

The Book of Revelation
Revelation 18 (NIV)
“The End of Evil, Excess, and Economics”

Lament Over Fallen Babylon

After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven. He had great authority, and the earth was illuminated by his splendor. With a mighty voice he shouted:

“Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great!’ She has become a dwelling for demons and a haunt for every impure spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable animal. For all the nations have drunk the maddening wine of her adulteries. The kings of the earth committed adultery with her, and the merchants of the earth grew rich from her excessive luxuries.”

Warning to Escape Babylon’s Judgment

Then I heard another voice from heaven say:

“Come out of her, my people,’ so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues; for her sins are piled up to heaven, and God has remembered her crimes. Give back to her as she has given; pay her back double for what she has done. Pour her a double portion from her own cup. Give her as much torment and grief as the glory and luxury she gave herself. In her heart she boasts, ‘I sit enthroned as queen. I am not a widow; I will never mourn.’ Therefore in one day her plagues will overtake her: death, mourning and famine. She will be consumed by fire, for mighty is the Lord God who judges her.

Threefold Woe Over Babylon’s Fall

“When the kings of the earth who committed adultery with her and shared her luxury see the smoke of her burning, they will weep and mourn over her. Terrified at her torment, they will stand far off and cry:

*“Woe! Woe to you, great city, you mighty city of Babylon!
In one hour your doom has come!’*

“The merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her because no one buys their cargoes anymore — cargoes of gold, silver, precious stones and pearls; fine linen, purple, silk and scarlet cloth; every sort of citron wood, and articles of every kind made of ivory, costly wood, bronze, iron and marble; cargoes of cinnamon and spice, of incense, myrrh and frankincense, of wine and olive oil, of fine flour and wheat; cattle and sheep; horses and carriages; and human beings sold as slaves. “They will say, ‘The fruit you longed for is gone from you. All your luxury and splendor have vanished, never to be recovered.’ The merchants who sold these things and gained their wealth from her will stand far off, terrified at her torment. They will weep and mourn and cry out:

“Woe! Woe to you, great city, dressed in fine linen, purple and scarlet, and glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls! In one hour such great wealth has been brought to ruin!’

“Every sea captain, and all who travel by ship, the sailors, and all who earn their living from the sea, will stand far off. When they see the smoke of her burning, they will exclaim, ‘Was there ever a city like this great city?’ They will throw dust on their heads, and with weeping and mourning cry out:

“Woe! Woe to you, great city, where all who had ships on the sea became rich through her wealth! In one hour she has been brought to ruin!’

***“Rejoice over her, you heavens!
Rejoice, you people of God!
Rejoice, apostles and prophets!
For God has judged her with the judgment she imposed on you.”***

The Finality of Babylon’s Doom

Then a mighty angel picked up a boulder the size of a large millstone and threw it into the sea, and said:

***“With such violence the great city of Babylon will be thrown down,
never to be found again.***

***The music of harpists and musicians, pipers and trumpeters,
will never be heard in you again.***

No worker of any trade will ever be found in you again.

The sound of a millstone will never be heard in you again.

The light of a lamp will never shine in you again.

The voice of bridegroom and bride will never be heard in you again.

Your merchants were the world’s important people.

By your magic spell all the nations were led astray.

***In her was found the blood of prophets and of God’s holy people,
of all who have been slaughtered on the earth.”***

Revelation 18

Introduction

In the previous chapter, we were witness to the fall of the world religion (the “Whore of Babylon”). In **Chapter 18**, we see the subsequent collapse of the entire world system. Babylon, the city of the anti-Christ, will be razed to the ground. The warnings given over and over again in scripture to come out of the secular humanistic world system have gone unheeded for centuries. The fall was eminent, but the ungodly were willing to risk everything in order to indulge in sinful pleasures and passions. They loved the world, even unto death. Jesus, Himself, asked the question in **Mark 8:36**, ***“What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?”*** The author of **Revelation**, the Apostle John, admonishes believers in **1 John 2:15-17**:

“Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – comes not from the Father, but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.”

