

The Judgment of Babylon, Revelation 18
Rev. Dr. Don L. Davis • Kingdomtide: Season After Pentecost, Proper 22
Blessed Hope Missionary Fellowship • October 2, 2008

*Teachings are proactive for the next Sunday in advance. Unless otherwise noted,
all Scriptures are taken from the English Standard Version (ESV).*



Make No Mistake: the Word of God Cannot Be Broken!

Mighty potentates have raged against this book, and sought to destroy and uproot it—Alexander the Great and princes of Egypt and Babylon, the monarchs of Persia, of Greece and of Rome, the Emperors Julius and Augustus—But have prevailed nothing. They are gone while the book remains, and it will remain forever and ever, perfect and entire as it was declared at first. Who has thus helped it – who has protected it against such mighty forces? No one, surely, but God Himself, who is master of all things. – Martin Luther, *The Protection of the Bible*



*Our study draws much from the outline and content of George Ladd's study,
A Commentary on the Revelation of John. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972.(ESV).*

THE JUDGMENT OF BABYLON

I. Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great!, Rev. 18.1-3

Rev. 18:1-3 After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was made bright with his glory. [2] 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. [3] For all nations have drunk the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her luxurious living."

- A. Another angel comes down, 18.1
 - 1. Comes down from heaven
 - 2. Possesses great authority
 - 3. The earth was illuminated by its splendor and glory

- B. The mighty voice and its message, 18.2
 - 1. And he called out with a mighty voice, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great!", 18.2a
 - 2. 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., 18.2b

- C. Corruption of the nations, kings of the earth, and its merchants, 18.3
 - 1. The nations have drunk the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality: idolatrous
 - 2. The kings of the earth have committed immorality with her, 18.3b (political corruption)
 - 3. The merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her luxurious living, 18.3c

- D. God's prophetic timepiece is never off: Babylon as symbol of the ungodly world system which God has promised to destroy
 - 1. Babylon would be become an utter desolation, Jeremiah 50:13 Because of the wrath of the Lord she shall not be inhabited but shall be an utter desolation; everyone who passes by Babylon shall be appalled, and hiss because of all her wounds.
 - 2. A sudden destruction, Jeremiah 51:8 Suddenly Babylon has fallen and been broken; wail for her! Take balm for her pain; perhaps she may be healed.
 - 3. The Lord's purposes regarding Babylon is set, Jeremiah 51:29 The land trembles and writhes in pain, for the Lord's purposes against Babylon stand, to make the land of Babylon a desolation, without inhabitant.
 - 4. A heap of ruins and an uninhabited haunt, Jeremiah 51:37 and Babylon shall become a heap of ruins, the haunt of jackals, a horror and a hissing, without inhabitant.
 - 5. Babylon will surely fall, Isaiah 21:9 And behold, here come riders, horsemen in pairs!" And he answered, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon; and all the carved images of her gods he has shattered to the ground."

II. Come out of her, my people!, Rev. 18.4-8

Rev. 18:4-8 Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues; [5] for her sins are heaped high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. [6] Pay her back as she herself has paid back others, and repay her double for her deeds; mix a double portion for her in the cup she mixed. [7] As she glorified herself and lived in luxury, so give her a like measure of torment and mourning, since in her heart she says, 'I sit as a queen, I am no widow, and mourning I shall never see.' [8] For this reason her plagues will come in a single day, death and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for mighty is the Lord God who has judged her."

A. Come out and escape her judgments, 18.4

1. The need to come out and be separate from the world
2. Flee from Sodom, Genesis 19:12-13 Then the men said to Lot, "Have you anyone else here? Sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone you have in the city, bring them out of the place. [13] For we are about to destroy this place, because the outcry against its people has become great before the Lord, and the Lord has sent us to destroy it."
3. Flee from Korah, Dathan, and Abiram's tents, Numbers 16:26 And he spoke to the congregation, saying, "Depart, please, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest you be swept away with all their sins."
4. Touch nothing unclean, Isaiah 52:11 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.
5. Be separate from the world, 2 Cor. 6:17 Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you,

