

Revelation
Chapter 18
“Get Out of Babylon”

All scripture references are from the NASU unless otherwise noted

Calvary Chapel Fellowship of Enid
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Teaching: Hopefully you remember from last week that **chapters 17 and 18** are unique in that they deviate from the linear timeline of this prophetic book.

Chapters 6 through 16 deal with the details of God’s judgment during the Tribulation Period in a roughly chronological sequence ... while **chapters 17 and 18** deal, not with how God will judge, but what He’s judging. But we’ll get back to the chronology as we get into **chapter 19** next week.

Let me give you a list of some names you’ll recognize. Relatively recent names of individuals who have all tried to restore the ancient city of Babylon and all that it represents. Names like; Charlemagne and Napoleon Bonaparte, the German Chancellor Bismarck, Adolph Hitler, Saddam Hussein and the list goes on and on ...

People who have had, and expressed a desire to revive that Unified, Roman Empire and / or rebuild one of the great wonders of the ancient world ... the city of Babylon.

In **chapter 17**, the Lord showed us the evil of false religion under the title of “Religious Babylon”. And not only the evil of that system, but the judgment that awaits those who knowingly choose to be a part of it.

Now, here in **chapter 18**, the Lord’s going to show us the other arm of evil ... not those who feign religion, but the blatantly unbelieving world. Those who cling to the power of human government and the security of the almighty dollar.

So **Chapter 17** gives us a picture of “Religious Babylon” and God’s judgment of it ... while **chapter 18** gives us a picture of “Commercial Babylon” and again ... God’s judgment of it.

But before we jump into that ... I wanna read you a description of Ancient Babylon ... a city unrivaled in splendor even to this day.

Although ... as an interesting side note, both architects and economists agree that its closest rival is none other than the State of Vatican City ... the headquarters of Catholicism in ... Rome!

Anyway ... let me read Dr. Clarence Larkin’s word picture of Ancient Babylon from his book; “Babylon the Great” (chapter 2) ...

If "Mystical Babylon" was destroyed in the previous chapter then she cannot appear in this chapter, and the "City" here described must be a literal city called Babylon, and as there is no city of that name on the earth today, nor has been since the ancient city of Babylon was destroyed, it must refer to some future city of Babylon. ...

The ancient city of Babylon from the days of Nimrod ([Gen. 10:10](#)), grew in size and importance century after century until it reached its greatest glory in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar.... As described by Herodotus it was an exact square of 15 miles on a side, or 60 miles around, and was surrounded by a brick wall 87 feet thick, and (between 100 and) 350 feet high On the wall were 250 towers, and the top of the wall was wide enough to allow 6 chariots to drive abreast. Outside this wall was a vast ditch surrounding the city, kept filled with water from the river Euphrates; and inside the wall, and not far from it, was another wall, not much inferior, but narrower, extending around the city.

Twenty-five magnificent avenues, 150 feet wide, ran across the city from North to South, and the same number crossed them at right angles from East to West, making 676 great squares, each nearly three-fifths of a mile on a side, and the city was divided into two equal parts by the river Euphrates, that flowed diagonally through it, and whose banks, within the city, were walled up, and pierced with brazen gates, with steps leading down to the river. At the ends of the main avenues, on each side of the city, were gates, whose leaves were of brass, and that shone as they were opened or closed in the rising or setting sun, like "leaves of flame."

The Euphrates within the city was spanned by a bridge, at each end of which was a palace, and these palaces were connected by a subterranean passageway, or tube, underneath the bed of the river; in which at different points were located sumptuous banqueting rooms constructed entirely of brass.

Near one of these palaces stood the "Tower of Bel," or Babel, consisting of 8 towers, each 75 feet high, rising one upon the other, with an outside winding stairway to its summit, which towers, with the Chapel on the top, made a height of 660 feet. This Chapel contained the most expensive furniture of any place of worship in the world. One golden image alone, 45 feet high, was valued at \$17,500,000, and the whole of the sacred utensils were reckoned to be worth \$200,000,000.

Babylon also contained one of the "Seven Wonders" of the world, the famous Hanging Gardens.

