

Revelation Chapter 18

1) **The Fall of Babylon (18:1-24)**

- 2) **1** After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was made bright with his glory. **2** And he called out with a mighty voice, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast. **3** For all nations have drunk the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her luxurious living.” **4** Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, “Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues; **5** for her sins are heaped high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. **6** Pay her back as she herself has paid back others, and repay her double for her deeds; mix a double portion for her in the cup she mixed. **7** As she glorified herself and lived in luxury, so give her a like measure of torment and mourning, since in her heart she says, ‘I sit as a queen, I am no widow, and mourning I shall never see.’ **8** For this reason her plagues will come in a single day, death and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for mighty is the Lord God who has judged her.” **9** And the kings of the earth, who committed sexual immorality and lived in luxury with her, will weep and wail over her when they see the smoke of her burning. **10** They will stand far off, in fear of her torment, and say, “Alas! Alas! You great city, you mighty city, Babylon! For in a single hour your judgment has come.” **11** And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn for her, since no one buys their cargo anymore, **12** cargo of gold, silver, jewels, pearls, fine linen, purple cloth, silk, scarlet cloth, all kinds of scented wood, all kinds of articles of ivory, all kinds of articles of costly wood, bronze, iron and marble, **13** cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, oil, fine flour, wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and slaves, that is, human souls. **14** “The fruit for which your soul longed has gone from you, and all your delicacies and your splendors are lost to you, never to be found again!” **15** The merchants of these wares, who gained wealth from her, will stand far off, in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning aloud, **16** “Alas, alas, for the great city that was clothed in fine linen, in purple and scarlet, adorned with gold, with jewels, and with pearls! **17** For in a single hour all this wealth has been laid waste.” And all shipmasters and seafaring men, sailors and all whose trade is on the sea, stood far off **18** and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning, “What city was like the great city?” **19** And they threw dust on their heads as they wept and mourned, crying out, “Alas, alas, for the great city where all who had ships at sea grew rich by her wealth! For in

a single hour she has been laid waste. **20** Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, for God has given judgment for you against her!” **21** Then a mighty 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 be found no more; **22** and the sound of harpists and musicians, of flute players and trumpeters, will be heard in you no more, and a craftsman of any craft will be found in you no more, and the sound of the mill will be heard in you no more, **23** and the light of a lamp will shine in you no more, and the voice of bridegroom and bride will be heard in you no more, for your merchants were the great ones of the earth, and all 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 earth.”

a) **Doom Pronounced upon Rome (18:1-3)**

i) This announcement was made by an angel

(1) Coming down from heaven – from the presence of God

(2) Having great authority

(a) Rev. 5:2 - And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?"

(b) Rev. 10:1 - Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head, and his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire.

(c) Rev. 18:21 - Then a mighty 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 be found no more;

(d) See handout for Revelation Chapter 8 for more information on angels.

(3) The earth was made bright with his glory – perhaps reflecting the one who sent him.

(a) Rev. 21:23 - And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb.

ii) And he called out with a mighty voice, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast. (18:2)

(1) A mighty voice – to proclaim to all

(a) Speaking as though the fall had already happened

(2) Isaiah 21:9 - And behold, here come riders, horsemen in pairs!” And he answered, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon; and all the carved images of her gods he has shattered to the ground.”

- (a) Isaiah speaking of the fall of physical Babylon.
- (3) Jeremiah 51:37 - and Babylon shall become a heap of ruins, the haunt of jackals, a horror and a hissing, without inhabitant.
- (4) Isaiah 13:20-22 - [20](#) It will never be inhabited or lived in for all generations; no Arab will pitch his tent there; no shepherds will make their flocks lie down there. [21](#) But wild animals will lie down there, and their houses will be full of howling creatures; there ostriches will dwell, and there wild goats will dance. [22](#) Hyenas will cry in its towers, and jackals in the pleasant palaces; its time is close at hand and its days will not be prolonged.
- (5) Rev. 14:8 - another angel, a second, followed, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality.”
- (6) Much of Chapter 18 is O. T. language in regard to the ancient city of Babylon, which had already fallen before the time of John, and is used here to picture the destruction of the Babylon of the N. T. – Rome.



