

BABYLON'S COMMERCIAL SYSTEM

(Rev 18:1-8) 05-03-20

Grace Bible Church, Gillette, Wyoming

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- I. COMPARISON BETWEEN CH. 17 & 18
 - A. Ch. 17 describes Babylon the Religious System. Ch. 18 describes Babylon the Commercial System.
 - B. Ch. 17 Babylon is likened to an adulterous harlot. Ch. 18 Babylon is likened to a great commerce city.
 - C. Ch. 17 & 18 Babylon is a literal city and Antichrist's capitol (Rev 17:18; 18:10, 16, 18, 19, 21).
 - D. Ch. 17 begins in the beginning of the Tribulation. Ch. 18 also begins in the beginning of the Trib.
 - E. Ch. 17 ends at the midpoint of the Tribulation. Ch. 18 ends at the conclusion of the Tribulation.
 - F. Ch. 17 takes place in the 1st 3 ½ years of the Trib. Ch. 18 takes place in all 7 years of the Tribulation.
 - G. Ch. 17 ends because of the worship of the Antichrist. Ch. 18 ends because of the judgment of God.
- II. OUTLINE OF CH. 18
 - A. Fall of Babylon and Its Sin (Rev 18:1-8)
 - B. Fall of Babylon and Its Lament (Rev (18:9-19)
 - C. Fall of Babylon and Its Conclusion (Rev 18:20-24)
- III. SIN OF COMMERCIAL BABYLON (Rev 18:1-4)
 - A. Illumination on Babylon (1)
 1. Different Aspect - By the phrase "**after these things**," we understand John's vision takes a different look at Babylon. Instead of Babylon's Religious System, John sees Babylon's Commercial System.
 2. Angel of Great Authority - This **angel** is most likely not one of the angels that had the seven bowls (Rev 17:1), but an angelic messenger of God coming **down from heaven with great authority**.
 3. Earth Illumined with His Glory
 - a. Not Christ
 - 1) Not The Angel of the Lord - Because the text states that the earth was illumined by "**his**" **glory**, some take this angel as Christ. However, we have no appearances of the "the Angel of the Lord" (i.e. Christ) in the NT. Angels reflect the glory of the Lord as in the case of the angels that appeared to the shepherds at Christ's birth (Luk 2:9-13).
 - 2) Another of the Same Kind - The Greek word for "**another**" is *allos* and means another of the same kind," i.e. another angel.
 - b. Exposed Babylon's Darkness - In contrast to the incredible darkness by which the fifth bowl judgment brought (Rev 16:10), the angel's brilliant appearance **illumined the earth**. The angel's illumination also exposed the spiritual darkness of a world led by Satan, demons, and Antichrist.
 - B. Demonic Headquarters of Babylon (2)
 1. Babylon's Predicted Fall - Numerous times John saw the vision that Babylon would be judged and fall (cf. Isa 21:9).
 - a. Rev 14:8 - It was first proclaimed by an angel who was accompanied by another angel proclaiming the gospel.
 - b. Rev 16:19 - It was proclaimed in conjunction with the 7th bowl judgment.
 - c. Rev 18:2 - It is preeminently proclaimed in Chapter 18. All along the Lord was predicting the fall of the Antichrist's capitol, giving encouragement to the saints.
 2. Babylon's Demonic Headquarters - Throughout time, Babylon has been at the center of evil and demonic activity. It has now become the demonic headquarters and "**dwelling place**"

for demons (Euphrates cf. Rev 9:14-16 cf. Bottomless Pit - Rev 9:2-5, 11; Armageddon - Rev 16:13-14, 16).

3. Babylon's Unclean and Hateful Birds - The use of "**unclean and hateful birds**" suggests either the description of circling demonic activity or a reference to complete destruction that is about to happen.

C. Worldwide Commerce of Babylon (3)

1. Nations Drunk With Wine - The description v. 3 is that of the Antichrist's rule over the world's commercial system. All the "**nations**" are completely intoxicated ("**drunk with wine**") with Babylon's commercial system.

2. Kings Committed Immorality

a. Spiritual Adultery - In Ch. 17, the references to "**immorality**" suggested spiritual adultery with Babylon's false religious system. In Ch. 18 "immorality" suggests intimacy with Babylon's commercial empire.

b. Worldwide Religion and Commerce - Without question the two systems go hand in hand. The religious system enticed the world with its wealth (Rev 17:4). The worldwide religious system became even wealthier through its worldwide commerce. However, the worldwide false religion is replaced by the worship of the Antichrist (Rev 17:16). In addition, the Antichrist will rule Babylon's political and commercial systems.

3. Merchants Became Wealthy - The end time worldwide commerce appears to be a capitalistic economy. It has "**merchants**" (Rev 18:3, 11-13, 15, 23) and worldwide maritime trade (Rev 18:17). Nevertheless, it is ruled by the Antichrist. The Antichrist will demand worship and entice the world to worship him through materialism.

D. Separation from Babylon (4)

1. Voice from Heaven - The word "**another**" here is also *allos*, so the voice is the voice of another angel.

2. Come Out of Her - Believers in the Tribulation were called to **come out** of Babylon's Commercial System. This is a serious request because in order to buy or sell in the commercial system a person will need to take the mark of the beast (Rev 13:17). To refuse the mark of the beast is physical death (Rev 13:15).

3. Not Participate in Sin and Plagues - If someone takes the mark of the beast in order to **participate** in the Antichrist's **sinful** commercial system, they will bring Tribulation judgments upon himself (Rev 16:2) as well as eternal punishment (Rev 14:9-11).

