

## Revelation 18:1-24

### "Bringing Down Babylon (part 2)"

Realize & recognize that when the book of Rev brings up "Babylon" that there are 2 distinct yet undeniably intertwined systems that are heralded by this name.

We developed last week that the literal city of Babel was the seat of the 1<sup>st</sup> organized attempt of mankind to rebel against God under the leadership of a man by the name of Nimrod back in the book of Genesis Ch's 10-11. He wanted to build a tower that would reach to the heavens, a "gate to the gods" (which is what "Babel" literally means) in defiant & decisive opposition against the Lord. It was his wife, Semiramis who developed the cult from which the "mystery religions" of Babylon emerged. **She was the high priestess of idol worship & devised a whole deception regarding her son's supposed miraculous conception. Babylonian legend purports that he (Tammuz) was out hunting, was killed by a wild beast, lay dead for 3 days & then came back to life & was heralded as a savior.** The bible recognizes Babylon as the origin of all false religions & cults, the mother of harlots & of the abominations of the earth.

Babylon (biblically) came to be an emblem of both practical worldliness and spiritual rebellion against God. In Ch's 17 & 18 of the book of Revelation we see God's final judgment upon both. God has given His word again & again that He will bring Babylon to utter, irreparable ruin/destruction. In these 2 Ch's we see that He will leave no stone unturned, both religious Babylon & commercial Babylon will burn... In Ch 17 we saw the downfall of religious Babylon; in Ch 18 we see God bringing down *commercial* Babylon.

Some have wondered if the Babylon of Ch's 17 & 18 are 1 & the same. As I mentioned they're undoubtedly intertwined to some degree initially, but it's easy to see that they're also very distinct in their place on this planet.

For instance when Religious Babylon is destroyed the kings of the earth will aid in her destruction (Ch 17:12-17). When commercial Babylon falls the kings of the earth will weep & wail because of the loss of luxury & wealth that befalls them in the wake of it's destruction. **Religious Babylon is destroyed by the A.C. commercial Babylon is destroyed by God Himself; Religious Babylon is brought down ½ through the Great Tribulation, commercial Babylon falls at the *end* of the Great Tribulation.** So, it's not difficult to discern that what we have here are 2 separate systems sharing the same name due to the common bond of rebellion against God.

Something else people wonder about is if it's the literal city of Babylon that's in view here, or perhaps a city near ancient Babylon that will share it's name. It's interesting that when Saddam Hussein was alive he had a passion to restore & rebuild Babylon. **Certainly it's not beyond reason to perceive the A.C. (w/unlimited wealth & resources) contracting 1,000's & 1,000's of builders, paying prevailing wages to build an incredibly luxurious city in a very short amount of time.** (Rapture doesn't mark final 7 yrs, the A.C. peace treaty w/Israel does, so there could be some time in there that things are happening, [cities are being built] after the rapture prior to the prior to that agreement).

**The bible indicates that Babylon may indeed be rebuilt only to be destroyed once & for all w/finality. But whether it be the literal city, or a city that becomes the world capital in the future it will certainly represent the satanic world system of the A.C. (that from the beginning has corrupted the earth) in all it's political & economic glory & God will destroy it in an instant... & All the king's horses & all the king's men, will never put Babylon back together again...**

### **Vs 1-3**

I'm gonna break this down & make this simple to understand. The reason that Babylon is falling under God's judgment is because she has enticed the nations of the world, intoxicating them through the sin of self-indulgence. **"The kings of the earth have committed fornication w/her" that is, they have engaged in ungodly business propositions "& the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury" that is, they have satiated themselves in the sin of self indulgence, too much is never enough... They gorge the black hole of their flesh which refuses to be satisfied.**

In Vs 1 John sees another angel coming down out of heaven, explicitly noted as having "great *authority*" which clues us into the fact *specifically* that he's about to speak on God's behalf; "& the earth was illuminated w/his glory". **Perhaps light shines from him innately. But it reminds me of Moses who being in the presence of God upon the Mt shone forth His glory when he descended; even so this angel being so fresh from the presence of God that the glory that shines forth from him illuminates the whole earth.**

We've spoken before of the "proleptic" nature of bible prophecy speaking of something as in the past before it even happens because the word of God is that certain. Here in Vs 2 the angel pronounces the downfall of Babylon as being history before it ever comes to pass. "Babylon is fallen, is fallen & has become the dwelling place of demons," so on & so forth.

