

Revelation 18 - Destruction of Babylon: Political/Economic Branch

IV. After These Things (Rev 4:1—22:21)

- (2) During the Tribulation (Rev 6:1—19:21)
 - (M) The Great City of Babylon (18:1-24)
 - (a) The Prediction of Babylon's Fall (18:1-3)
 - (i) Prediction (18:1-2a)
 - (ii) Reasons (18:2b-3)
 - (1) Demonic involvement (18:2b)
 - (2) Corruption of nations (18:3a)
 - (3) Corruption of kings (18:3b)
 - (4) Corruption of merchants (18:3c)
 - (b) The Appeal to Separate from Babylon (18:4-8)
 - (i) Appeal (18:4)
 - (ii) Reasons (18:5-8)
 - (1) Her sins (18:5)
 - (2) Her retribution (18:6)
 - (3) Her arrogance (18:7)
 - (4) Her destruction (18:8)
 - (c) The Reactions to Babylon's Fall (18:9-20)
 - (i) The Kings (18:9-10)
 - (ii) The Merchants (18:11-16)
 - (iii) The Sea Merchants (18:17-19)
 - (iv) Those in Heaven (18:20)
 - (d) The Description of Babylon's Fall (18:21-24)
 - (i) Description (18:21)
 - (ii) Nine Affected Groups (18:22-23a)
 - (iii) Cause (18:23b-24)
 - (1) Sorcery (18:23b)
 - (2) Martyrdoms (18:24)

God next led John to reveal the destruction of the commercial/economic system, that Babylon also symbolizes, in order to inform his readers of its end in the future. Wall Street identifies a particular geographical location in New York City, but it also represents a

commercial/economic system that has its center there. Likewise Babylon has, throughout history, represented a particular commercial/economic system—that originated in the geographical city of Babylon—as well as a particular religious system.

What Babylon symbolizes in this chapter is somewhat different from what it symbolizes in Rev 17. Nevertheless, the literal city is in view in both chapters, since it is the historical and philosophical headwaters for both systems. In Rev 18, there are many references to Babylon's commercial activity. The major guilt in Rev 17 was the city's abominations (17:4-5) but in Rev 18 it is her sensuality associated with luxury (18:3; Cf. 18:7,9). Heavy interaction with the merchants of the earth (18:3,11,15,23) and those connected with the sea (18:17) characterizes the Babylon of Rev 18, but is missing from Rev 17.

Rev 18 attributes to Babylon a distinctive attitude of arrogance (18:7) that is missing from Rev 17. The deep lamentation of uninvolved witnesses of her destruction in Rev 18 (18:9-11,15-16,19) contrasts strongly with the absence of such witnesses and lamentations at the destruction of Babylon in Rev 17 (17:16). The economic prosperity and luxury of the latter Babylon (18:11-14,19) is a marked difference from anything said about the earlier Babylon.

The distinction between the two chapters is that between two systems or networks that have the same geographical headquarters. In Rev 17 it is a religious system that operates independently of and in opposition to the true God; in Rev 18 it is an economic system that does the same. The collapse of the city leaves an unspeakably large void in both areas. The two chapters tell how two aspects of the city's function will come to a dramatic end and how this will affect other world entities at the time. Whether they will fall simultaneously or consecutively is yet to be determined, but they both will mark the internal deterioration of the beast's empire prior to the defeat of his political structure by the returning Warrior-King, Jesus Christ (19:11-21).

Babylon of 17 = Babylon of 18?

Some scholars treat the Babylon of Rev 17 differently than the Babylon of Rev 18. There are at least 24 reasons why the Babylon of Rev 17 is the same as Babylon of Rev 18:

1. Usage of the word "Babylon" is never used of the beast or its heads (17:5,18)
2. The context before and after Rev 18 (Cf. 16:19, 17:1,18; 18:2-3; 19:2)
3. Compare the statements of 18:3,24 with 6:9-11
4. The name is the same (compare 17:5 with 18:2)
5. The identity is the same (compare 17:18 with 18:10)
6. The clothing is the same (compare 17:4 with 18:16)
7. Both are cities (compare 17:18 with 18:10)
8. Both hold a cup (compare 17:4 with 18:6)
9. Both are drunk with the wine of immorality (compare 17:4 with 18:6)
10. Both are guilty of fornication (17:1, 2, 4, 5, 16; 18:3)

11. Both are guilty of causing the kings of the earth and the earth dwellers to imbibe of the wine (of the anger) of the city's fornication (17:2; 18:3)
12. The destiny of both is to be burned with fire (17:16; 18:8, 9, 18)
13. Both will become an utter desolation (17:16; 18:17, 19)
14. In both chapters Babylon is called "the great city" (17:18; 18:10, 16, 18, 19, 21)
15. In both chapters Babylon wears the apparel and adornment of a harlot (17:4; 18:16)
16. In both chapters Babylon is responsible for the martyrdom of the faithful (17:6; 18:20,24 [Cf. 19:2]).
17. The relationship to the kings is the same (compare 17:2 with 18:3)
18. The relationship with the nations is the same (compare 17:2 with 18:3)
19. Both persecute believers (compare 17:6 with 18:24)
20. Both experience destruction by fire (compare 17:16 with 18:8)
21. Both experience destruction by God (compare 17:17 with 18:5,8)
22. The object of destruction is the same (compare 17:5,18 with 18:10)
23. The means of destruction is the same (compare 17:16 with 18:8)
24. The source of destruction is the same (compare 17:17 with 18:8)

Revelation 18

- (M) The Great City of Babylon (18:1-24)
 - (a) The Prediction of Babylon's Fall (18:1-3)
 - (i) Prediction (18:1-2a)

1 After these things I **saw another** angel coming down from heaven, **having great authority**, and the earth was **illuminated from his glory**.

