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by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

*The Fall of Babylon*  
**Revelation 18**

**Keywords:** Revelation, End Times, Anti-Christ, Idolatry,, Prophecy, Babylon

**PowerPoint Presentation included:** None

**SermonAudio Blurb:** In Revelation 18 we witness the destruction of the future city of Babylon and its inhabitants as the judgment of God continues to roll down upon the earth. It is a serious message but one of hope for those safe in Jesus Christ.

**I. Introduction.**

- A. Read Revelation 18.
- B. We come to the most interesting and exciting portion of this important book.
  - 1. Things will progress rapidly from this point until chapter 21.
  - 2. There is an increasing sense of pace leading to the culmination of all things under the rule of our Lord.
  - 3. We will see in chapter 19 return of Jesus Christ.
  - 4. In chapter 20 describes what happens after Jesus returns but before all of creation is made new.
  - 5. And then in chapters 21-22 we have the joy and glory of seeing all things made new and the finality of God's cleansing judgment on all who are rebels.
- C. Today we will finish with Revelation's focus upon this entity called Babylon.
  - 1. Chapter 17 we were given a picture of the religious system of the end time called Mystery Babylon.
  - 2. Chapter 18 the focus is different. It is upon the political, economic system of the end time called Babylon the Great.
  - 3. These two systems share much in common.
    - a. They share the same name, Babylon.
    - b. They are both empowered by Satan.
    - c. They both are under the rule of the Antichrist.

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- d. They are both are filled with blasphemy.
  - e. They share a hatred for the people of God.
  - f. Most importantly here is that they both come under the judgment of God and are destroyed. But with that the similarities end and there are marked differences between Mystery Babylon of chapter 17, and Babylon the Great of chapter 18.
- D. The flow of this passage is controlled by two pronouncements by angels, each proclaiming the fall of Babylon (1 and 21).

## **II. The Fall of Babylon.**

### **A. First angelic announcement.**

1. The first angel comes in John's vision and it is a mighty coming that is seen. Note the way vs 1 describes this event
  - a. He descends from heaven. This is said so often that it loses its weight too easily in our minds. But see this as one sent by God to bring news of destruction. Not private opinion of the angel, but one given a task by the only opinion that matters, God's
  - b. He is granted "great" authority. Frankly, any angel is frightening if we were to see him. But here it is made even stronger by this description. The sense is that nothing is able to hold back the message that he shall pronounce.
  - c. So great and mighty is this angel that the earth is filled with his glory.
    - (1) Reminiscent of Revelation 10, "And I saw another strong angel coming down out of heaven, clothed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon his head, and his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire. . . ."
    - (2) My mind is struck simply by this image. If this is what a mighty angel is like, then I cannot even begin to imagine the glory, might, and power that is bound up in our Lord.
2. The pronouncement is made simply and clearly (2).

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- a. Notice the contrast that is made in what he says. It is fallen. But what or who is fallen? Babylon the “great.”
  - b. What we see in Revelation from the beginning to the end is the incredible power of evil and how it is so destructive and how it sets itself in the most violent of ways against God’s people.
  - c. But alongside that we also have the better image of the how unimpressed God is. How God is seated in heaven unperturbed.
  - d. This pronouncement of doom is not something to be ignored. The fact that his glory is throughout the world indicates that this message is heard by humanity.
3. Description of Babylon (2b-3).
- a. This city is described in specific ways to indicate it is not just a concept but is a city.
    - (1) It is common to see this as God’s judgment against the satanic system that corrupts this world since the beginning.
    - (2) It is a dwelling place. It is made distinct from the other nations.
    - (3) It is a place from which people are called to come out (4).
    - (4) In addition you see in this chapter described in terms of commerce, cargoes (note it is very specific regarding the goods), entertainment, it is seen as having a harbor and ships, it has craftsmen, it is burning/smoke, it is a place you can leave, subject to pestilence, has armaments and slaves, ship-masters and passengers, there were weddings, in it believers were murdered and finally, as it is destroyed the merchants and people who don’t belong to it mourn its passing because it harms their wealth.
    - (5) All of this points us to a literal city rather than merely a symbol.
  - b. But at its core it is a place where the power of sin and Satanic power is evident (2b).