“A prison for every foul spirit”, some wonder if this alludes to the fact that God will keep demonic entities imprisoned here throughout the millennial kingdom. I suppose it’s plausible but who can know? When he says, “Every unclean & hated bird” is he again speaking of demonic spirits (as in the parable of the soils, Mark 4:4,15) or is it a reference to the carrion kind of birds, scavengers who eat flesh who will feast on those who fall there? Again either way you perceive that I don’t see any damage to the text...

Vs 3 is where the charge is brought against her. Monarchs & merchants alike have become rich through (literally) the “power” or “strengths” of her luxuries... **Idolatry isn’t the only sin of Babylon, greed, an entitled sense of self indulgence is also on the list. Do you realize that “self indulgence” is a sin? It’s a tough topic to bring up here in America where we believe wealth is a constitutional right!**

Be careful my friends, it’s dangerous ground to tread upon. I’m not saying wealth is wrong, nor am I saying that money is inherently evil. I’m saying that the pursuit of wealth is thin ice on which we tread... The bible says, *“But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”*<sup>1</sup>

“Where is the balance”, one might ask, “between storing up an inheritance for my children (which the bible commends) & being self indulgent (which the bible condemns)?” The truth is I can’t (nor can anyone) answer that for you. That’s something you have to work out w/fear & trembling between you & the Lord.

The bible is clear that we’re to lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven, that we’re to use our monetary resources to propel kingdom priorities. Paul said, *“Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.”*<sup>2</sup>

The appeal & attraction of Babylon is that worldly values, materialism, comfort, & sensual gratification contain the power to make you rich. The world teaches you to indulge yourself, Jesus said, “Deny yourself”. The world says, “Gratify your flesh”.

<sup>1</sup> The New King James Version. 1982 (1 Ti 6:9-10). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>2</sup> The New King James Version. 1982 (1 Ti 6:17-19). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

The bible teaches us to *crucify* the flesh, to make no provision for the flesh to fulfill it's lusts. The world says, "Look out for #1" the bible says "Look out for the things of others, considering others as better than ourselves". Which is to say that we're to place the needs of others before our own. Everything about Babylon is counterintuitive & counterproductive to the things of God. Babylon intoxicates the masses through riches & luxury, caters to those of whom the bible identifies as "lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God." 2 Tim 3:4 The sin of Babylon (amongst other things) is that of *self-indulgence*.

### Vs 4-5

Here's another clue that the Babylon of Ch 17 & the Babylon of Ch 18 are separate & distinct. It's inconceivable that a child of God would be a part of religious Babylon (though certainly some elements may subtly creep in). But *materialistic lure is a constant threat that God's people are consistently exhorted to guard against... So as it pertains to commercial Babylon God says, "Come out of her My people, lest you share in her sins & receive of her plagues."*

Now, is this a call to a geographical *relocation*, or a spiritual *reorientation*? I would say, "Yes", it's almost impossible to read this & not be reminded of Lot & the call of God upon his life to get out of Sodom before He destroyed the city. But as we learned w/his wife you can take the person out of Sodom but you can't Sodom out of the person... God will at times call for a physical relocation, maybe there's compromise in your place of employment, or you're placing yourself in a position to fall by the company you keep. God says, *"Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord."*<sup>3</sup> The bible says, *"The righteous should choose his friends carefully, For the way of the wicked leads them astray."*<sup>4</sup>

So there will be times that God will call us to physically *depart* from the place of compromise. But God *always* & *w/out exception* calls us to lead a life that's *set apart* from the world, consecrated to Him. Lot may've moved to Sodom because it seemed like something that would benefit him initially, he could make some money, better life for his family. Yet ultimately in considering the things that made for a "better life" now, it cost him tremendously in the eyes of eternity. He lost most of his family, everything materially, he escaped w/2 daughters & the clothes on his back... We do well to count the cost & consider carefully the outcome of the decisions we make as it pertains to the pathways we take in this world...

