

INTRODUCTION:

1. If you have read this Revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ commentary from the beginning, you have become aware that John used specific keywords and phrases to tip us off his readers and help us follow him.
2. Perhaps the most memorable phrase for us is “they that dwell upon the earth.” That is John’s characteristic description of lost people since they dwell here and this world is not our home. We are just passing through.¹
3. Another important phrase that John uses repeatedly is “after these things,” μετὰ ταῦτα, translated “after this.” John used this phrase when he changed the subject matter and wanted his readers to follow the change in his thinking.
4. As we begin our study of Revelation chapter 18, which details the destruction, not of religious Babylon, but of commercial and political Babylon, let us remember to look for John’s helpful phrases.
5. But before we consider our text, allow me to present the comments of the late J. Vernon McGee on this chapter:

In the chapter before us we see the judgment of commercial Babylon and the reaction of both earth and heaven to it.

In chapters 17 and 18 two Babylons are brought before us. The Babylon of chapter 17 is ecclesiastical. The Babylon of chapter 18 is economic. The first is religious—the apostate church which entered the great tribulation period. The second is political and commercial. The commercial center is loved by the kings of the earth; and the apostate church is hated by the kings of the earth, as we saw in chapter 17. The apostate church is destroyed by the kings of the earth. When Christ returns, political Babylon will be destroyed by the judgment of God. Obviously, mystery Babylon, the apostate church, is destroyed first in the midst of the great tribulation; while commercial Babylon will be destroyed at the second coming of Christ. These two Babylons are not one and the same city. I personally believe that mystery Babylon is Rome and that, when it goes down in the midst of the great tribulation, the religious center shifts to Jerusalem because it is at Jerusalem that the false prophet will put up his image of the Antichrist to be worshiped. Commercial Babylon is ancient Babylon, rebuilt as the commercial capital of the world. This city is the final capital of the political power of the Beast.

A few years ago it seemed rather farfetched that the power could reach back into the Mideast, but since then we have experienced a shortage of energy, and when they cut off the oil supply, the whole world feels it. They wield tremendous power. The wealth of the world is moving into that particular area because of the price of oil. It could well become the great commercial capital of the world. And this great commercial center, which will be Babylon rebuilt, will be destroyed at the second coming of Christ.

Sometime ago a Jew challenged the Israeli minister of tourism by saying, “How does it come about that all the countries surrounding Israel have oil, but Israel doesn’t?” His reply was this: “God gave the Arabs oil and the Jews the Bible. Do you want to exchange with them? God forbid. The oil will run out quick enough, but the Bible will last forever.”

¹ 1 Peter 2.11

Revelation Chapter 18

There has been some disagreement among conservative expositors about whether or not ancient Babylon will be rebuilt. Candidly, for many years I took the position that it would not be rebuilt. However, I believe now that it will be rebuilt. Isaiah 13:19-22 speaks of the fact that ancient Babylon is to be rebuilt and destroyed, and this destruction is what is mentioned in chapter 18 of Revelation, which is before us. Actually, I don't think it could be rebuilt on the same spot because the Euphrates River has moved about fourteen miles from the ancient city.

There are two views of the destruction of Babylon which are diametrically opposed to each other. The viewpoint and perspective are highly important. (1) The reaction of men of business and politics is one of great anguish. To them it is the depth of tragedy. It means the total bankruptcy of big business. (2) The second reaction is that of heaven. It is one of joy that the holiness and justice of God is vindicated. It means the end of man's sinful career on earth. This will bring to an end the great tribulation period.²

(18.1) And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

1. The verse opens with one of John's characteristic phrases I just mentioned, μετὰ ταῦτα, alerting readers to a change in the storyline is occurring. John informs his readers that he is shifting gears a bit. However, having read the entire 18th chapter, we see that John's subject is still Babylon. So, what gives? "After these things" refers to after the bowl judgments. The angel described is distinct from the bowl angels and appears to be a high ranking angel coming from the presence of God, based upon the descriptive terminology of 'great authority' and the 'earth illuminated with his glory.'"³
2. Careful analysis of chapter 17 and chapter 18, together with John's cue phrase, "And after these things," convinces me that while chapter 17 deals with the destruction of religious Babylon, chapter 18 describes the destruction of commercial and political Babylon. That change in subject matter, from the ecclesiastical aspect of Babylon to the commercial and political aspect of Babylon, is why John wrote "after these things." As we progress through this chapter, I will point out evidence that shows this to be true.
3. After informing his readers of a change in subject matter, John recorded the dispatch of an angel of incredible power and glory from heaven: "I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory."
 - a. The phrase "I saw another angel" strongly suggests that John is describing an actual angel, as opposed to the Lord Jesus Christ appearing in the form of an angel. This is because the word "another" translates the Greek word ἄλλον.⁴ The word ἄλλον typically refers to a distinct other of the same kind as opposed to ἕτερος, which would suggest a specific other of a different kind.⁵ Therefore,

