

The Book of Revelation

Chapter 18

Introductory Notes

- We are in a last semi-parenthetical section in Chapters 17 and 18 that deals with the fate of “Babylon”.
- Opinions differ, but it appears that “Babylon” represents the unholy alliance of Ecclesiastical Babylon, Imperial Babylon, and Commercial Babylon, all under the control of the unholy trinity (Satan, Antichrist, False Prophet) during the Tribulation.
- Ecclesiastical Babylon fell in Chapter 17, Commercial Babylon falls in this chapter, and Imperial Babylon will fall at Armageddon in Chapter 19.

Outline

- The Angel’s Proclamation - vs. 1-3
- The Voice’s Message - vs. 4-8
- The Kings’ and Merchant’s Lament - vs. 9-19
- The Destruction of Babylon - vs. 20-24

Notes

- vs. 1 - another angel - not Christ, but a mighty angel nonetheless
- vs. 2 – This declaration concerns the fall of Ecclesiastical Babylon from the previous chapter. This is the first domino to fall among the three.
- vs. 2 - Devils, spirits, and birds (Matthew 13:32) are all representations of demonic forces. Reminds me of Matthew 12:43-45.
- vs. 3 – Imperial (rulers, nations) and Commercial (merchants) Babylon have gorged themselves on the riches of Ecclesiastical Babylon.
- vs. 4 – This is God speaking here (note “my people”).
 - It appears to be Him speaking through vs. 20 though it is difficult to tell.
- vs. 4 – God commands the righteous to depart before judgment falls. Such a command is common in the Bible, as in the case of Lot at Sodom in Genesis 19:15-22.
- vs. 5 - Literally, the sins are stacked like bricks unto heaven. Perhaps this is an allusion to the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:5-9)?
- vs. 6 – The crimes call for not just *lex talionis*, the law of exact retribution. Here the punishment is double the crime committed.
- vs. 7 – Proverbs 16:18 in action.
- vs. 8 – in one day - just as Babylon of old fell (Daniel 5). God’s judgment is swift and severe.

- vs. 9-10 – Imperial Babylon’s reaction to Ecclesiastical Babylon’s fall.
 - This is an interesting change of emotions for Imperial Babylon. In 17:16-17 the ten kings allied with the Antichrist attack and destroy Ecclesiastical Babylon. So Imperial Babylon both incites and mourns the loss of Ecclesiastical Babylon. Perhaps this is a cause of political strife that leads to “wars and rumors of wars” (Matthew 24:6).
- vs. 11-19 – Commercial Babylon’s reaction to Ecclesiastical Babylon’s fall.
 - Ever notice how people don’t care until it hits them in the pocketbook?
 - vs. 12-13 - the items mentioned are of great value and luxury.
 - vs. 12 - thyine wood - “fragrant wood corresponding to cypress and was used for expensive furniture in Roman times” - Walvoord
 - vs. 13 - “slaves, and souls of men” - literally owning them body and soul.
 - Strange how men are listed last and thus of least value!
 - vs. 14 – laments the loss of the Babylonian market.
 - vs. 15-19 – The merchants mourn the loss of the wealth of and from Ecclesiastical Babylon.
- vs. 20 – I think this is the return to John’s narration as he reacts to the fall of Ecclesiastical Babylon.
- vs. 21 – a vivid illustration of the judgment on Babylon
- vs. 22-23 – a once thriving, prosperous city/system is laid waste, basically a ghost town.
- vs. 24 – this reads like a postmortem.