- (7)
 - iii) For all nations have drunk the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her luxurious living.” (18:3)
 - (1) Rome was ungodly, and her ungodly influence spread to all nations.
 - (a) Rev. 14:8 - another angel, a second, followed, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality.”
 - (b) Rev. 17:1-2 - [1](#) Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who is seated on many waters, [2](#) with whom the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality, and with the wine of whose sexual immorality the dwellers on earth have become drunk.”
 - (2) Rome had brought peace and security to the kings of the earth, which made possible the prosperity of the merchants of the earth.
 - (a) So enamored were the kings and merchants of the earth that they had become allies with Rome in her evil deeds.

iv) **4** Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, “Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues; **5** for her sins are heaped high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. **6** Pay her back as she herself has paid back others, and repay her double for her deeds; mix a double portion for her in the cup she mixed. **7** As she glorified herself and lived in luxury, so give her a like measure of torment and mourning, since in her heart she says, ‘I sit as a queen, I am no widow, and mourning I shall never see.’ **8** For this reason her plagues will come in a single day, death and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for mighty is the Lord God who has judged her.”

(1) Another message from God comes through an unidentified voice from heaven.

(2) Come out of her, my people, (18:4)

(a) Jeremiah 51:6, 45 - **6** “Flee from the midst of Babylon; let every one save his life! Be not cut off in her punishment, for this is the time of the Lord’s vengeance, the repayment he is rendering her. ... **45** “Go out of the midst of her, my people! Let every one save his life from the fierce anger of the Lord!

(b) 2 Cor. 6:17 - Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you,

(c) Were God’s people being drawn into the seduction of Rome? If so, they need to separate themselves physically from Rome, as Joseph fled from Potiphar’s wife.

(d) Were God’s people being emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually becoming attached to Rome? If so, they need to separate themselves from Rome.

(3) lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues; (18:5)

(a) Two reasons are given for the separation:

(i) Lest you take part in her sins

- 1 John 2:15-17 - **15** Do not love the world or 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 desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. **17** And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.
- Rev. 17:4 - The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand

a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her sexual immorality.

a. In practice, the finery of clothing, jewelry, the golden cup present an awful fascination to those who dwell on the earth.

b. Come out of her, my people!

(ii) Lest you share in her plagues

- The plagues poured out from the seven bowls of wrath in Rev. 16.

(4) for her sins are heaped high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.

(a) Jeremiah 51:6-9 - **6** “Flee from the midst of Babylon; let every one save his life! Be not cut off in her punishment, for this is the time of the Lord’s vengeance, the repayment he is rendering her. **7** Babylon was a golden cup in the Lord’s hand, making all the earth drunken; the nations drank of her wine; therefore the nations went mad. **8** Suddenly Babylon has fallen and been broken; wail for her! Take balm for her pain; perhaps she may be healed. **9** We would have healed Babylon, but she was not healed. Forsake her, and let us go each to his own country, **for her judgment has reached up to heaven and has been lifted up even to the skies.**

(b) Rev. 16:19 - The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and God remembered Babylon the great, to make her drain the cup of the wine of the fury of his wrath.

(c) The figure of speech “high as heaven” indicates that their great sin did not go unnoticed by God.

(5) Pay her back as she herself has paid back others, and repay her double for her deeds; mix a double portion for her in the cup she mixed. (18:6)

(a) Similar expressions were made by Jeremiah about punishment for physical Babylon.

(i) Jeremiah 51:24, 49 - **24** “I will repay Babylon and all the inhabitants of Chaldea before your very eyes for all the evil that they have done in Zion, declares the Lord. ... **49** Babylon must fall for the slain of Israel, just as for Babylon have fallen the slain of all the earth.

(b) The avengers are not named, but the punishment is decreed by God and not without good reason.