B. The weight of Babylon's sins, and God's true memory, 18.5

1. In pronouncing judgment on Babylon, Jeremiah warned his people—who were supposed to be at home there in the short term (29:4–10)—to flee from the city's midst, because God would destroy it (51:6, 45; cf. Zech 2:7); even the presence of some of the righteous would not stay the judgment (cf. Gen 19:17). (In the Dead Sea Scrolls, the righteous were to "separate" themselves from the "children of the pit"; in one Essene commentary on Nahum, when the iniquity of those who were leading people astray was exposed, the righteous of Ephraim would flee from among them, joining the forces of the true Israel.) Getting out of an imminently doomed city was common sense for anyone who believed the prophecy (cf. Tobit 14:8; Ex 9:20–21). -- Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary : New Testament*. Downers Grove, Ill. : InterVarsity Press, 1993, S. Re 18:4
2. Keep yourself unspotted from the world; do not participate in its evils and avoid its certain judgment, James 1:27 Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

C. The righteous retribution of God, 18.6-8

1. God will repay the wicked in like manner for their mistreatment of others: a standard principle of the Hebrew Scriptures, 18:6. (Cf, Neh 4:4; Esther 9:25; Ps 7:15–16; 35:8; 57:6; Prov 26:27; 28:10; Dan 6:24; Jer 50:15, 29—Babylon; Obad 15)
2. Paying back double suggests the notion of complete retribution, Isaiah 40:1-2 Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. [2] Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.
3. A reference to the condemnation of wickedness and its arrogance, Isaiah 47:7-9 You said, "I shall be mistress forever," so that you did not lay these things to heart or remember their end. [8] Now therefore hear this, you lover of pleasures, who sit securely, who say in your heart, "I am, and there is no one besides me; I shall not sit as a widow or know the loss of children": [9] These two things shall come to you in a moment, in one day; the loss of children and widowhood shall come upon you in full measure, in spite of your many sorceries and the great power of your enchantments.
4. Those boasting of their supposed invincibility will taste God's righteous judgment, (cf. also, e.g., Is 32:9; Jer 48:11; 49:31; Ezek 16:49; Amos 6:1; Obad 3).
5. Ancient Babylon fell in a single night without battle (cf. Dan 5:30), but this judgment of this

“Babylon,” would be by the judgment of God with fire, Rev. 17:16-17 And the ten horns that you saw, they and the beast will hate the prostitute. They will make her desolate and naked, and devour her flesh and burn her up with fire, [17] for God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by being of one mind and handing over their royal power to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled.

6. The explanation of the judgment: “For this reason her plagues will come in a single day, death and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for mighty is the Lord God who has judged her.”, v. 8

III. The Lackeys play the blues: Kings, merchants, and ships of trade, Rev. 18.9-20

Rev. 18:9-20 And the kings of the earth, who committed sexual immorality and lived in luxury with her, will weep and wail over her when they see the smoke of her burning. [10] They will stand far off, in fear of her torment, and say, "Alas! Alas! You great city, you mighty city, Babylon! For in a single hour your judgment has come." [11] And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn for her, since no one buys their cargo anymore, [12] cargo of gold, silver, jewels, pearls, fine linen, purple cloth, silk, scarlet cloth, all kinds of scented wood, all kinds of articles of ivory, all kinds of articles of costly wood, bronze, iron and marble, [13] cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, oil, fine flour, wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and slaves, that is, human souls. [14] "The fruit for which your soul longed has gone from you, and all your delicacies and your splendors are lost to you, never to be found again!" [15] The merchants of these wares, who gained wealth from her, will stand far off, in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning aloud, [16] "Alas, alas, for the great city that was clothed in fine linen, in purple and scarlet, adorned with gold, with jewels, and with pearls! [17] For in a single hour all this wealth has been laid waste." And all shipmasters and seafaring men, sailors and all whose trade is on the sea, stood far off [18] and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning, "What city was like the great city?" [19] And they threw dust on their heads as they wept and mourned, crying out, "Alas, alas, for the great city where all who had ships at sea grew rich by her wealth! For in a single hour she has been laid waste. [20] Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, for God has given judgment for you against her!"

