

WEEK 22: CHAPTER 18

INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER 18

- Throughout chapter 17, we were given a look at the religious and spiritual view of what will be taking place during the tribulation.
- As we now move into chapter 18, we are given the behind-the-scenes look at the financial machine that was funding the false religion. Not only is this exposed, but it is also completely destroyed.
- False religion is always, *always* fueled by greed.
- “Writing for a penny a word is ridiculous. If a man really wants to make a million dollars, the best way to do it would be to start his own religion.”
 - This quote is from L. Ron Hubbard. After almost going broke, in 1954 he founded the Church of Scientology. Upon his death in 1986, he was worth at least \$200 million.
- As horrible as L. Ron Hubbard (and others like him) were, he did not invent this idea.
- Peter, warning the church of false teachers wrote in **2 Peter 2:2-3** “Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; [3] and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.”
- Again, here is Paul warning the church in **Titus 1:10-11** “For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, [11] who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain.”
- There are other examples, but false religion is fueled by financial gain.
- Chapter 18 is where God shows those who rely on their money and financial competency who really is in control. The wealthy may have earthly power, but they hold no influence over the God of the universe.

CHAPTER 18:1-3 ~ THE COLLAPSE OF BABYLON ANNOUNCED

Revelation 18:1-3 “After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illumined with his glory. [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. [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.”

- Notice the verbiage of John, *after these things*, John witnessed what took place in chapter 17, once that was complete, now chapter 18 is in chronological order after 17.

- An angel comes and announces to John that Babylon has fallen.
- Through the normal reading of the text, this is written as if it has already taken place. There is a certainty here that the Lord wants us to know.
- False religion and the financial system behind are never going to stand.
- The angel comes and “the earth was illumined with his glory.”
 - There is a good chance that the earth is still in darkness from the 5th bowl judgment.
 - **Revelation 16:10** “Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became darkened; and they gnawed their tongues because of pain...”
 - “Manifesting the flashing brilliance of a glorious heavenly being against the blackness, the angel will be an awe-inspiring sight to the shocked and terrified earth dwellers.”¹
- This is an interesting statement by John, *she has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison for every unclean spirit...*
 - There are two things happening here...one is that the “curtain” is pulled back and we are now seeing what is happening behind the scenes.
 - The demons are really running the show. This is false religion and greedy commercialism that are fueled by demonic power.
 - To the world, Babylon is a rich city filled with skyscrapers, luxury, and opulence. All the world can see is glitz and glamour.
 - But, behind the scenes and really in control are the demonic forces.
- Now, notice the chain of events...Babylon the great has fallen and has become an absolute wasteland after God struck her down.
- “Babylon was once the city of dreams — it is now the city of nightmares. A desolate, haunted region for demons and vultures, like some scene out of an Edgar Allan Poe story.”²
- In **verse 3**, it was not just Babylon but the whole world, all the nations that were going along with all that Babylon stood for.
- “There is no more ideal location anywhere for a world trade center, a world communications center, a world banking center, a world educational center, and a world capital. The greatest historian of modern times, Arnold Toynbee, wrote that Babylon would be the best place in the world to build a future cultural metropolis.”³
- She was making the world rich and that was all the people cared about.

¹ John MacArthur, *Revelation 12-22*, 178.

² <https://www.wisdomonline.org/teachings-detail/revelation-lesson-50>

³ Ibid.

CHAPTER 18:4-5 ~ THE CALL TO COME OUT OF BABYLON

Revelation 18:4-5 “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; [5] for her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.”

- God’s people were living in Babylon, and now they are called by a voice to come out.
- These Tribulation saints were summoned to come out before complete destruction came upon the city.
- God did not want His people to partake in the sins of the city or the judgment that was coming.
- The sins of Babylon had *piled up as high as the heavens*.
 - This language is that of stacking and gluing. Just as bricks are stacked up one on another and stuck together so they don’t fall, so are the sins of Babylon.
 - Perhaps this is a reference to the tower of Babel that started the city of Babylon. What mankind wanted was to reach heaven, but the best they could do was has their sins reach there instead.
- This is not the first time that God has called people from Babylon:
- **Isaiah 48:20** “Go forth from Babylon! Flee from the Chaldeans! Declare with the sound of joyful shouting, proclaim this, send it out to the end of the earth; Say, ‘The LORD has redeemed His servant Jacob.’”
- **Jeremiah 50:8** “Wander away from the midst of Babylon And go forth from the land of the Chaldeans; Be also like male goats at the head of the flock.”
- **Jeremiah 51:6-9** “Flee from the midst of Babylon, and each of you save his life! Do not be destroyed in her punishment, for this is the LORD’S time of vengeance; He is going to render recompense to her. [7] Babylon has been a golden cup in the hand of the LORD, Intoxicating all the earth. The nations have drunk of her wine; Therefore the nations are going mad. [8] Suddenly Babylon has fallen and been broken; Wail over her! Bring balm for her pain; Perhaps she may be healed. [9] We applied healing to Babylon, but she was not healed; Forsake her and let us each go to his own country, for her judgment has reached to heaven and towers up to the very skies.”
 - This is what we just read in Revelation 18:5.
- Believers today can fall into the same seduction from the world if we are not careful. We are certainly called to be in the world, but never of or part of the world.
- **1 John 2:15-17** “Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. [16] For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. [17] The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.”