1 After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illumined with his glory.

1 After these things, I saw another angel coming down from heaven. He had great authority, and the earth was made bright by his splendor.

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

— "...I saw" - a verb of perception; whenever a verb of perception accompanies "after these things" in Rev (Cf. 4:1a; 7:1,9; 15:5; 18:1; 19:1), the phrase is used chronologically rather than eschatologically, meaning it indicates the time sequence in which the visions were revealed to John

— The four instances where "after these things" appears (1:19; 4:1b; 9:12; 20:3) *without* a verb of perception ("I saw," "I heard," "I looked," etc.) seem to indicate chronological distinctions between future events.

— Thus the mere presence of "after these things" in 18:1 does not indicate a chronological distinction between the chapters. It only shows that the events revealed to John by the

second angel were shown after he had viewed the woman on the beast.

- "...another" - *allos*, another angel of the same kind as 17:1 (one who descends from heaven to fulfill a special mission, Cf. 10:1; 20:1)
- The angel who pronounces judgment on Babylon is different from the one who served as John's guide (17:1,7,15)
- His function is to announce Babylon's destruction in conjunction with the vision granted through the agency of the earlier guide, who was one of the angels with the seven bowls
- "...having great authority" - the angel possessed great power and glory, indicative of the importance of the judgment he announced
- "...illuminated from his glory" - the 5th Bowl plunged the world into complete darkness. Against that backdrop, the sudden, blazing appearance of another angel (not the same angel as in 17:1,7,15) will certainly rivet the world's attention on him and his message of judgment on Babylon.
- Some have identified this as Jesus Christ, but this messenger's clear identification as an "angel," as well as the function he performs, indicate he is an actual angel (Cf. 14:8)

[OT reference: Ezek 43:2]

(ii) Reasons (18:2b-3)

(a) Demonic involvement (18:2b)

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**.

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.

2 He cried out in a powerful voice, "Fallen! Babylon the Great has fallen! She has become a home for demons. She is a prison for every unclean spirit, a prison for every unclean bird, and a prison for every unclean and hated beast.

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.

- A direct quote from Is 21:9 (Cf. Jer 51:8); the entire chapter of Is 21 concerns the destruction of Babylon

— Throughout this chapter (Rev 18), John will continue to refer to passages from the OT that deal directly with Babylon. The passages that John alludes to do not describe Rome, NYC, Las Vegas, the USA, etc...they describe the ancient city of Babylon.

- "...mighty voice" - the strength of the angel's voice makes it impossible for anyone to ignore what he has to say

- "...Fallen, fallen" - this pronouncement begins with the same words as in 14:8. The prophetic aorist tense expresses the certainty of the future fall.
- John describes Babylon's fall from a future perspective, through the eyes of heavenly onlookers. He does not witness the destruction himself because it is still pending at the end of the chapter (Cf. v21-24).
- Ancient Babylon fell to Cyrus the Persian in 539 BC, but that fall did not completely fulfill the OT prophecies about Babylon (Cf. Is 47:11; Jer 51:8)
- Up to today, Babylon has never undergone the destruction prophesied for it in the OT (Cf. Is 47:11; 51:8). The present state of the city is the result of slow decay and near abandonment, not sudden destruction.
- "...demons...every unclean spirit" - to become a den of demons and unclean spirits means to be utterly destroyed and vanish from existence
- Isaiah and Jeremiah prophesied this type of destruction for Babylon (Cf. Is 13:21-22; 34:11-17; Jer 51:37; Cf. Jer 50:39; Zeph 2:14-15 regarding Nineveh)
- "...prison" [2x] - *phylakē*, imprisoned is to be somewhere involuntarily; a place where these unclean spirits/demons are kept safe, but held against their will
- "...every unclean and hateful bird" - another symbol of desolation; the unclean spirits/demons hover over the fallen city like scavengers waiting to feast on prey. The former thriving metropolis has become a wilderness.

[OT reference: Is 21:9; 34:13-15; Jer 50:30; 51:37]

- (b) Corruption of nations (18:3a)
- (c) Corruption of kings (18:3b)
- (d) Corruption of merchants (18:3c)

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**."

3 For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed *acts of* immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich by the wealth of her sensuality."

3 For all the nations have drunk from the wine of her sexual immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality with her. The world's businesses have become rich from her luxurious excesses."

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.

- Babylon will be a mass exporter of everything corrupt and repugnant, to the rest of the world (sounds a lot like Hollywood today) (Cf. Jer 51:7)
- "...because" - *hoti*, the cause of the city's fall: her prostitution with the kings of the earth and luxurious immorality with the merchants of the earth
- The passionate luxury and materialism of the great city have intoxicated all the nations
- "...her" [3x] - connects Babylon (v2) with the woman of Rev 17
- "...sexual immorality" - often refers to false doctrine
- When we, as the bride of Christ, come under another form of teaching other than the Word of God, and we're no longer walking in orthodoxy (correct belief) or orthopraxy (correct practice), the Lord looks at us, as His bride adorned in white, as if we have committed an act of sexual immorality against Him.
- The kings of the earth, those in authority in government, will be corrupted by the woman. The city (economic system) will instill an unquestioning faith in her supposedly inexhaustible resources, discouraging any sense of a deeper need for God.
- The merchants, big business, major Fortune 500 corporations will become vastly rich in her system. This luxury is the actual power that will work to enrich the merchants.
- When Babylon is destroyed, the merchants will suffer more than the kings because the kings will still have their political power. The merchants will have lost everything.
- Babylon will allow these corporations to make money their god; her commercial system will be diametrically opposed to God (Cf. 1 Tim 6:6-9)

[OT reference: Jer 51:7]

(b) The Appeal to Separate from Babylon (18:4-8)

(i) Appeal (18:4)

- 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;
- 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 of her plagues;
- 4** Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, so that you don't participate in her sins and also suffer from her diseases.
- 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.
- "...Come out" - *exelthate*, an urgent call; resembles the seven-fold call to come out of Babylon in the OT (Is 48:20; 52:11; Jer 50:8-9; 51:6,8; Zech 2:6-7)
- Another voice from heaven from an angel speaking on behalf of God, instructing believers to separate themselves from the system that the city symbolizes, and geographically from the city itself, so they would avoid getting caught in her judgment.