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- (1) As I have already taught, this is the place where the Anti-christ makes as his base of operations. This is where the nations are coming to worship him once he is revealed by Satan.
  - (2) This is the place from which, during the Tribulation, the lies and false teaching will come pouring forth through the mouthpiece of the false prophet.
  - (3) It is worth noting that although the bible describes Babylon in the past as facing God's judgment. The Old Testament speaks of a day when it will fall "suddenly" (Isaiah 47:11) but that moment has not yet happened in human history.
  - (4) The picture given is one of abandonment and spiritual desolation.
    - (a) Demons dwell here.
    - (b) It is a prison for unclean spirits. Remember how in Revelation 9 that the Euphrates (which is there by Babylon) is described as a prison of demonic hordes.
    - (c) This is what is meant by being a prison of every unclean bird. It is a picture of how utterly corrupt and vile the place is. A place of demonic presence. A place where no thing of joy or beauty dwells.
    - (d) And the wrath of God is staring at it.
- c. This place is one that has great influence over all other powers (3).
- (1) "all nations. . . . the kings of the earth . . . . the merchants of the seas" captures the full extent of world—all are affected by Babylon.
  - (2) Notice though that each of those categories are also guilty of partaking/sharing in Babylon's evil.

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4. The warning to believers (4-5).
  - a. In light of the guarantee of destruction and the promise of judgment, God calls all who are faithful to Him to flee.
  - b. The question is how do we understand these verses.
    - (1) If you take these chapters about Babylon as purely symbolic then you say that it refers to God calling believers to be pure and reject this fallen age.
    - (2) But if you take this city to be an actual city as I teach, then it is understood one of two ways.
      - (a) First would be to recognize even today how history is moving toward this establishment of a single, false religion centered in a city and have nothing to do with that direction.
      - (b) Second, to see that during the Tribulation, since there will still be believers, that they should flee it when they see the time approaching much like Lot fled Sodom and Gomorrah. This is my personal choice.
  - c. One side point of interest. Notice in verse 5 the idea of their sins piling up to heaven. This is likely designed to draw your mind all the way back to Genesis where humanity sought to build a tower up to heaven and God scattered them through the creation of languages.
5. The judgment of God on the city (6-19).
  - a. This section does not need a lot of commentary as it is quite straight-forward.
  - b. The key to take away here is that nothing is forgotten by God. Nothing is ignored or overlooked. God remembers, He calls to mind all that this place and people has done and He prepares to judge them.
  - c. Quick observations about the nature of God's judgment:

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- (1) Whatever is done against God in rebellion shall be paid back double (6). It is not like one loses the fight but gets some good licks in. It is brutal and unrelenting.
  - (2) Sin shall be met with judgment in the same degree (7). There is no concept of mercy in the court of God.
  - (3) The arrogance of all sinners who do not repent will be their undoing (7a-8).
  - (4) Shame is part of the judgment of God. This is evident through this whole section where God takes the arrogance and pride of this city and grinds it into dust.
  - (5) God's judgment is swift and unexpected. For Babylon it will occur in the time of its power and wealth. And then it is nothing.
- d. Note also the hardness of the heart of humanity in this section.
- (1) All these merchants and kings and such are weeping as they see the destruction.
  - (2) But none are fleeing from God wrath by repenting. Just as the rest of this book, in the face of God's wrath people only become more hard.
  - (3) They do not weep over the sin of this place.
    - (a) They weep because they lose out on power and wealth. Their agendas and desires are laid bare to their eternal shame.
    - (b) And so in vs 19 they are bemoaning the loss of wealth rather than the loss of soul.
- e. Remember in Revelation 17:12 there were those 10 kings who rose in power under the rule of the Anti-christ.
- (1) Likely at this point in time during the Tribulation the earth is essentially broken down into ten parts, each controlled by these leaders

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- (2) Remember that their role was to ultimately wage war against the Lamb/Jesus.
- (3) And so now here in 18:9 they are weeping as the destruction is rendered by God upon this wicked city. The sense they are getting is that as powerful as it was, it could not stand against the wrath of God.
- (4) And what was bad for them is that they had hitched their fortunes to Babylon and there was no other option available to them now.
- f. This is nothing new for God. He has shown time and time again the point where His patience ends and He rises up in power and wrath to execute His judgments.
  - (1) We saw it graphically in the great Flood over the earth in Genesis 6-9.
  - (2) We saw it in the utter destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19.
  - (3) We saw it with the great city of Tyre in Ezekiel 36.
- g. Remember also that those kings are raised up to be used to fight against our Lord in what is known as the battle of armageddon.
  - (1) Watching the great city burn so easily and watching their wealth melt away can easily become one of the key reasons to rise up and fight in that great battle.
  - (2) Picture them assembling the armies all to make one final attempt to win and regain their power and wealth.
- B. The second angel's pronouncement (21-24).
  - 1. Hear a prophecy from Jeremiah.

