

Revelation 18 Commentary

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Revelation 18:1

In the previous chapter, John was shown [The Great Harlot](#) who sits on many waters (Rev. 17:1⁺). She was identified as *Babylon the Great* (Rev. 17:5⁺) and *that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth* (Rev. 17:18⁺). The angel describes her relationship to the [Beast](#) with [seven heads](#) and [ten horns](#) upon which she rides. John is told that the Beast and the horns will hate her and be used of God to destroy her (Rev. 17:16⁺). Having identified her relationship with the Beast and declared her impending demise, now John is shown her dramatic overthrow and complete destruction. The suddenness and completeness of her destruction is illustrated by the threefold lamentation of those who profited from her commercial luxury: kings of the earth (Rev. 18:9-10⁺), merchants of the earth (Rev. 18:11-17⁺), and seafarers (Rev. 18:17-19⁺). In contrast to their wailing over the loss of the city, heaven rejoices (Rev. 18:20⁺, cf Rev 19:1-6⁺).

The *Kings* of the earth make this lament. The *Merchants* make it (Rev. 18:16⁺) : and the *Mariners* make it (Rev. 18:19⁺). In the first, the verbs introducing it are in the *Future* tense (Rev. 18:9⁺): in the second, in the *Present* (Rev. 18:11⁺), and in the third, the *Past* tense (Rev. 18:17⁺). It is as though a moving scene is passing before the eyes, while the interpreting angel explains it.¹

The destruction of Babylon described in this chapter bears much in common with the predicted destruction of Tyre in Ezekiel's day (Eze. 26-28). Both cities are called harlots and known for their commercial splendor, shipping, and ungodly influence upon the surrounding nations. At their destruction, merchants who benefited from commercial contact with the city are grieved. The destruction of Tyre which Ezekiel predicted was initiated by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (the city destroyed in this chapter) and completed by Alexander the Great in 332 B.C.² An important commonality between the two cities is the empowerment of their respective kings by Satan (Isa. 14:4, 12; Eze. 28:2, 13-14; Rev. 13:2⁺). It is important to grasp the essential unity between Revelation 17⁺ and 18⁺. Many interpreters are quick to identify the [Harlot](#) as a separate entity from the city while overlooking the many indications that a single Babylon is in view:

The last verse of chapter 17 closed it by giving the interpretation of the woman as being "that great city." Though the woman is the first thing mentioned in that chapter, yet her interpretation is left till the end, so that the mention of the city may lead on to the account of its destruction, which is the subject of chapter 18.³

Chapter 18 contains the description of the previously announced "judgment" of the prostitute (Rev. 17:1⁺). It is important not to separate this chapter from the portrayal of the prostitute in chapter 17⁺, for there is no warrant for making the prostitute in chapter 17⁺ different from the city in chapter 18⁺ (cf. Rev. 17:18⁺).⁴

See [One or Two Babylons?](#)

After these things

[Μετα τα τα](#) [Meta tauta], the frequently-encountered phrase which separates sections of John's revelation. In a similar way that John was shown the bowls of wrath (Rev. 15⁺) prior to their pouring forth (Rev. 16⁺), he was shown the impending destruction of the Harlot Babylon in the previous chapter (Rev. 17⁺) prior to her actual destruction here (Rev. 18⁺).

another angel coming down from heaven

A different angel than the one who showed John the great harlot who is about to be judged (Rev. 17:1⁺). He comes on a mission

from heaven, much like the mighty angel who came down from heaven with the little book and who stood on the sea and on the land to declare God's intention to retake dominion of the earth (Rev. 10:1[±]). "Interpreters seem as anxious to make this, and other of the angels, to be the Lord Jesus, as they are to make all else to be the church. There is no occasion to go beyond the simple understanding of the words. This is no ordinary angel; for he was invested with great power and glory."⁵ See commentary on [Revelation 10:1](#).

the earth was illuminated with his glory

The glory of the mighty angel was so great that it shone down upon the earth. His brightness is an indication of his authority and high rank (Luke 2:9; Acts 12:7). It is a reflection of the glory of God Who appointed him to this task (Hab. 3:3-4; Rev. 21:23[±]). When the angel descends, the earth is full of moral darkness. The illumination of the earth by his glory presages the destruction of darkness and the introduction of light which will be the overthrow of Babylon and the introduction of the Millennial Kingdom (Isa. 60:1-3).