These Gardens were 400 feet square, and were raised in terraces one above the other to the height of 350 feet, and were reached by stairways 10 feet wide. The top of each terrace was covered with large stones, on which was laid a bed of rushes, then a thick layer of asphalt, next two courses of brick, cemented together, and finally plates of lead to prevent leakage; the whole was then covered with earth and planted with shrubbery and large trees. The whole had the appearance from a distance of a forest-covered mountain, which would be a remarkable sight in the level plain of the

Euphrates. These Gardens were built by Nebuchadnezzar simply to please his wife; who came from the mountainous country ..., and who was thus made contented with her surroundings. The rest of the city was, in its glory and magnificence, in keeping with these palaces, towers, and "Hanging Gardens." The character of its inhabitants and of its official life is seen in the description of "Belshazzar's Feast" in [Dan. 5:1-31](#).

Babylon was probably the most magnificent city the world has ever seen and its fall reveals what a city may become when it forsakes God and He sends His judgment upon it. ...

But on the site where this incredible city once stood is no more than a village today.

Q. What happened to it? – It was incrementally dismantled ... militarily, politically and economically. Most notably ... King Cyrus the Great of Persia in 539 BC took a very large bite out of it.

Q. So ... will it be rebuilt? – It would appear so, but when you have an opportunity ... read **Zechariah chapter 5** for yourself and then you decide ...

But even more certain than the rebuilding of some grand, physical city, is the immense foundation of commerce, upon which the city, in whatever form, will sit!

Verses 1-2: A habitat for the evil spiritual forces of the world ... including human beings who've given themselves over to Satan's purposes ... here referred to as unclean and hateful birds ... a frequently used biblical metaphor.

The parables of **Matthew chapter 13**, and in particular, the parables of the Sower of the Seed and the Mustard plant that becomes a tree, explain that metaphor further.

So rebuilt Babylon is a truly evil city.

But remember that we're not talking about a merely physical city here. The Lord's also directing our attention to a system where making money reigns supreme. Decisions are made with that as the first consideration. A system where anything goes as long as it makes money.

Verse 3: This system has seduced countless people; some lured by the hope of gain ... others are the source of system's wealth ... the consumers of the system's commodities.

But no matter which side of the fence ... they're intoxicated by the smell of money. Buyers and sellers deceived together. But if you think about it ... their pursuit is the same ... contentment and happiness.

But it's a futile pursuit because those things simply do not exist outside of God. So the intoxicated multitudes stagger away in disappointment.

Verses 4-5: No doubt a bit of a play on words here ... remembering that this is the same place that set out to build a tower to Heaven ... the Tower of Babel as a testimony to the power of man.

Their tower efforts, of course, fell far short of Heaven, but the sin of their arrogance made it all the way to God.

So we hear Him saying to His people ... “I’m about to judge this city ... get out!” In part He wants them out so that they won’t be seduced along with the others, but He also wants them out so the rain of His wrath won’t fall on the righteous.

And these are words we need to hear! Get out of Babylon! You cannot ... you cannot ... you cannot ... hang out with evil and not get dirty and hurt. You cannot!!!! Never have ... never will!

It’s vital that God’s people separate themselves from this world and all that it values. That’s counsel that’s repeated throughout the scriptures ... get out of Babylon!

Verses 6-8: People with money and the God-given ability to make money ... seemingly at will ... are too often stricken with arrogance.

Arrogant in part because they have more money than most, but even more so because of their trust in that money. A life-confidence based on their bank account.

But the Lord can consume that any hour of any day just as He pronounces on Babylon here. In fact, **verses, 10, 17 & 19**, speaking of the individual components of this system says they will be consumed in an hour’s time.

And this won’t be the first time the Lord’s done this ...

Dan 5:1 Belshazzar the king held a great feast for a thousand of his nobles, and he was drinking wine in the presence of the thousand. ... 3 Then they brought the gold vessels that had been taken out of the temple, the house of God which was in Jerusalem; and the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines drank from them. 4 They drank the wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone. 5 Suddenly the fingers of a man's hand emerged and began writing opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace, and the king saw the back of the hand that did the writing. ... 30 That same night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was slain.

“Chaldean”, of course, being another name for Babylonian.

Verses 9-13: Twenty-eight commodities are listed.

