

Revelation 18

Babylon Is Fallen

After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated from his glory. ² And he cried out with a mighty voice, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird. ³ For all the nations have fallen because of the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed *acts of sexual immorality* with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich from the excessive wealth of her luxury.”

⁴ I heard another voice from heaven, saying, “Come out of her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive *any* of her plagues; ⁵ for her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her offenses. ⁶ Pay her back even as she has paid, and give back *to her* double according to her deeds; in the cup which she has mixed, mix twice as much for her. ⁷ To the extent that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, to the same extent give her torment and mourning; for she says in her heart, ‘I sit *as a queen* and I am not a widow, and will never see mourning.’ ⁸ For this reason in one day her plagues will come, plague and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for the Lord God who judges her is strong.

Grief over Babylon

⁹ “And the kings of the earth, who committed *acts of sexual immorality* and lived luxuriously with her, will weep and mourn over her when they see the smoke of her burning, ¹⁰ standing at a distance because of the fear of her torment, saying, ‘Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! For in one hour your judgment has come.’

¹¹ “And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, because no one buys their cargo any more— ¹² cargo of gold, silver, precious stones, and pearls; fine linen, purple, silk, and scarlet; every *kind of* citron wood, every article of ivory, and every article *made* from very valuable wood, bronze, iron, and marble; ¹³ cinnamon, spice, incense, perfume, frankincense, wine, olive oil, fine flour, wheat, cattle, sheep, and *cargo* of horses, carriages, slaves, and human lives.

¹⁴ The fruit you long for has left you, and all things that were luxurious and splendid have passed away from you and *people* will no longer find them. ¹⁵ The merchants of these things, who became rich from her, will stand at a distance because of the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning, ¹⁶ saying, ‘Woe, woe, the great city, she who was clothed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold, precious stones, and pearls;

¹⁷ for in one hour such great wealth has been laid waste!’ And every shipmaster and every passenger and sailor, and all who make their living by the sea, stood at a distance, ¹⁸ and were crying out as they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, ‘What *city* is like the great city?’ ¹⁹ And they threw dust on their heads and were crying out, weeping and mourning, saying, ‘Woe, woe, the great city, in which all who had ships at sea became rich from her prosperity, for in one hour she has been laid waste!’

²⁰ Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, because God has pronounced judgment for you against her.” ²¹ Then a strong angel picked 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 never be found again. ²² And the sound of harpists, musicians, flute players, and trumpeters will never be heard in you again; and no craftsman of any craft will ever be found in you again; and the sound of a mill will never be heard in you again;

²³ and the light of a lamp will never shine in you again; and the voice of the groom and bride will never be heard in you again; for your merchants were the powerful people of the earth, because all the nations were deceived by your witchcraft. ²⁴ And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slaughtered on the earth.”

We will use five tools on our expedition that are built around five questions

- What questions were provoked within you?
- Did anything confuse you?
- Did anything move you emotionally?
- Did God instruct you to do something?
- Did you gain any insight into God’s character?

Pauls Observations and insights

1. The angel who comes down from heaven conveys a sense of inevitability of further judgements.
2. Notice John describes the angel as a ‘him’.
3. ‘He had great authority’ - what does this statement convey to you?
4. How do you think the earth became illuminated by this angel’s splendour?
5. He shouted. Why did he shout and was it necessary to shout?
6. The shout he gave is a declaration of conclusion for this great city, Babylon the great.
7. To fall is to embrace the darkness and the dark arts, hence, the residents of this place were occupied by demons and every manifestation of bad - demons who are angels that have fallen.
8. How had all the nations drunk from this great city? How had the kings and the merchants indulged in the fruit of her wares?
9. A voice who calls God’s people out from Babylon was heard, so as to avoid the judgements that were coming.
10. These judgements will be intently immense.
11. The arrogance of her heart has deceived her into thinking she is untouchable, even from God!
12. But her perspectives are foolish, as God prepares to bring His judgements upon her for all the evil she has done to the nations.
13. The kings will stand afar and lament over her with shouts of woe ‘Babylon the great’.
14. One hour is a representation of a short length of time.
15. The merchants also weep over her because she no longer trades with them. All that is luxurious and tradeable, including slaves, cease.
16. Once it is gone, it is gone - you can’t get it back! There is a time for everything under the sun including the summing up of all things.
17. The merchants too will stand off and watch her torment and weep, they too will cry out ‘woe to this great city’.
18. All their great investments have been brought to ruin in a short length of time.
19. Captains of ships and sailors will stand off in amazement.
20. What is the smoke of her burning?

21. They will ask the question ‘was there ever a great city like this great city?’ Why did they ask this question?
22. Why will they throw dust upon their heads?
23. The sailors and the captains will also cry, stand off and say ‘woe’. What does woe mean?
24. Why is heaven and earth asked to rejoice over this city and why rejoice God’s people?
25. God has recompensed her for the judgements they poured out on the people of God. Perhaps these are those who previously asked for justice?
26. The judgment begins with an angel who throws a large rock into the sea.
27. The prophecies of Babylon’s destruction have begun!
28. The implication of this judgement is that there is no music to be found in her, no trade, no harvest, no light, no marriage - the city is under a curse!
29. The declaration that, through deception, Babylon led the nations astray. What is it referring to?
30. She shed the blood of the prophets and God’s holy people.