EDITORIAL COMMENT - E. W. Bullinger (page 273) in 1909 wrote "We have more than once referred to and spoken of **the revival and rebuilding of Babylon. Many laugh at the very idea.** But if they will not listen to the clear teachings of the word of God, will they listen to what man says? If they deem this revival as unlikely or impossible, judging by the standard of their own imagination, what will they say to the following, from The Daily Express (London), Jan. 28, 1902? It is not speculation, but news, which is given us under the heading of "Germany's Great Railroad": and the sub-title "Some facts about the grand Mesopotamian railway scheme," by William Durban." **MY COMMENT** - So just as prior to 1948 it was thought to be "laughable" that Israel would ever be a nation again, men will continue to think a **rebuilt Babylon in the future is highly unlikely.** I did a Google Earth search for **Babylon** and was amazed to find the area of the ruins of Babylon [click link which hopefully will work](#) to be surrounded by towns on the northwest and on the south (so much for the argument that this area will never be inhabited as excluding the possibility of rebuilding the city!) - Bruce Hurt.

Revelation 18:2

he cried mightily with a loud voice

The angel serves as a divine herald, announcing that which is about to take place. He signals that an event of great importance is about to transpire (Rev. 5:2[±]; 10:3[±]; 14:15[±]).

Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen

The word order is reversed in the Greek to emphasize her fall: *It is fallen, it is fallen, Babylon the great.* The time has finally arrived for the predicted [destruction of Babylon](#) to find fulfillment. Although aspects of Isaiah's and Jeremiah's prophecies concerning her destruction relate to the [overthrow of Babylon by Persia](#) in 539 B.C., her catastrophic and permanent destruction had not occurred until now. See [Babylon's Predicted Destruction](#). Perhaps this is the same angel which flew forth earlier to declare Babylon's destruction (Rev. 14:8[±] cf. Isa. 21:9). Like the declaration of that angel, *is fallen* is [πῆσεν](#) [epesen], prophetic aorist tense. The city's fall is so certain and [imminent](#) it is described as if it has already been accomplished. See commentary on [Revelation 14:8](#). Her destruction takes place as a result of the pouring forth of the seventh bowl of God's wrath (Rev. 16:19[±]). The city and the [Harlot](#) are given the same title: "Babylon the Great" (Rev. 17:4[±]). The Harlot is not some separate entity, but the city itself (Rev. 17:18[±]). See [One or Two Babylons?](#) She is called *great* because of her power and commercial splendor, but also because she thought herself to be great. She was built on *pride* (Isa. 13:19; Jer. 50:29; Dan. 4:30).

has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird

Has become is [γένητο](#) [egeneto], aorist tense. The angel describes her condition *after* her fall.⁶ Although foul spirits no doubt frequented Babylon prior to her destruction, this speaks of the incarceration of demons *in prison* as a result of the judgment.⁷ *Dwelling place* is [κατοικητήριον](#) [katoikētērion], used to describe the corporate church as a dwelling place of God, a holy temple (Eph. 2:22). It indicates a place where residents settle down with the idea of a protracted residence.⁸ *Foul* and *unclean* are [καθάρτου](#) [akathartou], meaning *unclean*—matching the character of the *filthiness* of the fornication of the Harlot (Rev. 17:2[±]) and the three *unclean* spirits which gathered the kings of the earth to the [Campaign of Armageddon](#) (Rev. 16:13[±]). Concerning *foul spirit*, see commentary on [Revelation 16:13](#). Certain birds were considered unclean according to the Mosaic Law (Lev. 11:13-19). In Scripture, birds—and especially unclean birds—often denote evil (Isa. 13:21; Zec. 5:9; Mat. 13:4, 19). *Prison* and *cage* are [φυλακ](#) [phylakē]: "The place of guarding, prison. . . . The fallen city of Babylon becomes [αφυλακ](#) [phylakē] *haunt* for all kinds of unclean spirits and birds."⁹ The same term describes the *prison* which Satan is released from at the end of the Millennial Kingdom (Rev. 20:7[±]). During the thousand years that Satan is bound in the abyss, he is unable to escape from his location. Thus, this speaks of a