Jon Courson, in his commentary on this passage, walks us through the departments of

Bloomingdale's with this list in hand ... starting with the jewelry department ... 4th floor; **gold and silver and precious stones and pearls.**

From there you go down one floor to apparels; **fine linen and purple and silk and scarlet.**

And remember this is why these merchants are weeping and mourning! They're crying, not because of the way they've hurt God and misled thousands ... no they're upset and weeping because business has dropped off on their high-end inventory.

First jewelry and then apparel and then ... to the second floor ... home furnishings with; **... every article of ivory and ... costly wood and bronze and iron and marble.**

Then you saunter on over to kitchenware and fine foods ... passing through cosmetics on your way, with ... **cinnamon and spice and incense and perfume and frankincense and wine and olive oil and fine flour and wheat and cattle and sheep.**

From there you go to the first floor ... the automotive showroom **of horses and chariots.**

And then ... then you go all the way down to the basement ... the X-rated department ... where the commodity is human flesh.

The adult bookstore section ... prostitution and pornography because the word that's used here is soma (so'-mah) ... literally bodies. Living and/or dead bodies of human beings. Human trafficking at its worst!

But the Lord shows up and business drops off!

Verses 14-19: The end of all who trust in money ... all who see the dollar as a means to contentment and happiness.

But contrast that with the **next verse** ...

Verse 20: God has judged this evil system for what it did to His beloved.

And as the earth mourns and laments and weeps ... Heaven rejoices.

Verses 21-24: So in addition to feeding the lusts of human beings for adornments and fine apparel and homes and cars and sex ... we see here reference to another source that will feed this evil system of commerce; Musical artists and craftsmen are mentioned along with the bright lights of fame. It's speaking of the entertainment industry.

And generation by generation we've become more and more addicted to entertainment and amusement. We are the "amuse me" generation.

You know the word "muse" means to think. But an "a" as a prefix to any word means

without ... “without thinking” or “to not think”.

And true to what the scriptures are saying right here ... there is already a gazillion dollar industry built around getting people not to think.

And don't miss the reference to “sorcery” either. The original word being, pharmakeia (far-mak-i'-ah), from which, of course, we get the English word pharmacy. This is the drug trafficking trade.

And lastly they made money through bloodshed. Crime of all flavors. Anything for a buck.

R.A. Torrey said of this prophetic city and system ...

“It will be given over to pleasure and business Money will be their god, pleasure their high-priest and unbridled passion the ritual of their worship.”

Conclusion: Unless you're hiding it very well ... I don't think we have any monetarily rich people in here this morning. But that doesn't mean that some of us aren't tempted or perhaps even already off track.

For us it's a divided life that we must fear and run from. It's a little God and a little world that is the most dangerous for us!

I know it reads like pure prophecy, especially in the light of **Revelation** ... but what James wrote ... he wrote to contemporary man ... to the men of his day and the Lord has preserved those words because we also need to hear them ...

James 5:1 Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries which are coming upon you. 2 Your riches have rotted and your garments have become moth-eaten. 3 Your gold and your silver have rusted; and their rust will be a witness against you and will consume your flesh like fire. It is in the last days that you have stored up your treasure!

We're not placed on this earth to pursue the creation, but the Creator.

We're called to be pilgrims ... those who are just passing through. Not putting down roots or trusting in this world or its goods.

Years ago a widely quoted preacher by the name of Wilbur Reese said with tongue in cheek ...

"I would like to buy \$3 worth of God, please.

Not enough to explode my soul or disturb my sleep, but just enough to equal a cup of warm milk or a snooze in the sunshine.

*I don't want enough of Him to make me love (someone who's different from me)
or pick beets with a migrant.*

I want ecstasy, not transformation.

I want the warmth of the womb not a new birth.

I want about a pound of the eternal in a paper sack.

I'd like to buy \$3 worth of God, please."

As Jesus told the parable of the Seed and the Sower ... "One portion of the seed", He said "**fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them out**" (Matthew 13:7).

And then as He explained to His disciples ...

Matt 13:22 "... the ... seed ... among the thorns, ... is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

Q. Does the world have a stranglehold on you this morning? – Are you in Babylon or have you run away from it?

Paul warned Timothy ...

1 Tim 6:10 For the love of money is a root of all ^[a]sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

Money is not evil ... but for us to love it ... is evil and it leads to abundant sin!