

Rev. 18:1 And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

Rev. 18:2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

Rev. 18:3 For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

Now John sees another powerful angel come “down” from heaven, and his glory illuminates the earth. The Greek for “power” indicates that this angel has a position of privilege, authority, jurisdiction, and delegated influence—all His as designated by God Almighty.

He declares his message forcefully and loudly. “Babylon the great is fallen...”

Note: The chapter divisions most commonly used in Bibles today were established in the early 1200s. They are credited to Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury. In context with the previous chapter, the connection is clearly to the city mentioned in the last verse of that chapter. That city, Babylon, has seduced the world and its leaders to practice spiritual fornication through her false religion and has used that influence to emerge as the leading economic power base in the world as shown by the verses to follow.

Remember, John is being shown the judgment of the “whore.” The identity of city, woman and whore are inextricably connected to one another. This city has become the dwelling place of demons/evil spirits, a cage for unclean spirits, often pictured as birds in scripture.

***Matthew 13:3–4 & 18-19** And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up.... Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart.*

This section of Revelation makes it clear that the one-world religion of the tribulation will be totally consumed by the love of money. Scripture is very clear in declaring the love of money to be the root of all evil—and evil is unbridled at this point in time.

***1Timothy 6:10** For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*

I couldn't help but make a comparison to what is happening in the church today. The “business” of church is growing day by day. It's becoming more like a picture of the Laodicean church on hormones. Peter warned that this would become the modus operandi of false teachers in the professing church. They are

all motivated by the love of money as they promote their “damnable heresies” and deny the truth of God’s word.

2 Peter 2:1–3 “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as **there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.**”

Paul warned Titus of the same thing.

Titus 1:10–11 “For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake.”

I found a pertinent quote at www.biblelife.org in an article entitled *Church Bondage*: “The modern Christian churches use brainwashing, mind control, indoctrination, oppression, coercion, intimidation, legalism, false teaching, guilt, shame, peer pressure, and other bondage techniques to control members, increase church attendance, and obtain more money. The goal is said to be “winning souls to Christ,” but the underlying agenda is the desire for more power, control, and money. These mind control and bondage techniques are not needed to win souls to Christ. In fact, they are very counter-productive to soul winning.”

And another from an article at www.ukapologetics.net: “The typical ‘money-man’ of tele-evangelism wears highly expensive silk suits, he (or she) purposefully strides the stage (yes, it often appears to be a stage-like setting, as for entertainers, rather than a pulpit, as for Bible teachers - significant?) while yelling out their spiritually-subversive money-based spiel (yes, they often seem to prefer to yell as this world yells, rather than to employ the ‘still small voice’). They either directly state or, more often, *imply* that you too can share their obviously affluent and prosperous lifestyle if you will send your money in to them (oh, I beg your pardon, I mean send in your “tithes and offerings”). Yes, Jesus is mentioned too although quite often in rather a flippant way, rarely (I have noticed) in a respectful manner - but their gospel is a *different gospel* which would have been *unknown* to the original apostles.”

Rev. 18:4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

Rev. 18:5 For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

John hears yet another voice from heaven which according to the context of the message has to be that of God. He is calling for *His* people to get out of Babylon. God is always faithful to warn His people of judgment to come. There will be

those who exercise saving faith in the tribulation years, and some of these people will live in Babylon. Again I am reminded of the words of Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 51:6--*Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the LORD'S vengeance; he will render unto her a recompence.*

Jeremiah 51:45--*My people, go ye out of the midst of her, and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the LORD.*

When you are surrounded with that which is wicked, you are going to be tempted to partake. Those who choose to stay in Babylon will also partake of her judgment. God is not going to separate out His own when He judges Babylon (like He did with Israel in the land of Goshen during the time of the plagues in Egypt). It's going to be like Sodom and Gomorrah; if you don't get out, you will experience her judgment. As with Sodom, the sins of Babylon are well known in heaven, and God has decided that now is the time to exercise judgment in accordance with her sins.

Rev. 18:6 **Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.**

Rev. 18:7 **How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.**

Babylon is deserving of great punishment. She is deserving of more than just an "eye for an eye." She is deserving of at least double (or is it quadruple) retribution for what she has herself inflicted on others. The cup is a direct reference to verse 4 of chapter 17.

Revelation 17:4 *"And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a **golden cup** in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication...."*

Verse 7 continues the thought of determining how much judgment to impose upon her. She has lived in haughtiness and pride and in great luxury. In direct proportion to that lifestyle she should experience torment and sorrow. She has positioned herself as a queen and not as a widow. The Greek for the word *widow* implies the idea of deficiency or lacking. Babylon lacks nothing and thinks she is immune to judgment.

There is a verse in Isaiah with a direction connection to this verse: ***Isaiah 47:8-9*** *Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me; **I shall not sit as a widow**, neither shall I know the loss of children. **But these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day**, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments.*

Isaiah also points out that the lifestyle predominant in Babylon will embrace sorcery, magic, and wickedness—all prominent methods of deception employed by Satan and his forces.