CHAPTER 18:6-8 ~ THE CHARGE AGAINST BABYLON

Revelation 18:6-8 “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. [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.' [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.”

- The charges and judgment are based upon *the degree that she glorified herself and lived sensuously*.
- “The only place in the entire New Testament that this word “sensuously” or “sensuous” appears is in this chapter of Revelation. The word comes from *strenos* (στρηνος), which literally refers to uninhibited sexual promiscuity coupled with excessive luxury. Babylon will create her own new class of perverted, unhinged, sexual deviants along with so much money to burn that they can support luxurious lifestyles beyond anyone’s imagination. In other words, as bad as Rome became; as immoral as Corinth was, they were never quite immoral enough to be accused of this word — this perverted depth of sensuality. The entire city will be a literal playground for the rich and famous. There will be no boundaries to their behavior. Their pride and arrogance will have no boundaries as well.”⁴
- It is very interesting that this was prophesied about Babylon. Listen to **Isaiah 47:7-9** “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.”
- “Babylon did not decay slowly, but went from being the wealthy lady, the unconquered virgin, the proud, invincible mother of many to a degraded, slave woman in the dust who lost her throne, her children, and her life. It happened in one night, suddenly and unexpectedly, when Cyrus and the Persian army entered the city.”⁵
 - This would happen in the past, Daniel 5:28-30, and in the future, Revelation 18:6-8.
- The demonic spirit of Babylon has never changed.⁶

⁴ <https://www.wisdomonline.org/teachings-detail/revelation-lesson-50>

⁵ *The MacArthur Study Bible: New American Standard Bible*, Is 47:9.

⁶ Chart taken from multiple dispensational sources.

- **Arrogance and Security** (Isa 47:8 / Rev 18:7): Both the ancient empire and the future Tribulation empire suffer from total delusion. They believe they are economically bulletproof. They think they are too big to fail.
- **Sorceries and Spells** (Isa 47:9 / Rev 18:23): Isaiah points out that Babylon relied on demonic "sorceries" and "spells". In Revelation 18:23, John says the exact same thing: "all the nations were deceived by your sorcery." (The Greek word there is *pharmakeia*, implying a deceptive, intoxicating spell cast over global commerce).
- **The “Single Day” Judgment** (Isa 47:9 / Rev 18:8): God doesn't erode Babylon over centuries. Because her pride is so high, He drops the hammer instantly. In Isaiah, it's "in one day"; in Revelation, it is "in one hour."
- Man's pride is always going to be their downfall. When one begins to think they are gods themselves or better than the God of the heavens, judgment is swift and full.
- This is what John describes in **verse 8**, the Lord God Himself brings judgment against this city.
- "... sudden destruction from the Lord which according to verse 8 will come in one day in the form of plagues, death, mourning, and famine, resulting in her utter destruction by fire. Her vaunted strength is as nothing compared to the power of God. Like the church at Laodicea, her wealth has brought a sense of false security (3:17)." (Walvoord)
- We should always remember, when God's judgment comes, it descends with a firm and steady swiftness.
- All throughout the Bible, God and His prophets and His people have been warning the world that God's judgment is coming.
- Nobody should be surprised when it comes.
- **2 Peter 3:8-9** "But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. [9] The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance."

CHAPTER 18:9-10 ~ THE CRIES OF THE KINGS

Revelation 18:9-10 "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, [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.'"

- The monarchs and rulers of the earth lose their power. As they watch the city burn, they can only lament about the city; not about their own sin that they committed with the city.

- It is very interesting that there is no record of lamenting over the fall of religion in Babylon, but there is going to be much lamenting over the financial fall of the great city.
- “Their mourning is also characterized by fear lest they have the same judgment which has overcome the city, and for this reason they stand afar off...too late for mercy.” (Walvoord)

CHAPTER 18:11-19 ~ THE CRIES OF MERCHANTS

Revelation 18:11-19 “And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, because no one buys their cargoes any more-- [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, [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. [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. [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, [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; [17] for in one hour such great wealth has been laid waste!' And every shipmaster and every passenger and sailor, and as many as make their living by the sea, stood at a distance, [18] and were crying out as they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What city is like the great city?' [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!'