(i) Isaiah 40:2 - Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the Lord’s hand **double for all her sins.**

- (ii) Rev, 14:8 - Another angel, a second, followed, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality.”
 - (iii) As all nations were made to drink from her cup, the same cup will be filled with a double portion for her to drink.
 - Could be either double the amount or double the intensity of her punishment.
 - (iv) Jeremiah 16:18 - But first I will doubly repay their iniquity and their sin, because they have polluted my land with the carcasses of their detestable idols, and have filled my inheritance with their abominations.”
 - (v) “Double portion” was a conventional expression for “full requital”.
- (6) As she glorified herself and lived in luxury, so give her a like measure of torment and mourning, since in her heart she says, ‘I sit as a queen, I am no widow, and mourning I shall never see.’ (18:7)
- (a) She glorified herself and did not acknowledge God as the source of her gifts.
 - (b) A like measure – NIV reads “Give her as much torment and grief as the glory and luxury she gave herself.”
 - (c) In the first century the world was pouring wealth into the lap of Rome. The long peace, the safety of the seas, and the freedom of trade had made Rome the trading center for the products and delicacies of every land from the British Channel to the Ganges (river which flows through the nations of India and Bangladesh).
 - (d) The Flavian dynasty of Rome began with Vespasian (69 AD) and continued through Domitian (96 AD)
 - (i) Eternal city was the motto of the Flavian dynasty, with the words engraved on coins and included in inscriptions.
 - (ii) Such was their confidence that they believed that they would never see mourning.
- (7) For this reason her plagues will come in a single day, death and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for mighty is the Lord God who has judged her. (18:8)
- (a) Because of the arrogance of invincibility, the mighty God will bring upon her the things she thought would never happen.
 - (b) God has the might to destroy the city.
 - (c) The plagues will come *suddenly*, indicated by a single day or single hour.

- (d) Physical Babylon did fall in a single day (Daniel 5), to Cyrus the Mede, but the city continued to exist for several hundred years before the desolation prophesied by Isaiah was complete.
- (e) A distinction has been made between the persecuting Roman empire (Nero, Domitian) and the Roman empire under Caesar's who did not pursue persecution of Christians.
- (f) God's view may be like that of Adam and Eve (Genesis 3). The consequence of disobeying God was death, but they lived many years before their death.
- (g) Perhaps a good understanding is that God, at a single time, set in motion the destruction of the proud city.
- (h) Isaiah 47:7-9 - [7](#) You said, "I shall be mistress forever," so that you did not lay these things to heart or remember their end. [8](#) Now therefore hear this, you lover of pleasures, who sit securely, who say in your heart, "I am, and there is no one besides me; I shall not sit as a widow or know the loss of children": [9](#) These two things shall come to you in a moment, in one day; the loss of children and widowhood shall come upon you in full measure, in spite of your many sorceries and the great power of your enchantments.
- (i) The boast of Rome in 18:7 was that she would never be a widow (loss of lover/husband) and would never mourn (loss of children).
- (i) The western part of the Roman Empire fell in 476 AD, but the decline began 200+ years before then.
- (j) In another case, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was very much as "in a single hour", but only after God investigated.
 - (i) Genesis 18:20-21 - [20](#) Then the Lord said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, [21](#) I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me. And if not, I will know."

b) Rome Allies (Kings) Weep (18:9-10)

- i) [9](#) And the kings of the earth, who committed sexual immorality and lived in luxury with her, will weep and wail over her when they see the smoke of her burning. [10](#) They will stand far off, in fear of her torment, and say, "Alas! Alas! You great city, you mighty city, Babylon! For in a single hour your judgment has come."
 - (1) Verse 8 pictured Rome burning with fire.
 - (2) Now the allies of Rome see the smoke from the fire and weep over her burning.