² J. Vernon McGee, *Revelation – Volume III*, (Pasadena, CA: Thru The Bible Books, 1979), pages 105-106.

³ Bob Kollin, *Revelation Unlocked*, (Springfield, Missouri: 21st Century Press, 2003), page 173.

⁴ *Ἡ ΚΑΙΝΗ ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ*, (London: Trinitarian Bible Society), page 472.

⁵ Bauer, Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, (Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), pages 46-47 and 399.

this is an angel, not the Son of God, and a distinct angel from the one mentioned in Revelation 17.1.

- b. "... come down from heaven, having great power." God has dispatched this angel, and is an angel that has ἐξουσίαν μεγάλην, which is authority that is great, or control that is great. So, something important, something of real significance, is going to be dealt with by this angel.
- c. "... and the earth was lightened with his glory." "The fifth bowl (16:10) will have plunged the world into darkness. Against that backdrop, the sudden, blazing appearance of another angel (not the same as in 17:1, 7, 15) will certainly rivet the world's attention on him and his message of judgment on Babylon (cf. 14:8)."⁶

(18.2) And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

1. Notice the *method* of this great angel: "And he cried mightily with a strong voice."
 - a. The Greek word that is here translated "cried" is the word κράζω. The word refers to screaming, to crying out with a loud voice.⁷ Therefore, the basic concept here is an angel sent from God with dazzling glory that lights up the dark sky, who wields the great authority given to him by God to accomplish his mission by screaming/yelling his message to the world.
 - b. But this incandescent angel with great authority does not only scream/yell. Our text says, "he cried mightily with a strong voice." He cried or screamed or yelled powerfully with a φωνῆ μεγάλη. Change the order of those last two words, and you have the word megaphone, a powerful voice.
 - c. Unless there is some supernatural compensation for what the angel does with his voice, the decibel level, the amount of energy involved in this angel crying out for all humanity worldwide to hear, will destroy the hearing of many and almost certainly kill many people.
 - d. Who would be protected from harm by this blast of sound? Those in hiding. Those Jews and Christians who have sought refuge in the caves and basements, who dare not show their faces for fear the antichrist's stormtroopers, will identify them by their lack of a mark on their forehead or the back of their right hand.

⁶ See footnote for Revelation 18.1 from John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1997), page 2017.

⁷ Fritz Rienecker & Cleon Rogers, *Linguistic Key To The Greek New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Regency Reference Library, 1980), page 851.

- e. So you see, “all things do work together for good to them that love God.” Persecution is a terrible thing. But persecution drives people into hiding. And it would only be in hiding that people would be safe from the devastating effects of this angel’s loud voice.
2. Take note of the **message** of this great angel. It is found in the rest of verse 2 and verse 3, but I will only address the rest of verse 2 at this time: “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.”

- a. The message begins, “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen.” That this is political and commercial Babylon seems evidenced by the fact that Isaiah in Isaiah 21.9 predicts this very thing, Isaiah was referring to the nation of Babylon in his prophecy. Read along with me:

“And, behold, here cometh a chariot of men, *with* a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground.”

- b. The pronouncement is that commercial Babylon is destroyed and has become the habitation of devils, δαιμόνων, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird. Consider two other passages:

Isaiah 13.19-22:

- ¹⁹ And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.
²⁰ It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there.
²¹ But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there.
²² And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in *their* pleasant palaces: and her time *is* near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged.

Jeremiah 50.38-40:

- ³⁸ A drought *is* upon her waters; and they shall be dried up: for it *is* the land of graven images, and they are mad upon *their* idols.
³⁹ Therefore the wild beasts of the desert with the wild beasts of the islands shall dwell *there*, and the owls shall dwell therein: and it shall be no more inhabited for ever; neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation.