- His instruction was also to forsake the enticements of idolatry, self-sufficiency, love of luxury, and violence that the city symbolizes
- "...my people" - the first part of this call is addressed to believers, those alive at the apex of the beast's kingdom that unless they separate from the world's (Babylon's) sins, they will be hurt by the judgment coming upon her. If they do separate, they will enjoy protection from the remaining plagues of God's wrath (Cf. 12:14; Matt 24:16).
- This reference implies that believers will inhabit the beast's kingdom until the very end, and are in danger of being deluded by her enticements of riches and wealth. The consequence for such fondness will be caught up in her judgment and destruction.
- A similar warning was given to Lot and his family to leave Sodom before its destruction, however Lot's wife desired the pleasures of Sodom more than God, and she was destroyed (Cf. Gen 19:26; Luke 17:32)
- Preterists try to make Babylon = Jerusalem by tying this command to leave to the Jews flight from Jerusalem to Pella just prior to Jerusalem's destruction [as recorded by Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 3.5.3]
- Unfortunately, Eusebius indicates that the church's flight to Pella occurred in 62 AD, three years prior to their dating of John's writing of Revelation
- In fact, the flight to Pella could not have taken place after the Jewish War had started, as Titus had surrounded the entire city of Jerusalem and there was no hope of escape
- Jeremiah prophesies for God's people to come out of Babylon (Jer 50:8; 51:6,45)
- "...will not participate" - *mēsygkoinōneō*, part of this Greek word is *koinonia* or "fellowship"
- We are not in the Tribulation currently, but we can definitely find application from this warning (Cf. Prov 22:24-25; 1 Cor 5:9-10; 15:33; 2 Cor 6:14-17; Eph 5:11; 1 John 2:15-17) [OT reference: Is 52:11; Jer 50:8; 51:6,45]

(ii) Reasons (18:5-8)

(a) Her sins (18:5)

- 5 for **hersinshave piled up** as high as heaven, and **God has remembered her offenses**.
- 5 for her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.
- 5 For her sins are piled as high as heaven, and God has remembered her crimes.
- 5 For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.
- "...her sins" - a second reason is given for believers to separate from Babylon and her sins: like the bricks used to build the tower of Babel (Gen 11:3-4), her sins have accumulated so they finally reach ("are piled up as high as") heaven
- She has exhausted God's patience (Cf. Jer 51:9)
- God has noticed and "remembered" her sins, and because He is righteous, He must judge them

- "...have piled up" - *kollaō*, to increase enormously the number of something with the implication of reaching or calling the attention of God
- A reminder of the Tower of Babel (Gen 11:4)...
- "...God has remembered her offenses" - the massive misdeeds of the Babylonian system have impressed themselves into the memory of the God of justice
 - Because God must punish Babylon for her iniquities, it would be wise for God's people to distance from the city both geographically and morally
 - Babylon represents the time in history where man engaged in his first formal revolt against God, building a one-world system, the New World Order, of economics, politics and religion whereby God's judgment was invoked
 - Here, God is remembering what they did on the plain of Shinar (Gen 11), He hasn't forgotten. And now that they are trying it again, the long awaited overdue judgment of God will come upon the city of Babylon.
- Preterists point out that Jerusalem, with her sins arising to heaven, is described in the exact same manner (Ezra 9:6)
- However, the notion of sins rising to heaven does not uniquely describe Jerusalem since Gentile cities are also described in the same manner (Gen 11:4; 18:21; Jer 51:9)

[OT reference: Jer 41:9]

(b) Her retribution (18:6)

- 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.
- 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.
- 6 Do to her as she herself has done, and give her double for her deeds. Mix a double drink for her in the cup she mixed.
- 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.
- Jeremiah's prophecies (Jer 50:15,29) also have the concept of retribution (deserved punishment); God alone can implement the law of retaliation
- "...give back" - *apodote*, refers specifically to the persecutions and martyrdom of the saints by Babylon (Cf. 18:24; 19:2) rather than to her corruption of the nations
 - Everything that Babylon has done in the world, in terms of rebellion against God in deception, God will pay it back commensurately
 - God sometimes did the same thing with Israel (Jer 16:18)
 - "...double...twice as much" - to return double measure means to return in full (Cf. Ex 22:4,7,9; Is 40:2; 61:7; Jer 16:18; 17:18; Zech 9:12). It does not mean double the retribution in severity to the seriousness of the sin.

