

# Babylon Is Fallen, Is Fallen!

## Revelation 18

Revelation 17 describes the vast conspiracy of evil that is Babylon, depicted as a prostitute—a scarlet woman sitting on a scarlet beast. Revelation 18 records her fall. In the final days of earth’s history, God will say, “Enough.” He keeps an accurate record of sin. He bears long with sinners, but when a line is crossed and there is no possibility of repentance, divine patience comes to an end. In this chapter, the combined forces of evil at the end of time reach that point of no return. Babylon has filled to overflowing her cup of “abominations and the filthiness of her fornication,” and she falls.

### **The Fall of Babylon the Great**

John writes,

After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean bird! For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury!” And I heard another voice from heaven saying, “Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities” (Revelation 18:1-5).

The angel that announces the fall of Babylon has “great authority.” He comes directly from heaven and still bears the glory of God so strongly that it illuminates the entire earth! He has a message from God, the message that Babylon has fallen. His words sound like a tragic dirge—“Babylon is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons.” This proclamation

mirrors that of the second angel of Revelation 14 who also announced the fall of Babylon (Revelation 14:8)..

Revelation 18:4 is God's final appeal to all humanity. "Come out of her [Babylon], my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues." Sin is the transgression of God's law (1 John 3:4). God is calling His people to come out of every lawbreaking church. Why is God calling His people out of Babylon at this point? Verse 5 tells us: "For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities."

Demonic forces control Babylon. All nations have drunk the wine of her fornications. Wine represents false doctrines. Those who drink the wine of Babylon become confused in their thinking and mistake error for truth and conclude that truth is error.

Fornication is an illicit union. Notice carefully who unites in this end-time confederacy—Babylon and the kings of the earth.

Babylon's sins have "reached to heaven" (verse 5). This wording points us back to the origins of Babylon at the tower of Babel in Genesis 11 where the people said, "Let us build ourselves . . . a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves" (verse 4).

The emphasis is on the pronoun, *ourselves*, suggesting their insistence on being independent of God. The builders of the Tower of Babel intended to create a secular community separate from, and independent of, God.

The Hebrew word for "tower" is *migdal*. It is related to the word, *gadal*, which means "great." It implies the ideas of ambition and self-glorification. The purpose of the builders is obviously a spiritual ambition to replace God and glorify themselves. They push themselves upward, because they refuse to believe in the God who comes down to be with His people.

This very word, *gadal*, which is associated with the Tower of Babel and spiritual "Babylon the great" (Revelation 18:2), is also used to describe the little-horn power of Daniel 7. Like the builders of Babel, this little horn also attempts to exalt itself to the heavens, placing its authority above that of God, casting down God's truth, and changing His law. In this, the tower builders and the little horn are like Satan who sought to "ascend above the heights of the clouds" and "above the stars of God" (Isaiah 14:14, 13).

Babylon unites with the "kings of the earth" and the "merchants of the earth" (Revelation 18:3). The picture is one of a union of apostate false religions, political powers, and financial or

economic interests. This threefold union forms a confederacy of evil to persecute the people of God.

### **“Come Out of Her, My People”**

The angel of Revelation 18 proclaims God’s appeal: “Come out of her [Babylon], my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues” (verse 4). Where are most of God’s people today? According to this verse, they must be in Babylon, since God is calling them to come out.

This appeal is God’s gracious message of salvation. Here at the end-time every person on earth must choose sides in the great controversy between God and Satan. This is the appeal that God’s people, energized by the Holy Spirit, are taking to the world today with great power.

God is preparing a people to proclaim the marvels of His grace, the greatness of His love, the goodness of His character, the righteousness of His law, and the beauty of His truth. Bathed in His righteousness, they are justified by His grace and sanctified through His saving power. They love His truth, live His truth, and proclaim His truth. With the apostle Paul, they say, “For me, to live is Christ” (Philippians 1:21). Empowered by His Spirit, they proclaim God’s love and share His grace. The earth is illuminated with the glory—the character—of God. The Holy Spirit is poured out in latter-rain power. Hearts are touched. Lives are changed. All this comes about through the power of God’s appeal, “Come out of her, my people.” Many respond and do come out and prepare to meet their soon-coming Savior. Jesus says, “My sheep hear My voice . . . and they follow Me” (John 10:27).

Babylon falls, because “her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities” (Revelation 18:5). God “remembers” her iniquities, because she refuses to give them up. In contrast, He says to those who surrender their sins and ask His forgiveness, “Their sins . . . I will remember no more” (Hebrews 8:12).

### **Kings and Merchants Mourn Babylon’s Fall**

The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning, standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, “Alas, alas, that great city

Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.” And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her. . . . The merchants . . . who became rich by her, will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, and saying, “Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls! For in one hour such great riches came to nothing” (Revelation 18:9-17).

While God is appealing to His people to come out of Babylon, she “says in her heart,

“I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.” Therefore her plagues will come in one day—death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her (verses 7, 8).

Verse 19 adds, “In one hour she is made desolate.” The great confederacy of evil persists in its opposition and is blind to what is about to happen. These verses indicate that the seven last plagues that fall on Babylon are sudden and last only a relatively short time before Babylon is totally destroyed.

The kings and the merchants—the political and economic interests which have united themselves to Babylon—mourn her fall. They committed spiritual fornication with her and lived luxuriously because of her as they exercised power over the earth. Now they fall with her and mourn as they suffer God’s punishment. They do not mourn for their sins and their rebellion against God. They mourn, because of the consequences of their sins.

### **The Finality of Babylon’s Fall**

Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, “Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore. The sound of harpists, musicians, flutists, and trumpeters shall not be heard in you anymore. The light of a lamp shall not shine in you anymore, and the voice of the bridegroom and the bride shall not be heard in you anymore. For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your

sorcery all the nations were deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth (verses 21-24).

John draws on the experience of Jeremiah to introduce his vivid description of the total and complete and final destruction of end-time Babylon. Jeremiah 51 tells how the prophet wrote in a book all the punishments and disasters that God had pronounced against Old Testament Babylon. Jeremiah then gave the book to a man named Seraiah who was going to Babylon and told him to read the words of the book when he arrived in the city. He told Seraiah,

It shall be when you have finished reading this book, that you shall tie a stone to it and throw it into the Euphrates. Then you shall say, “Thus Babylon shall sink and not rise from the catastrophe that I will bring upon her” (Jeremiah 51:63, 64).

Notice how John has intensified Jeremiah’s picture-lesson. A stone tied to a book and thrown into the Euphrates river has now become a “great millstone” thrown into the sea! In this way John graphically pictures the final and total destruction of spiritual Babylon at the end of time.

He goes on to describe a deserted city which is devoid of the sights and sounds of everyday life. The city is silent and dead. The finality of Babylon’s destruction is complete, for “in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth” (verse 24).

For the most part, chapters 13-18 of Revelation have been painting a grim picture of end-time events. They are sprinkled with verses reassuring readers that the Lamb will overcome and that God is King of kings and Lord of lords. But the focus has been on beasts and dragons and false prophets who will unite in a vast confederacy of evil to fight against God and destroy His people. That has been the focus, because unfortunately that is a true picture of what will be taking place at the end of time. The apostle Paul wrote,

Know this, that in the last days perilous times will come; for men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God (2 Timothy 3:1-4).

This grim description is reality, and Revelation gives it to us with no sugarcoating. But thank God the book of Revelation doesn't end with chapter 18! The picture turns much brighter in chapter 19 and the remaining chapters of the book!