place of *involuntary confinement*, not merely a “haunt, den, [or] refuge.”¹⁰ In various passages concerning the ultimate destruction of Babylon, she is said to become a devastated wilderness (Isa. 13:21-22; 14:23; Jer. 50:39; 51:37). These passages make mention of various animals of the wilderness as an indication that she will remain uninhabited. Now, John is told at her destruction Babylon *has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul [unclean] spirit*. The declaration of the angel makes explicit that which was only hinted at in the [OT](#) use of certain terms describing the animals attending her destruction:

Therefore the **wild desert beasts** shall dwell *there* with the jackals, and the ostriches shall dwell in it. It shall be inhabited no more forever, nor shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation. (Jer. 50:39 cf. Jer. 51:37) [emphasis added]

Wild desert beasts (Jer. 50:39) is [צַיִם](#) [šîyîm]: “A wild desert creature . . . specific identification is not known . . . some of these contexts may be a desert demon . . . a supernatural class of being that haunts the desert (Ps. 74:14).”¹¹

But wild beasts of the desert will lie there, and their houses will be full of owls; ostriches will dwell there, and **wild goats** will caper there. The hyenas will howl in their citadels, and jackals in their pleasant palaces. Her time *is* near to come, and her days will not be prolonged. (Isa. 13:21-22 cf. Isa. 14:23) [emphasis added]

Wild goats (Isa. 13:21) is [שְׂעִירִים](#) [šēʿîrîm]: “Satyr, may refer to a demon possessed goat like the swine of Gadara (Mat. 8:30-32).”¹² “Satyr, i.e., a spirit being that inhabits desolate areas (Isa. 13:21; 34:14).”¹³

The Hebrew word sāʿîr primarily meant a he-goat. In lower Egypt the goat was worshipped with abominable rites. The word is rendered “satyr” in two passages, Isaiah 13:21 and 34:14 (R.V. margin “hegoat”). In both places the Septuagint translates it daimonia, demons, and this gives the true indication of the evil spirits which inspired the particular worship carried on by the idolaters: “the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God” (1Cor. 10:20). The word is translated “devils” (that is, demons) in KJV Leviticus 17:7 “they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils, after whom they have gone a whoring” . . . that is, to the evil spirits.¹⁴

It appears that both Babylon and Edom (Isa. 34:8-17) will be dwelling places for demons during the [Millennial Kingdom](#).¹⁵

It is obvious that the animal inhabitants, as we know them, mentioned in Isa. 13:20-22 and Jer. 50:39-40, cannot live in a place of continual burning pitch and brimstone and so there cannot be literal animals. . . . This place of continual burning and smoke will be a place of confinement for many demons during the Kingdom period. . . . In fact, the Hebrew word translated *wild goats* refers to demons in goat form.¹⁶

Hated is [μειστημένου](#) [memisēmenou], a perfect tense passive participle, *while having been hated*. These demon spirits were hated in the past, but will now be confined to the region of Babylon. Thus, in the same way that Satan is bound so he is unable to interfere with the Millennial Kingdom, his fallen angels will also be incarcerated during the thousand-year reign of Messiah on earth. Some Greek manuscripts include, *and every unclean beast*.¹⁷