- "Double" has the sense that the punishment should be the exact equivalent of the offense, in the same way that a person who looks exactly like someone else is called his "double."
- The implication of "double" is to ensure that she receives back every bit of the deserved punishment for her wrongdoings
- "...according to her deeds" - the guideline for meting out the exact equivalent in judgment is confirmed by this phrase
- This is consistently the basis for God's future judgment of mankind (Ps 28:4; 62:12; Prov 24:12; Is 59:18; Jer 17:10; Rom 2:6; 1 Cor 3:8; 2 Cor 11:15; 2 Tim 4:14; 1 Peter 1:17; Rev 2:23; 20:12,13; 22:12)
- "...the cup which she has mixed" - the "cup" she had used to seduce others will become the instrument of her own punishment
- This is the same "cup" mentioned earlier in 14:8,10; 17:4; 18:3)
- To whom is v6 addressed? Who is God using to carry out His judgment on Babylon? The beast and ten kings are the ones who destroy Babylon (Cf. 17:16-17).
- So God's executioners are God's enemies, whom He uses to execute His vengeance. Even though vengeance is the prerogative of God alone (Deut 32:35; Rom 12:19; Heb 10:30), He may choose His enemies to implement it.

[OT reference: Ps 137:8; Jer 50:15,29]

This is not a prayer for personal vengeance by the persecuted saints, but a heavenly interpretation of the divine response to cruelty committed by wicked persons who have passed the point of no return in their moral choices. The last hour has now struck, and it is too late for repentance. This is a judicial pronouncement against a sinful civilization that has reached the ultimate limit of evil.

(c) Her arrogance (18:7)

- 7 To the extent that she glorified herself and **livedluxuriously, 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.'
- 7 To the degree that she glorified herself and lived sensuously, to the same degree 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.'
- 7 Just as she glorified herself and lived in luxury, inflict on her just as much torture and misery. In her heart she says, 'I am a queen on a throne, not a widow. I will never see misery.'
- 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.

- Babylon is a city and a system that glorifies itself; there is no room in Babylon for any glorification of God. This puts Babylon in dangerous territory (Cf. Is 42:8).
- The most egregious sin, outside of unbelief, is eclipsing God's glory, taking onto oneself the glory that God rightfully deserves. This is exactly what Nebuchadnezzar, ruler of Babylon, did (Dan 4:30-31).
- "...lived luxuriously" - to live solely for the wanton pleasures of life, feeding the basic desires of the sin nature, and in the process completely exclude God from everything (Cf. 1 Tim 5:6)
- It denotes a luxurious lifestyle with the accompanying trappings of dis-courtesy, arrogance, self-indulgence, ruthless exercise of strength, and unruliness
- "...to the same extent" - confirmation of the interpretation of "double" (v6)
- It's a way of saying that the torment and sorrow should correspond exactly with the self-glorification and wantonness of Babylon
- The principle of matching the punishment to the crime is a consistent Scriptural principle (Cf. Is 3:16ff; Prov 29:23; Luke 1:51; 14:11)
- "...I sit as a queen" - the Scrutinizer of motives detects a self-centeredness that is tantamount to self-deification; He understands Babylon's attitude of "there is no other god but me."
- "...I am not a widow" - the rejection/avoidance of suffering; Babylon rejects the possibility of widowhood and sorrow
- It is a confident boast of security illustrated by the emphatic position of *penthos* ("sorrow") and the expression of future negation ("I am not...never")
- It's a claim of self-sufficiency and an avoidance of sorrow or suffering that reminds us of the attitude of the church in Laodicea (Cf. 3:17)

[OT reference: Is 47:7-8; Zeph 2:15]

The Four Sins of Babylon

1. Self-glorification
2. Finding satisfaction in luxury and material things
3. Self-sufficiency
4. The avoidance of suffering

(d) Her destruction (18:8)

8 **For this reason in oneday** her plagues will come, **plague** and **mourning** and **famine**, and she will be **burnedup with fire**; for the Lord God who judges her is **strong**.

8 For this reason in one day her plagues will come, pestilence and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for the Lord God who judges her is strong.

8 For this reason, her diseases that result in death, misery, and famine will come in a single day. She will be burned up in a fire, because powerful is the Lord God who judges her."

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.

- Babylon's brazen attitude will add to the intensity and speed of her judgment and destruction...

- "For this reason" - looks back on Babylon's blatant boast and presumptuousness (v7) as the cause of her sudden and utter ruin

- "...one day" - Babylon will be destroyed in a single day; judgment will come upon it suddenly (v10,16,19; Cf. Is 47:7-9)

— Verse 10 states that "in one hour your judgment has come"; v21 says that Babylon's destruction will come upon it as fast as a millstone will sink into the sea

— Belshazzar's Babylon was overthrown by Media-Persia in one day (on a single night, Dan 5:30)

- "...plague" - *thanatos*, "death" comes as a response to her scorn for being a widow (v7)

- "...mourning" - *penthos*, sorrow comes in return for her reveling

- "...famine" - in response to her abundance

- "...burned up with fire" - same description given of Babylon's destruction in 17:16, which describes this same destruction (Cf. Jer 51:30)

- "...strong" - this strong city (v10) is no match for the strength of God; His strength is the cause for the suddenness and severity of the judgment

[OT reference: Is 47:9; Jer 50:31-32,34; 51:8]

(c) The Reactions to Babylon's Fall (18:9-20)

(i) The Kings (18:9-10)

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**,

9 "And the kings of the earth, who committed acts of immorality and lived sensuously with her, will weep and lament over her when they see the smoke of her burning,

9 The kings of the earth, who committed sexual immorality with her and lived in luxury with her, will cry and mourn over her when they see the smoke rising from the fire that consumes her.