⁴⁰ As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour *cities* thereof, saith the LORD; so shall no man abide there, neither shall any son of man dwell therein.

3. When you read Revelation 18.2 together with the Isaiah and Jeremiah passages, several conclusions seem reasonable:
 - a. Since the Revelation passage refers to a future event, the Isaiah and Jeremiah passages would also refer to a future event since the three seem to parallel each other.
 - b. Since the Isaiah and Jeremiah passages refer to a literal Babylon, not a strictly religious one, so also ought Revelation 18 to be referring to a literal city of Babylon.
 - c. Finally, since no literal city of Babylon presently exists, and since old Babylon was not overthrown by God the way Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities were by fire from heaven, we might very well expect Babylon to be rebuilt sometime before the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ so that these prophecies could be literally fulfilled.

(18.3) For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

1. Notice the reach of political and commercial Babylon's tentacles. All nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. The merchants of the earth have waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.
2. Babylon will push the engine of big business and commerce to the absolute maximum. If there has been a more destructive force in the family unit or the Church than lust-driven commercialism and the insane drive to make money, I do not know what it could be.
3. What ever happened to the man who refused overtime at work to serve God? What ever happened to the man who changed jobs to serve God? What ever happened to the man who made everything come second to taking his family to worship God together? And what happened to forsaking a job or a promotion so that your family might stay in their Church home where God had so often blessed them in the past?
4. May God help us to avoid that mad rush for the accumulation of wealth that ruins so many Christians today. We are ruining many by failure and ruining the rest by success. Instead, let us faithfully sow that we might later reap in due season if we faint not. Let us have nothing of Babylonianism in our thinking or our behavior.

(18.4) And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

1. We have already noted that the antichrist and his followers have destroyed religious Babylon, probably because her usefulness had ended. Now, we see the warning that goes forth just before the destruction of commercial and political Babylon.
2. Before we examine this verse closely, note once more the difference between religious and political Babylon. There was no warning in chapter 17 before religious Babylon was destroyed. Why? Because it was not God Who destroyed her but the antichrist. Here, as God prepares to destroy political Babylon, He warns His Own.
3. “And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people” The voice referring to His audience as “my people” persuades me that the speaker is either God the Father or the Lord Jesus Christ. Only deity can refer to them as “my people.”
4. “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.”

The call to separation has come to the people of God in every age. It came to Abraham (Genesis 12:1); to Lot (Genesis 19:12-14); to Moses (Numbers 16:23-26). “Go ye forth of Babylon” (Isaiah 48:20), said God to His people Israel. “Remove out of the midst of Babylon” (Jeremiah 50:8). “Flee out of the midst of Babylon” (Jeremiah 51:6). “My people, go ye out of the midst of her, and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the LORD” (Jeremiah 51:45). And in the New Testament we read, “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers. . . . Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord” (2 Corinthians 6:14,17). “Neither be partakers of other men’s sins: keep thyself pure” (1 Timothy 5:22).

God’s people are not of this world system (John 17:14,16). When professing Christians ally themselves with Babylon, or with any other worldly society, on the pretence that they are going to give a testimony and attempt to change those who are in it, they violate the plain teaching of God’s Word. The reason why is plain.⁸

5. Judgment is about to fall, so God’s people are warned to flee so they are not engulfed in the destruction that is about to occur.

(18.5) For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

1. Consider the difference between saved and lost. To the saved, God promises, “their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.”⁹ However, God will remember the sins of the unrepentant forever, and He will hold them against that person who refused to turn from sin and come to the Lord Jesus by faith.

⁸ Lehman Strauss, *The Book Of The Revelation*, (Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1963), page 308.