The simple fact remains, to live for Christ brings life, but to live for the world brings death. Many *Bible* scholars disagree as to whether this description of Babylon’s fall in this passage actually refers to the physical capital city of the anti-christ, or merely the collapse of the world’s “Babylonian” economic system. I, however, do not believe these things to be mutually exclusive. The center of world commerce will be the capital city of the anti-christ, much as New York and its famed “stock exchange” is the center of world commerce today. And therefore, when this end-times city collapses, then so also shall the world economy. When the final bell tolls for the Babylonian world system, God will bring swift judgment on His enemies. It will be the end of Evil, Excess, and Economics. The fall of mighty Babylon.

The End of Evil

Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great! She has become a home for demons and a haunt for every evil spirit... **Revelation 18:2**

The prophet Zechariah was shown a vision of wickedness personified as a woman in a basket (**Zechariah 5:7**). The basket was carried away by demons to the city of Babylon, to “build a house for it” (**Zechariah 5:11**). All the ungodly empires of the world find their beginning in Babylon. The peoples of earth who wish to “control their own destinies” apart from the authority of God are all too eager to pledge their allegiance to Babylon. She offers them every indulgence with no strings attached. Live for yourself, do as you please, and give no thought to the consequences. Be as religious as you like, but leave God and His Son out of it. Draft the rules of your own morality. Judge yourself in the light of your own standards. Throw off the restrictions of the Almighty. Don't repent of your sin, embrace it! After all, your sins are a part of you. To deny them, would be denying your very self. This is Babylon. The very home of evil and rebellion.

Revelation 18:8 states that Babylon's sins are “piled up to heaven”. The Greek word translated “piled” actually means “glued and stacked”. This is more than likely a reference to the stacking of bricks in the construction of the tower of Babel. In the eyes of the Lord, the world's sin upon sins, layer by layer, have become a tower to the heavens. In the last days, the tower will fall. Evil will be destroyed forever. “Babylon is fallen!”

The End of Excess

Have you ever watched the scene on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange and wondered if the frenzied activity of buying and selling was demonically inspired? The buyers and sellers appear to be completely out of control, swept away in a wave of maddening greed, each one wanting the same thing... one more dollar that they do not already possess. Theirs is a thirst that is never quenched. This is a perfect example of the excess of Babylon. *The Bible* warns us repeatedly that greed is simply another form of idolatry.

Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Colossians 3:5

The list of luxuries of Babylon given in **vs. 12-13** reads like a list of commodities on the Stock Exchange. While most of the world barely has enough to get by, in the city of the anti-Christ, there seems to be plenty of everything. Riches abound. The final Babylon where the anti-christ reigns will be a decadent city indeed. She will boast of her splendor. **“I sit as a queen.” (vs. 7).** This kingdom will be so over confident in its wealth that its inhabitants will believe they are invincible.

“I am not a widow, and I will never mourn.” (vs. 7). There is a false sense of security that accompanies great wealth. I am reminded here of the early 2000's when the US banking system almost collapsed. We were told that these powerful banks for certain had to be bailed out for they were, and I quote, “too big to fail”. When God declares **“It is finished”** for the Babylonian economic system of greed in this world, there will be no bailout. The ultimate crash will be both swift and final. God gives one final warning for those who would repent and turn to Christ to come out of her before it is too late (**vs.4**).

With an endless supply of money, countries begin to feel that they cannot fail. After all, money buys great military might and elevates a nation to a place of awesome power and privilege. The United States has become a nation that boasts much like Babylon. Our own citizenry believed they were completely secure until 9/11. We learned on that day, that no one can truly buy their way out of calamity. Riches cannot save. Only Jesus saves! In one swift stroke, the excesses of Babylon will be destroyed. Her rapid plunge into bankruptcy will be devastating to the entire world.

It is amazing how the wicked of this world place so much of their faith in wealth. The attitude of the rich is that nothing can ever take them down. We have seen for ourselves in the past few years, how an unforeseen, worldwide pandemic wreaked havoc upon the economies of every nation on the planet. And yet, we still take pride in riches! This is nothing new. The original city of Babylon was much the same in her arrogant pride.