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,

- "...kings of the earth" - world government leaders, who will mourn when they see the collapse of the system that sustained them and enabled them to live in luxury

- Many scholars point to the different reaction of the kings between the destruction of Babylon in Rev 17 ("hate," 17:16) and "weep and mourn" (here); see chart: **Two Babylon View? #5** below
- If the Babylon described and destroyed in Rev 17 is the same as the Babylon described and destroyed in Rev 18, how can the kings have different reactions to the same event? Doesn't this argue for two Babylons?
- No. The kings in (v9) are different from the kings described in 17:16. The kings of 17:16 are specifically the 10 horns who rule over the 10 regions of the world, under the delegated authority of the Antichrist. The kings described here (v9) are kings who are united with Babylon.
- The Antichrist has kings associated with (loyal) to him, namely the ten kings ruling over the ten regions of the world; Babylon also has kings, mainly merchants (corporate CEOs?), who are aligned with her. The ten kings are always in the company of the beast while these kings are always in the company of Babylon until its destruction.
- It is the ten kings surrounding the beast that destroy Babylon; the kings here are a larger circle of rulers
- When you understand that the kings in Rev 17 are different kings than those in Rev 18, their different reaction to Babylon's destruction makes sense
- "...committed *acts of sexual immorality*" - expresses the leaders' sharing in Babylon's luxury (Cf. Ezek 26:16; 27:30-35)
- In v3 it is the kings who commit fornication with the harlot and the merchants who are enriched by her luxury. Here the kings do both. It appears that sharing in Babylon's luxury is part of committing fornication with her.
- "...weep and mourn over her" - the kings are weeping in regret because they lost their power so suddenly; it's a self-centered mourning (see v9,11,17-18). The world laments while the godly repent.
- "...smoke of her burning" - evidently fire will be the main cause of the city's destruction (Cf. v18; 14:11; 17:16; 19:3), although other plagues will contribute to her downfall (v8)
- The evidence of her fall is what caused the rulers misery (Cf. Gen 19:28; Is 34:10; Ezek 28:18)

[OT reference: Jer 50:46; v9-19 includes allusions to Ezek 26:16-18; 27:26-31]

Two Babylon View?

	TWO BABYLON ARGUMENT	ONE BABYLON RESPONSE
1. Chapter division	Different prophetic subject	Non-inspired chapter divisions
2. "After these things" (18:1)	Takes place later chronologically (1:19; 4:1b; 9:12; 20:3)	Sequence in which visions were shown to John (4:1a; 7:1,9; 15:5; 19:1)
3. "Another angel" (18:1)	A new vision (10:1; 14:6,8,9)	Same vision (7:2; 8:3; 14:15,17,18)
4. Different Destructions	Destroyed by the kings (Rev 17:16) vs. destroyed by God (18:9)	Destroyed by God (17:17; 18:9) and by fire (17:16; 18:8-9,18)
5. Different reactions	Kings hate Babylon (17:16) vs. kings weep over Babylon (18:9)	Kings united with the Beast (17:16) vs. kings united with Babylon (Rev 18:9)
6. Different symbols	Woman (17:3) vs. a city (18:10)	Woman called a city (17:18; 18:10)

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.'

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.'

10 Frightened by the torture that she experiences, they will stand far away and cry out, "How terrible, how terrible it is for that great city, the powerful city Babylon, because your judgment arrived in a single hour!"

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.

- "standing at a distance" - the kings are careful to distance themselves from Babylon at the time of judgment

- This demonstrates that the burning/destruction of Babylon is not the ultimate end of human history. This great fire does not hurt this group of kings directly.

- "...Woe, woe" - these "woes" are an exclamation of sorrow from these kings; the earlier ones in Revelation are announcements of doom (8:13; 12:12)

- Doubling the woes increases the perception of the strength of the sorrow ("How terrible, how terrible" [ISV]) (Cf. v6)

- They were under the illusion that they could defy God, martyr His saints, and get away with it while living in exceptional wealth and luxury...but now that misconception has disappeared

- "...great city" - they call her the "strong city" but in reality she only seemed strong; it was an illusion

- Preterists believe Babylon is Jerusalem, and point to the fact that Jerusalem was called a "great city" (11:8), just as Babylon is here

- "...one hour" - Babylon will fall quickly (v17,19; Jer 51:8)

- This could mean a 60-minute time period, but is often used in Scripture to describe a "short age" or short period of time (1 John 2:18; Cf. Rev 17:12; 18:8)

- Babylon was overthrown by the Medo-Persian Empire in a single night (Dan 5:30)

[OT reference: Is 13:1; v9-19 includes allusions to Ezek 26:16-18; 27:26-31]

Parallels Between Jeremiah 50-51 & Revelation 17-18

	Jeremiah	Revelation
Associated with a Golden cup	51:7a	17:3-4; 18:6
Dwelling on many waters	51:13	17:1
Intoxicating the nations	51:7b	17:2
Same name	50:1	17:5
Stone sinking into Euphrates	51:63-64	18:21
Sudden destruction	51:8	18:8
Destroyed by fire	51:30	17:16
Final, uninhabitable	50:39	18:21
Deserved	50:29	18:6
God's people flee	51:6, 45	18:4
Heaven rejoices	51:48	18:20

Dyer, "The Identity of Babylon in Revelation 17-18 (Part 2)," 441-43.

(ii) The Merchants (18:11-16)

11 "And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, because no one buys their cargo any more—

11 "And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, because no one buys their cargoes any more—

11 The world's businesses cry and mourn over her, because no one buys their cargo anymore—

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

- Businesses and corporations lament the destruction of this system because it will greatly impact their profits and ability to remain in business. They no longer have anyone to sell their luxuries to.

- These merchants became rich because of Babylon (v15). They profited from the enormous supply of materials required to satisfy Babylon's demands, things which the world holds dear and for which the ungodly are willing to sell their souls.

- Jeremiah prophesies the destruction of Babylon by saying, "...Abundant in treasures, Your end has come..." (Jer 51:13)

- The city itself is a treasure that they also regret losing (Cf. Ezek 27:25-31)
- The wailing of the merchants is greater than the politicians and ocean travelers, in this context, because their loss is greater. They bemoan the loss of customers, but they themselves had previously denied the right to buy and sell to anyone who did not have the mark of the beast (13:17).