- (3) Rev. 17:1-2 - **1** Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who is seated on many waters, **2** with whom *the kings of the earth* have committed sexual immorality, and with the wine of whose sexual immorality the dwellers on earth have become drunk.”
- (4) Rev. 17:12-14 - **12** And the ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have not yet received royal power, but they are to receive authority as kings for one hour, together with the beast. **13** These are of one mind, and they hand over their power and authority to the beast. **14** They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.”
- (5) The kings of the earth of 17:2 are the same kings of 18:9, but are probably not the ten kings of 17:12.
- (6) Why do they weep?
- (a) They had depended on Rome for protection and support, and the loss of their alliance would leave panic and confusion in the world.
- (b) They weep while acknowledging “your judgment” as “the judgment you brought on yourself”.
- (7) Also note that they stood far off – they were not trying to extinguish the flames of Rome’s burning.
- c) **The Merchants Weep (18:11-17a)**
- i) **11** And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn for her, since no one buys their cargo anymore, **12** cargo of gold, silver, jewels, pearls, fine linen, purple cloth, silk, scarlet cloth, all kinds of scented wood, all kinds of articles of ivory, all kinds of articles of costly wood, bronze, iron and marble, **13** cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, oil, fine flour, wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and slaves, that is, human souls. **14** “The fruit for which your soul longed has gone from you, and all your delicacies and your splendors are lost to you, never to be found again!” **15** The merchants of these wares, who gained wealth from her, will stand far off, in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning aloud, **16** “Alas, alas, for the great city that was clothed in fine linen, in purple and scarlet, adorned with gold, with jewels, and with pearls! **17** For in a single hour all this wealth has been laid waste.” The merchants weep and mourn because no one buys their cargo anymore.
- (1) Ezekiel 27:1-36 Lament for Tyre
- (a) ... **12** “Tarshish did business with you because of your great wealth of every kind; silver, iron, tin, and lead they exchanged for your wares. **13** Javan, Tubal, and Meshech traded with you; they

exchanged human beings and vessels of bronze for your merchandise. [14](#) From Beth-togarmah they exchanged horses, war horses, and mules for your wares. [15](#) The men of Dedan traded with you. Many coastlands were your own special markets; they brought you in payment ivory tusks and ebony. [16](#) Syria did business with you because of your abundant goods; they exchanged for your wares emeralds, purple, embroidered work, fine linen, coral, and ruby. [17](#) Judah and the land of Israel traded with you; they exchanged for your merchandise wheat of Minnith, meal, honey, oil, and balm. [18](#) Damascus did business with you for your abundant goods, because of your great wealth of every kind; wine of Helbon and wool of Sahar [19](#) and casks of wine from Uzal they exchanged for your wares; wrought iron, cassia, and calamus were bartered for your merchandise. [20](#) Dedan traded with you in saddlecloths for riding. [21](#) Arabia and all the princes of Kedar were your favored dealers in lambs, rams, and goats; in these they did business with you. [22](#) The traders of Sheba and Raamah traded with you; they exchanged for your wares the best of all kinds of spices and all precious stones and gold. [23](#) Haran, Canneh, Eden, traders of Sheba, Asshur, and Chilmad traded with you. [24](#) In your market these traded with you in choice garments, in clothes of blue and embroidered work, and in carpets of colored material, bound with cords and made secure. [25](#) The ships of Tarshish traveled for you with your merchandise. So you were filled and heavily laden in the heart of the seas. ...

ii) The fruit for which your soul longed ... (18:14)

- (1) Livy (59 BC – 17 AD) call avarice and luxury “those pests which have ever been the ruin of every great state.”
- (2) Other historians wrote that Nero spent \$100,000 for Egyptian roses for one of his banquets.
- (3) Vitellius reigned for less than one year but spent \$20,000,000, mostly on food.

iii) When Rome fell, those she had counted as friends were not so much concerned about her as they were about how her fall would affect them.

- (1) Rev. 18:15-17a - [15](#) The merchants of these wares, who gained wealth from her, will stand far off, in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning aloud, [16](#) “Alas, alas, for the great city that was clothed in fine linen, in purple and scarlet, adorned with gold, with jewels, and with pearls! [17](#) For in a single hour all this wealth has been laid waste.”

