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## **The Fall of Babylon**

### **Series: Between a Rock and a Hard Place**

**August 8, 2021**

### **Revelation 18**

#### I. **Context**

##### A. Prologue

1. **Revelation 1:7–8** (NASB95) — 7 BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen. 8 “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

##### B. **Theme**

1. **Jesus Christ is coming**
  - a. Tribes of earth will mourn over Him
  - b. Eschatological triumph of Christ over the anti-Christian forces of evil in the world and in the heavenly realms
2. **Purpose – encourage the churches under great pressure**
  - a. Series: Between Rock and a Hard Place

##### C. How is this purpose accomplished?

1. **Four visions**
  - a. **“In the Spirit”**
2. **Revelation 1:9–10**
  - a. First vision
    - (1) The glorified Christ
    - (2) The messages to the seven churches
3. **Revelation 4:1–2**
  - a. Second vision
    - (1) The heavenly vision
    - (2) The tribulation
4. **Revelation 17:1–3**
  - a. Third vision
    - (1) The mystery of Babylon
    - (2) Judgment of Babylon
    - (3) Final triumph and consummation
5. **Revelation 21:9–10**
  - a. Fourth vision
    - (1) The New Jerusalem

##### D. Third and fourth visions condense the events at the end of history

1. Unfolding of the divine victory
2. Negative aspect
  - a. Revealing the nature of Babylon – Chapter 17

- b. Judgment of Babylon – Chapter 18
      - 3. Positive aspect
        - a. Coming of Christ
        - b. Victorious millennial reign
        - c. Establishing New Heavens and New Earth
  - E. **Identities in Chapter 17**
    - 1. **Great Harlot**
      - a. **Babylon**
        - (1) Detestable to Israel as captor
        - (2) History predates that – Babel
      - b. **Civilization developed in opposition to God**
        - (1) Appearance of wealth and splendor
        - (2) Full of corruption
        - (3) Persecuted and martyred saints
    - 2. **Beast**
      - a. Same as **Beast of Sea – Chapter 13**
        - (1) **Governmental institution opposed to God**
          - (a) Historical and eschatological
        - (2) Cf Ch 13 – Beast of the Earth – religious institution
    - 3. **Interdependent relationship between harlot and beast**
      - a. Civilization and government
      - b. Civilization drives government
      - c. Civilization depends on government
      - d. Can't talk about one without the other
    - 4. **History of the Beast**
      - a. Series of kingdoms (7 heads)
      - b. Most evil manifestation in 2 kingdoms
        - (1) Antichrist in fullness
        - (2) **Antiochus Epiphanes** (Daniel) was previous manifestation
        - (3) Final form is yet to come
        - (4) Final form will have two stages
          - (a) 8<sup>th</sup> head out of 7
    - 5. **Nature of the end**
      - a. **Beast will destroy harlot!**
      - b. Antichrist government will destroy civilization
      - c. Self-destruction
- II. **Oracles of the Fall of Babylon – Chapter 18**
  - A. **Announcement of the fall – 18.1-3**
    - 1. Revelation 18:1–3 (NASB95) —
      - a. 1 After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illumined with his glory.
      - b. 2 And he cried out with a mighty voice, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird.

- c. 3 “For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed acts of immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich by the wealth of her sensuality.”
- 2. **Another angel** coming from heaven
  - a. Indicates John’s perspective – earth
    - (1) Changed from previous chapter (heaven)
    - (2) Fluidity of perspective – makes interpretation difficult
  - b. Great authority
    - (1) Synonymous with power
  - c. Glory
    - (1) Angel is unusual in power, splendor
  - d. Mighty voice
  - e. **Significance – importance of the announcement**
- 3. **Fallen, fallen...**
  - a. Proleptic announcement
    - (1) Doesn’t quite happen yet
    - (2) Already announced in the same words in the context of those seven histories between trumpets and bowls
    - (3) **Revelation 14:8** (NASB95) — 8 And another angel, a second one, followed, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality.”
- 4. **Dwelling place of demons**, prison for unclean spirits
  - a. Image is this destruction involving the absence of human beings
    - (1) Kings, merchants, others will stand far off to issue woes in 18.9ff
  - b. Place is fit for only the most detestable creatures
- 5. Basis of fall
  - a. **Nations drunk with wine of immoralities**
    - (1) Enticed with subtle glories of civilization
    - (2) Led to the worship of the beast instead of Lamb
      - (a) Immoralities, adulteries
  - b. **Kings committed acts of immorality**
    - (1) Worship of beast instead of Lamb
  - c. **Merchants grew rich from excessive luxuries**
    - (1) Benefits accruing to those who supported accumulation of wealth
- 6. **Implications**
  - a. All of this recounts Ch 17
  - b. **Civilization carries enticements** that lead away from God
  - c. **Every aspect of civilization** can be affected
    - (1) Government
    - (2) Merchants (commerce)
    - (3) People in general (all the nations drunk with wine...)