A. The kings of the earth mourn, Rev. 18.9-10

1. A Roman allusion perhaps: Rome employed kings who served as its clients, appointed with its favor; if Rome were to experience destruction, its lackeys would feel the sting of its demise
2. A huge trade flowing from Revelation: “The imperial grain fleet, by which the fertile soil around the Nile fed the masses of Italy, represented the largest form of transport in the Mediterranean world, but Revelation especially addresses the luxury trade (18:12–16), focusing on nonessential items secured for those who could afford them.” Keener, 18.9-11
3. What the client kings say: "Alas! Alas! You great city, you mighty city, Babylon! For in a single hour your judgment has come.", Rev. 18.10

B. The mourning of the merchants, Rev. 18.11-17a

1. An analogy with Tyre (cf. Isaiah 23:1–8; Ezekiel 27), cf. Isaiah 23:6-8 Cross over to Tarshish; wail, O inhabitants of the coast! [7] Is this your exultant city whose origin is from days of old, whose feet carried her to settle far away? [8] Who has purposed this against Tyre, the bestower of crowns, whose merchants were princes, whose traders were the honored of the earth?
2. Notice the centrality of consumption and acquisition in the laments against the world system, 1 John 2:15-17 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. [16] For all that is in the world— the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world. [17] And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.
3. The lament of the merchants: "Alas, alas, for the great city that was clothed in fine linen, in purple and scarlet, adorned with gold, with jewels, and with pearls! [17] For in a single hour all this wealth has been laid waste.", 18.16

C. The shipmasters and sea-faring traders, Rev. 18.17-20

1. Singing the blues for a great loss: out of business, its “cash cow” now dying, they are stuck with all kinds of remarkably wealthy cargo bays filled to overflowing with no customers and

- much debt! Sound familiar?
2. Notice their sadness: And all shipmasters and seafaring men, sailors and all whose trade is on the sea, stood far off [18] and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning, "What city was like the great city?" vv. 17-18
 3. The same lament as the merchants: [19] And they threw dust on their heads as they wept and mourned, crying out, "Alas, alas, for the great city where all who had ships at sea grew rich by her wealth! For in a single hour she has been laid waste., 18.19
 4. In all cases the suddenness of the destruction is made plain: a obvious reality to all observers (i.e., what took years, maybe centuries to develop is destroyed in a day!)
 - a. Rev. 18:8 For this reason her plagues will come in a single day, death and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for mighty is the Lord God who has judged her."
 - b. Job 9:19 If it is a contest of strength, behold, he is mighty! If it is a matter of justice, who can summon him?
 - c. Isaiah 27:1 In that day the Lord with his hard and great and strong sword will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent, and he will slay the dragon that is in the sea.
 - d. Jeremiah 50:31 "Behold, I am against you, O proud one, declares the Lord God of hosts, for your day has come, the time when I will punish you.
- D. A doxological affirmation: "Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, for God has given judgment for you against her!", 18.20
1. The heavens and the earth will be glad at the destruction of the world, Psalm 96:11-13 Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it; [12] let the field exult, and everything in it! Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy [13] before the Lord, for he comes, for he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness, and the peoples in his faithfulness.
 2. God will comfort his people and the creation will rejoice, Isaiah 49:13 Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth; break forth, O mountains, into singing! for the Lord I has comforted his people and will have compassion on his afflicted.
 3. God will punish Babylon and the heavens and earth will sing for joy, Jeremiah 51:47-48 Therefore, behold, the days are coming when I will punish the images of Babylon; her whole land shall be put to shame, and all her slain shall fall in the midst of her. [48] Then the heavens and the earth, and all that is in them, shall sing for joy over Babylon, for the destroyers shall come against them out of the north, declares the Lord.

IV. "So will Babylon the great city be thrown down," Rev. 18.21-24

Rev. 18:21-24 Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "So will Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence, and will be found no more; [22] and the sound of harpists and musicians, of flute players and trumpeters, will be heard in you no more, and a craftsman of any craft will be found in you no more, and the sound of the mill will be heard in you no more, [23] and the light of a lamp will shine in you no more, and the voice of bridegroom and bride will be heard in you no more, for your merchants were the great ones of the earth, and all nations were deceived by your sorcery. [24] And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slain on earth."