Rev. 18:8 Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.

Therefore – based on the above facts

Her plagues/wounds/stripes will come in “one day.” (see Isaiah 47:9 above)

What are these plagues?

1. Death
2. mourning (grief, sorrow)
3. famine (destitution, scarcity of food).

As I looked again at the root words in the original language, it occurred to me that the reference to “famine” is probably that of spiritual destitution. This would seem to fit the context better in reference to destruction “in a moment in one day” and the fact that she is prosperous until she is destroyed by fire. In fact, Revelation narrows it to one hour.

Revelation 18:10 Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.

Why/How will this happen to one who seems so strong? Because mightier, stronger, and more powerful is the Lord God who condemns and judges her.

Rev. 18:9 And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning,

Rev. 18:10 Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.

Note again that John specifically connects the woman to the “great city Babylon.”

When Babylon is destroyed, John reveals that the kings of the earth and others who have profited from intercourse with her will weep and mourn for the loss of their lover. They had “lived deliciously” in luxury from the profits they made doing business with her. Their success was directly dependent on her well-being. They won’t be running in to try and help her because whatever method the Lord uses to accomplish this destruction will make them afraid. It is interesting to note that they will “see” the smoke of her burning. This is no surprise to those of us living in the day of 24-hour television news, but quite impossible to imagine in John’s day.

John again emphasizes that Babylon’s destruction will happen in “one hour”—swiftly and suddenly. The prophet Jeremiah mirrored the words of this prophecy.

Jeremiah 51:25 - Behold, I am against thee, O destroying mountain, saith the LORD, which destroyest all the earth: and I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a **burnt** mountain.

Jeremiah 50:46 At the noise of the taking of Babylon the earth is moved, and the cry is heard among the nations.

Rev. 18:11 And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more:

Rev. 18:12 The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,

Rev. 18:13 And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.

Babylon's control of the world economy will be so great that it will destroy the business fortunes of all who are involved in marketing her prime commodities. I think it is significant to note that the merchants are only grieved over the destruction of Babylon because of the direct impact on their wealth. This is a sad principle that prevails throughout the world today I believe. More often than not, you are only valued as a friend in reference to your benefit to those who call themselves your friend. What were Babylon's prime commodities?

1. Gold, silver, precious stones and pearls.
2. Fine/white linen, purple garments, silk, scarlet
3. Thyine wood (citron wood, a fragrant tree)
4. Vessels/goods of ivory
5. All types of vessels/good of precious wood (the most desired type), brass, iron and marble
6. Cinnamon, odours (aromas, incense), ointments (perfumed oils), and frankincense
7. Wine, oil, fine flour, wheat (grain, especially wheat, corn)
8. Beasts (domesticated animals), sheep
9. Horses and chariots
10. Slaves (forced labor), and souls of men (those willing to sell themselves)

As you look over the list you can see that it covers money, jewels, fine clothing, luxurious furnishings, perfumes, the finest quality foods, pets, transportation, and servants—all things associated with the rich and powerful.

Isn't it interesting to note that gold, silver, jewelry and fine garments are all used in the gaudy and self-promoting display of those who are high profile false teachers? Their lifestyles are almost always luxurious and their homes and furnishings expensive. They enjoy the best that life has to offer and travel in style at the expense of those they deceive.

Although there is very little with which I can agree with Vernard Eller, I liked his statement on verses 12-13: "And you can be sure it is not accidental on John's

part that "slaves and the lives of men" come at the bottom of the list, following "sheep and cattle, horses, chariots." This is accurate; the world does not value persons, it uses them; it consumes, exploits, and manipulates people for the sake of the "higher values" of gold and silver, jewels and pearls. The splendor of the world customarily is bought at the expense of the *people* of the world."

All of this, of course, indicates that Babylon is a very rich, powerful, influential city at this time. I do believe that the literal city is being referenced here. You can't destroy a religious system through famine and fire, but you can destroy its base of operation.

I can't help but wonder if the United States has set things in motion to allow Babylon to rise to prominence again through our latest actions in Iraq as of 2003.

Rev. 18:14 And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.

Rev. 18:15 The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing,

Rev. 18:16 And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!

Rev. 18:17 For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off,

Rev. 18:18 And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city!

Rev. 18:19 And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.

These verses seem to reiterate the information given in the previous verses. The emphasis is still regarding the reaction of the merchants to the destruction of Babylon. In the eyes of everyone watching, they can't imagine that this could have happened to "this great city" (verse 18). I imagine it is sort of akin to the feeling I had when watching the events of 9-11-01. In their helplessness, they weep and mourn. Again, we find the corresponding prophecy in Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 50:46 At the noise of the taking of Babylon the earth is moved, and the cry is heard among the nations.

Twice in this section of verses reference is made to the fact that Babylon is made desolate in "one hour." It must be a terrifying sight to see. Another interesting cross-reference is found in Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 51:41 How is Sheshach taken! and how is the praise of the whole earth surprised! how is Babylon become an astonishment among the nations!

