

Babylon is Falling Down

Text: Revelation 18:1–24

Theme: God will judge all who follow after godless worldliness

Introduction — Song: Babylon Is Fallen

We need to be free from the attractions of the world's spiritual red-light district

- we need to see God's power to provide freely everything the world would sell us
- those who trade God in for the world's misuse of God's gifts will get all those taken away
- the world doesn't love us—just our desires for what it offers us
- the worldly people don't love us—only themselves
- we need to see Babylon for who she really is: a vile, empty-handed harlot
- and, we who strive, by God's grace, to persevere, to patiently endure, need to see her fall
- we need to hear the clarion call to come out from her and be set apart for God's glory

Revelation 18 promises that all godless worldliness will be judged

- this chapter, while it is still today, calls earth dwellers to repent and believe upon Christ Jesus
- and it calls all believers who are in Christ to keep themselves separate and holy unto God
- let's take a look now, at what John sees in this portion of Revelation

We've seen how ch 17 is a zoom in on the details of who this prostitute Babylon is

- ch 18 will let us look closely at what God will do to her come the last day
- and then, ch 19, let's us focus up in heaven upon the worship of God at her fall
- so let's see, here in ch 18, how God will judge all who follow after godless worldliness

First, let's observe...

I. THE GROSS WOMAN

- first, John sees a mighty angel coming down from heaven
- he's seen this before
- **Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head, and his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire.**
(Revelation 10:1 ESV)
- he will see it again
- **Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain.**
(Revelation 20:1 ESV)
- this angel is one of the mightiest in all of heaven
- this angel, in ch 18, makes the first pronouncement

1. A terrible place to live

- Babylon is a terrible place to live
- if you give yourself over to the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, & the pride of life
- this is what you'll find
- **And he called out with a mighty voice, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast.**

(Revelation 18:2 ESV)

1) what a deceptive place to be

- what we see here is an unveiling of reality
- Babylon has looked so gloriously beautiful
- **The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her sexual immorality.**

(Revelation 17:4 ESV)

- but, pull back the thin veneer and fake make-up and this is what you see
- unclean spirits, unclean birds and beasts, all making those who chase after these unclean

2. A vile substitute (for God)

- all these symbols reveal a full-on rejection of God and His good gifts
- this shouldn't catch us off guard however
- OT prophet, Jeremiah, warned us of this
- **and Babylon shall become a heap of ruins, the haunt of jackals, a horror and a hissing, without inhabitant.**

(Jeremiah 51:37 ESV)

- I hope you're not living for Babylon
- if you think what you get out of this world is true pleasure, you're deceived
- you've bought into the lie she has sold you
- instead, we need to hear the clarion call of God to be holy even as He is holy

1) v. 3 shows us more

- this is why God's judgment comes against earth dwellers chasing this delusional lover
- we've already seen this in 17.1, 2, 15
- nations are drunk on the pleasures of this wicked world
- they substitute garbage for the glories God offers freely to those who love Him
- kings are in love with this whore
- governments chase after the illusory nature of these sinful objects
- worldly businesses profit greatly, true; but one day it will all burn & they'll be left with nothing
- what comes to all who sell out to this woman is what we see next

*Second, let's see...***II. THE GREAT JUDGMENT**

- v. 4 shifts our attention to something different and another voice from heaven speaks
- this voice's announcement addresses the righteous in both v. 4, and v. 20
- vv 4-5 call the righteous out from all this refuse and filth
- v. 20 is actually a command to all followers of Jesus Christ to rejoice over Babylon's fall
- in between come a command to pay Babylon back for all her evil
- and we're also given a description of how the wicked reacts to Babylon's fall

1. The righteous flee and rejoice

- vv. 4–5 shows us a call as the people of God: come out! Come out!
- we know this doesn't mean to go live in some hermitage, but to keep purity as your calling

- 1) Once again the OT informs our faith here

• **Go out from Babylon, flee from Chaldea, declare this with a shout of joy, proclaim it, send it out to the end of the earth; say, “The Lord has redeemed his servant Jacob!”**

(Isaiah 48:20 ESV)

• **Depart, depart, go out from there; touch no unclean thing; go out from the midst of her; purify yourselves, you who bear the vessels of the Lord.**

(Isaiah 52:11 ESV)

• **“Flee from the midst of Babylon, and go out of the land of the Chaldeans, and be as male goats before the flock.**

(Jeremiah 50:8 ESV)

• **“Flee from the midst of Babylon; let every one save his life! Be not cut off in her punishment, for this is the time of the Lord’s vengeance, the repayment he is rendering her.**

“Go out of the midst of her, my people! Let every one save his life from the fierce anger of the Lord!

(Jeremiah 51:6, 45 ESV)

2) This is like a return from exile

- Israel had been hauled off by a great evil
- they had been forced to live in the world of vile immorality
- and now, when they are coming out, literally, they are told to keep themselves pure & holy
- holiness is always the goal of our salvation and life in Christ
- **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love**

(Ephesians 1:3–4 ESV)

- in v. 5, even as we’re being called to holy living, we see why God will be judging Babylon

2. **Just retribution, vv. 7–8**

- v. 6 gives a command to pay Babylon back
- the rationale behind this comes in vv. 7, 8
- you who are young...at least 30 and younger, pay attention
- the consequences of sinful choices, pursuit of evil pleasures have grave consequences
- vv. 9–13 show the regrets of those who fell in love with all the world’s immoralities
- all the judgments coming fit the crime
- Babylon, this world’s culture & way of thinking and living, seeks glory for herself
- now she and all those who have given self over to her, will be punished in like manner
- as she disregarded God, so she will be punished
- how did she disregard God? Totally, so therefore, the judgment against her will be total