⁹ Hebrews 10.17

2. As an aside, consider the oft-promoted practice of Christians taught to repent their sins and prayerfully ask God to forgive them. It seems strange to encourage believers to ask for God's forgiveness in light of the passages that explicitly state that God *will not* remember the sins of His Own (Jeremiah 31.34; Hebrews 8.12; 10.17) but that He will remember the sins of the unsaved. The only place in the New Testament where someone is directed to pray for forgiveness was Simon Magus upon the Apostle Peter's exposure of the former's false hope, Acts 8.21-23. Ongoing repentance and the timely expression of sorrow for sins committed by believers seem to be the New Testament pattern, First John 1.9. It makes no sense for the believer to ask God for what one already has from God: forgiveness.
 3. Remember that this Babylonian system of political power and commercial activity is an interconnected network of real people. These are people working in concert that are referred to. In addition, in their pursuit of money and power, they have willingly opposed the plan and purpose of God to satisfy their lust for power and wealth. For these sins and upon these people, God will pour out His wrath in judgment.
 4. "O pastor, are you against free market capitalism?" No, I am against free market capitalists who will not be restrained from their pursuits by God's expressed will. The economic system that we usually think of when we refer to capitalism is the most unrestricted and liberating approach to production and livelihood. Capitalism is what people naturally do to earn a living when you leave them alone and do not impose unnecessary government-mandated requirements upon them.
 5. But what happens when a man conducts his business so that his love for money overrides his moral obligations and duties as a keeper of his fellow man? For example, the British East India Company did everything they could to keep missionaries such as William Carey out of India in the latter 17th and early 18th centuries. Why so? If the Indians became Christians, they felt they would have to treat them right, which would cut profits. Keeping the missionaries out to keep the Indians Hindu was their greedy profit motive.
 5. "Is it wrong for a Christian to go into business?" No! However, your responsibilities as a Christian should never give way to your obligations as a person in business. The term is Christian businessman, not businessman Christian. Being a Christian comes first.
 6. What will happen to commercial and political Babylon at the end of the Great Tribulation will be the result of unbridled greed and a lust for power that forever puts to rest what Paul meant by the statement to Timothy, "For the love of money is the root of all evil." Moreover, God will severely judge those with great wealth, who had great opportunities to do right, but who served themselves rather than God or their fellow man.
- (18.6) Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.

1. We live in a day when every man says in his own heart, “You can’t get away with that. I’ll sue you for what you did. I’ll get my revenge.”
2. There are certainly times when lawsuits are in order. After all, our system of laws includes provisions for civil suits being brought against those who have wronged you, with our government providing a legal way for wrongs to be righted. That said, Christians must remember that vengeance is not ours to exact.
3. Consider Romans 12.18-19:
 - ¹⁹ Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.
 - ²⁰ Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.
4. What does it mean to heap coals of fire on someone’s head? I am not sure, but I do know this: Vengeance is the Lord’s. Therefore, when you seek vengeance upon someone, you are usurping God’s role in that other person’s life and setting yourself up as the judge and final authority concerning business, which God says is His alone to deal with.
5. Revelation 18 shows some measure of the Lord’s vengeance. What injustice has been done to you in the marketplace? God will repay twofold. How has the merchant cheated you? God will get even. How about that lemon you bought with your last bit of savings and cannot get satisfaction for? Be confident that God will repay you. And in verse 7, we see it happening.
6. So great are Babylon’s sins that God will not return to them according to their wrongdoing, but will repay them double. Their punishment will be great. God’s wrath will be severe.

(18.7) How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.

1. How pretty, intelligent, and secure is big money in our day and time. Is she not the queen who rules over all? Has not big money placed herself in high positions above the laws of nations? Sure, she has.
2. The comedians joke about celebrities being immune from punishment for crimes in California. They joke about Jeffrey Epstein and Hunter Biden getting a pass for years because of their connections and fame. But they are wrong.
4. Remember Jon Bene Ramsey, the little beauty contest winner murdered in Boulder, Colorado 1996? No one was ever arrested. No prosecutions of any kind. Why not? Were her parents celebrities? Was her half-brother a celebrity? No. However, her father is a highly wealthy man whose resources prejudiced an incompetent Boulder,

Colorado, police department. Then the incident with Kobe Bryant, whose wealth and fame, overwhelmed a small Colorado tourist town police department and district attorney in 2003 when a young woman accused him of rape. I do not comment on guilt or innocence

5. Do I know anything about their guilt or innocence? No. But we have observed what can happen when a very wealthy suspect decides to respond in every way his wealth enables, sometimes spending more money than the entire police department and district attorney budgeted for the year.
6. Combine all of those individuals into a vast system of commerce and political clout. Imagine what it would be like for them to have that kind of power in a system that did not oppose them but which they were allied with. That is what Rome was like. That is what it was like in the Soviet Union. That is what it is like in China, to a degree. That is what it is like in Saudi Arabia. It is proving to be like that in our country. And it will be worse than all of them combined during the Great Tribulation.
7. However, no matter how bad it will be, according to the heights to which she has glorified herself, she shall suffer torment and sorrow. God will exact vengeance upon commercial and political Babylon.
8. Notice how severe the punishment will be. Verse 6 calls for double punishment according to Babylon's works. This verse calls for retribution in direct proportion to her extravagance. Interesting. The world thinks they do well by living beyond their means, by living the golden and gilded life. But God's punishment at the end of the Great Tribulation will be related to how high on the hog the people will be living, how much excess Babylon indulges herself in.
9. Why so? The wicked rich mistake the reason God gives wealth. God does not give wealth to enjoy, be extravagant, or indulge yourself. God gives wealth to use for His glory. And when great wealth is greatly misused, great punishment will follow.