[OT reference: v9-19 includes allusions to Ezek 26:16-18; 27:26-31]

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;

12 cargoes of gold and silver and precious stones and pearls and fine linen and purple and silk and scarlet, and every *kind* of citron wood and every article of ivory and every article *made* from very costly wood and bronze and iron and marble,

12 cargo of gold, silver, gems, pearls, fine linen, purple cloth, silk, scarlet cloth, all kinds of scented wood, all articles made of ivory, all articles made of very costly wood, bronze, iron, marble,

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,

1. Precious Wares
 - a. Gold
 - b. Silver
 - c. Precious stones
 - d. Pearls
2. Luxury Materials
 - a. Fine linen
 - b. Purple
 - c. Silk
 - d. Scarlet
3. Building Materials
 - a. Citron wood
 - b. Ivory
 - c. Precious wood
 - d. Brass
 - e. Iron
 - f. Marble

[OT reference: Ezek 27:12-25; v9-19 includes allusions to Ezek 26:16-18; 27:26-31]

13 cinnamon, spice, incense, perfume, frankincense, wine, olive oil, fine flour, wheat, cattle, sheep, and cargo of horses, carriages, **slaves**, and **human lives**.

13 and cinnamon and spice and incense and perfume and frankincense and wine and olive oil and fine flour and wheat and cattle and sheep, and cargoes of horses and chariots and slaves and human lives.

13 cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, olive oil, flour, wheat, cattle, sheep, horses, chariots, and slaves (that is, human souls)—

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.

4. Spices

- a. Cinnamon
- b. Spice
- c. Incense
- d. Ointment
- e. Frankincense

5. Groceries

- a. wine
- b. oil
- c. fine flour
- d. wheat

6. Agricultural and Domestic

- a. Cattle
- b. Sheep
- c. Horses
- d. Chariots

7. Human Trafficking

- a. "bodies" (slaves) and souls of men

- The variety of goods listed in v12-13 suggests how extensive trade will be at this time in history. It will truly be a worldwide market.

— 28 cargos total: these must be literal, not symbolic. If they are symbolic, what do all of these goods symbolize? If they are symbolic, why list 28 different goods?

— "...slaves" - it appears that the international slave trade will again be prominent

— "...human lives" - human trafficking will be part of the money making operation of Babylon

— You get the idea that at least some of the wealth that is accumulated in Babylon and by her kings was done on the backs of slaves, human trafficking, and cheap labor.

[OT reference: v9-19 includes allusions to Ezek 26:16-18; 27:26-31]

There are prophecy books and many scholars who believe Babylon is an idiom for the evil world system, and that may be true, but looking at these passages, the destruction is specific, the mourning comes from specific groups, and the timeframe is specific. The merchandise that was no longer sold is very specific (28 items total).

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.**

14 The fruit you long for has gone from you, and all things that were luxurious and splendid have passed away from you and *men* will no longer find them.

14 "The fruit that you crafted has abandoned you. All your dainties and your splendor are lost, and no one will ever find them again."

14 And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things no more at all.

- The epitome of the passing pleasures of wealth... the immense wealth accumulated by Babylon is gone in a day, in an hour, "and *people* will no longer find them."

— The Bible tells us that there are only two things that can live on into eternity: the souls of men (Eccl 3:11), and the Word of God (Matt 24:35; Is 40:8). Everything else is going to burn (2 Peter 3:10).

- "...will no longer find them" - *ouketi ou mē*, the Greek construction indicates that these things will never return; there are two double negatives in the Greek text

[OT reference: v9-19 includes allusions to Ezek 26:16-18; 27:26-31]

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,

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,

15 Frightened by the severity of her punishment, businesses that had become rich because of her will stand at a distance, crying and mourning:

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,

- "...these things" - the antecedent is the listed items in v12-13

— The enrichment of the merchants derived from their trade with Babylon is the reason for their mourning

- "...stand at a distance" - the merchants, like the politicians, "stand at a distance" while watching the destruction of the city (Cf. v10,17)

[OT reference: v9-19 includes allusions to Ezek 26:16-18; 27:26-31]

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;
 16 saying, 'Woe, woe, the great city, she who was clothed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls;
 16 "How terrible, how terrible it is for the great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet and was adorned with gold, gems, and pearls,
 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!

- The merchants/businesses/corporations have aligned themselves with the harlot/city/political system, and the capital city is now destroyed
- The description of the city here is similar to that of the harlot in 17:4; the same city is in view in both chapters
- This dirge (v16-17a) begins and ends the same way as that of the politicians (v10). However, the merchants mourn the city's lost opulence and splendor, whereas the politicians will grieve over its withered strength (Cf. Ezek 16:23; 28:13). Each group evaluates the disaster in terms of their own self-interest.

[OT reference: v9-19 includes allusions to Ezek 26:16-18; 27:26-31]

ONE BABYLON		
	Rev 17	Rev 18
Same name	17:5	18:2
City	17:18	18:10
<u>Same clothing</u>	<u>17:4</u>	<u>18:16</u>
Holding a cup	17:4	18:6
Fornicating with Kings	17:2	18:3
Drunk with wine of immorality	17:2	18:3
Persecuting believers	17:6	18:20,24
Destroyed by fire	17:16	18:8,18
Destroyed by God	17:17	18:5,8

Dyer, "The Identity of Babylon in Revelation 17–18 (Part 1)," 311-13.

(iii) The Sea Merchants (18:17-19)

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,
17 for in one hour such great wealth has been laid waste!' And every shipmaster and every passenger and sailor, and as many as make their living by the sea, stood at a distance,
17 because all this wealth has been destroyed in a single hour!" Every ship's captain, everyone who traveled by ship, sailors, and everyone who made a living from the sea stood far away.