- A. An enacted prophetic event: a great millstone thrown into the sea, Rev. 18.21-23
1. Analogous to Jeremiah's prophecy, Jeremiah 51:60-64 Jeremiah wrote in a book all the disaster that should come upon Babylon, all these words that are written concerning Babylon. [61] And Jeremiah said to Seraiah: "When you come to Babylon, see that you read all these words, [62] 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.' [63] When you finish reading this book, tie a stone to it and cast it into the midst of the Euphrates, [64] 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.
 2. The complete devastation of this wicked system is illustrated by its silence and uninhabited status, Isaiah 13:20-22 It will never be inhabited or lived in for all generations; no Arab will pitch his tent there; no shepherds will make their flocks lie down there. [21] But wild animals

will lie down there, and their houses will be full of howling creatures; there ostriches will dwell, and there wild goats will dance. [22] Hyenas will cry in its towers, and jackals in the pleasant palaces; its time is close at hand and its days will not be prolonged.

- B. A clearly stated recognized legacy: the blood of the prophets and saints, and all the slain of the earth: victims of wanton wickedness, Rev. 18.24
1. Clothes stained with the blood of the innocent, Jeremiah 2:34 Also on your skirts is found the lifeblood of the guiltless poor; you did not find them breaking in. Yet in spite of all these things [35] you say, 'I am innocent; surely his anger has turned from me.' Behold, I will bring you to judgment for saying, 'I have not sinned.'
 2. Indiscriminate violence and cruelty, Ezekiel 22:9 There are men in you who slander to shed blood, and people in you who eat on the mountains; they commit lewdness in your midst.
 3. All for the sake of gain, Ezekiel 22:27 Her princes in her midst are like wolves tearing the prey, shedding blood, destroying lives to get dishonest gain.
 4. One, unbroken line of unjust treatment, violence, and murder, Luke 11:47-51 Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets whom your fathers killed. [48] So you are witnesses and you consent to the deeds of your fathers, for they killed them, and you build their tombs. [49] Therefore also the Wisdom of God said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and persecute,' [50] so that the blood of all the prophets, shed from the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation, [51] from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, it will be required of this generation.



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MARKET RESEARCH CLEARLY SHOWS THAT OUR CORE AUDIENCE IS UNCOMFORTABLE WITH SERMONS THAT HAVE TO DO WITH SIN, JUDGEMENT, AND THAT WHOLE HELL THING

The Season After Pentecost: Proper 22 (Year A, 2008)

The Judgment of Babylon, Revelation 18.
October 2, 2008.

Rev. 18:1-3 After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was made bright with his glory. [2] 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.

The day of accountability and judgment is set, and nothing can prevent it. In spite of appearances, the wickedness of this present system will be judged directly by the Lord. This ought to provide us with hope and reverence. Let us hope,

Unpopular But Necessary Message

The Word of God is completely clear that God intends to make an end of war, death, and sin. This world cannot continue on forever; its demise is certain, and this ungodly system of greed, lust, and pride will be put down, with not even a sliver, a speck, a dot of its influence or effect left. The kingdom of this world will become the Kingdom of our God and of his Christ, and he will reign forever and ever. Come out from among the system, and touch nothing unclean, and escape the wrath to come.

for we know that evil will not ultimately win. Let us reverence, keeping ourselves free from the stain of the world and its pollutions and corruptions. The next great event on the calendar of God is the advent of his Son the coming ruler of this world, Jesus the risen Lord. Hallelujah, our God reigns and will reign!

Morning Collect: Eternal God our Father, teach us to worship You, knowing that your righteous judgment will one day fall upon this godless and wicked world. Help us to fear you today. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

Evening Collect: Precious Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, soon and very soon You will return and make all things right and restore the Kingdom on earth. Lift up our hearts to You alone this night. In Your name, we pray, Amen.

Memory Verse: **MTB, New Beginnings in Christ: Series 1; Topic 1: OT Plan of Salvation, Messiah Will Die for Us.**
Isaiah 53:10-11 Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. [11] Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.