- B. **Call for vengeance – 18.4-8**
1. **Revelation 18:4–8** (NASB95) —
    - a. 4 I heard another voice from heaven, saying, “Come out of her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive of her plagues;
    - b. 5 for her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.
    - c. 6 “Pay her back even as she has paid, and give back to her double according to her deeds; in the cup which she has mixed, mix twice as much for her.
    - d. 7 “To the degree that she glorified herself and lived sensuously, to the same degree give her torment and mourning; for she says in her heart, ‘I SIT as A QUEEN AND I AM NOT A WIDOW, and will never see mourning.’
    - e. 8 “For this reason in one day her plagues will come, pestilence and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for the Lord God who judges her is strong.
  2. **Another voice**
    - a. Another angel?
  3. **“Come out of her”** – a warning to God’s people
    - a. Martyrdom incomplete
      - (1) Cf **Revelation 13:15** (NASB95) — 15 And it was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed.
      - (2) Always a remnant
    - b. **Constant pressure** in tribulation to conform
      - (1) Threat of martyrdom
    - c. Just as the fall is about to begin, God’s people told to get out of the way
      - (1) Tribulation, yes
      - (2) Wrath, no
    - d. **... may not participate in her sins**
      - (1) Remove self to avoid participating in sin
    - e. **... not receive of her plagues**
      - (1) Remove self to avoid punishment for participating in sin
    - f. God’s judgment is sure
  4. **Summons of angels** of retribution
    - a. Clearly not directed to God’s people
      - (1) Christians not to take vengeance into their own hands
    - b. Double portions
      - (1) OT idiom for full measure of judgment
    - c. **“To the degree which she glorified herself...”**
      - (1) Pride to be accounted for
      - (2) **Isaiah 47:7–9** (NASB95) — 7 “Yet you said, ‘I will be a

queen forever.’ These things you did not consider Nor remember the outcome of them. 8 “Now, then, hear this, you sensual one, Who dwells securely, Who says in your heart, ‘I am, and there is no one besides me. I will not sit as a widow, Nor know loss of children.’ 9 “But these two things will come on you suddenly in one day: Loss of children and widowhood. They will come on you in full measure In spite of your many sorceries, In spite of the great power of your spells.

- (3) Literal Babylon viewed herself in that way
- (4) Human civilization believes it can get along without God
  - (a) Its creation of wealth, etc., will carry it

d. **Destruction is sure**

- (1) Plagues
- (2) Pestilence
- (3) Famine
- (4) Fire
- (5) God is strong

5. **Implications**

- a. **Don’t be enticed** by the luxuries of civilization
- b. **Be prepared to distance yourself** from anything that leads to sin

C. **Woes of the kings – 18.9-10**

1. **Revelation 18:9–10** (NASB95) —

- a. 9 “And the kings of the earth, who committed acts of immorality and lived sensuously with her, will weep and lament over her when they see the smoke of her burning,
- b. 10 standing at a distance because of the fear of her torment, saying, ‘Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! For in one hour your judgment has come.’

2. Not the 10 kings aligned with the Beast

- a. They participated in destroying Babylon

3. **These are other civil governors**

- a. Did not participate wantonly in Satan’s purposes
- b. They were, however, enticed and led astray
- c. Mourning comes not as sorrow for sin, but regret of loss of wealth and power
- d. Mourning comes as they see the falsity of Babylon’s promise of safety, security, wealth, etc.