3. **The wicked weep and wail, vv. 9–19**

- instead of learning from what happens to this harlot, her suitors & consorts lament
- the governments of this world grieve when they no longer get the same highs
- when the excitement of power and corruption leave, they lament
- notice that their grieving is not due to the injustice Babylon exercised
- nor are they bothered by all the ruined lives they brought about in their lusts
- their lament isn’t even really for Babylon, but for themselves

- oh, how this shows the self-love that nearly all worldly governments live for
- merchants, businesses who want all the luxury they can get, see it dribble away
- no longer do they experience the highs, the pleasures, the kicks, the happiness of the world
- and instead of learning from how Babylon is drying and shriveling up, they cry out loud
- they do not weep because they didn't give God glory, for they gave Him none
- no, they are only sad because no one buys from them anymore
- the list of luxuries in vv 12–13 are simply showing how to live your best life now
- people can no longer indulge their immoral, godless pleasures, and business suffers
- v. 14 reveals what it means to live just for yourself
- as we move into v 17 and following we see more wailing
- those at highest levels of society, who appear to “have it all” now have nothing
- even those who ship all these goods and pleasures all over the world get left out
- none of these groups and peoples have lived for God
- their turned their backs upon Him, but He will not turn His face forever
- He will come in all His fierce wrath, His powerful holiness, and complete justice

4. The righteous rejoice over her

- I want to visit v 20 for just a moment
- note that this is a command to you and me who are in Christ
- God will vindicate His name and His people
- in judging Babylon, this world's evil system, God's people will rejoice
- not because they're watching and cheering, “Yeah, you finally get yours! Ha! Told you so!”
- no, it will be because God's name is upheld
- His glorious justice shines forth, His righteousness vindicated
- and we, who died to self, took up our cross, died daily to this world & her temptations, rejoice
- the patient endurance we are told to exercise wins the day
- we will exult in God's mighty power
- we will praise Him for His mercy and forgiveness
- we will be lifted up because He will vindicate us
- so, what will you be doing when that day comes?
- will you be wailing that your house is taken from you?
- will you cry that all the adult toys you love and have indebted yourselves to are ruined?
- will you lament that the government is no longer able to take care of you, protect you?
- or will you be praising God, rejoicing in His holy judgment, singing for those who love God?

Now, let's examine...

III. THE GRAND DELUSION, vv. 21–24

- **Jeremiah wrote in a book all the disaster that should come upon Babylon, all these words that are written concerning Babylon. And Jeremiah said to Seraiah: “When you come to Babylon, see that you read all these words, and say, ‘O Lord, you have said concerning this place that you will cut it off, so that nothing shall dwell in it, neither man nor beast, and it shall be desolate forever.’ When you finish reading this book, tie a stone to it and cast it into the midst of the Euphrates, and say, ‘Thus shall Babylon sink, to rise no more, because of the disaster that I am bringing upon her, and they shall become exhausted.’” Thus far are the words of Jeremiah.**

(Jeremiah 51:60–64 ESV)

- the future destruction of Babylon is seen now by John
- now, a mighty angel uses a millstone for judgment and destruction upon Babylon
- this scene will fulfill what Jeremiah said

- it brings about what Jesus said in Matthew 18:6
- **but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.**

(Matthew 18:6 ESV)

1. A millstone into the sea

- pay careful attention here to the timing of this great fall
- it is in the future: Babylon WILL be thrown down
- this is still God's mercy crying out: Repent! Turn to Me! Look to Christ!
- even those who believe who are trying to belly up to Babylon's buffet get the call to come out
- but make no mistake: Babylon will be overthrown
- and it will not be some gentle fading away; "the great city [will] be thrown down with violence"
- Babylon has abused the nations who will turn against her in the end
- evil will devour itself and fall hard

2. All her false beauty is gone

- in vv. 22 and following we see all the beautiful things Babylon offered taken away
- now, some look at this list and ask "What's so sinful in music and craftsmanship?"
- nothing, when it is done for God's glory
- but all these good gifts of God have been corrupted
- the music is vile and reprehensible
- the handiwork is done for the praise of man or for the exploitation of the poor
- production that could have benefited all, but was used selfishly, ceases to be
- relationships will fracture, marriages end in disaster like never before
- the light of truth and glory is gone; God has given you over

3. So much good wasted

- Babylon could not be bothered with God
- God is just too restrictive
- there are so many pleasures we could enjoy if it weren't for God
- God must be some type of cosmic killjoy, so let's throw Him off & ignore Him
- so God will give Babylon exactly what she wants
- demons, haunting vultures, predators, harsh and violent judgment
- so much could have been used for good, v. 23
- instead, used for selfish idolatry and immorality
- all that was given as gifts by God is used to torture and kill God's people, v. 24
- Babylon would not tolerate those who called her out, who told her what she truly was
- so she killed them
- instead extended life and protection, she withdrew both
- now her great sin of prostitution will be exposed and dashed upon the rocks of holiness

Conclusion – Will you miss her?

- how does this message hit home to you?
- what will you say when movie theaters and streaming services are no longer available?
- what will be the cry of your heart when the music you love is gone?
- trendy clothing store chains closed, great food eateries shut down
- what will you do when the pornography industry is finally destroyed?

- will you be sad to see all this pass?
- will you be like those kings, merchants, men of the sea?

Or are you going to do what God has commanded: rejoice & pay her back?

- when He shows His power, will you sing to His glory?
- when His justice vindicates your faith in Him, will you shout the victory?
- will your heart be filled with joy, even as you have watched family & friends in Christ suffer?

The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever

- do you live for this? To bring glory to God?
- does your heart beat for this? To know the joy of the Lord in and around you?
- who do you live for right now?
- and who will you live for as the days march on?

Live for the Lamb! For God will judge all those who follow after godless worldliness