- iv) The list of items in 18:12-13 testify to the wealth that Rome lavished upon herself.
 - (1) Rev. 18:7 - [7](#) As she glorified herself and lived in luxury, so give her a like measure of torment and mourning, since in her heart she says, 'I sit as a queen, I am no widow, and mourning I shall never see.'
- v) It was not unusual for 10,000 slaves to be auctioned off in a single day.
 - (1) The value of a human being was cheap in the Roman empire.
- d) **The Sailors Mourn (18:17b-xx)**
 - i) And all shipmasters and seafaring men, sailors and all whose trade is on the sea, stood far off [18](#) and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning, "What city was like the great city?" [19](#) And they threw dust on their heads as they wept and mourned, crying out, "Alas, alas, for the great city where all who had ships at sea grew rich by her wealth! For in a single hour she has been laid waste.
 - (1) Closely linked to the merchants were those who delivered cargoes.
 - (2) These also stood at a distance.
 - (3) They also grew which from the commerce of Rome.
 - ii) Three groups (kings, merchants, and sailors) had profited by being associated with Rome.
 - (1) When Rome fell, all would know.
 - (2) Everyone except Christians profited from Rome.
- e) **Amid the Weeping and Mourning, a Voice is Heard (18:20)**
 - i) Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, for God has given judgment for you against her!"
 - (1) The voice is calling for saints, apostles, and prophets to rejoice.
 - (2) No higher court would hear the case – God has given judgment.
- f) **The Angel's Prophecy (18:21-24)**
 - i) [21](#) Then a mighty 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 be found no more; [22](#) and the sound of harpists and musicians, of flute players and trumpeters, will be heard in you no more, and a craftsman of any craft will be found in you no more, and the sound of the mill will be heard in you no more, [23](#) and the light of a lamp will shine in you no more, and the voice of bridegroom and bride will be heard in you no more, for your merchants were the great ones of the earth, and all 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 earth."
 - (1) There has been a progression of the destruction.
 - (a) First, the Empire – 18:1-8
 - (b) Second, the Allies of the Empire

- (i) Kings – 18:9-10
- (ii) Merchants – 18:11-17a
- (iii) Sailors – 18:17b-19
- (c) Third, the Imperial City of Rome – 18:21-24
- (2) A mighty angel took up a stone
 - (a) Jeremiah 51:59-64 - [59](#) The word that Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraiah the son of Neriah, son of Mahseiah, when he went with Zedekiah king of Judah to Babylon, in the fourth year of his reign. Seraiah was the quartermaster. [60](#) Jeremiah wrote in a book all the disaster that should come upon Babylon, all these words that are written concerning Babylon. [61](#) And Jeremiah said to Seraiah: “When you come to Babylon, see that you read all these words, [62](#) and say, ‘O Lord, you have said concerning this place that you will cut it off, so that nothing shall dwell in it, neither man nor beast, and it shall be desolate forever.’ [63](#) **When you finish reading this book, tie a stone to it and cast it into the midst of the Euphrates, [64](#) and say, ‘Thus shall Babylon sink, to rise no more, because of the disaster that I am bringing upon her, and they shall become exhausted.’” Thus far are the words of Jeremiah.**
 - (b) Mark 9:42 - “Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea.
 - (c) Millstones were very heavy, so it was quite a feat for this strong, mighty angel to pick it up and cast it into the sea.
- (3) “So will Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence, and will be found no more;
 - (a) When the stone breaks the surface, there is much tumult, but as it sinks the sea grows calm again as if the stone had never been thrown.
 - (b) As physical Babylon fell according to the prophecy of Isaiah and Jeremiah, a great change is coming to Rome.
- (4) and the sound of harpists and musicians, of flute players and trumpeters, will be heard in you no more, (18:22)
 - (a) Amusement life will cease.
- (5) and a craftsman of any craft will be found in you no more, and the sound of the mill will be heard in you no more, (18:22)
 - (a) Business life will grind to a halt.
- (6) and the light of a lamp will shine in you no more, and the voice of bridegroom and bride will be heard in you no more (18:23)

- (a) Home life will cease.
- (7) And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slain on earth.” (18:24)
 - (a) What is left is the blood of God’s people who had been slain – the very cause of the downfall of Rome.
 - (b) God’s people will stand after Rome has fallen.
 - (c) Rev. 6:10 - They cried out with a loud voice, “O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”
- g) Some will point out that Rome still exists, which is true, but it is not the *persecuting* Rome of John’s time.
 - i) Christianity will still stand after those who tried to stamp it out have fallen, and will continue to stand when succeeding “*Romes*” have fallen into decay.