

# 80. The Book of Revelation—18:1-3

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A message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier  
(5-18-22)

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In Chapters 17–18 we are brought face to face with two Babylons:

- The Babylon of Chapter 17 is *religious/ecclesiastical*—and
- The Babylon of Chapter 18 is *commercial/political*

From its inception, Babylon has been both a city and a false religious system.

Many commentators believe that these two Babylons are one in the same.

I personally believe that Mystery Babylon (Chapter 17) will be headquartered in Rome where the Roman Catholic Church will be the head of the world church. That when Rome eventually goes down in the midst of the Tribulation—the religious center of the world will shift from Rome to Jerusalem.

➤ *Why do I believe that?*

Because it is at Jerusalem that the False Prophet will put the image of the Beast (Antichrist) in the Holy of Holies of the rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem (midpoint of the Tribulation Period) launching the start of a new religion where the Antichrist is worshipped as God.

So, I don't believe commercial Babylon (Chapter 18) will be the same city that religious Babylon will occupy. The Babylon of Revelation 18 will be the commercial capital of the world located somewhere else as the center of capitalism and commerce during the Tribulation Period.

This city will be the capital of the political power and commercial wealth of the Beast (Antichrist) and his kingdom. As we have already seen in Chapter 17—for the Antichrist to gain power he has to use the world church which is seen in Chapter 17 as a woman riding (controlling) the Beast (the one world government).

At around the midpoint of the Tribulation Period he no longer needs her, so he and his followers turn on her and kill her—

## **Revelation 17:15-18 (NKJV)**

<sup>15</sup> Then he said to me, "The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. <sup>16</sup> And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. <sup>17</sup> For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled. <sup>18</sup> And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth."

In John's day, there was no doubt which city reigned over the kings of the earth—Rome was the political, economic, and religious center of the world in John's day.

So *religious* Babylon will be destroyed around the midpoint of the Tribulation Period—whereas *political/commercial* Babylon will be destroyed just prior to the return of Jesus Christ to establish His Kingdom.

**Revelation 18:1 (NKJV)**

<sup>1</sup> **After these things...**[‘meta tauta’—something new is being introduced—a new vision]

After the things of Chapter 17—or after the woman (world church) is destroyed by the Antichrist as he establishes his own religious system *combining* the political and religious systems of Babylon into one (which God destroys in ch.18 at the end of the Great Tribulation).

**Revelation 18:1 (NKJV)**

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

Some view this angel as Jesus—but the use of *allos* (another of the same kind) instead of *heteros* (another of a different kind) indicates that this is an angel of the same type as the one in Revelation 17:1. In fact, he may be the angel who had earlier predicted Babylon’s downfall—

**Revelation 14:8 (NKJV)**

<sup>8</sup> And another angel followed, saying, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."

The fact that the earth was illuminated with his glory is significant because, ever since the Fifth Bowl Judgment (16:10) was poured out—the earth has been in darkness.

**Revelation 18:2 (NKJV)**

<sup>2</sup> **And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!"**

The repetition—“**Is fallen, is fallen**” speaks of finality—but could include the idea that *two* things have fallen.

The first “**Is fallen**” speaks of *religious* Babylon, whereas the second “**Is fallen**” speaks of the fall of *commercial* Babylon.

Now, we need to stop and ask the question that commentators and scholars have debated for centuries—

➤ Is this ‘*Babylon*’ the literal city of Babylon or some other city that is allegorically being referred to as Babylon?

God sometimes does this—He called Jerusalem “*Sodom and Egypt*” in Revelation 11:8. Many commentators and scholars believe that ancient Babylon that once sat on the Euphrates River is going to be rebuilt in the last days—why?

Because many of the Old Testament prophecies about the destruction of Babylon tell us that God is going to totally destroy the city and turn it into a smoldering heap of rubble.

Isaiah tells us it will happen in the ‘*Day of the Lord*’ (Great Tribulation Period).

**Isaiah 13:19-20 (NKJV)**

<sup>19</sup> And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, The beauty of the Chaldeans' pride, Will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah [i.e., 'fiery judgments]. <sup>20</sup> It will never be inhabited, Nor will it be settled from generation to generation; Nor will the Arabian pitch tents there, Nor will the shepherds make their sheepfolds there.

**Jeremiah 51:24-26 (NKJV)**

<sup>24</sup> "And I will repay Babylon And all the inhabitants of Chaldea For all the evil they have done In Zion in your sight," says the Lord. <sup>25</sup> "Behold, I *am* against you, O destroying mountain, Who destroys all the earth," says the Lord. "And I will stretch out My hand against you, Roll you down from the rocks, And make you a burnt mountain. <sup>26</sup> They shall not take from you a stone for a corner Nor a stone for a foundation, But you shall be desolate forever," says the Lord.

**Jeremiah 51:61-64 (NKJV)**

<sup>61</sup> And Jeremiah said to Seraiah, "When you arrive in Babylon and see it, and read all these words, <sup>62</sup> then you shall say, 'O Lord, You have spoken against this place to cut it off, so that none shall remain in it, neither man nor beast, but it shall be desolate forever.' <sup>63</sup> Now it shall be, when you have finished reading this book, *that* you shall tie a stone to it and throw it out into the Euphrates. <sup>64</sup> Then you shall say, 'Thus Babylon shall sink and not rise from the catastrophe that I will bring upon her. And they shall be weary.' " Thus far *are* the words of Jeremiah.

Yet when ancient Babylon fell in 539 BC, it was sacked by the Medes and Persians—but not destroyed. When the Greeks conquered the area 200 years later—Alexander the Great used the city of Babylon for his headquarters and capital for a while. In fact, historians tell us that the city continued in some form up until 1000 A.D.