(18.8) Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.

1. This verse powerfully reinforces my belief that the Isaiah 13 and Jeremiah 50 prophecies we looked at earlier concerning Babylon's destruction have not yet been fulfilled but will be fulfilled in the future. This verse indicates that that judgment will be meted out in a single day by fire.
2. Notice Who destroys Babylon here. Remember, religious Babylon was destroyed by the antichrist in chapter 17. And when it happened, the wealthy and powerful did not mourn her destruction. But here, in chapter 18, we see political and commercial Babylon destroyed, with her passing significantly mourned, as we shall see.

3. Why will she be mourned in this chapter? Because in this chapter, it is the Lord God Who destroys her. Being opposed to Jesus Christ and His cause, they will naturally resist God's judgment upon Babylon.
4. John describes how four plagues destroy the city. Death, mourning, famine and fire. Though it is difficult to imagine anyone dying in one day of mourning or famine causing deaths in a single day, we can imagine the city suffering the various judgments that have been poured out to this point, causing death, causing mourning, and bringing famine. Then, swiftly and suddenly, God smites the city with fire that brings about her unexpected end.

(18.9) And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning,

1. See what I mean? Babylon will be mourned. The kings of the earth may not be only those who rule countries but also those who run powerful multinational conglomerates. No matter who they are, they have winked and nodded to an entangled web of illegal, immoral, and unethical arrangements to build their wealth to live off the backs of the ordinary person's labor. God calls it fornication. Why so? It is the illicit gratification of the lust.
2. Do the individuals in the inner circles live deliciously with her? Oh, my, yes. They have little to do with ordinary people, living far above the fray in an elite insider club that gathers in Davos, Switzerland, every year.¹⁰ And when they see their beloved city of Babylon, destroyed by God with fire, seeing the smoke from afar, they will mourn and weep because they will know that their sweet deals have ended, their advantages over others have come to an end.
3. Just as Sodom and Gomorrah were, Babylon will be burned with fire.

(18.10) Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.

In that day Babylon will dominate and rule the world. The capital of Antichrist will be Babylon, and he will have the first total dictatorship. The world will become an awful place. In that day everything will center in Babylon. The stock market will be read from Babylon—not New York. Babylon instead of Paris will set the styles for the world. A play, to be successful, will have to be a success in Babylon, not London. Everything in that city will be in rebellion against Almighty God, and it centers in Antichrist.

No one dreamed that this great city would be judged. Yet by the time the sun goes down, Babylon is nothing but smoldering ruins. When the news goes out, the world is stunned, and then begins the wail. The whole world will howl when Babylon goes down. I imagine that if you were on the moon, you would have to tune down your earphones because the howl would be so loud!

In chapter 17 we saw that the kings of the earth hated religious Babylon and that Antichrist got rid of it in order that he might be worshiped without any competition in the area of religion. And the kings of the earth joined in her destruction.

¹⁰ <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/12/davos-annual-meeting-everything-you-need-to-know/>

Revelation Chapter 18

In contrast to this, here in chapter 18 we see that the kings of the earth love commercial Babylon because of the revenue she brought to their coffers. In fact, it is called here fornication— you can't find a better word for it than that! All the lobbyists were in Babylon, not Washington, D.C. They were representing all the great corporations in the world. But the kings desert Babylon like rats leaving a sinking ship; their mourning is both pathetic and contemptible. They eulogize her with panegyrics of praise, but there is a hopelessness in their anguish. They marvel at the sudden destruction of that which they thought was gilt-edged security. The judgment came in the space of one hour, reminding us of the sudden devastation caused by atomic explosions. This is a frightful picture presented to us, and it is the final conflagration and catastrophic judgment that will bring Christ to the earth to set up His kingdom.¹¹

(18.11) And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more:

1. Why is it that it is the merchants who weep and mourn? Why do the poor not weep and mourn?
2. Simple. The poor will not benefit from commercial Babylon for seven long years. Remember, there has been famine and pestilence. Food has been scarce for the poor all along.
3. For that reason, the demise of commercial Babylon will have little impact on the poor. But for the rich

(18.12-13)¹² The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,

¹³ And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.

