

### The Fall Commercial End-Time Babylon

#### Revelation 18

Revelation 18 - *"After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory.<sup>2</sup> And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!"<sup>3</sup> For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury."<sup>4</sup> And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues."<sup>5</sup> For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.<sup>6</sup> Render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her.<sup>7</sup> In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, 'I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.'<sup>8</sup> Therefore her plagues will come in one day—death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her.*

*<sup>9</sup> "The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning,<sup>10</sup> standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.'*

*<sup>11</sup> "And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore:<sup>12</sup> merchandise of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, fine linen and purple, silk and scarlet, every kind of citron wood, every kind of object of ivory, every kind of object of most precious wood, bronze, iron, and marble;<sup>13</sup> and cinnamon and incense, fragrant oil and frankincense, wine and oil, fine flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and bodies and souls of men.<sup>14</sup> The fruit that your soul longed for has gone from you, and all the things which are rich and splendid have gone from you, and you shall find them no more at all.<sup>15</sup> The merchants of these things, who became rich by her, will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing,<sup>16</sup> and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls!<sup>17</sup> For in one hour such great riches came to nothing.' Every shipmaster, all who travel by ship, sailors, and as many as trade on the sea, stood at a distance<sup>18</sup> and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What is like this great city?'*

*<sup>19</sup> "They threw dust on their heads and cried out, weeping and wailing, and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city, in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth! For in one hour she is made desolate.'<sup>20</sup> "Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!"<sup>21</sup> Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore."<sup>22</sup> The sound of harpists, musicians, flutists, and trumpeters shall not be heard in you anymore. No craftsman of any craft shall be found in you anymore, and the sound of a millstone shall not be heard in you anymore.<sup>23</sup> The light of a lamp shall not shine in you anymore, and the voice of bridegroom and bride shall not be heard*

*in you anymore. For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived. <sup>24</sup> And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth."*

## Background Notes

Revelation 17 describes the beginning of the final overthrow of end-time Babylon, and in Revelation 18 the destruction continues. A brief definition of "Babylon" would be "the one world religion and one world government of the end times." It seems that Babylon will be a combination of religious and political power -- not an empire, but a system -- a global religio-political system that is centered in a great city. The name "Babylon" refers to both the city and the system. The city may be the rebuilt ancient city of Babylon on the Euphrates River in present-day Iraq, or it may be that the city of Rome is symbolically called "Babylon" in Revelation -- we can't be sure.

In any case, as a religious/economic/commercial/political system, Babylon will govern and have worldwide influence. In fact, we saw in Revelation 17 that Babylon will control the revived Roman Empire Beast of the end times -- until the Beast overthrows Babylon.

Revelation 17 also describes Babylon as an evil system, and in Revelation 18 the angel describes Babylon as evil, committing immorality and allowing demonic spirits and unclean birds to dwell within her. As in the parable of the sower in Matthew 13, the birds would represent false religious sects and cults, including the occult. Praise the Lord, the evil religious system of Babylon will be overthrown and destroyed, and Revelation 17 tells of this overthrow of Babylon's religious system. This first phase of her judgment will take place in the middle of the Tribulation period.

In Revelation 18 we see the overthrow of Babylon as a great economic and commercial system of the last days. This phase of her judgment will be at the end of the Tribulation period, as we saw in Revelation 16, under the seventh Bowl Judgment. In Revelation 18 we read that Babylon's destruction will be intense. Verse 6: "*Render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her.*" Her destruction will also be quick -- in one day (v8), and it will be complete -- she will be utterly burned with fire (v9). No longer will Babylon sit on her throne as a self-indulgent queen. Every part of this evil system will be completely destroyed -- for good!

## Doctrinal Points

### 1. The destruction of commercial Babylon will result in great weeping.

Why will the kings and merchants of the earth weep over the destruction of Babylon (v9)? They won't be weeping because a good and noble person has died, or because a righteous nation has been conquered. No, they will weep because their source of wealth and profit is gone!

These verses tell us that every kind of product from around the world will be bought and transported and traded by Babylon, including people as slaves (v13). Certainly this is a further indictment of the evil system of Babylon, and further justifies her complete destruction. Notice the emphasis in these verses on Babylon's sudden downfall in one hour: "*For in one hour your judgment has come*" (v10); "*For in one hour such great riches came to nothing*" (v17); and "*For in one hour she is made desolate*" (v19).

Verses 17-18 seem to indicate that those who are on board commercial ships will see the smoke of burning Babylon. This fact has led many to believe that Babylon is actually Rome, which is not too far from the Mediterranean Sea. On the other hand, we know that oil well fires can be seen for miles, and if nuclear weapons are involved in Babylon's destruction, the resulting mushroom clouds would certainly be visible from a great distance away. The magnitude of Babylon's destruction in such a short time suggests nuclear warfare. So, the city mentioned in Revelation 17 and 18 may indeed literally be the rebuilt ancient city of Babylon. In any case, the destruction of commercial Babylon will result in great weeping.

## **2. The destruction of commercial Babylon will result in great rejoicing.**

Verse 20: "*Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her.*" In verse 20, who is rejoicing over the fall of Babylon? It is the saints – the apostles and prophets! They will rejoice because the wicked will be reaping what they have sown, and God's righteousness will be vindicated.

"Babylon" is the evil system that began at the Tower of Babel, when people turned away from God to make a name for themselves. "Babylon" is the evil system of world religion and world politics that persecuted and killed the saints down through history (v24). "Babylon" is the evil commercial system of the last days, that will only deal with those who receive the mark of the Beast. Revelation 13:17 - "*and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.*"

The sudden and violent and complete destruction of Babylon is illustrated by a strong angel taking up a great millstone, weighing thousands of pounds, and throwing it into the sea (v21). Babylon will sink, never to rise again. All activity -- industrial, economic, and social -- will come to an end (v22-23).

Another reason that saints, apostles and prophets will rejoice is that "the times of the Gentiles" will be over. In Luke 21:24, the Lord Jesus said, "*And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.* The times of the Gentiles began with Babylon's invasion of Jerusalem under Nebuchadnezzar in 605BC. The times of the Gentiles will end with the destruction of Babylon at the end of the Tribulation period, as we see here in Revelation 18. What a great time that will be, just before the Lord returns! The destruction of commercial Babylon will result in great rejoicing.

## **Practical Application**

### **Don't see your investments go up in smoke!**

We've seen that the people of this world will weep when end-time Babylon is destroyed. Why? They will weep because they will see their investments literally going up in smoke!

Will you see your investments go up in smoke? "No," you may say, "because I'm a Christian and I'm leaving at the Rapture." Quite so, and when we leave, we won't take our earthly investments with us. Only the investments that we send on ahead -- by using them for the Lord now -- will escape the testing fire! 1 Corinthians 3:13 says, *"Each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is."* In that day, will your investments go up in smoke?

As God tells His people in verse 4 to come out of Babylon and not to participate in her practices, so God tells His people today: *"Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you."* (2 Corinthians 6:17).

Obedience in this area should certainly affect how we view our investments and where we make our investments. Don't see your investments go up in smoke!