Revelation 18:3

For all nations have drunk

The conjunction *for*, [ἵ](#) [hoti], indicates that the reason for her destruction is that which follows—her pollution of the global populace. Her pollution spans all aspects of culture: political, commercial, and religious. The first kingdom on earth was Babel under Nimrod. At that time, all people on earth spoke one language. With the introduction of languages, the people dispersed from Babel to form all the nations of the earth. In their dispersal, they carried forth the abominable practices of Babel. Since that time, all nations have been drinking her potion. See [Babylon of Old](#). See commentary on [Revelation 14:8](#).

the wine of the wrath of her fornication

Fornication is [πόρνευσαν](#) [porneusan], which is related to [πόρνης](#) [pornēs]: *harlot*. The [Harlot](#) served the kings and inhabitants of the earth “wine of her fornication” (Rev. 17:2+). She made “all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication” (Rev. 14:8+). See commentary on [Revelation 14:8](#).

the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her

The same was said of the Harlot (Rev. 17:2+). Her influence spans the full breadth *and height* of culture. The kings of the earth are singled out because of their great responsibility and influence over those they rule. She knew that by polluting the leaders, her influence over the people would be greatest. The city polluted the political realm.

the merchants of the earth

Merchants is [μπαρο](#) [emporoi]: “One who travels about for trading . . . wholesale dealer in contrast to a retailer.”¹⁸ The word emphasizes those who travel in merchandizing and is also used of a passenger on shipboard.¹⁹ It is derived from [πορος](#) [poros], a *journey*. The merchants are “the great men of the earth” (Rev. 18:23⁺), powerful magnates who use their great wealth to influence the affairs of the world to further their own power and interests. The city polluted the commercial realm. Throughout history, the boundary between kings and powerful merchants has been blurred. In our own day, perhaps more than in previous eras, wealthy heads of powerful *multinational* corporations may have greater influence over the affairs of the world than their publicly elected *national* counterparts (Isa. 23:8). While kings wield *political* power, merchants wield great *financial* power. With rare exception, world leadership has generally been immersed in a tangled web of political, religious, and commercial interests which are impossible to isolate from one another.

Such international magnates and financiers constitute, more often than not, the power behind the throne. Kings and presidents often attain and keep their authority by sufferance of those who finance their undertakings. In turn, these great men of the earth receive land grants and trade monopolies and tax loopholes and innumerable other favors from those whom they establish in political power, all to enrich themselves still further.²⁰

It has become an axiom that “corporations have no souls,” and upon this all great moneyed corporations act, though the men who constitute them will find out a different doctrine when they come to the day of judgment. And when it comes to these great and ever magnifying commercial compacts and interests, there is not a law of God or man which is not compelled to yield if found in the way. . . . If the question were ever pressed in these circles, *What is truth?* it would be hooted and laughed to scorn. The cry would be, “What have we to do with that? Let every one quietly enjoy his own opinions.” . . . Church is nothing, State is nothing, creed is nothing, Bible is nothing, Sunday is nothing, religious scruples are nothing, conscience is nothing, everything is practically nothing, except as it can be turned or used to the one great end of accumulation and wealth.²¹

have become rich

“Not only is Babylon to become the world political capital, it is also to become the world economic capital. This fact is portrayed in the vision of Zechariah 5:5-11.”²² See [Back to Shinar](#). As with the city of Tyre, the merchants played a key role in her global influence because it was through the distribution of her merchandise that her affluence and power grew:

In their wailing for you they will take up a lamentation, and lament for you: ‘What *city is* like Tyre, destroyed in the midst of the sea?’ When your wares went out by sea, you satisfied many people; you enriched the kings of the earth with your many luxury goods and your merchandise. But you are broken by the seas in the depths of the waters; your merchandise and the entire company will fall in your midst. (Eze. 27:32-34)

the abundance of her luxury

Abundance is [δυναμεις](#) [dynamēōs], literally *strengths* of her luxury. *Luxury* is [σρηνους](#) [strēnous], which indicates a luxurious and sensuous way of life characterized by headstrong pride. She has a harlot’s forehead and refuses to be ashamed (Jer. 3:3 cf. Rev. 17:5⁺).