1. Look at this list John has provided. Not one of the things mentioned here are commodities that can be afforded by the multitudes and the poor of this world. These are the items that are enjoyed only by the rich and the elitists.
2. “The list of articles of merchandise (twenty-eight in all) commences with gold and finishes with slaves and souls of men.”¹²
3. Notice the last two items these merchants are used to purchasing.¹³ Slaves and the souls of men. What depths of depravity will humanity sink to when the Spirit of God no longer holds back the tide against evil?

(18.14) And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.

¹¹ McGee, pages 113-114.

¹² L. Sale-Harrison, *The Remarkable Revelation*, (New York: Sale-Harrison Publications, 1930), page 177.

¹³ <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/otip/news/bureau-justice-statistics-releases-human-trafficking-data-collection-activities-2021-and>

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1. God takes away that which the wealthy and powerful lusted after. In essence, He takes away the toys their lusts fed on.
2. How soon will they be made available to those people again? The Bible says, “no more at all.”
3. I suggest you underline “no more at all” in your Bible. It is crucial in this chapter revealing the finality of God’s judgment against Babylon.

(18.15) The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing,

1. Though they weep at her passing, the merchants are intelligent enough to stand back so they do not take part in her destruction.
2. How little do they realize their judgment will come soon enough?

(18.16-19) ¹⁶ And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!
¹⁷ For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off,
¹⁸ And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What *city* is like unto this great city!
¹⁹ And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.

1. These people who have trusted in riches see how transient their fortunes are.
2. There is another phrase, found three times in this chapter, which you should probably underline. It is found in verses 10, 17, and 19. The phrase is “in one hour.”
3. Three times, John records the wealthy saying this phrase. How surprised they will be, how very aware they will be that Babylon, which took so long to build and accumulate, is destroyed “in one hour.”
4. Take this to heart and keep your priorities in order. Make sure you are investing your life in that which cannot be destroyed “in one hour,” or ever. Make sure you, Christian, are not making a Babylonian mistake by spending all your labors on material wealth that will just be burned “in one hour.”
5. By the way, have you also noticed that the phrase “Alas, alas” appears in verses 10, 16, and 19 and is the cry of those weeping and wailing over the destruction of the city of Babylon and the commercial and political Babylonian system? The word translated as “Alas” is the word οὐαὶ. So, they are crying Οὐαὶ, οὐαὶ.

(18.20) Rejoice over her, *thou* heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.

1. They cried, weeping and wailing when they saw the great and wicked city of Babylon destroyed in an hour, according to verse 19. But if there is sadness and mourning on earth over Babylon's judgment, we will shout, "Praise the Lord!" in heaven.
2. "Rejoice over her, *thou* heaven" The verb εὐφραίνου, translated "rejoice," is imperative, which is to say this is a command, a directive, an instruction.¹⁴ Sometimes God's people do not know what to do. So, as the voice from heaven directed God's people on earth to come out of the city in verse 4, the same voice directs God's people in heaven to rejoice. The destruction of Babylon is a good thing. The display of God's justice and righteous retribution is good.
3. Who is told to rejoice? It seems as though heaven is so directed, as are the holy apostles and prophets. It would seem, then, that everyone in heaven (both the redeemed and the holy angels), including the twelve apostles and the Old Testament prophets, is in mind here.
4. What God had said in Deuteronomy 32.35, which Paul echoed in Romans 12.19, about not seeking vengeance because vengeance belongs to God, is shown in this verse to be true. God will exact vengeance against those who have harmed His children. As well, when He does exact vengeance it will be severe, indeed.
5. Reflect for a moment on the contrast between how the world will respond to the destruction of Babylon and how God's people in heaven will respond to Babylon's destruction. One group will be sad, and the other will be happy. One group will mourn, and the other will rejoice.
6. Do we not see this type of thing everywhere? One group rejoices when the booze is served, while the others grieve. One group of people laugh when the off-color jokes are told, while the others are offended and saddened. One group of people will say at a funeral, "Well, at least she is in a better place," while the others are broken-hearted because they know she died without Jesus Christ and is at that very moment burning in Hell.
7. Different likes. Different loves. Different actions. Different reactions. Different values. Different goals and objectives. The child of the devil seeks ways and opportunities to serve himself, while the child of God seeks ways and opportunities to serve the Lord. A terrible conflict is in progress, a great battle for people's souls. The contest is ultimately between God and Satan. It spread into the human realm when the serpent beguiled Eve, and Adam ate the forbidden fruit. What we are studying in Revelation is the war entering its climax, the final battles reaching a fever pitch and a crescendo.

