



I AM

THE FALL OF BABYLON THE GREAT

Revelation 18

The Daily Word from Laura Martin

John's vision continued as the great city of Babylon fell to destruction forever. The political leaders fell, the merchants fell, and all who did business by the sea fell. All were destroyed. God wiped away everything they had built up with their hands and had placed their hope in. It affected other kingdoms, and the people wept and lamented. Pride and seduction filled Babylon. Now, at last, *they received this final judgment.*

Whom and what do you put your hope in? If the stock market crashed, if your car was destroyed, if you were laid off from your executive position, or if you were unable to exercise daily, would it cause you to crumble and lament? Or would you remain strong in the Lord because your hope rests in Him? When life falls apart, your response will honestly reveal what or whom you have placed your hope in. Choose to rest in the Lord's promise to work all things together for good. He has a plan, and He has control over all the earth. He will carry your burdens. Choose to not only believe His truth but live out your belief that *God is bigger than the temporary pleasures this life offers.* May your life reflect His faithfulness as you put your hope in Him.

"He cried in a mighty voice: It has fallen, Babylon the Great has fallen! She has become a dwelling for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, and a haunt for every unclean and despicable beast."

— Revelation 18:2

FURTHER SCRIPTURE

- *2 Corinthians 4:16–18* — "Therefore we do not give up. Even though our outer person is being destroyed, our inner person is being renewed day by day. For our momentary light affliction is producing for us an absolutely incomparable eternal weight of glory. So we do not focus on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal."
- *Revelation 18:16–17a* — "Saying: Woe, woe, the great city, dressed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, adorned with gold, precious stones, and pearls, for in a single hour such fabulous wealth was destroyed!"
- *Revelation 18:23b–24* — "All this will happen because your merchants were the nobility of the earth, because all the nations were deceived by your sorcery, and the blood of prophets and saints, and of all those slaughtered on earth, was found in you."



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Teaching Notes

INTRO

Revelation 1:4 gives the theme of the entire book of Revelation: *“John: To the seven churches in Asia. Grace and peace to you from the One who is, who was, and who is coming; from the seven spirits before His throne.”* Chapters 1—3 document who Jesus is and was, and Chapters 4—5 proclaim how Jesus will return in the future. We are still covering the imagery of Revelation 1:4 today. In Revelation 16, we looked at the seven trumpets and then the four living creatures who handed seven bowls of wrath to seven angels. These seven wraths include for those who are not believers: (1) sores that will never go away; (2) seas of blood; (3) blood-contaminated drinking water; (4) sunburn from intense, ever-present heat; (5) darkness that comes over the Antichrist and his people; (6) the Euphrates River (1800 miles long) will dry up; and (7) enormous hail, each weighing 100 pounds, will fall on the cities. This is the wrath of God. Satan’s wrath is possibly portrayed in the seven seals in Revelation.

In Revelation 17, the fall of Babylon and its religious system and the battle with Satan is outlined. Satan will eventually wage war against Jesus, the Lamb of God in the battle at Armageddon. Revelation 18 presents the commercial or economical side and the political side of the fall of Babylon. Revelation 19 outlines Jesus’ return. The reason we have reviewed the bowls of wrath is because, at this point, the people were still in darkness (wrath #5).

TEACHING

Revelation 18:1-3: John saw another angel with great authority descending from heaven, and the entire earth was illuminated by his splendor (v. 1). Even while the wrath of God continued, people were allowed to witness the glory of God. Constable summarizes verses 1—3 as “the first angelic announcement of judgment.”¹ Wiersbe summarizes these same verses as “a voice of condemnation.”² Webster’s Dictionary defines “condemnation” as “the act of condemning or pronouncing to be wrong; censure; blame.” The angel will come down in God’s glory to pronounce His displeasure with Babylon. The angel proclaimed that the Babylonian system had failed, becoming a dwelling place for demons, unclean spirits, and even unclean birds and animals (v. 2). The system was so corrupt the demonic dwelled there instead of in the great abyss. The reality is the demonic are present today (Ephesians 6:12). Why do we not address this today? There are times when the angelic beings are fighting demonic forces for us. Not only was Babylon guilty, other nations had been drawn into the Babylonian’s system. The kings were drawn into sexual immorality, and the merchants became wealthy with excessive greed (v. 3).

Revelation 18:4-8: Wiersbe summarizes verses 4–8 as, “The voice of separation.”³ Another voice from heaven called for believers to get out of Babylon so they would not get caught up in its sin and its plagues (v. 4). MacArthur points out, “God will call His own to disentangle themselves from this evil system. This may also be God’s calling the elect to abandon the world system and come to faith in the Savior.”⁴ The voice explained that Babylon’s sins were so great they were piled up to heaven and God was focused on those sins (v. 5). Wiersbe points out, “John offered two reasons for God’s people separating themselves from the diabolical system. The first is that they might avoid pollution, becoming ‘partakers of her sins’ (1 Timothy 5:22; Revelation 18:4).”⁵ “The second reason is that God’s people might be spared the terrible plagues He will send on Babylon.”⁶

In verse 6, John heard a voice say the woman should be paid back double according to her sins (Isaiah 51:19–22). MacArthur explains, “The angel calls for God to recompense wrath to Babylon in her own cup to repay her according to her deeds. This is an echo of the Old Testament law of retaliation, which will be implemented by God.”⁷ Double the judgment was coming. The widow had glorified herself and saw herself as a queen (v. 7). She was deserving of the judgment to come. Therefore, the plagues she would face would come in one day at one time—death, grief, and famine (v. 8).