<sup>3</sup> The New King James Version. 1982 (2 Co 6:17). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>4</sup> The New King James Version. 1982 (Pr 12:26). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

*"Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God."*<sup>5</sup>

& Again, *"...have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them."*<sup>6</sup> Now lest you misunderstand me I'm not suggesting that you join a monastery or isolate yourself from people who need Christ. We're to be salt & light, Jesus lived a life set apart from sin, yet was the "friend of sinners". *Dined w/prostitutes & tax collectors, we're to be in the world, but not of the world. There is a very distinct difference & we're to be careful to observe that line. In the world? Yes. Of the world...No.*

We could spend extensive time on this point, but we need to move on. John calls for separation from Babylon on 2 counts. #1 "Lest you share in her sins", we are new creations yet we still struggle w/a sin nature. The bible declares (1 Cor 15:33) that bad company corrupts good morals. *You hang out w/sinful people & they will entice you to sin. That's why the bible encourages us to hang out w/wise, godly people, that we might grow wiser still. #1 "Lest you share in her sins" & #2 "Lest you receive of her plagues".* Don't be deceived, you will not live after the pattern of the wicked & receive the reward of the righteous. If we follow after the ways of the world, we receive the reward of the world. Paul exhorted the believers of the principle over & over again throughout his epistles...

*"For her sins have reached to heaven, & God has remembered her iniquities."* Interesting the word "reached" here speaks of stacking one on top of another (like bricks). *They've succeeded on building a tower that reached to heaven, but it's not the one they hoped it would be.* They've stacked sin on top of sin, reaching to "high heaven", they've sinned "to the limit" & God has remembered her iniquities. ... Now this is where we pause for just a moment & give God praise for the contrast in His dealings w/believers as opposed to unbelievers. To those who have placed their faith in Christ God says, *"I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."*<sup>7</sup> & Again, *"For as the heavens are high above the earth, So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us."*<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> The New King James Version. 1982 (2 Co 6:14-16). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>6</sup> The New King James Version. 1982 (Eph 5:11). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>7</sup> The New King James Version. 1982 (Heb 8:12). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>8</sup> The New King James Version. 1982 (Ps 103:11-12). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Not so w/the unredeemed, their sin accumulates like piles of uncollected, rotten garbage piling higher & higher till it reaches to heaven. It's another way of speaking of that wine cup of wrath that people fill up that's in the hand of God & when they fill it to the brink w/their sin He presses it to their lips & forces them to drink it down to the dregs.

### Vs 6-8

And what does the bible say? *"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."*<sup>9</sup> Even so, *"For our God is a consuming fire."* Heb 12:29

Vs 5 & 6 remind us of the law of sowing & reaping, if you sow to the wind, you reap the whirlwind.

In an antithetical kind of way Vs 6 & 7 reminded me of the principle that the Lord instructed us in as it pertains to giving. He said, *"Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."* Translation: you can't out give God. Even so w/this world system of the A.C. that has enticed others to sin against God, their "reward" will be pressed down, shaken together, & running over, "repay her *double* according to her works" ...

Btw, Vs demonstrates another sin-associated w/Babylon. We've noted idolatry, self-indulgence/greed, here we have the sin of "pride". *"She says in her heart, 'I sit as queen, & am no widow, & will not see sorrow.'" Why are those words ringing a bell? "She says in her heart..."* Oh yeah! Leave the book of Rev & turn back to the book of **Isaiah 14** (Vs 12-15).

Man may be content (many times) to settle on the outward appearance, but God searches the heart, that's where things get real. *We can look real good outwardly, have the appearance of walking humbly, but God is searching our heart, & when God searches her heart He finds pride, self sufficiency & the thought of perpetual luxury. Write it down, look it up later, Luke 12:16-21.*

### Vs 9-11

Every monarch, every merchant & every mariner related to Babylon will wail for the destruction that comes upon her... Seeing them stand at a distance, & the suddenness of the destruction some wonder if perhaps nuclear fallout is in view here. *I suppose that's plausible, but it doesn't seem probable. God is the One in view here, He's the One who's brought Babylon down & I just don't see Him allowing there to be confusion on that point as though it's man's doing.*

<sup>9</sup> *The New King James Version*, 1982 (**Heb 10:31**). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

But here's where we see the utter depravity of humanity upon the earth when this comes down. Did you notice in Vs 11 why they were weeping? It wasn't because of the loss of life, or even the radical global devastation that would occur when the world capital melts down (literally). We read that they weep & mourn over her, "*for no one buys their merchandise anymore.*" wow...

You know you're at the epitome of self-centered when you just watched the destruction of countless lives, the entire world's system collapse in a moment inevitably leading to the loss of countless more lives & all you can think of is, "Now who will buy my stuff?" You don't weep for the loss of life, but your loss of income... that's what's listed for us next, the list of lost items. You might note as we read through them that there's no much in the form of necessity, what's mostly represented is luxuries.