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,

- The first part of the verse once again describes the rapid nature of Babylon's destruction. The second part begins a description of a new set of mourners: the sea-people

- "...shipmaster" - *kybrnetes*, captains and other ship officers

- "...sailor" - *nautai*, those who work on ships or boats to make a living

- "...all who make their living by the sea" - those who work the sea such as fishermen, divers, etc.

[OT reference: v9-19 includes allusions to Ezek 26:16-18; 27:29-36]

18 and were crying out as they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What *city* is like the great city?'

18 and were crying out as they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What *city* is like the great city?'

18 When they saw the smoke rising from the fire that consumed her, they began to cry out, "What city was like that great city?"

18 And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What *city is* like unto this great city!

- The occasion of this dirge comes in the phrase "as they saw"...

- Their question echoes the one about Tyre (Ezek 27:32). The implied answer is that no city can match Babylon in its material greatness.

[OT reference: v9-19 includes allusions to Ezek 26:16-18; 27:26-31]

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!'

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 by her wealth, for in one hour she has been laid waste!'

19 Then they threw dust on their heads and shouted while crying and mourning: "How terrible, how terrible it is for the great city, where all who had ships at sea became rich from her wealth, because it has been destroyed in a single hour!

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.

- "...they" - the sea merchants

- "...threw dust on their heads" - symbolized great grief in the OT (Joshua 7:6; 1 Sam 4:12; 2 Sam 1:2; 13:19; 15:32; Job 2:12; Lam 2:10)

- They bemoan the loss of the city by which those who have ships (transport goods) have become rich. Her treasures are the reason the sea-people were able to accumulate such riches. The wealth of Babylon represents great spending power and so is a welcome resource for seafarers who use her port (Cf. Ezek. 27:33).

[OT reference: v9-19 includes allusions to Ezek 26:16-18; 27:26-31]

(iv) Those in Heaven (18:20)

20 Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you **saints** and **apostles** and **prophets**, because God **has pronounced** judgment for you against her."

20 Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, because God has pronounced judgment for you against her."

20 Be happy about her, heaven, saints, apostles, and prophets, for God has condemned her for you!"

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

- The reaction in heaven to the destruction of Babylon is polar opposite of the reaction of the world

— So often what the world hates, God loves, and what the world loves, God hates (Cf. the death of the Two Witnesses, 11:10; John 15:18-19; James 4:4; 1 John 2:15-16)

— Heaven is rejoicing while the earth is weeping and mourning because Babylon has fallen. The reason heaven is rejoicing is because of Babylon's historic mistreatment of three groups: the saints (not necessarily the church), the apostles ("sent ones"), and the prophets (Jeremiah, etc.)

— The rejoicing throughout heaven continues in 19:1-6...

- "...saints" - a generic word to describe believers; does not specifically refer to Church Age believers, but also includes OT believers (Cf. Ps 50:5 [NKJV]; 149:1 [NKJV])

— If John was specifically referring to Church Age believers, he would've used the Greek word for "church" (*ekklesia*), which he used 19x in Rev 2-3 but never in Rev 4-20

- "...apostles" - often used in a technical sense referring to the twelve (Cf. Acts 1:21-22; Eph 2:20), but it's not a technical word, meaning it can also be used in the generic sense to describe a "sent one" (Cf. Barnabas, Acts 14:14; Titus, 2 Cor 8:23; Epaphroditus, Phil 2:25)
- Many use this reference to "apostle" here to argue that Babylon = Rome because the (twelve) apostles were persecuted by Rome
- To interpret this verse correctly, you must understand the broad semantic range of "apostle" in Scripture; it's not a technical word
- "...prophets" - Jeremiah prophesied that Babylon would persecute the saints: "Babylon is to fall for the slain of Israel" (Jer 51:49)
- God kept a record of Babylon's treatment of Israel's prophets and the future destruction of Babylon is partial due to God's remembrance (16:19) of Babylon's treatment of His prophets
- Preterists interpret "apostles and prophets" as NT "apostles" and OT "prophets," however neither are technical terms that always must refer to the same thing every time they are used
- There is far more flexibility in these terms: "prophets" sometimes refers to OT prophets (Matt 23:34-35), however the same word can also refer to NT prophets (Acts 11:27-28; 13:1; 15:32; 21:10; 1 Cor 12: 28-29; 14:1-5,29,32; Eph 2:20)
- Similarly, "apostles" sometimes refers to 1st century NT apostles (Acts 1:21-22; Eph 2:20), the same word can also refer to common "sent ones" or missionaries (Acts 14:4,14; Rom 16:7; 2 Cor 8:23; Phil 2:25)
- "...has pronounced" - *krima*, literally, "God has done what you thought was right" [OT reference: Jer 51:48]

Vengeance

There is a sense throughout Revelation that God's judgmental intervention into history is long overdue when it finally arrives. Many today often look at God's future judgment as sad for those who receive His severe blows, but that is not the attitude advocated in heaven when believers are commanded to rejoice in v20.

The Bible teaches that one of the ways we can demonstrate our trust and confidence in God and His plan for history is to let Him take care of the wrongs that we have experienced throughout this life. Just as the persecution and eventual death of Christ was so wrong and unjust, there have been millions of similar injustices perpetrated upon God's people since. Yet, we are to wait for His day when He will right all the wrongs and take vengeance upon the wicked.