So Jeremiah wrote in a single scroll all the calamity which would come upon Babylon, that is, all these words which have been written concerning Babylon. Then Jeremiah said to Seraiah, "As soon as you come to Babylon, then see that you read all these words aloud, and say,

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'Thou, O LORD, hast promised concerning this place to cut it off, so that there will be nothing dwelling in it, whether man or beast, but it will be a perpetual desolation.' "And it will come about as soon as you finish reading this scroll, you will tie a stone to it and throw it into the middle of the Euphrates, and say, 'Just so shall Babylon sink down and not rise again, because of the calamity that I am going to bring upon her; and they will become exhausted.'" Thus far are the words of Jeremiah. (Jeremiah 51:60-64)

2. That prophecy has not been fulfilled to this day. So we are left to ask what was meant by it?
  - a. Was it merely hyperbole to make a point?
  - b. Was it to be merely treated in a symbolic way of the eventual overthrow of all things in the new heavens and earth?
  - c. Or do we look at vs 21 and see that in this future time written by John that the words of God through Jeremiah are fulfilled? I choose this view.
3. Vss 22-23 leave us with this final picture of desolation.
  - a. The sense of this section is that Babylon was the place to be and be seen.
  - b. It was a immensely wealthy place and therefore had all the baubles and distractions present.
  - c. I have told you before the meaning of 'amusement.' And that is what this city was designed to be. A place to forget and to not think. Just experience it and soak up its fun and sound and food.
  - d. But now it lies silent. The lights are turn off. The sounds are squashed. Not even the joys of a wedding.
  - e. It is finished.

### **III. Conclusion.**

- A. Note vs 20 and the posture of Christians toward the judgment of God.
  1. It is not one of shame. It is not treated as Christianity's dirty little secret.

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2. While the vile parties are silenced in Babylon, Heaven erupts into joy and celebration.
  - a. All of heaven's angelic hosts and all believers who have died and entered into their Lord's presence are now shouting and rejoicing.
  - b. Note why. ". . . because God has pronounced judgment for you against her."
  - c. Never forget why Jesus commands us to love our enemies and pray for them. Never forget why we are forbidden to take vengeance for ourselves.
  - d. "Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord." (Romans 12:19)
  - e. "A jealous and avenging God is the LORD; The LORD is avenging and wrathful. The LORD takes vengeance on His adversaries, And He reserves wrath for His enemies. The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, And the LORD will by no means leave the guilty unpunished. In whirlwind and storm is His way, And clouds are the dust beneath His feet" (Nahum 1:2-3).
- B. And if you are still unclear about why this judgment is so complete and so fierce look at verse 24.
  1. It is a city filled with the blood of the people of God and the innocent.
  2. And now their bloodguiltiness is now something they must all own and be judged by.
- C. It is worth reminding you once again that they were not left without a witness for the gospel.
  1. If I am correct that the church shall be in this final time known as the Great Tribulation, then we shall see their faithful witness even as the hate of this world comes against them.

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2. But also remember the 144,000 Jews God set apart to be His witnesses. They too were faithful to the very end in bringing the gospel to this final generation.
  3. But it will be ignored. The love of money and the love of power have scents that are too intoxicating for them to desire a gospel that appears to be so weak and shameful.
  4. And because of that they shall, in chapter 19, meet their end in a horrific manner only to then enter eternity under the fulness of God's wrath.
- D. So to you hearing my voice, hear it one more time. This is your end if you do not repent.
1. If you are somehow thinking you can put things off until later then you are most to be pitied.
  2. You shall likely be found to be that rich landowner described by Jesus who realizes his wealth is growing even more and so he plans to build larger storehouse.
  3. And then the fateful words are utter, "You fool. This very night your soul is required of you, and now who will own what you have prepared?" (Luke 12:20).

## **IV. Benediction/Doxology.**

Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

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### **Small Group Questions**

- Discuss what stood out in this message. What challenges did you find in it? What encouragements were there?
- As a nation that is so filled with wealth and comforts, how do you fight against the idea of being amused to death rather than becoming sober-minded?
- Have everyone believer give a specific example of how they put up clear barriers against the encroachment of this world and its values.