God allowed The Babylonians to enslave the nation of Israel for her idolatry. The king of Babylon thought himself to be indestructible. God not only humbled him (**Daniel Chapter 4**), but eventually he brought about the fall of the great city in a single moment (**Daniel Chapter 5**). This fall of Babylon was foretold by the prophet Isaiah. And the language that he used to describe the city's arrogant pride and subsequent downfall is eerily similar to John's account in **Revelation 18**.

Our Redeemer — The LORD Almighty is His Name — is the Holy One of Israel. “Sit in silence, go into darkness, queen city of the Babylonians; no more will you be called queen of kingdoms. I was angry with My people and desecrated My inheritance; I gave them into your hand, and you showed them no mercy. Even on the aged you laid a very heavy yoke. You said, ‘I am forever — the eternal queen! But you did not consider these things or reflect on what might happen. “Now then, listen, you lover of pleasure, lounging in your security and saying to yourself, ‘I am, and there is none besides me. I will never be a widow or suffer the loss of children.’ Both of these will overtake you in a moment, on a single day: loss of children and widowhood. They will come upon you in full measure in spite of your many sorceries and all your potent spells. You have trusted in your wickedness and have said, ‘No one sees me.’ Your wisdom and knowledge mislead you when you say to yourself, ‘I am, and there is none besides me.’ Disaster will come upon you, and you will not know how to conjure it away. A calamity will fall upon you that you cannot ward off with a ransom; a catastrophe you cannot foresee will suddenly come upon you. Isaiah 47:4-11

Just as the ancient city of Babylon fell in a single night after Belshazzar’s infamous drunken party and the subsequent, terrifying “handwriting on the wall”, new Babylon, the city of the anti-christ and center of the world’s excesses, will be razed to the ground in an instant. And all in this wicked world, who were intoxicated with her immorality and idolatry, will mourn over her demise. It is a grim reminder that the wicked will not mourn over their sin for repentance, but rather, will mourn over the loss of their ability to indulge further in wickedness!

Just as Lot’s wife looked back upon the destruction of Sodom with sadness and longing, causing her to be destroyed along with the city, the wicked of this world will weep, when their continuous thirst for debauchery can no longer be satiated. They will look upon the fallen city of Babylon and long for the times of their depravity and weep. It is a wailing that will last for an eternity in the lake of fire and brimstone. And as they are weeping, all of the redeemed are rejoicing (**vs. 20**), for God has fulfilled His promise to rid this world of its evil once and for all! Babylon is fallen, and with it, its king the anti-christ.

The End of Economics

In **Revelation 18:9-19**, the kingdoms of earth mourn the sudden collapse of the anti-Christ’s capitol city. Monarchs, merchants, and mariners all mourn their lost income due to Babylon’s destruction. The world economy collapses as God throws Satan’s City down, as a millstone thrown into the sea (**vs. 21**). Babylon sold the world everything it desired. Even people were considered commodities by the Empire of the anti-Christ (**vs. 13**).

During the 1990’s, a slogan from the Bill Clinton campaign became famous as people demonstrated their willingness to trade their personal values for economic growth. The slogan, “It’s the economy, Stupid”, became the rallying cry to justify a vote for someone, who aligned himself with the secularists who espoused anti-Christian values, in order to get elected. People justified abandoning their moral convictions in order to make more money. The Apostle Paul said it best;

“The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.”

1 Timothy 6:10

In the last days, Babylon will entice the world with her wealth. She will lure the kingdoms of earth to their demise like a seductive harlot. In the name of economics, men will trade their souls for riches. The inevitable conclusion will eventually “pierce the victim with many griefs”. The rich economy will collapse, leaving those with the mark of the beast to mourn. The world is no more. A new Kingdom is soon to arise. Let the people of God rejoice for Babylon is fallen (**vs. 20**)! The music has stopped playing (**vs. 22**). The arrogance of opulence has ended! Justice has finally come. Jesus is coming to reign. Hallelujah! TRUTH!