

Revelation 18

Introduction:

This chapter gives the details of the end of the rule of man in opposition to God. This event has already been foreshadowed in the sixth Seal (Rev 6:15), the seventh Trumpet (Rev 11:15), the divine preview (Rev 14:8), and the seventh vial (Rev 16:19).

The details given in this chapter correspond to the smiting of the great image (depicting the 'Times of the Gentiles') in the feet as prophesied by Daniel. Dan 2:33-35, 41-45.

Remember Babylon is a system, a religious system, but in this chapter we learn it is also a city – a political center and an economical center.

- I. The Announcement of the Fall of Babylon – vs. 1-2
 - a. A New Vision – vs. 1
Although still part of a parenthetical explanation of the doom of man's system (Babylon), the words, "After these things..." indicate a separate vision from that of chapter 17.
 - b. A Great Angel – vs. 1
Some have seen this glorious and powerful angel as Jesus Christ Himself, a Christophany; but the phrase "another angel" indicates this being to be celestial. Other mighty angels are referred to in Rev 8:3; 10:1.
 - c. A Solemn Announcement – vs. 2
This is the actual fulfilling of Bible prophecy. – Is 13:19; 21:9; Jer 51:8
The narrative, left off at Rev 16:19, picks up again at this point. Here are the details of the seventh vial.
 - d. A Desolate End – vs. 2
This great city, destined to become the showpiece of godless domination, will be turned into a habitation for:
 - Devils – i.e. demons
 - Unclean spirits
 - The spirit of the world – I Cor 2:12
 - The spirit that works with the lost – Eph 2:2
 - The spirit of error – I Jn 4:6
 - The spirit of bondage – Rom 8:15
 - The spirit of fear – II Tim 1:7
 - The spirit of whoredoms – Hosea 4:12; 5:4
 - The spirit of seduction – I Tim 4:1
 - Unclean and hateful birds
Cf. Matt 13:4 See: Lev 11:13-19

These 3 descriptions apply to the sum-total of the wicked unseen world, fallen angels, evil spirits, demons, powers, etc.

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- II. The Heavenly Indictment of Babylon – vs. 3-5, 23-24
- a. An Influential City – vs. 3
Note that ALL nations have been intoxicated with her wine of fornication (rebellion) – evil political relationships.
 - b. An Economically Powerful City – vs. 3
Wealth is generated through the abundance of her delicacies – evil commercial relationships.
 - c. A Sinful, Wicked City – vs. 5
In this latter-day Babylon, the sins of the past 6 millennia will have been heaped up to heaven. Compare the phrase, “...reached unto heaven...” with Gen 11:4.
 - d. A Satanic City – vs. 23
The word meaning ‘sorcery’ is “pharmakeia” in the Greek, a word which has to do with drugs and evil potions. Even today, we can see how the economies of the nations (not to mention the lives of their peoples) are being dominated by the drug trade.
 - e. A Christ-Rejecting City – vs. 24
Whether in its religious, political, or economic form – whether in the past, the present, or the future – the system of Babylon has been an enemy of God and His people. Note: Verse 20 shows the system of Babylon was operative in the days of the apostles (30-100 AD).
 - f. A Command to be Separate – vs. 4
In the immediate context, this verse applies to believing Jews in the Tribulation period. Just as Lot was removed from Sodom before its destruction, so God’s people are warned to leave Babylon. See: Jer 50:4-9; 51:6, 45

Because Babylon is a system which has pervaded the earth since its inception, a secondary application of Rev 18:4 may be made to the Lord’s people at any time. Thus today, the Christian needs to identify the system of Babylon and separate himself from it. - II Cor 6:14-17

- III. The Human Assessment of Babylon – vs. 7, 12-16, 22-23
- a. A Center of Pomp and Ceremony – vs. 7
Self-glorified; self-sufficient (“lived deliciously” – wantonness); self-assured
 - b. A Center of Economic Power – vs. 12-16
These verses give us a glimpse of the vast wealth and economy of this city.
Precious metals – vs. 12
Clothing industry – vs. 12

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Timber industry – vs. 12
Base metals – vs. 12
Pharmaceuticals – vs. 12
Agriculture – vs. 13
Livestock – vs. 13
Transport – vs. 13
Labor – vs. 13
Trade – vs. 17

With all these economic factors “sewn up”, it is little wonder men will ‘sell their souls’ (vs. 13) to survive. Rev 13:17

At the beginning of the Tribulation period, with the rise of the Antichrist as the false messiah, we read of terrible famine conditions throughout the world. (Rev 6:5-6) Now, less than 7 years later, control of the means of production and the produce is firmly in the hands of the Antichrist.

- c. A Center of Entertainment – vs. 22
As it was in the days of Noah (just prior to the judgment of the flood), music figured strongly, Gen 4:21. In ancient Babylon, music was used to sway the masses, Dan 3:4. Like the ‘Pied Piper’, future Babylon will use music to control and influence men. It will be the next “Rock ‘n Roll Capital” of the world. Ez 26:13
- d. A Center of Industry – vs. 22
- e. A Center of Activity – vs. 22-23
Note the mention of ‘voice’ and ‘sound’ and ‘light’ in these verses. These all indicate activity.

IV. The Utter Destruction of Babylon – vs. 6, 8-11, 17-21

- a. A Double Destruction – vs. 6
She is to be dealt a double dose of judgment. (God’s normal requisite for judgment is Deut. 19:21.)
- b. A Speedy Destruction – vs. 8, 10, 17, 19
Literally one hour is all it will take to reduce this glorious city to complete ruin. The “Wall Street Crash” will seem like a minor financial hiccup compared to this collapse of the world economy. Cf. Dan 5:30-31
- c. A Complete Destruction – vs. 8
Babylon will be ‘utterly’ destroyed. Eight ‘no more’s.
- d. A Visible Destruction – vs. 9
- e. A Lamented Destruction – vs. 10, 11, 15, 16, 18, 19

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Three times we read the cry. "Alas! Alas!"

- f. A Violent Destruction – vs. 21
Cf. Jer 51:61-64