➤ So, what happened to it you ask?

It simply ceased to exist through *attrition* but not utter *destruction*. So, the prophecies of its being turned into a smoldering heap of rubble have never been fulfilled. This means that Babylon needs to be rebuilt before it can be destroyed during the Day of the Lord judgments just prior to Jesus' return.

Many laugh at the idea that ancient Babylon will be rebuilt (like they laughed at the prophecies that Israel would become a nation again), but—Henry Morris noted:

*"The site of modern Babylon is strategically located at the crossroads of Asia, Europe, and Africa and is not far from the Persian Gulf. It is also near the world's richest oil fields and has a virtually unlimited water supply from the Euphrates. Those considerations led the famed historian Arnold Toynbee to proclaim that Babylon would be an ideal site for an important political and cultural center"* (Morris, *Revelation Record*, 349).

Chuck Missler—

*"Many believe the language in Revelation 18 is talking about the city of Rome which is being called 'Babylon'. And yet when you do your homework on Isaiah 13-14 and Jeremiah 50-51 you're going to discover several things. When you study Isaiah 13-14, Jeremiah 50-51 as well as Revelation 18 you'll see that many nations are going to attack this Babylon. You'll discover from the passages in Isaiah and Jeremiah that Israel is in the land and are forgiven meaning it is in the end times. It also tells us that Babylon will be located on the Euphrates River—the pride of the Chaldeans! That doesn't sound like Rome. But most interestingly is in Isaiah 13 and Jeremiah 50 it tells us that Babylon is going to be destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah. Has the city of Babylon ever been destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah? NO! Also, in the Isaiah and Jeremiah passages it says that once Babylon is destroyed it will never be inhabited again and the bricks and other building materials will never be reused. And*

*yet today Babylon in Iraq is being rebuilt (Saddam Hussein started rebuilding the city but never finished it) telling us that these prophecies in Isaiah and Jeremiah have yet to be fulfilled. The literal city of Babylon on the banks of the Euphrates River has never been destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah. The destruction of Babylon as prophesied in Isaiah and Jeremiah says its destruction will happen in the Day of the Lord—the period that corresponds to the second half of the Tribulation Period known as ‘great tribulation’.*”

Therefore, I believe it is likely that before Rome is destroyed the Antichrist will rebuild the ancient city of Babylon during the first half of the Tribulation Period.

**Revelation 18:2 (NKJV)**

<sup>2</sup> And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "**Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!**"

Some have suggested that Babylon will be the place where evil spirits are imprisoned during the Millennial Kingdom—or possibly where an opening to a shaft is located that leads down to the abyss (bottomless pit).

**Revelation 9:13-15 (NKJV)**

<sup>13</sup> Then the sixth angel sounded: And I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, <sup>14</sup> saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." <sup>15</sup> So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind.

The City of God (New Jerusalem) will come down from heaven as the city of the people of God and will exist forever—

**Revelation 21:2 (NKJV)**

<sup>2</sup> Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

In contrast, the city of Babylon is the city and capital of fallen man (the earth-dwellers) and will be destroyed right before Jesus returns.

John says it is the dwelling place of **“demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!” (verse 2)**

In Jesus’ Parable of the Sower likened birds to Satan—He also used the birds as a picture of Satan and his demons in Matthew 13:31–32. This judgment has come because the Babylonian “system” has polluted the whole world with spiritual and moral fornication—from practically the beginning of mankind upon the earth.

This fallen, evil system has always been dominated and controlled by the demonic.

**Revelation 18:3 (NKJV)**

<sup>3</sup> **For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury.**"

The word for ‘**merchants**’ does not mean *those who produce or manufacture goods*. It literally means *“those who travel”* and is a reference to the *‘movers and shakers’* of the world.

In other words, the uber-rich who are *'brokers'* and who travel the world and deal in volume—large corporations that have a global footprint and make lots of money engaging in business for big profit.

This is God's judgment on big business and on those who run them often thinking they are *gods* who have authority over the lives of people to treat them as slaves to be taken advantage of—especially the poor who can't stand against them—

**James 2:5-7 (NKJV)**

<sup>5</sup> Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world *to be* rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? <sup>6</sup> But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? <sup>7</sup> Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called?

**James 5:1-6 (NKJV)**

<sup>1</sup> Come now, *you* rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon *you!* <sup>2</sup> Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. <sup>3</sup> Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days. <sup>4</sup> Indeed the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. <sup>5</sup> You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury; you have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter. <sup>6</sup> You have condemned, you have murdered the just; he does not resist you.

I have nothing against big corporations or capitalism—but when *big corporations* partner with *big governments* (the **'kings'** in verse 3 represent governments)—the result is big corruption!

This would include corporations that partner with Communist China which uses slave labor to produce the goods of big corporations at a fraction of what they would have to pay American workers to produce them.

China, with their numerous human rights violations including the persecution and even the murder of the Muslim Uyghurs and the harvesting of human organs for profit (from those who are still alive—50k last year alone!).

This is the unholy alliance of government and big business leading to corrupt capitalism and human atrocities for the sake of profit.

This system has and will continue to intoxicate the super-rich corporations of the world who love to use cheap labor to produce their goods which they can then sell at high prices making them even richer.

God will not only judge these big corporations and their leaders—but also those whose products they cater to—those who are, *"lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God"* (2 Timothy 3:4).

I believe the final global economy will be *communitistic* for the poor and exceedingly *materialistic* for the rich—the uber-wealthy will be obsessed with the luxuries and fine goods the Antichrist's government will make available to them while the poor work in slave labor camps to produce these goods.

➔ Next week we'll talk a little about the 'Great Reset' and how it will lead to the Antichrist's kingdom

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