

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

"The Fall of the City Babylon"

Revelation 18:1-8

Introduction

1. The final wrap-up of events with the world system are extrapolated in the Word (Rev. 17, 18). The religious side of things, under the figure of the great Harlot includes Romanism, religions of the world, apostate Protestantism, sects, and cults. Modern ecumenicalism is the harbinger of this religious conglomerate.

2. The present chapter concerns the massive destruction of the commercial system centered in the rebuilt city of Babylon. This system has consorted with the Beast (Antichrist, Rev. 13:1-10) and now the entire demise of Gentile power is detailed.

3. The words "after these things" (v. 1) support the fact that the religious system falls before the political-commercial system. These are eschatological concepts within the framework of Daniel's 70th week (9:27) which is the Tribulation. All of these events follow the removal of the Church at the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:13-18).

Special Note: The city of Babylon is mentioned and given prominence (vv. 10, 16, 18, 19, 21). The question is often raised: what Babylon? It appears that there will be a literal rebuilt Babylon on the Euphrates. The Old Testament predictions of its destruction have never been adequately fulfilled in history (see Isa. 13, 14; Jer. 50, 51, note particularly Isa. 13:20; Jer. 51:26, 43). The time that this destruction is predicted is yet future (Isa. 13:9 cf. Luke 21:25-27). It will be by fire (Rev. 18:8, 9, 18). That is the way it was predicted in the Old Testament (Isa. 13:19; Jer. 50:40). Zechariah similarly prophesied that evil would be transported to that area in the last days (5:5-11). The reservoir of oil and wealth in that part of the world is staggering. It fits the picture which is provided.

4. God has His plan for judgment of commercial Babylon. It includes the following:

1. DESOLATION vv. 1, 2

This is noted by another (ἄλλος allos) angel (cf. 17:1). That there are orders of angels is patent (Eph. 1:21; Jude 9). This one comes from (out of) heaven having great power (authority,). Moreover, the earth is lighted (aorist passive) with (out of) His glory.

With a mighty cry, this unusual angel cries out with a strong (great) voice that "Babylon the Great" has fallen (twice aorist indicative). He makes three assertions about what Babylon has become ():

- Habitation of devils (demons)
- Hold (prison) of every foul (unclean) spirit.
- Cage (prison) same as above (φυλακή fulake) of every unclean man and hateful (perfect tense) bird.

Note: Commercial Babylon will end up in Satanic horror. It will be a center of occultism. God has said it. It will be done as predicted.

2. FORNICATION v. 3

Here is part of the rationale or cause for the judgment or fall of Babylon ("for," οτι hoti). Three groups are involved:

a. All nations They have drunk (perfect tense) of the wine of the wrath of Babylon's fornication. The wine becomes wrath associated with the apostate Babylonianism's religious system. The nations have consumed fully this dreadful potion.

b. All kings These appear to be a broader number than the ten kings confederate with the Beast (17:11, 12). These actively participate in the idolatry of the Babylonian religious system. They are partakers "with" Babylon.

c. All merchants The commercial interests of the earth (cf. kings of earth) have become rich out of the power of Babylon's wantonness or insolent luxury.

Note: Forcefully, God brings judgment on the commercial giant, Babylon, because virtually all the world has participated in her blatant apostasy and sin.

3. SEPARATION v. 4

Another voice, apparently another (of the same kind) angel, issues a message to "my people" to come out of Babylon (aorist tense, hence urgently). Specifically this is a word to the Jews (cf. Isa. 52:11; Jer. 50:8; 51:6, 9, 45, 50) who will be living in the Tribulation. Two purposes are given for the urgent call:

- That they do not become fellows of the sins of Babylon.
- That they do not receive the plagues of Babylon's sins.

Note: Even in the Tribulation, the Lord has His spared remnant. The doctrine of separation from what deserves God's judgment (Babylon) and those who belong to Him (my people) is consistent throughout Scripture (cf. 9:26; 2 Cor. 6:11-7:1).

4. RETRIBUTION vv. 5, 6

The call for separation is linked with two reasons openly identified by God.

- Because sins of Babylon have been joined together all the way to heaven (aorist passive). Her aggregate of sin has reached its acme.
- Because God has remembered the wrongs or misdeeds of Babylon.

Note: How long-suffering God was with Babylon, but finally judgment came! Take note that sin will be punished.

As Babylon gave so she was to be given. Indeed the retribution is doubled according to her works. As her cup was mingled (cf. 17:4), she is now to have a double portion. Sin's wages get double time!

5. EXPLANATION vv. 7, 8

Babylon claims three self-centered benefits: a. I sit as queen. b. I am not a widow. c. I will not (double negative, therefore never never) see sorrow. These confident boasts of security are meaningless in the face of God's promise of destruction. The exact opposite is predicted: Whereas Babylon a. glorified herself, b. lived luxuriously so in like manner the commercial activities of the City are to be given (aorist imperative) torment and sorrow (mourning). What is claimed will not come, does come:

6. TERMINATION v. 8

"Therefore" is actually "on account of this" (δια τουτο dia touto). Based on what has been recorded (vv. 1-7), plagues will come to Babylon. These include four major judgments: a. death, b. mourning (sorrow, v. 7), c. famine, and d. burning with fire.

The one single reason given for what is recorded is that the Lord God is strong. He it is Who is judging (present tense) Babylon.

Conclusion Let no one, but no one, believe that God's Word will not be fulfilled. The Babylonian scheme of Genesis comes to its demise in Revelation. Take careful note, friend, God's patience will run out!