

## Revelation 18:1-24 | Fallen Is Babylon The Great

### Introduction

Chapter 17 chronicled the decisive judgment of God on the world's idolatrous religious system (The Great Prostitute/Babylon The Great), now chapter 18 chronicles the decisive judgment of God on the world's idolatrous economic system (Babylon the Great). Chapter 18 functions as a type of funeral dirge for the cursed city/system.

Robert Mounce: "Chapters 17 and 18 portray the judgment of God on the great (read 'notorious') prostitute, Rome, that citadel of pagan opposition to the cause of Christ. . . . In chapter 17 the harlot appears as a vulgar display of the trappings of wealth and power drunk with the blood of the martyrs. In chapter 18 she is a city brought to ruins from her former position of world domination."

### Verse-By-Verse Notes

#### Verses 1-3

- The judgment of God on the world's self-love and self-sufficiency personified in Babylon the Great will be so exhaustive that the city will be left in desolate ruin, inhabited only by demons. Mounce says, "It is a prophetic picture of absolute desolation where the proud achievements of the human race become the demonic haunts of unclean and detestable creatures."
- Verse 3 specifies the reason for God's judgment on Babylon: her corrupting influence in the world. Note the two aspects of her pervasive evil influence: *pleasure* and *prosperity* (v. 3).

#### Verses 4-5

- The original recipients of Revelation would have understood this as a call for Christians to separate from the evil influences of Rome. Babylon, Rome, the future capital city of the antichrist's world dominion, embody the world's system, the spirit of the age which is *pro-self* and *anti-Christ*. Separation from the ideology of the world is fundamental to the Christian life (1 John 2:15-17; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; James 4:4; Romans 12:2, etc.).
- Note the allusion back to the Tower of Babel, the origin of Babylon – "her sins are heaped high as heaven" (Genesis 11:4; also Jeremiah 51:9)
- "God has remembered her iniquities." It may appear that the wicked go unpunished, but God has the complete record of their sins and they will receive the justice they have earned (see vv. 6-8).

#### Verses 6-8

- Verse 6 contains a triplet of retribution representing complete and final judgment. This is a divine reckoning.

- The essential characteristics of the world's system are *pride* ("she glorified herself), *pleasure* ("she lived in luxury"), and *self-sufficiency* ("I sit as a queen . . . mourning I shall never see.") (v. 7)
- God will send quick and decisive judgment against the world's system (v. 8)

### **Verses 9-10**

- Verses 9-20 record the lamentation of those who colluded with and profited by Babylon (i.e. those who represent the political/ideological system and economic systems of the world). (v. 9)
- There are three divisions represented in Babylon's dirge: "kings of the earth" (political leaders), "merchants of the earth" (global economic trade), and "shipmasters"/"all whose trade is on the sea" (global shipment ).
- Note that this is not sorrow over Babylon's sin, but sorrow over Babylon's judgment. (v. 10)

### **Verses 11-14**

- Babylon will be the center of the world's economy, and with its destruction, global commerce will shut down.
- Note the mention of slaves in verse 13. John MacArthur: "The slave trade, long banned by the civilized nations of the world, will reappear in Antichrist's debauched commercial system."

### **Verses 15-17**

- The "merchants of the earth" (global economic trade) will lament the destruction of Babylon because the source of their wealth is no more.

### **Verses 18-19**

- The global shipping industry ("all whose trade is on the sea") will lament the destruction of Babylon because the source of their wealth is no more.
- This will be an unprecedented disruption of the economic interdependence of the world's nations. With this, the empire of the antichrist is brought to a decisive end.

### **Verses 20-24**

- While the wicked will lament the fall of the world's financial system, the righteous will rejoice.
- In verses 21-24, an angel expresses a metaphor signifying the decisiveness of Babylon's overthrow. John MacArthur offers a helpful summary: "The fall of Babylon ends whatever semblance of normalcy will still exist in the world after all the seals, trumpets, and bowls. Life will be totally disrupted and the end near. No more music, no

industry, no preparing of food ('millstone'), no more power for light, and no more weddings because God will destroy the deceivers and deceived."

- See Jeremiah 51:60-64

**BIG IDEA: "WITH THE DESTRUCTION OF THE SATANIC LAST AND GREATEST HUMAN EMPIRE, THE STAGE IS SET FOR THE TRIUMPHANT RETURN OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST." – JOHN MACARTHUR**