¹⁴ Rogers, Jr., Cleon L. and Rogers III, Cleon L., *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key To The Greek New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: ZondervanPublishingHouse, 1998), page 645.

8. The holy apostles and prophets are key players throughout this unfolding drama of redemption. They have been some of the central speakers in the cast of characters, treated very roughly and subject to terrible abuse by the enemy and his pawns. How very gratifying it is to know, therefore, that when God is about to wrap the conflict up, when the Lord Jesus Christ is about to step back onto center stage to defeat our enemy and thwart his intentions dramatically, these who gave their all for the Master down through the centuries will be remembered.
 9. To paraphrase, God is as much as saying, “Remember when they mocked you and ridiculed you? Remember when you suffered such great affliction for love’s sake, for My sake, for Jesus’ sake? Remember when you were under orders to seek no vengeance because vengeance is mine? Remember when I comforted you with the indwelling Holy Spirit and assured your heart that the end of all things was mine to control and that it would be worth it all? The end is coming, just like I told you, and it is now time for you to rejoice. I remembered you. In part, this is for you.”
- (18.21-23) ²¹ And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.
- ²² And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft *he be*, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee;
- ²³ And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.

What descriptive language John uses to describe the extent of Babylon’s destruction. Consider one statement at a time:

1. Verse 21: “And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.”
 - a. “Millstones were large, heavy stones used to grind grain. This metaphor portrays the violence of Babylon’s overthrow.”¹⁵
 - b. “John in his vision now sees a ‘mighty angel’ (cf. 5:2; 10:1) throw a stone like a great millstone into the sea, portraying the violent downfall of the great city. A similar instance is found in Jeremiah 51:61-64. In this passage in Jeremiah, Seraiah, a prince who accompanied Zedekiah into Babylon, is instructed after reading the book of Jeremiah to bind a stone to it and cast it into the midst of the Euphrates with the words ‘Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her: and they shall be weary.’ In the similar instance portrayed in Revelation, the millstone is cast into the sea instead of the Euphrates. The symbolism is the same. It represents the destruction of the great

¹⁵ See footnote for Revelation 18.21 from John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1997), page 2018.

city, which like a stone cast into the sea will be found no more. The ultimate end of Babylon in all its forms will be accomplished by God's judgment at the end of the great tribulation. Babylon will be found 'no more at all' (cf. vv. 14, 22-23). The expression occurs seven times with minor variations."¹⁶

2. Verse 22 begins, "And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee"
 - a. Genesis 4.16-21:
 - ¹⁶ And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.
 - ¹⁷ And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch.
 - ¹⁸ And unto Enoch was born Irad: and Irad begat Mehujael: and Mehujael begat Methusael: and Methusael begat Lamech.
 - ¹⁹ And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah.
 - ²⁰ And Adah bare Jabal: he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle.
 - ²¹ And his brother's name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ.
 - b. Music, which you might think it is unusual to mention in Revelation 18.22, was first mentioned in the Bible in connection with the descendants of Cain in the passage we have just read.
 - c. Some believe Cain's descendants resorted to music to soothe their guilt and dull their minds against the knowledge of judgment for their rebellion against God. This is likely since God's Word mentions spiritual songs, and it is not likely that Cain's descendants would be connected to spiritual music, but instead to that which is carnal and fleshly.
 - d. Such music as the world uses to deaden their spiritual sensitivities will end when Jesus comes again.
3. Verse 22 concludes, "and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft *he be*, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee."
 - a. The artisans, who typify the rise of commerce and the building of commercial Babylon, will be found no more. Neither will the instruments of business be heard anymore.

¹⁶ John Walvoord, *The Revelation Of Jesus Christ*, (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1966), page 266.

- b. Thus, the economies of the world will be destroyed. How can economies exist when the labor and the tools are gone from the center of commerce? Destruction will be complete.
4. Verse 23 begins, “And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee.”