- Not only are there cries from the kings of the land but also the merchants on land and on sea.
- They are not weeping because of judgment nor because of their sin, but as **verse 11** says, it is because of their loss of money. They have lost their wealth because nobody is buying their cargo anymore.
- “Like the kings of the earth who stood afar off and watched the ascending smoke of the burning of Babylon, so the merchants also shall fear to go near the city. Weeping and wailing, that is, crying out loud and mourning, they also repeat their sad “alas” (Gr., *ouai*). All the great riches of the city, described again as fine linen, purple and scarlet, gold, precious stones, and pearls, are brought to nothing.” (Walvoord)
- “There will be a stock market crash and bankruptcy on a worldwide scale; yet, in the face of it, the thoughts of the unsaved people will turn only to how their own interests are affected. This is selfishness and greed in its most naked form.”⁷

⁷ Charles Ryrie, *Revelation*, 148.

- “In other words, Babylon had been the commercial center of the world. She was the clearing house with her giant warehouses, markets, and shopping centers, which now go up in smoke. Babylon had traded in every product imaginable, including slave trade (verse 13), where they bartered for slaves — even human lives. Life was cheap — life only mattered as it advanced the kingdom of Babylon. That is the way Babylon has always operated. Life is cheap.”⁸
- Note the repetition of judgment’s swift arrival. The phrase “one hour” appears in:⁹
- **Verse 10** — in one hour your judgment has come.
- **Verse 17** — in one hour such great wealth has been laid waste!
- **Verse 19** — in one hour she has been laid waste!
- All the millions, all the connections, all the power, all the pomp, all the extravagance — all that seemed to matter — lost!
- When money is god, and God is gone, what is left but godless grief? What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul? This is Pearl Harbor, the stock market crash, the Great Depression, the bubonic plague, and the Holocaust all rolled up into one hour.
- The fall of Babylon is absolutely complete.

CHAPTER 18:20 ~ THE CHEERS OVER BABYLON’S FALL

Revelation 18:20 “Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, because God has pronounced judgment for you against her.”

- “In contrast to the grief overtaking worldly rulers and merchants by the destruction of Babylon, those in heaven, who are mentioned later in 19:1, are called upon to rejoice at the righteous judgment of God.” (Walvoord)
- God’s wrath has been waiting, not silent. Now is the time to turn mourning into dancing for the people of God!
- Notice that the rejoicing is not over the death of people, but over the righteous judgment of God.

⁸ <https://www.wisdomonline.org/teachings-detail/revelation-lesson-50>

⁹ Ibid.

CHAPTER 18:21-24 ~ THE COLLAPSE OF BABYLON

Revelation 18:21-24 “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. [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; [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. [24] “And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who have been slain on the earth.”

- **Verse 21** the angel takes the great millstone and throws it into the sea...Babylon will no longer be found.
- Everything that Babylon was known for has been completely wiped out through the judgments of God.
- No more music...all enjoyment is gone.
- No more craftsmen...no more work for people to do.
- No more sound of the mill...domestic life ceases (the mill was used to grind grain and prep food)
- No more light...it is just a shell of a city, dark and inhabited with demons and flesh-eating birds.
- No more marriages...life as it was once known and celebrated will completely cease to exist.
- “The cradle of human civilization is the grave of civilization as Babylon orchestrates a global army to march upon God Himself in the Battle of Armageddon. With the return of Christ and one word of His power, the armies of the world are defeated and Babylon is reduced to rubble. The defiance of Babylon against God in Genesis ends in Revelation with one final gasp of defiance.”¹⁰
- In **verse 23b and 24** there is the final recounting of the 2 reasons for this massive judgment from God:
 - Babylon deceived the nations by their sorcery.
 - The depth of deception used to turn people away from God. This may well be actual drugs, but it most likely is talking about intoxicating people with the allure of wealth, luxury and living a life completely absent from God.
 - Babylon murdered the people of God.
 - “The religious and commercial/political systems embodied in Babylon will commit unspeakable atrocities against God’s people.”¹¹
- “Joyless, dark, and silent, Babylon stands as a monument to the righteous vengeance of God. Wickedness that reigned enthroned for so long is now overthrown.”¹²

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ *The MacArthur Study Bible: New American Standard Bible*, Re 18:24.

¹² Ryrie, *Revelation*, 149.