometimes a figure of speech for **full and complete restitution**, not excessive, but thorough. Every wrong accounted for. No debt unpaid.

Jeremiah 16:18 uses the same language when God announces judgment on Israel: "*I will repay them double for their wickedness and their sin.*" It's a declaration of **comprehensive justice**, nothing swept under the rug, nothing minimized, nothing forgotten.

And then look at verse 7. This is the key to the whole judgment:

"Give her as much torment and grief as the glory and luxury she gave herself."

This is the principle of **mirror judgment**. What she glorified in herself becomes the measure of her grief. She lived in excess and her judgment is in proportion. She draped herself in luxury while people suffered and her suffering will be proportional to her indulgence. She celebrated herself and now God brings her low.

Babylon gave herself glory. God gives her grief.

Babylon gave herself luxury. God gives her torment.

Babylon celebrated herself without restraint. God judges her without exception.

This is not cruelty. This is **moral symmetry**. This is what justice actually looks like when it is finally, fully carried out.

And here's what we often forget: justice is not something God reluctantly performs. Justice is not a departure from His love. **Justice is an expression of His character**. A God who sees Babylon crush the poor, murder the saints, and seduce the nations — and does nothing — is not a good God. He is an indifferent one.

The God of the Bible is not indifferent. He is righteous. And righteousness demands that what Babylon has sown, she will also reap.

Galatians 6:7 says:

"Do not be deceived: God is not to be mocked. Whatever a man sows, he will reap in return."

That principle applies to individuals. And Revelation 18 makes it unmistakably clear it applies to systems, empires, and civilizations as well. Babylon has been sowing for generations. The harvest is coming.

When we see exploitation and corruption and the abuse of power in this world, we do not have to despair. We do not have to feel like nothing will ever be made right. Because God has promised that **every cup Babylon has mixed for others, she will drink herself**. Every throne built on stolen lives will be dismantled. Every crown worn in arrogance will be removed.

The scales of God's justice are not broken. They are simply not finished yet.

6. Babylon's Pride and Her Sudden End (vv. 7b–8)

Revelation 18:7–8 BSB

⁷ As much as she has glorified herself and lived in luxury, give her the same measure of torment and grief. In her heart she says, 'I sit as queen; I am not a widow and will never see grief.'

⁸ Therefore her plagues will come in one day— death and grief and famine— and she will be consumed by fire, for mighty is the Lord God who judges her.”

After everything we've seen — the angel's declaration, God's warning to His people, the accumulation of sin, the certainty of judgment — we finally get to hear Babylon speak for herself.

And what does she say?

"I sit as queen."

"I am not a widow."

"I will never see grief."

Three statements. All of them about herself. All of them about her permanence, her power, and her safety. She is completely absorbed in her own greatness. There is no room in her thinking for God, for accountability, or for the possibility that any of this could end.

This is the voice of pride. And it's a voice we've heard before.

This language comes straight out of [Isaiah 47:7–9](#). God is addressing ancient Babylon through the prophet, and He quotes her in almost the exact same words. *"I will be a queen forever... I will never be a widow or know the loss of children."* The arrogance is identical. That's the point. Babylon in every age says the same thing. The specific city changes. The spirit doesn't.

And we hear that same voice today.

We hear it in nations that believe their power is permanent. We hear it in institutions that think they are too big to fail. We hear it in people who have built so much comfort and security around themselves that they've stopped leaving any room for God.

We sometimes hear it in ourselves.

Whenever we start to believe that our health, our income, our relationships, or our plans are so solid that nothing can shake them, we are speaking Babylon's language. We are saying, in our hearts, *"I will never see grief."*

That's not faith. That's arrogance. And God takes it seriously.

"Therefore her plagues will come in one day."

The word *therefore* in verse 8 connects Babylon's pride directly to the timing of her judgment. Her arrogance doesn't just describe who she is. It speeds up what's coming. **Pride doesn't just precede the fall. It invites it.**

Proverbs 16:18 says:

"Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."

And Babylon's fall is shockingly fast. *One day.* Centuries of empire. One day. Everything she built, every alliance she made, every luxury she accumulated — gone in twenty-four hours.

And then later, in verses 10, 17, and 19, the language gets even tighter: *"In one hour."* Not one day. **One hour.** What took generations to build, God dismantles in a single hour.

We need to sit with that. Because we live in a world that treats power as if it's permanent. Empires look like they'll last forever... until they don't. Companies that seem untouchable collapse overnight. Regimes that look unshakeable fall apart in a matter of weeks. History is full of Babylons that said "I will never see grief" and then didn't survive to see the next century.

God is not impressed by what impresses us.

"For mighty is the Lord God who judges her."

This is the reason Babylon falls so fast. It's not because she was weaker than we thought. It's because **the One judging her is infinitely stronger than she is.** She was never being measured against other nations or armies. She was always being measured against God. And there is no contest there.

The same God who spoke the universe into existence, who parted the Red Sea, who raised Jesus from the dead, that God is the one bringing judgment. Babylon's wealth and power and arrogance mean nothing in front of Him.

This is where our passage closes, and it closes in exactly the right place. Not with a warning. Not with another description of Babylon's sins. It closes with a declaration about who God is.

Mighty is the Lord God who judges her.

That's the anchor. When the world looks stable and Babylon looks invincible and the timing of God's justice feels unclear, come back to that line. The Lord God is mighty. He is not slow. He is

not weak. He is not unaware. And when He moves, **even the proudest empire falls in a single hour.**

Key Themes

1. God sees what the world ignores. Babylon's hidden corruption is fully visible to God. Nothing is buried deep enough.
2. Separation from evil is an act of obedience. "Come out" is not a suggestion. It is a command from the voice of God.
3. Sin accumulates. Babylon's judgment didn't come from one act. It came from generations of accumulated rebellion.
4. Pride is a spiritual danger, not just a personality flaw. Babylon's arrogance was the final indictment before judgment.
5. God's people must not be spiritually at home in Babylon. Comfort in the world's system is a warning sign.

Application

1. What areas of Babylon's values have you quietly accepted? Think about how you measure success, security, worth, and beauty. Are those measurements coming from God's Word or from Babylon's cup?
2. "Come out" is a daily decision, not a one-time event. What would it look like this week to actively reject one way Babylon tries to shape your thinking?
3. Where are you tempted to say "I will never see grief" about something in your life? A relationship, a career, a financial situation? Babylon's mistake was in finding her security in herself. Where is your security actually anchored?
4. The call is to God's people — which means believers can be in Babylon and not know it. Spend time this week asking God honestly: What in my life is Babylon, and what is the Kingdom?

Closing

Babylon looks glorious. She always does. That's the point. If she looked dangerous, no one would drink from her cup. But the angel arrives and says what God has always known: *Fallen. Fallen.*

The empire that said "I am a queen and will never see grief" will be consumed in a single day. The system that seduced the nations, intoxicated the kings, and enriched the merchants will be silent.

And in the middle of it all, God stops to speak to His people. Not to condemn them. Not to lecture them. But to warn them. *Come out. You are Mine. Don't share in her sins. Don't be swept away in her judgment.*

That voice is still speaking tonight.

The question is: **Are we listening?**