#### Vs 12-14

1<sup>st</sup> up, the jewelry department: gold, silver, precious stones & pearls. Next, clothing: fine linen, silk, purple & scarlet. Then we come to the furniture department: citron wood, objects of ivory (of course ivory makes great inlay), precious wood, iron, bronze & marble. Deodorants & perfumes: cinnamon, incense, fragrant oil & frankincense. The finest restaurants, wine, lamb, porterhouse steaks. Automotive: horses, chariots & finally entertainment: the bodies & souls of men.

Is this talking about slavery? Possibly, but you might also think of things like prostitution, pornography, even certain sports: basically paying people to destroy themselves for our entertainment.

Vs 14 reads more literally, "& the fruit of your soul's lust fled from you." All of these flesh-feeding luxuries are now gone from them forever. The loss is both irreparable & eternal.

#### Vs 15-19

Monarchs, merchants, mariners, all weeping & wailing over what they see w/their eyes. Not a whole lot of commentary is really even necessary here except maybe to point out again that their sorrow is all rooted in selfishness. (This city that made us all rich is now gone!)

#### Vs 20

Notice the significant contrast between heaven & earth. God's perspective & man's perspective Remember what Jesus said? "*For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.*"<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> The New King James Version. 1982 [Lk 16:15]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

I should also point out that what's being rejoiced over isn't the death of the wicked. The bible tells us (Ezek 33) that God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked. It's His desire that the wicked would turn from their wicked way & live!

We rejoice over the righteous resolution of God's judgment; vengeance is His & He will repay. An assault on one of God's people is an assault on God Himself & God will right every wrong & avenge the wicked on behalf of the righteous.

#### Vs 21

The day is coming when this world system will pass away like a 1500 lb. millstone sinking to the bottom of the sea. The idea here is that the time is coming when Babylon will sink into destruction like a millstone sinking violently & w/rapidity to the bottom of the sea never to be recovered or remembered again.

Of course it's hard to talk about millstones being thrown to the bottom of the sea w/out being reminded of what Jesus said in Matt 18 isn't it? How that it would be better for a person to have a millstone tied around their neck & cast into the depths of the sea than to cause a child who believes in Him to sin... Certainly Babylon led many others into sin. It's a horrible thing to sin unto yourself, all the worse if you lead others into sin. This angel testifies to the finality of Babylon's judgment.

#### Vs 22-23

Notice phrases like, "Shall not be heard, shall no longer be found, shall not shine anymore..." John vividly describes the desolation of this place, no more entertainment, no more trades work, no more commercial work, no more night life, no domestic life, nothing; utter destruction & desolation.

This word "sorcery" in Vs 23 is the familiar word "pharmakia" w/reference to drug use; partying; the lure of commercial Babylon was like a drug addiction always aching for a continual fix.

#### Vs 24

Of course we realize that no single city responsible for all of the slain saints of the world. But certainly the "spirit of Babylon" that we developed last week. The world's system & rebellion against God will be held responsible.

You guys, it's ez to get caught in the trap of thinking that this world will carry on forever; business as usual, life as we know it. Rev 18 is a sobering reminder that this world & everything in it is at best temporary; that we're to come out from among them (says the Lord); that we're to be in the world but not *of* the world.



To learn the meaning (like a skillful surgeon) of contact w/out contamination. **If you can't rejoice at the righteous judgment of God because you're not certain that your name is in the book of Life, than come out of Babylon; lest you share in her sins & receive of her plagues. Give your life to Jesus and God will remember your sins no more...Praise God? Praise God.**

#### Prayer Points:

God the exhortation of Your word is that we love not the world, nor the things in the world. For all that is of the world, the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, & the pride of life isn't of you; it's of this world's system which is passing away. **Father we need our hearts renewed; & refocused upon you, that we not "pitch our tent toward Sodom" but that we be separated, consecrated to You. Deliver us from covetousness & give us hearts content in You. You are our all in all & we give You praise...**

Come out from among them... is that the call of God to your heart today? If so I'm going to invite you to discard your sin, to turn from it, repent of it & trust in J.C. who has loved you, shed His blood & died upon the cross for you & rose again 3 days later that you might find forgiveness & new life in Him. Don't kick against the goads; give your life to Christ today.