Revelation 18:4

Come out of her my people

In the rebellion of Israel against the authority of Moses, Moses and Aaron were told by God to “separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment” (Num. 16:21). The congregation of Israel was commanded to separate from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram before the earth opened up to swallow their families (Num. 16:26-34). Like Lot and his family who fled Sodom prior to its destruction (Gen. 19:12-15), the saints of the Tribulation period are urged to flee the city so as to avoid her physical judgment.

Go forth from Babylon! Flee from the Chaldeans! With a voice of singing, declare, proclaim this, utter it to the end of the earth; say, “The LORD has redeemed His servant Jacob!” (Isa. 48:20)

Move from the midst of Babylon, go out of the land of the Chaldeans; and be like the rams before the flocks. (Jer. 50:8)

Flee from the midst of Babylon, and every one save his life! Do not be cut off in her iniquity, for this *is* the time of the LORD’S vengeance; He shall recompense her. (Jer. 51:6)

We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed. Forsake her, and let us go everyone to his own country; for her judgment reaches to heaven and is lifted up to the skies. (Jer. 51:9)

My people, go out of the midst of her! And let everyone deliver himself from the fierce anger of the LORD. (Jer. 51:45)

You who have escaped the sword, get away! Do not stand still! Remember the LORD afar off, and let Jerusalem come to your mind. (Jer. 51:50)

“Up, up! Flee from the land of the north,” says the Lord; “for I have spread you abroad like the four winds of heaven,” says the Lord. “Up, Zion! Escape, you who dwell with the daughter of Babylon.” (Zec. 2:6-7)²³

If the call to God’s people to come out of Babylon immediately precedes the time of destruction under the seventh bowl (Rev. 16:19⁺), then the requirement to take the mark of the [Beast](#) for commercial participation has already been imposed (cf. Rev. 16:2⁺). Since it is impossible to take the mark and be among the elect of God (Rev. 14:9-11⁺; 17:8⁺), those saints which are in Babylon at this time are “underground.” They will be unable to obtain support except by the black market and must remain in hiding because they lack the mark (Rev. 13:15⁺).²⁴ If the warning occurs before the pouring forth of the first bowl (Rev. 16:2⁺), then the mark of the Beast may not have been instituted yet and the saints in the city have probably been drawn there to participate in the city’s commercial prosperity. Like Lot at the gates of Sodom, they unwisely linger and dabble in their ungodly surroundings. This should not be interpreted as a general command for believers to physically separate from all who practice sin:

I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. Yet I certainly *did not mean* with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person. (1Cor. 5:9-11)

This verse is readily abused in the hands of legalistic shepherds who use it as a tool to manipulate their flock in an attempt to control every aspect of their lives. This illustrates one of the dangers of taking passages out of context and spiritualizing their meaning. This verse concerns the Tribulation period and the *physical* destruction of the literal city of Babylon. It does not concern a legalistic separation of the believer today from all forms of commercial involvement.

While these words have a real application to the believer to come forth to Jesus outside the spiritual Babylon—ecclesiasticism, Nicolaitanism and the false promises of “mystery” Babylon in its various forms; yet the particular *interpretation* of the words is not to the saints, who will have been raptured before this call goes forth. The call to “come forth” from this great commercial Sodom of the last days—rebuilt Babylon, is evidently issued to those individuals living in or doing business in that capital of the Antichrist in the last days.²⁵

lest you share in her sins

Lest you share is [συγκοινωνήσῃτε](#) [synkoinōnēsēte], *lest you all take part in or take a sympathetic interest in*²⁶ The same term is used when Paul writes to the Ephesian church not to have *fellowship* with the unfruitful works of darkness (Eph. 5:11) and when he commends the Philippian church because they *shared* in his distress (Php. 4:14). It is a compound word combining the concepts of *fellowship* and *together with*. The saints are not to isolate themselves from the world (1Cor. 5:9-11). For how else can evangelization take place? Yet, while being *in* the world, they are not to be *of* the world—joining themselves with those who practice lawlessness:

Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” (2Cor. 6:14-16)

The saints who are in Babylon at the time of the end are at great risk of taking part in or having sympathetic interest in her sins.²⁷

lest you receive of her plagues

The plagues she is to receive are primarily her burning and destruction as related in this chapter.

