

Bible Study Outline: Revelation 18

All Things Must Fall

The Fall of Babylon and the Judgment of Corrupt Systems

Big Idea: No empire, economy, institution, or system of human power is so great that it can escape God's judgment when it is built on corruption, idolatry, injustice and the exploitation of God's people

I. Babylon's Fall Is Announced (vv. 1-3)

- **Old Testament: Isaiah 21:9; Jeremiah 51:7-8; Isaiah 13:19.**
- An angel descends with great _____, illuminating the earth with _____.
- Babylon is declared fallen, exposing the collapse of her _____ and _____.
- Her apparent greatness conceals spiritual _____.
- Her influence has led _____, _____, and _____ into immorality and greed.

Key observation: *Outward prosperity does not necessarily indicate spiritual integrity.*

II. God's People Are Called to Come Out (vv. 4-6)

- **Old Testament: Jeremiaiah 51:6, 45; Isaiah 48:20; Isaiah 52:11.**
- God commands His people to separate themselves from Babylon's _____.
- Babylon's sins have accumulated before God.
- God remembers her deeds and announces _____.
- God's people must refuse _____ in practices that oppose His will.

Key observation: *Faithfulness to God requires discernment about the values and practices we embrace.*

III. Babylon's Pride Is Exposed (vv. 7-8)

- **Old Testament: Isaiah 47:7-9; Zephaniah 2:15; Daniel 4:28-33.**
- Babylon boasts of her _____, _____, and _____.
- She believes she will never experience loss or mourning.
- Her confidence is rooted in _____ and _____.
- Her judgment comes _____, revealing the fragility of her security.

Key observation: *Pride creates a false sense of permanence and invulnerability.*

IV. The Kings Mourn Her Destruction (vv. 9-10)

- **Old Testament: Ezekiel 26:15-18; Ezekiel 27:30-35.**
- The kings who benefited from Babylon's corruption mourn her downfall.
- They witness her destruction from a _____ because they fear her punishment.
- Their lament reveals their _____ to the power and benefits Babylon provided.

Key observation: People may mourn the loss of the benefits of a corrupt system more than the corruption itself.

V. The Merchants Mourn the Loss of Wealth (vv. 11–17a)

- **Old Testament: Ezekiel 27:12-25; Isaiah 23:8.**
- Merchants mourn because their market for _____ has disappeared.
- The extensive merchandise list highlights Babylon's material _____.
- The inclusion of "_____ and _____ of men" exposes the commodification of human beings.
- Economic prosperity has become entangled with _____ and _____.

Key observation: *When profit becomes more important than people, economic success becomes morally destructive.*

VI. The Shipmasters Mourn the Collapse (vv. 17b–19)

- **Old Testament: Ezekiel 27:25-36.**
- Shipmasters, sailors, and maritime workers witness Babylon's destruction.
- Their livelihood and prosperity are tied to the city's _____ success.
- Their lament emphasizes the _____ of the economic collapse.
- Babylon's destruction affects an entire network of people who depended on her wealth.

Key observation: *Systems built on unjust prosperity can create widespread dependence on their continued existence.*

VII. Heaven Rejoices Over God's Judgment (v. 20)

- **Jeremiah 51:48; Deuteronomy 32:43.**
- Heaven is commanded to _____ over Babylon's fall.
- God's judgment addresses the _____ and _____ of His people.
- The response of heaven contrasts with the _____ of those who profited from Babylon.

Key observation: *What brings grief to those invested in injustice can bring vindication to those who have suffered under it.*

VIII. Babylon Is Thrown Down (vv. 21–24)

- **Old Testament: Jeremiah 51:60-64; Jeremiah 25:10; Isaiah 47:9.**
- A mighty angel throws a great _____ into the sea as a sign of Babylon's decisive destruction.
- _____, craftsmanship, _____, and ordinary social life cease.
- Babylon is held accountable for _____ the nations.
- Her judgment is connected to the blood of _____, _____, and others who were killed.

Key observation: *No amount of wealth, influence, or power can shield a corrupt system from God's judgment.*

How Should We Apply This Lesson?

- Examine complicity as carefully as personal conduct. Revelation 18 asks believers whether their participation in social, political, and economic systems causes them to “share in” practices inconsistent with allegiance to Christ. Christian ethical reflection therefore includes not only what we personally do but also what our participation supports.
- Evaluate prosperity by its human consequences. The inclusion of enslaved people in Babylon’s merchandise demonstrates that profitability does not establish moral legitimacy. Believers should consider who bears the human cost of the goods, services, conveniences, and economic arrangements from which they benefit.
- Recognize how self-interest can distort moral judgment. The kings, merchants, and sailors mourn Babylon because her destruction damages their own prosperity. Their response warns that benefiting from a system can make its injustices more difficult to recognize or acknowledge.
- Refuse to treat powerful systems as permanent. Babylon appears economically indispensable and internationally dominant immediately before her collapse. Revelation therefore cautions believers against locating ultimate security in institutions because of their wealth, influence, scale, or longevity.

Conclusion

The chapter ultimately presents two radically different evaluations of the same civilization. Those who benefit from Babylon regard her destruction as catastrophe, while heaven regards it as justice. That contrast requires believers to examine the perspective from which they evaluate prosperity, power, and social stability. “Come out of her, my people” therefore calls for discernment within the world rather than simple escape from it: believers must resist participation in Babylon’s sins even when participation offers genuine economic or social advantages. Her sudden fall finally demonstrates why such separation matters. A system can be wealthy, globally connected, politically influential, and economically indispensable without being just, and none of those qualities makes it permanent.