IV. FALL OF COMMERCIAL BABYLON (Rev 18:5-8)

A. God's Remembered Babylon (5)

1. Sins as High as Heaven - The phrase "**sins have piled up as high as heaven**" means that Babylon was so sinful that God had His fill of it. It also could mean that there wasn't any sin that they didn't commit (spiritual adultery, materialism, Satanic worship (Rev 13:4), and murder (Rev 6:10; 17:6).

2. Reference to Ancient Babylon - It is also a reference to ancient Babylon who attempted to build a city and tower "whose top will reach into heaven," (Gen 11:4).

3. God's Remembrance - When God "remembers" something, it is not because He forgot it but then recalled it. It means that God is going to act according to a promise or judgment (i.e. Gen 9:15 cf. Isa 43:25; Jer 31:34). In the case of Babylon, God "**remembered her iniquities**" and will act in judgment because of them (cf. Rev 16:19).

B. Double Judgment for Babylon (6)

1. Double Pay Back - Though the phrase "**give back double**" may appear to be unjust for a holy God, what it actually means is to pay back in full. In an act of grace, God often withholds His full anger, but there is a time coming when He will unleash His full judgment upon sinful Babylon (cf. Jer 51:56).

2. According to Deeds - The phrase "pay back" also has reference to Babylon's wrath that she will unleash upon all those who will not worship the beast. She will receive a full mixture **according to her deeds** (cf. Jer 51:35).

C. Pride of Babylon (7)

1. Satan's Pride - If you were to sum up all of Babylon's sins it would be described as the ultimate pride. We have to remember that the one ruling Babylon will be the Antichrist, who Himself will be possessed by Satan. Satan's goal from the beginning was to be "like the Most High" (Isa 14:14).
 2. Attributes of Babylon - The attributes of Babylon's Commercial System, which will be ruled by the Antichrist, are described as self-**glorifying** (deifying) and **living sensuously** (*strêniaō - to run riot*) which in this context would include materialism.
 3. Queen - In the **heart** of Babylon, she is claiming that she is a "**queen**" (ultimate ruler) who will **never see mourning**, i.e. destruction. Her words were prophesied by Isaiah as well as her destruction (Isa 47:5-10).
- D. Plagues on Babylon (8)
1. Divine Plagues - The **plagues** that are mentioned here are in some way connected to the 7th bowl judgment (Rev 16:17-21). Some see the plagues mentioned here as additional plagues reserved for Babylon. Either way, the plagues will be divine plagues from the hand of God.
 2. One Day - The idea here is the swiftness of the judgments against Babylon (Isa 47:9). "**One day**" may be metaphorical for a short period of time because **pestilence, mourning, and famine** usually take time. Nevertheless, God could bring these things about in one day or even "one hour" (Rev 18:10, 17), especially in regard to being destroyed by fire.
 3. Lord is Strong - Babylon itself was a "strong" city because its existence was able to endure all of the judgments until the last one (Rev 18:10). However, it is the Lord who brings the final judgment against strong Babylon and it falls. It falls because the Lord who judges her is "**Strong(er).**"











V. OBSERVATIONS AND APPLICATIONS

- A. Ecumenical Trends
 1. When we studied Babylon's False Religion, we suggested that it would be ecumenical in nature.
 2. We also said that we can see today's religious culture moving in that direction.
- B. Materialistic Trends
 1. When we look at Babylon's materialism, we see Satan's and the Antichrist's enticement of the world. They draw the world away from God with materialism.
 2. We can also see today's materialistic culture moving in that direction.
 3. Materialism can be defined as the belief that material possessions and physical comfort are more important than spiritual values.
 4. It hardly seems appropriate as an application in light of the economic challenge our nation faces today. But guarding against trusting in material possessions or anything else above Christ is always an appropriate application.
 - a. Pro 11:4 Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, But righteousness delivers from death.
 - 1) Unbeliever: If you are trusting in anything other than Christ for salvation (wealth, giving, good works, religious rituals etc.) then you are trusting in the wrong thing or person - *Act 4:12 "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."*
 - b. Pro 11:28 He who trusts in his riches will fall, But the righteous will flourish like the green leaf.
 - 1) Believer: If material things mean more to you than spiritual values, your priorities are unbiblical. Spiritual growth comes from pursuing spiritual values.
Come out from among them (2Co 6:16-18).
- C. Conclusion: The church is not necessarily called to "social distancing," but it is necessarily called to "moral distancing." As the church (*ekklêsia - called out ones*) we are called out from among ecumenical trends, materialistic trends, and worldly trends so that we will "not participate in their sins or receive of their plagues" but will receive the blessings from the hope that is in Christ.





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 - A. Ecumenical Trends
 - B. Materialistic Trends

EVENTS IN THE TRIBULATION

6 - 7				8 - 11 16 17-18			
SEAL JUDGMENTS				TRUMPET JUDGMENTS		BOWL JUDGMENTS	
							
							
"FIRM COVENANT" (Dan 9:27)	ANTI-CHRIST (Rev 6:2)	"GREAT HARLOT" (Rev 17:1)	"STOP SACRIFICES" (Dan 9:27)	"COME TO LIFE" (Rev 13:14)	"ABOMIN. OF DES." (Dan 9:27; Mat 24:15)	FALL OF BABYLON (Rev 18:2)	ARMA-GEDDON (Rev 16:16)

BABYLON'S RELIGION & COMMERCE

6 - 7	8 - 11 16 17-18		
SEAL JUDGMENTS	TRUMPET BOWL JUDGMENTS JUDGMENTS		
			
			
FALSE RELIGION (Rev 17:1)	BABYLON COMMERCE (Rev 18:10-11)	ANTICHRIST'S RELIGION (Rev 17:16)	FALL OF BABYLON (Rev 18:2)