Even in war zones such as Ukraine, Yemen, and Syria, some people make a living, and others marry. But not when Babylon is judged. It will be like the terrible destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki but without the radiation.

5. Verse 23 ends, “for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.”
 - a. That which rose in rebellion against God so many years ago, and all that symbolized and was the byproduct of that rebellion will be no more.
 - b. Babylon was the fountainhead of humanity’s deception following the Flood. And the nations were all deceived as Eve was deceived. Regardless of deception or not, they are responsible for their sins and will be punished accordingly.
 - c. God will demonstrate His power. Christ, as the Righteous Judge, will move terribly and swiftly.

(18.24) And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

1. This verse tells why the judgment of God will fall. Homicides. The murders of God’s preachers, the murders of God’s people, and the murders of those who, whether saved or lost, are image-bearers of God.
2. In Genesis 9.6, we read these words: “Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.” This shows God’s authorization for the crime of murder to be met with the execution of the murderer. However, this pronouncement of God is rarely honored anymore for two reasons:
 - a. *First*, the value placed upon human life is so low that taking another person’s life is hardly considered a crime worthy of capital punishment.
 - b. *Second*, in those few cases where a person is convicted of a capital offense and sentenced to forfeit his life, the burden of proof is so low that there is significant doubt whether the person convicted is guilty of the crimes he is convicted for.¹⁷

¹⁷ The sad state of the justice system in the USA is exposed by John Grisham, *The Innocent Man: Murder and Injustice in a Small Town*, (New York: Doubleday, 2006), Harvey A. Silverglate, *Three Felonies A Day: How The*

3. For these and many other reasons, most murderers think they get away with their murders. This is because so few who take the life of another are ever discovered.
 - a. Consider the family member who overmedicates an aged relative to get him or her out of the way. That is a murder that rarely results in an arrest, much less a conviction.
 - b. Consider the doctors who withhold their expertise because they believe the world is overcrowded with the wrong kind of people, such as the aged and the severely disabled. Will that physician ever be brought to justice?
 - c. Then there is the government official who promotes abortions in third world countries. Will such a person ever be brought to justice?
 - d. How about the large pharmaceutical companies that manufacture birth control pills that do not prevent conception but cause early-term abortions? The scientists who work at such companies and the directors of that kind of company will never be brought to justice for the blood on their hands.
 - e. How about the public school teachers and quack experts who medicate little boys because they are active, supposing them to have ADHD, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder? Will the medicated little boys, who will later destroy their lives with illegal drugs, ever be vindicated? Will their moms, who drug kids they cannot discipline, and their foolish public school teachers who are complicit in such crimes ever be brought to justice for the suicides and accidental deaths caused by the drugging of the little boys years earlier? No.
 - f. Then there are the abortionists, the abortionist's nurses, and other staff, the hospitals where abortions are performed, the mothers who pay physicians to kill their inconvenient children, and the men who sire children and sit idly by when they are murdered. Will anyone ever speak for the helpless little ones?
 - g. Within the last few years, there has been an outbreak of so-called gender confusion. The California attorney general is suing a school district in California to prevent the implementation of a policy mandating that teachers inform parents if they suspect a child of "transitioning" from one gender to another by employing medications or surgery.¹⁸ This will increase the likelihood of suicides by those confused young people. Will the attorney general have blood on his hands? Yes. Will he be accountable in a court of law? Not in this lifetime.

Feds Target The Innocent, (New York: Encounter Books, 2011), and Sidney Powell & Harvey A Silverglate, *Conviction Machine: Standing Up To Federal Prosecutorial Abuse*, (New York: Encounter Books, 2020).

¹⁸ <https://www.osvnews.com/2023/08/30/calif-ag-sues-school-district-over-gender-change-parental-notification-requirement/>

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4. All these people, and many more, think they get away with what they are doing. Moreover, as far as human reckoning is concerned, they do get away with their savage brutality and murders. But God keeps track, does He not? He writes such things down in His books in heaven (Revelation 20.12).
5. Somehow and in some way, there is a connection between all this innocent shedding of blood by these people with this wicked world system that Babylon will epitomize. And as the sins of all humanity will be judged, so will that which symbolizes the organized rebellion against God be judged. ***No one*** will get away with ***anything!***
6. When we take up our study of Revelation chapter 19, we will read of the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power and great glory!