

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

DECEMBER 1ST, 2024 // REVELATION

## BABYLON HAS FALLEN (REVELATION 18:1-8) BACKGROUND OF BABYLON

As discussed in Chapter 17, Babylon had existed in many fashions; not only in literal forms (original Babylon in Genesis 11 and neo-Babylonian empires throughout the OT), but also symbolic (commercial) Babylon has existed in various ways since the beginning.

- Babylon, in every way, stands for what the Bible refers to as “the world.”

## BABYLON (CHAPTER 17 VS. CHAPTER 18)

The “Babylon” from Ch. 17 is identified as a religious abomination. She is blasphemous to the name of Jesus and to all followers of Christ (drunk with the blood of the saints).

- The “Babylon” in Chapter 18 is identified with commercialism, greed/control of exports, and excess.
- The two are related, yet distinct.

## WHERE IS THIS CITY?

It is debated whether this city exists today or will be a rebuilt Babylon in the Middle East. While there have been efforts in the past toward a rebuilt Babylon, **it is not farfetched to observe many existing cities that mimic Babylon.**

- Regardless, we can conclude, based on this chapter, that all **evil will be annihilated and “never be found again”** (v. 21).

## AN ANGEL WITH GREAT AUTHORITY

Chapter 18 is seen from a couple of different perspectives throughout. At first, from a heavenly perspective, John sees an angel like that in Chapter 17. Although, this angel is said to have great authority.

- **The angel is authorized by God to carry out this task of finality, and the earth is illuminated by his splendor!**

## “A HOME FOR DEMONS”

Not only has this great city fallen, but in the absence of Christian existence, the city is haunted with demonic influence running rampant throughout.

- In verse 2, we see a literal fulfillment of what Jeremiah 50:39 describes: **the desolation of Babylon. When the desire for God is absent, darkness thrives.**

## GOD'S JUDGEMENT AND JUSTICE ARE PERFECT

Similar to Matthew 21 when Jesus overturns tables in the temple, the punishment seen in v. 3 is a result of corrupt business and trade.

- Because the leaders (kings) of the earth, along with the nations that follow them, have committed these sins, Babylon must fall and wrath must be incurred. **For perfection to be had, evil must be punished and eradicated.**

## WEALTH AND EXCESS

There are many scriptures taken out of context when it comes to general wealth (1 Timothy 6:10, Matthew 19:24). The Bible does not condemn wealth, but as we see here in Chapter 18, **when the appetite for excess is never quenched, we can easily be led astray.**

- **The things of the world are fleeting, and we should never indulge to the point of obsession.**

## “THEN I HEARD ANOTHER VOICE FROM HEAVEN”

Since Christians are removed from the earth at this point, the things that John hears are meant for us. This is to say that, as Christians, we are not to live as the world.

- We are also not to be isolated. We are to be **“the salt of the earth and the light of the world”** (Matthew 5:13-14). We are also called to be **“in the world and not of the world”** (John 17:15-16).

## A PRIDEFUL CITY

- **“For she says in her heart”:**
- **“I sit as a queen” – “I am royalty and will not submit.”**
- **“I am not a widow” – “The world's kings are mine.”**
- **“I will never see grief” – “I am in control and do not need support.”**
- **As Believers, we cling to the cross and submit to God's will.**

## MOURNING (REVELATION 18:9-20) THE DIRGE

Starting in v. 9, we see these three groups of people (kings, merchants, mariners) mourning over the loss of their way of life. The source of their riches and their livelihood is literally crumbling in front of them.

- Not only is their livelihood being destroyed, but the realization that this will soon be their fate is setting in as well.

## KINGS, MERCHANTS, MARINERS

These kings are the same that we see in v. 3, who not only commit adultery with her, but also are infatuated with the luxury that has allowed them to live the extravagant lifestyles to which they have become accustomed.

- The “woes” that we see in the three groups are like the “woes” in Chapter 8. All groups are in disbelief at the swift, **catastrophic** end.
- The merchants mourn for a similar selfish reason: their way of life becoming obsolete.
- The idea of this “high-tech” civilization of opportunity is not far-reaching by today's standards. The merchants were wrapped up in power and influence. But **“all your splendid...things are gone;” never [to be] found again** (v. 14).

- The reasoning for the mariners mourning is one in the same with the previous two groups. Even so, they make the defining statement, “Who was like the great city?” This group is elevating the city itself, and everything the city stood for. **With every bit of themselves (their worth, etc.) invested in the city, when the city comes to ruin, their lives become hopeless.**

## “REJOICE OVER HER, HEAVEN”

Though the three groups of kings, merchants, and mariners lament over the destruction of Babylon, we as Believers are told to rejoice. This is not to say we rejoice at the suffering of others, but rather, **rejoice in God's righteousness and the eternal destruction of evil.**

- Can we rejoice? Will we rejoice? **Do we desire the world, or the coming Kingdom?**

## FINALITY (REVELATION 18:21-24) “THEN A MIGHTY ANGEL...”

The act of throwing the great city into the sea like a large millstone illustrates the swift and permanent destruction of Babylon. The fall of ancient Babylon was to happen the same way in Jeremiah 51:63-64.

- Jesus also mentions a millstone in Matthew 18:6 when he tells about the importance of not leading children/new Believers astray.

## LEADING PEOPLE ASTRAY

Babylon led others into sin, therefore swift judgment was necessary. We must remember: to sin ourselves is terrible and we distance ourselves from God when sin occurs in our life, but to lead others to sin is exceedingly terrible.

- Teachers and leaders will be judged by how we use our influence. Therefore, **let us use that influence to help instead of harm.**

## NEVER TO BE HEARD FROM AGAIN

Music, trades, art, and even the construct of marriage, will never be heard from again. **What a terrible thing that these blessings have been distorted to the point of total desolation!**

- As previously mentioned, there is nothing inherently wrong with commerce. Its unjust usage brings destruction. The city and its culture will pay for the abuse and distortion.

## DECEPTION AND SORCERY

Further on in v. 23, we see that the leadership of the earth was leading from a place of deception and sorcery. The Greek word for sorcery used here is *pharmakeia*.

- Commercial Babylon is a tempting and addicting drug, and **the “nobility of the earth” utilized its tantalizing nature to induce a dependence to capitalize on wealth.**

## DIVINE JUSTICE

Earlier in Revelation 6, the martyrs ask about vengeance and when it will take place. In v. 24, we read that “the blood of the prophets and saints, and of all those slaughtered on the earth” are found on Babylon's hands.

- Now that the waiting is complete, God's perfect justice is served. **The persecution of God's people is a personal offense!**

## AN ALLUSION TO CHAPTER 19

We cannot read Ch. 18 without Chapter 17, and likewise Chapter 19. From Chapter 18, a chapter filled with destruction, sorrow, and death, we move to Chapter 19, a chapter filled with celebration. How? Why?

- If we view Chapter 18 from a “fallen” point of view, we cannot shout hallelujah, but once we view this from a godly perspective, we will!

## TEMPORARY VS. ETERNAL

- Thinking about an end to this life can be difficult. Therefore, our investment of time, money, and efforts can sometimes misalign with the Word.
- Everything that is seen is temporary.
- **How do we invest our time?**
- Do our priorities match up with how we choose to live our lives?

## DO WE CRY WOES OR DO WE CELEBRATE?

- If our investment is in the temporary, we will cry the woes of the nobility of the earth.
- Handel's Messiah's “Hallelujah Chorus” was written regarding the celebration song, praising the end of Babylon, that is sung in Chapter 19.
- **Are we able to celebrate? Do we even desire to celebrate?**