This does not mean that when a crime is committed against a believer that justice through the civil authorities should not be sought. However, too often the authorities become

corrupt and we must wait for the Judge to set things right. Exhibit A would be the miscarriage of justice by the civil government in the death of Christ. One of the main lessons is that a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ does not have to become bitter over an injustice that someone may have committed against them, because Jesus Himself will one day bring perfect justice to this sinful world. He will make all things right. Instead, when we're wronged or persecuted because of Christ, we can respond with the love and grace that God in Christ has already shown us in redemption. We have an opportunity to show them the love of Christ. Paul says, "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom 12:21). How do we do that? As the previous verse says, we are to be kind and gracious to our enemies by attempting to meet their needs.

(d) The Description of Babylon's Fall (18:21-24)
(i) Description (18:21)

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**.

21 Then a strong angel took 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 not be found any longer.

21 Then a powerful angel picked up a stone that was like a large millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "The great city Babylon will be thrown down violently—and will never be found again.

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.

– "...great millstone" – the fall of Babylon is analogized to a millstone sinking into the Euphrates (Jer 51:63-64). Just as it is impossible for a huge stone to rise to the surface again, the same is true for Babylon.

— Millstones were 4-5 feet in diameter, 1 foot thick, and weighed thousands of pounds.

Picking up a stone this large required a "strong angel."

— This imagery is being used to describe how fast Babylon will be destroyed (Cf. one day, v8; one hour, v10,19)

— "...thrown down with violence" – God says to Babylon that you have treated My people (saints) with violence, My apostles with violence, and My prophets with violence, now I am going to overthrow you with violence

— "...never be found again" – after Babylon is destroyed, it will never be found again; the Greek word for "never" here is a double negation, the strongest negation available in Greek

- This phrase, by itself, completely blows up preterism and any belief that Babylon is a code word for Rome, New York City, Jerusalem, or any other city other than historic, literal Babylon in Iraq
- The total and complete destruction of Babylon is also inline with ancient prophecies (Is 13:20-22; Jer 50:3,13,26,39-40; 51:29,43,62)
- The phrase "never be found again" or "never be heard of again" is found 6x in v21-23 stressing the total and complete destruction and desolation of Babylon. In the Greek, the word "never" is a double negation, the strongest negation in the Greek language.
- If Babylon = Jerusalem, as preterism believes, and the destruction of "Babylon" here refers to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, how does preterism describe the existence of Jerusalem today (or its prominence in the messianic kingdom, Is 2:3; Zech 14:16; Rev 20:9)?
- In addition, Babylon's destruction is said in this verse to be instantaneous, within one hour; the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD was a long process spanning several years (66-70 AD) [OT reference: Jer 51:39,63-64]

Babylon's History After 539 BC

- Herodotus gives Babylon's measurements (450 BC)
- Alexander the Great visits and dies in Babylon (323 BC)
- Seleucus seizes Babylon (312 BC)
- Strabo pronounces Babylon's hanging gardens as one of "seven wonders of the world" (25 BC)
- Babylonians present on Pentecost (Acts 2:9)
- Talmud promulgated from Babylon (500 AD)
- Haukal mentions Babylonian village (917 AD)
- Babylon known as "Two Mosques" and "Hilah" (1100 AD)

Hitchcock and Ice, *The Truth Behind Left Behind*, 109

(ii) Nine Affected Groups (18:22-23a)

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;

22 And the sound of harpists and musicians and flute-players and trumpeters will not be heard in you any longer; and no craftsman of any craft will be found in you any longer; and the sound of a mill will not be heard in you any longer;

22 The sound of harpists, musicians, flutists, and trumpeters will never be heard within you again. No artisan of any trade will ever be found within you again. The sound of a millstone will never be heard within you again.

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;

- The song is over. Factories close. Lights off. Babylon is no more.

[OT reference: Is 24:8; Jer 25:10; Ezek 26:13]

(iii) Cause (18:23b-24)

(a) Sorcery (18:23b)

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**.

23 and the light of a lamp will not shine in you any longer; and the voice of the bridegroom and bride will not be heard in you any longer; for your merchants were the great men of the earth, because all the nations were deceived by your sorcery.

23 The light from a lamp will never shine within you again. The voice of a bridegroom and bride will never be heard within you again. For your merchants were the important people of the world, and all the nations were deceived by your witchcraft.

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.

- The electricity is off; everyday life will never be found in Babylon again...

- "...voice of the groom and bride" - the marriage ceremony symbolizes the renewal of ordinary life (Cf. Jer 33:10-11), but it will never be found again in Babylon

- "...for your merchants were the powerful people of the earth" - men whom the world regards as great have enriched themselves and lifted themselves up in pride because of Babylon's influence (Cf. Is 23:8)

— "were" - past tense

- "...all the nations were deceived by your witchcraft" - as a result of the first reason Babylon has seduced all nations
 - The background for the witchcraft of Babylon is given in Is 47:9-13. Babylon's witchcraft was so prevalent that "all the nations" were deceived by it.
 - She deceived all the nations into thinking that joy, security, honor, and meaning in life (i.e., "success") come through the accumulation of material wealth. She had used "sorcery" (*pharmakon*, Cf. 9:21) to "deceive" and seduce "the nations" into following her (Cf. 2 Kings 9:22; Is 47:9,12; Nahum 3:4).

[OT reference: Jer 7:34; 16:9; 25:10; Nahum 3:4]

(b) Martyrdoms (18:24)

- 24 And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slaughtered on the earth."
- 24 And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who have been slain on the earth."
- 24 The blood of the world's prophets, saints, and all who had been murdered was found within her."
- 24 And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.
- The third reason for Babylon's judgment is that she martyred the saints (Cf. Jer 51:35-36,49)
 - The angel stated this reason as a historical fact rather than as an accusation. The responsibility for "the blood" of God's servants, martyred for their testimonies, lies at the feet of this system.