



The Bowls & Babylon: Part 3

Revelation 18

BIBLE PASSAGE

[Rev 18:1-24 NKJV] 1 After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. 2 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! 3 "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." 4 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. 5 "For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. 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. 7 "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.' 8 "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. 9 "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, 10 "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.' 11 "And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore: 12 "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; 13 "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. 14 "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. 15 "The merchants of these things, who became rich by her, will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, 16 "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! 17 '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 18 "and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What [is] like this great city?' 19 "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.' 20 "Rejoice over her, O heaven, and [you] holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!" 21 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. 22 "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. 23 "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. 24 "And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth."

INTRO

As we moved through Revelation chapter 17, we zoomed into the final destruction of a city and a system called Babylon.

- It really signifies the weakness of the world's power and kingdoms next to God's mighty hand that raises up and tears down according to the counsel of His will.
- Babylon is presented as a harlot, the world's prostitute offering perverted fulfillment of every kind: spiritual, economic, and political. Babylon perverts by blending and mixing that which was designed by God with the distorted, perverted pursuits of sinful human beings apart from God.
- The seven crowns represent those seven empires that directly interacted with the Jewish people. Each empire possesses the philosophy of Babylon. Six have already gone, and the seventh is coming.
- The ten horns rise to power and eventually become subdued by the antichrist, the beast. At first, they are carrying this great Babylon as they seem to share a symbiotic

relationship at first, but in the end, the kingdom of the antichrist desolates Babylon as he subjugates the world under His control. They do this as part of God's judgment on their wickedness.

Chapter 18 flows directly from Chapter 17 as a continuation of the aspects of Babylon's fall. We clearly see an instantaneous commercial and economic collapse of the world's greatest superpower.

APPLICATION

Now, it is worth mentioning that there are several compelling arguments trying to determine the exact identity of Babylon, but as we saw last week, I believe that there are still elements that are a MYSTERY to us today.

- Some see Babylon as a future Rome, which would be the capital of a revised Roman Empire.
- Some see Babylon as analogous to Jerusalem. That Jerusalem will be the capital of the world in the future.
- Some view Babylon as an ecclesiastical power, such as the Roman Catholic Church.
- Other see Babylon as symbolic of a city of great power and prominence in the last days.
- Still others take Babylon literally and believe there will be an empire that spawns out of Babylon in modern-day Iraq, that the city will be rebuilt and then utterly destroyed.

I don't really know. There are strong biblical cases for each argument, some stronger than others. Regardless, I think these chapters provide a strong warning today, both spiritually and physically, to any form of Babylon that exists within the so-called church or world today. So let's continue to look into the characteristics of Babylon.

We will examine the ATTITUDE of Babylon, the ASSESSMENT of Babylon, the AMAZEMENT of Babylon, and the ANNIHILATION of Babylon.

1 The Attitude of Babylon

BIBLE PASSAGE

[Rev 18:1-24 NKJV] 1 After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. 2 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! 3 "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." 4 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. 5 "For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. 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. 7 "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.'

DISCUSSION

Let's not forget where this judgment is coming from. It's coming "down from heaven."

- There are some who might look and say, "Wow, humanity is really going through a patch of bad luck." Yeah, it's called the wrath of God!
- This Mighty angel is so majestic that his brightness illuminates the earth, and his glory pales in comparison to God's. In the end, there will be no more sun, for the Lord shall be the sun that lights the earth.

Notice the double emphasis on "fallen, fallen." This could have two meanings:

- It records the downfall of both the religious system (harlot) and the commercial system.
- The angel is emphasizing the greatness of the fall. Saying it twice means that this was not just a fall, it was a great fall, unlike anything ever seen before. This is a fall from which there is no recovery.

When I read verse two, I **picture the land of Mordor**, the forlorn landscape of Tolkien's mystical land of desolation, orcs, and Sauron.

The Fallen Babylon gets three descriptions:

- 1. A dwelling place of demons**
- 2. A prison for unclean spirits**
- 3. A cage for unclean birds**

Babylon, once beautiful, wealthy, comfortable, and safe, now holds the demons that were at work; they are the only thing that's left, as if they are trapped there until the day of Judgment.

Unclean birds have an interesting connotation:

- All of the unclean birds that the Bible forbids to eat have something in common. They all eat meat, whether it is dead animals or fish. They all have high risks of carrying parasites that will make you sick because of that.
- This might be an indication that though the materialism and wealth of the world might have an outward beauty, it's extremely poisonous when it is consumed.

1 John 2:15-16 - 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. For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world.

The world's "carnal lusts." Carnal = meaty. Things of demons, unclean Spirits, unclean birds, and the things that appeal to that carnal nature. On the surface, they appear to have beauty, but their end is destruction and desolation.

Her cup of wine, carnal pleasures of every kind, was offered to the world, and every nation drunk of it in order to gain from her.

BIBLE PASSAGE

4 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. 5 "For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.

APPLICATION

Apparently, God's tolerance and patience of wickedness don't = His approval or indicate forgetfulness on His part. God doesn't forego justice on any level. Like the world of Noah's time and Sodom and Nineveh of old, there are times when human wickedness crosses a threshold when God says, "Enough is enough." We should read this as though God forgot then remembered, but rather that the threshold of His patience has been breached by the overflowing wickedness of this world power in His sight.

- I don't know how this all works with nations today. I know that we are in a dispensation of great forbearance and patience as God extends His grace toward sinners, seeking to reconcile them to Himself.
- But we should make no mistake that what one sows, he reaps. The command to God's people who dwell in the tribulation period should be heeded today by all those who live in this world. "Come out of her my people!"