Revelation 18:5

her sins have reached to heaven

Although each and every evil deed of history is known to God, there comes a time where the number and magnitude of sins reaches a point where God is forced, by His righteous character, to intervene. When this occurs, sin is said to gain His attention in a special way. The voice of Abel’s blood cried out to God from the ground (Gen. 4:10). The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah reached up to God (Gen. 18:20-21; 19:13). Nineveh’s wickedness *came up* before the LORD (Jonah 1:2). Particularly heinous acts are said to *reach up to heaven* (2Chr. 28:9). As guilt compounds, it is said to *grow up to the heavens* (Ezra 9:6). In the establishment of [Babel](#),

the people had attempted to make themselves a name by constructing a tower which reached to heaven (Gen. 11:4). Instead, they had been dispersed. Now they have built a new tower reaching to heaven—a tower of sin. As her sin is so great it reaches to heaven, so is her judgment: “We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed. Forsake her, and let us go everyone to his own country; for her judgment reaches to heaven and is lifted up to the skies” (Jer. 51:9).

God has remembered her iniquities

Not that God could forget a single one of her iniquities, but that He now considers the sum total of their weight and the need to respond in righteous judgment. As the iniquity of the Amorites finally reached its full height (Gen. 15:16), the guilt of Babylon now requires God’s intervention in order to be true to His righteous character. “And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath” (Rev. 16:19⁺). Babylon had thought her wickedness would not be taken into account: “You have said, ‘No one sees me’ ” (Isa. 47:10).

Revelation 18:6

Render to her just as she rendered to you

Render is [πρόδοτε](#) [apodote], plural imperative, *you all give back to her!* Who is this command given to?

According to Rev. 17:16-17⁺, it is the false Christ and his allies who will destroy Babylon in compliance with the overarching purpose of God. Further confirmation of this conclusion surfaces in noting that the result of the judgment is the same in both chapters: the burning of the city (Rev. 17:16⁺; 18:8⁺, 9⁺, 18⁺). . . . God puts into the hearts of these enemies to do what they do, so it appears wisest to connect the city’s burning in chapter 18⁺ with that in chapter 17⁺.²⁸

The [NU](#) text and several [MT](#) manuscripts omit *to you*. The unnamed recipients of what she rendered is probably the whole earth. This is supported by the realization that she has rendered to her enemies throughout history (Rev. 18:24⁺). See commentary on [Revelation 17:16](#). *She rendered*, is [αὐτὴ ἀπέδωκεν](#) [autē apedōken], *she, she gave out*. The addition of the pronoun in addition to the implicit pronoun found in the verb form emphasizes her bad behavior. Her judgment is based on the law of retribution, not undertaken by the saints, but by God. “O daughter of Babylon, who are to be destroyed, happy the one who repays you as you have served us!” (Ps. 137:8). “Take vengeance on her. As she has done, so do to her” (Jer. 50:15b). “Repay her according to her work; according to all she has done, do to her” (Jer. 50:29b). “As Babylon *has caused* the slain of Israel to fall, so at Babylon the slain of all the earth shall fall” (Jer. 51:49).

repay her double according to her works

Under the Law of Moses, restitution of thievery involved interest of 100%—the thief was required to pay double what was stolen (Ex. 22:4). Even Jerusalem received double for all her sins from the LORD’s hand in judgment (Isa. 61:7; Jer. 16:18). When Jeremiah prayed for judgment of his enemies, he asked God to “bring on them the day of doom, and destroy them with double destruction!” (Jer. 17:18). Jeremiah calls Babylon, [מַרְתָּיִם](#) [m^orāṭayim], meaning *double rebellion* (Jer. 50:21):

This word, which is formed by the prophet in a manner analogous to Mizraim, and perhaps also Aram Naharaim, means “double rebellion,” or “double obstinacy.” It comes from the root [מָרָה](#) [mārâ], “to be rebellious” against Jahveh and His commandments.²⁹

in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her

Having served her cup to the nations, she will now drink from her own cup and suffer derangement at her own hand. **“Your wisdom and your knowledge have warped you . . . You are wearied in the multitude of your counsels;** let now the astrologers, the stargazers, and the monthly prognosticators stand up and save you from what shall come upon you” [emphasis added] (Isa. 47:10-12). See commentary on [Revelation 14:10](#). See commentary on [Revelation 17:4](#).