¹ Thomas Constable, Dr. Constable’s Expository Bible Study Notes: Revelation, p. 283; available at <https://planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/revelation.pdf>.

² Warren W. Wiersbe, The Bible Exposition Commentary: Ephesians–Revelation, v. 11 (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 1989), p. 614.

³ Wiersbe, p. 614.

⁴ John MacArthur, The MacArthur Bible Commentary (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishing, 2005), p. 2029.

⁵ Wiersbe, p. 614.

⁶ Wiersbe, p. 615.

⁷ MacArthur, p. 2029.



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Teaching Notes

Revelation 18:9–19: Wiersbe summarized these verses as “the voice of lamentation.”⁸ Not only would the woman be burned up, but the earthly kings who had supported her and participated in her religious and economic systems would not survive either (v. 9). Babylon will fall in one day (Daniel 5:30–31). MacArthur points out that the word for mourn or lament comes from the same Greek word that means “to express the despair of the unbelieving world at the return of Christ.”⁹ The kings will lament because they cannot get what they want—everything they had or want will be gone. In fear, the kings will stand as far away from the woman’s judgment as possible (v. 10).

The merchants will also mourn because no one will buy what they sell (vv. 11–13). The merchants will lose their businesses. MacArthur suggests, “The slave trade, long banned by the civilized nations of the world, will reappear in Antichrist’s debauched commercial system.”¹⁰ The things they desired and had value to them will leave them and will never be available to them again (v. 14). The merchants will stand by in fear and mourning that everything will be wiped out in an hour (vv. 15–17a).

The shipmasters, seafarers, and the sailors also watch selfishly, mourning from afar that they would no longer make a living by the sea (vv. 17a–19). The question in verse 18 really proclaims their loss of hope. If Babylon can fall, then no other equal options were available to them. Where do you turn when everything you know and value is lost? The sea people could only see Babylon as their answer. In hopelessness, they threw dust on their heads and kept mourning their loss. If only they had been willing to cry out to the Lord in their hopelessness (Joshua 7:6; 1 Samuel 4:12; Job 2:12).

Revelation 18:20–24: Wiersbe summarizes these final verses as “the voice of celebration.”¹¹ In verse 20, the people of God were told to rejoice and celebrate because He has executed judgment on Babylon. God avenged all the works of Satan and the Antichrist against His people. Then, a mighty angel threw a large millstone into the sea to show how Babylon would be thrown down and destroyed (v. 21). The people of Babylon will never celebrate, never work, never trade again (v. 22). No life in Babylon will continue—no marriages, no light for them will ever be seen again (v. 23).

CLOSING

Constable points out that the angel gave three reasons for why Babylon would face such devastation: “First, men whom the world regards as great have enriched themselves and lifted themselves up in pride because of Babylon’s influence (cf. Isaiah 23:8). Second, as a result of the first reason, Babylon has seduced all nations.”¹² Third, Babylon slew God’s saints.¹³

⁸ Wiersbe, p. 615.

⁹ MacArthur, p. 2029.

¹⁰ MacArthur, p. 2030.

¹¹ MacArthur, p. 1982.

¹² Wiersbe, p. 616.

¹³ Constable, p. 293.

¹⁴ Constable, p. 293.



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Reading Guide Questions

1. In Revelation 18:2, what do you think it means when it says fallen Babylon has “become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird”? (Isaiah 13:21)
2. When you read Revelation 18:4, do you think of Sodom? Where else in Scripture are God’s people warned to separate from a place or people? (Genesis 19:12–13, 17; Isaiah 48:20; 52:11; Jeremiah 51:6, 45; 2 Corinthians 6:17)
3. Where in Scripture do we first hear about Babylon (Babel)? Read Genesis 11:4. What were the people’s aspirations? Read Revelation 18:5. How do these two verses relate?
4. Revelation 18:7 and Isaiah 47:7–8 note that Babylon called herself a queen and not a widow. In fact, twice in Isaiah 47, Babylon is quoted to have said in her heart, “I am, and there is no one besides me” (Isaiah 47:8, 10). Note the almost exact wording of the Lord in Isaiah 46:9. Why do you think she (Babylon) is described as being clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls? (Exodus 39; 40; Revelation 17:4a; 18:16; 21:18–21)
5. Do you think there are deliberate contrasts between the fall of Babylon the Great and the new heaven and earth (weeping or mourning: Revelation 18:15, 19; 21:4; lamp or light: Revelation 18:23a; 21:23; kings of the earth: Revelation 18:3; 21:24; the nation’s interaction: Revelation 18:3; 21:25–26; unholy vs. holy: Revelation 18:2–3; 21:27)? Can you find others not listed here?
6. Revelation 18:22 specifically records that no musicians or instruments will be heard any longer in Babylon. Do you think this is a connection to Daniel 3:5, 7, and 15? Note that the consequence for not worshipping the image in Daniel 3:15 was to be cast into a furnace of blazing fire. Read Revelation 18:8 and 18. Do you think Babylon’s destruction is divine justice?
7. What did the Holy Spirit highlight to you in Revelation 18 through the reading or the teaching?