This echoes the call of God to His people throughout history:

Isaiah 52:11 - Depart! Depart! Go out from there, touch no unclean thing; Go out from the midst of her, be clean, You who bear the vessels of the LORD.

[2Co 6:14-18 NKJV] 14 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? 15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? 16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among [them]. I will be their God, And they shall be My people." 17 Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you." 18 "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty."

Jesus taught us in John 15, that though we are in the world, we are not of the world. Christian, we have to be in this world. We can't escape the world that operates apart from Christ. We aren't called to monasteries on lonely mountains. We are called to a mission of spiritual warfare and eternal hope in the trenches of the unbelieving world. We are the ones who are called to bring them the hope of the gospel.

But you have to understand that we operate in a different economy and system than the world, God's economy.

- Jesus said, "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God

and mammon (material wealth).”

APPLICATION

APPLICATION: Christian, there should be no question in your mind when you leave this place about what God you serve, but how many of us this week will hear the Lord’s voice and be disobedient because it interferes with our earthly comfort?

- How many of us will not give our finances, time, and resources to the kingdom of God because the new TV or phone or Black Friday/Cyber Monday sale is more important? I can’t afford to give my tithe to the church this week or help support someone going on a mission trip to spread the gospel, but I can definitely afford to buy a new gadget or gismo that will help entertain me.

I’m speaking to the choir here. I enjoy technology, I have hobbies, there are things in this world that make me smile and bring me joy. That’s not all evil. Paul told us that God has given us richly all things to enjoy. But ENJOY, not WORSHIP, not PRIORITIZE over the kingdom. So where’s the balance? That is between you and God. I’m not here to be the Holy Spirit or to tell you if you have too much money in your bank account or too many “this’s or that’s.” That is the job of the Holy Spirit and a job that I don’t want.

The fact is, it has everything to do with your heart. What do you love more? What do you worship?

- I know people who have a lot of wonderful things, and they would give them to someone in need without batting an eye. They are generous and don’t hold tightly to their earthly treasures. Why? Because their God is Christ.

God commands His people, “Get out of her!” Don’t be pulled into a world system that promises everything and leaves you with nothing that lasts. I love this famous quote from Jim Elliot,

“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”

This world and everything in it is passing. Every shiny, glittering thing will one day burn and pass away, but the word of the Lord endures forever. Of the kingdom of God, there shall be no end! This is why Paul addresses the issue of wealth in his letters:

[1Ti 6:17-19 NKJV] **17** Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. **18** [Let them] do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, **19** storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

BIBLE PASSAGE

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. 7 "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.'

APPLICATION

Notice the principle of double restitution. "Repay her double... Mix double for her."

In the Old Testament, the law of double restitution applies to those who steal from others.

- Exodus 22 goes into great detail to make sure that he who steals from his neighbor must repay double what he took.
- Mystery Babylon is a thief. She stills innocence and purity and worship. She will be repaid double with destruction and downfall.

Render – To pay a debt. Babylon has been running up the credit card, and now God is calling in the balance!

Verse 7 - Notice three characteristics about Babylon that cause her downfall.

- **Self glorification**
- **Self indulgence**
- **Self confidence**

Self-glorification (verse 7 - she glorified herself):

It's always a dangerous, scary thing when man starts to take credit for what God does. This is the same thing the King Nebuchadnezzar did when He looked at the kingdom that he built for his own glory. As soon as he did God took it all away from him.

Here is the problem with self-glorification.

When I glorify myself, I give myself the impression that I deserve credit for something that God did. It also gives me the false impression that I can do anything without God's help. t's my talent, my gifts, my abilities, my money, my hardwork...

John 15:5 - "I am the vine, you [are] the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."

When it comes to doing anything of eternal value, it is a task that is impossible apart from Christ.

- 2 Corinthians 10:17 - As the Scriptures say, "The person who wishes to boast should boast only of what the Lord has done."
- It's critical that we recognize where every blessing and every good and perfect gift comes from. They come from the hand of God.
- [Jas 1:17 NKJV] 17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

Self-indulgence:

(verse 7 - lived luxuriously) - This was not just that she possessed nice things, but that nice things possessed her.

- Christian, be careful that your possessions don't possess you. At the core of self-indulgence is self-worship.
- People who indulge themselves with every pleasure, are doing it because they love themselves more than they love God.
- Instead of offering their bodies to God, they offer everything to their bodies, as though their bodies are God.

[2Ti 3:2-4 NKJV] 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God...

Remember that one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit in your life is "Self control."

God wants us to enjoy the things he blesses us with, but we must use self-control and discretion and always consider God's will and desire.

Self-confidence (I sit as queen, I will be no widow, I will see no sorrow):

It might be better said that she was overly self-confident. She trusted in her own hands rather than the hands of God. She doesn't ever think that disaster could come to her because of how great she is.

[1Co 10:12 NKJV] 12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

2 The Assessment of Babylon

BIBLE PASSAGE

8 "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. 9 "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, 10 "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.' 11 "And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore: 12 "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; 13 "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. 14 "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.

3 The Amazement of Babylon

BIBLE PASSAGE

15 "The merchants of these things, who became rich by her, will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, **16** "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! **17** '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 **18** "and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What [is] like this great city?' **19** "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.' **20** "Rejoice over her, O heaven, and [you] holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!"

A. THE AMAZEMENT OF HER ACCOMPLISHMENTS**B. THE AMAZEMENT OF HER FALL**

4 The Annihilation of Babylon

BIBLE PASSAGE

21 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. **22** "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. 23 "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. 24 "And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth."