4. Stand at a distance because of fear of her torment

- a. They too, will have fled
- b. Shocked at the destruction (smoke of her burning)
- c. Shocked also at the swiftness (one hour judgment has come)
- d. Like a house of cards

D. **Woes of the merchants – 18.11-17a**

1. **Revelation 18:11–17** (NASB95) —

- a. 11 “And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, because no one buys their cargoes any more—
- b. 12 cargoes of gold and silver and precious stones and pearls and fine linen and purple and silk and scarlet, and every kind of citron wood and every article of ivory and every article made from very costly wood and bronze and iron and marble,
- c. 13 and cinnamon and spice and incense and perfume and frankincense and wine and olive oil and fine flour and wheat and cattle and sheep, and cargoes of horses and chariots and slaves and human lives.
- d. 14 “The fruit you long for has gone from you, and all things that were luxurious and splendid have passed away from you and men will no longer find them.
- e. 15 “The merchants of these things, who became rich from her, will stand at a distance because of the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning,
- f. 16 saying, ‘Woe, woe, the great city, she who was clothed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls;
- g. 17 for in one hour such great wealth has been laid waste!’ ...
- 2. Again, **mourning not as sorrow for sin, but regret** for its material consequences
  - a. No one buys from them anymore
- 3. Incredible array of goods; **entire economy** is devastated
  - a. Precious stones, jewels, etc.
  - b. Clothing, textiles
  - c. Decorative crafts – wood, ivory, marble, etc.
  - d. Fine accessories to food, life’s pleasures
  - e. Agriculture, livestock
  - f. Transportation
  - g. Even slavery
- 4. **Lament of vanished splendor** – forever
- 5. They too stand at a distance, in fear of her torment
  - a. Shocked at destruction
  - b. Distressed over what has been lost
  - c. Shocked at its swiftness (one hour)
- E. **Woes of the workers – 18.17b-20**
  - 1. **Revelation 18:17–20** (NASB95) —
    - a. 17 ... And every shipmaster and every passenger and sailor, and as many as make their living by the sea, stood at a distance,
    - b. 18 and were crying out as they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, ‘What city is like the great city?’
    - c. 19 “And they threw dust on their heads and were crying out, weeping and mourning, saying, ‘Woe, woe, the great city, in which all who had ships at sea became rich by her wealth, for in one hour

- she has been laid waste!’
- d. 20 “Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, because God has pronounced judgment for you against her.”
2. **All who earn living**
    - a. Not owners (cf merchants and kings), but workers
      - (1) Shipmaster
      - (2) Passenger (lit, one who sails anywhere)
      - (3) Sailor
      - (4) As many as make their living by the sea
  3. Also stand at a distance for the same reason
  4. **Mixed woe**
    - a. Lament for loss of those who own things
    - b. Recognition of justice of what is happening
    - c. Perhaps have less to lose in all of this than kings and merchants
      - (1) Kings lose power
      - (2) Merchants lose their investment, capital
      - (3) Workers lose less
  5. **Implications of the woes**
    - a. **Civilization will ultimately collapse**
    - b. **Consequences for all associated with its luxuries**
    - c. **Every position in life will suffer**
      - (1) Kings
      - (2) Merchants
      - (3) Workers
    - d. **Don’t think you can avoid the consequences**
- F. **Prophecy of collapse of culture – 18.21-24**
1. **Revelation 18:21–24 (NASB95) —**
    - a. 21 Then a strong angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, “So will Babylon, the great city, be thrown down with violence, and will not be found any longer.
    - b. 22 “And the sound of harpists and musicians and flute-players and trumpeters will not be heard in you any longer; and no craftsman of any craft will be found in you any longer; and the sound of a mill will not be heard in you any longer;
    - c. 23 and the light of a lamp will not shine in you any longer; and the voice of the bridegroom and bride will not be heard in you any longer; for your merchants were the great men of the earth, because all the nations were deceived by your sorcery.
    - d. 24 “And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who have been slain on the earth.”
  2. **Millstone indicative of industry**
    - a. Cast into sea indicative of destruction of the culture
  3. **Violence** is the means of destruction
  4. **Eternal** is the length of the destruction

5. **Complete collapse** of the culture is in view
  - a. Arts
  - b. Craftsmen, tradesmen
  - c. Industry
  - d. Utilities
  - e. Family life
  - f. Commerce
    - (1) World's great men
    - (2) Chief engineers of culture
    - (3) Great is their fall
6. **Reason for destruction – Babylon's enticements**
  - a. Persecution, martyrdom
  - b. Murder of others than saints
7. **Implications**
  - a. **Destruction of civilization will be complete**
  - b. **No occupation will be spared**
  - c. **Status in culture will not matter**
  - d. **We can rejoice in the justice for persecution, martyrdom**

### III. Conclusion

- A. **Revelation 18:20** (NASB95) —
  1. 20 "Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, because God has pronounced judgment for you against her."