Casting dust on one's head was a sign of great grief/distress. When I was searching for a cross-reference, I found words from the prophet Ezekiel

regarding a situation very similar to the one being described here, the destruction of Tyre.

***Ezekiel 27:30-31** And shall cause their voice to be heard against thee, and shall cry bitterly, and shall cast up dust upon their heads, they shall wallow themselves in the ashes: And they shall make themselves utterly bald for thee, and gird them with sackcloth, and they shall weep for thee with bitterness of heart and bitter wailing.*

Rev. 18:20 Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.

Apostle - **apostolos**, *ap-os´-tol-os*; from 649; a delegate; specially, an ambassador of the Gospel; officially a commissioner of Christ ("apostle") (with miraculous powers):—apostle, messenger, he that is sent.

The response in heaven, however, will be a stark contrast to that on earth. There will be rejoicing by the holy apostles and prophets who were martyred at the hands of those who followed her false religions; they will take satisfaction in God's vengeance against her. By the way, He is the only one justified to exercise vengeance.

***Romans 12:19** Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.*

When God steps in to judge with vengeance, it should not make us sad or of a heavy spirit. We should rejoice. I admit that this is not an easy truth to swallow when I think of how that righteous judgment could or will impact those I care about.

Rev. 18:21 And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.

As John continues to watch, he sees a mighty angel pick up a great millstone and throw it into the sea to illustrate the sudden swiftness with which Babylon will be completely destroyed. Babylon will be destroyed with violence and intensity and shall be found "no more at all." This will fulfill the following prophecies.

***Isaiah 13:19-20** And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there.*

***Jeremiah 50:13** Because of the wrath of the LORD it shall not be inhabited, but it shall be wholly desolate: every one that goeth by Babylon shall be astonished, and hiss at all her plagues.*

***Jeremiah 50:40** As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour cities thereof, saith the LORD; so shall no man abide there, neither shall any son of man dwell therein.*

***Jeremiah 51:26** And they shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations; but thou shalt be desolate for ever, saith the LORD.*

***Jeremiah 51:29** And the land shall tremble and sorrow: for every purpose of the LORD shall be performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation without an inhabitant.*

It also brings to mind the following verses in Jeremiah:

***Jeremiah 51:63-64** And it shall be, when thou hast made an end of reading this book, that thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of Euphrates: And thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her: and they shall be weary.*

Rev. 18:22 And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft *he be*, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee;

Rev. 18:23 And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.

These verses are an emphasis to the complete and total destruction that will befall Babylon. Although it has never been the center of power and importance it once was, the area of Babylon has continued to be inhabited. In fact, Saddam Hussein started rebuilding the city since he thought he was Nebuchadnezzar reincarnate. I believe these verses indicate that it will once again be a thriving, powerful metropolis that will be utterly destroyed to the point that it will never vibrate with the sounds of life again—no music, no craftsmen, no one to grind grain or make oil, no one to burn a candle, no sounds of family—nothing.

Joseph Seiss (1823-1904) expressed the sum of things well: “When did Babylon ever fall with so complete a fall, or meet with such an utter obliteration from the earth, “as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah?” Sodom and Gomorrah were completely blotted out. But this has never yet been the case with Babylon. Such was not its fate when the Medes and Persians seized it from the hands of the infamous Belshazzar, for they made it one of their royal cities. In the time of Alexander it still stood, and was the chosen capital of the Graeco-Macedonian empire, the second city of Alexander’s dominions, where he himself lived and died. It continued to be a populous place under the Syrian kings, who succeeded Alexander in the rule over it. In the time of the apostles it was still a populous place, for both Peter and Bartholomew preached the Gospel there, and there Peter wrote his first Epistle. As late as A.D. 250, there was a Christian church there, and an influential bishopric for many years thereafter. Five hundred years

after Christ there were Jewish academies there, who issued the celebrated Babylonian Talmud. Here, then, was a lengthening out of the existence of Babylon as a populated city for more than a thousand years subsequent to the taking of it by Cyrus. And even to this present hour there is a city in the middle of the area occupied by old Babylon containing 10,000 people, and which pays to its governor a revenue of 342,000 Turkish piastres, more than \$17,000, a year. Shepherds do make their folds there, as testified by all modern travelers, and the Arabians do pitch their tents there. It is not an utter desolation without inhabitant, and never has been since Nimrod laid its first foundations. The sentence upon Babylon is therefore not yet fulfilled, and cannot be unless that city comes up again into something of its former consequence."

Babylon was able to seduce the great men and nations of the world through the use of medicines, drugs, magic and witchcraft. This is where we have to remind ourselves that she didn't seduce the world without the help of the beast that she rides. Through her and others he has used all these things in his efforts to undermine the workings of God, to destroy His plan for salvation, and to establish himself as God. I am reminded of the words of Isaiah.

Isaiah 14:12-15 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

Rev. 18:24 And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

John is basically being told that the blood of ALL that were slain upon the earth were slain as a result of her influence through false religions, idolatry, self indulgence, deceit and trickery.