Revelation 18:7

she glorified herself and lived luxuriously

She boasted in her own glory, saying “I shall be a lady forever” (Isa. 47:7) and “I *am* and *there is* no one else besides me” (Isa. 47:8, 10). God calls her “O most haughty one!” (Jer. 50:31). Her pride was also the sin of Nineveh (Zep. 2:15). *She lived luxuriously* is [εστρένιασεν](#) [estrēniasen], *she luxuriated, lived sensually*. The term has been used of bulls running wild³⁰ and includes the idea of revelry.³¹ “Having thrown off any semblance of self-control or self-restraint, sinners will indulge in a wild materialistic orgy. Like those in ancient Babylon, they will be partying when their city is destroyed (cf. Dan. 5:1-30).”³² Her excess contributed to her delusion of independence from God (Ps. 73:3; Luke 9:25). She mistook her abundance as an indication of blessing (Jer. 44:17-18).

Throughout history the petty kingdoms and empires built by proud, arrogant, God-rejecting rebels have come and gone. The spirit of humanism first expressed at Babel has permeated human history ever since. Unshakably optimistic despite centuries of war, slaughter, injustice, and cruelty, people still seek a utopia, to be brought about by humanity's upward scientific progress. Having taken control (so they think) of their own destiny through science, sinners have no use for God and haughtily replace Him as self-styled gods devoted to their own sovereignty.³³

I sit as queen

Sit is [κάθημαι](#) [kathēmai], present tense, *I am presently seated* as queen. She believes she is queen because she reigns over the kings of the earth (Rev. 17:18⁺). She sits on the [Beast](#) with [seven heads](#) and [ten horns](#) (Rev. 17:3⁺).

Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon; sit on the ground without a throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans! For you shall no more be called tender and delicate. Take the millstones and grind meal. Remove your veil, take off the skirt, uncover the thigh, pass through the rivers. Your nakedness shall be uncovered, yes, your shame will be seen; I will take vengeance, and I will not arbitrate with a man. *As for* our Redeemer, the LORD of hosts *is* His name, The Holy One of Israel. Sit in silence, and go into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans; for you shall no longer be called The Lady of Kingdoms. (Isa. 47:1-5)

am no widow and will not see sorrow

Her haughty boastfulness is so great that she believes herself to be immune from God's judgment. *Not* is the double negative, [ο μ](#) [ou mē], the strongest negation possible. She is absolutely convinced she will not see sorrow for her ways. She believes she is secure:

Therefore hear this now, *you who are* given to pleasures, who dwell securely, who say in your heart, 'I am, and *there is* no one else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, nor shall I know the loss of children'; but these two *things* shall come to you in a moment, in one day: the loss of children, and widowhood. (Isa. 47:8-9a)

The loss of her children may refer to the judgment of her daughter harlots (Rev. 17:5⁺) when the cities of the nations fall as part of the seventh bowl judgment under which she herself is destroyed (Rev. 16:19⁺).

Revelation 18:8

her plagues will come in one day

When her judgment finally comes, it will be swift and decisive (Isa. 47:9, 11; Rev. 18:9⁺, 10⁺, 17⁺, 19⁺). See [Babylon's Predicted Destruction](#).

The suddenness and completeness of Babylon's judgment and *disappearance from the face of the earth* is the one prominent feature of this prophecy: and it effectually proves that it has not yet taken place. For Jehovah's prophecies are far too accurate and particular for this suddenness and completeness to be fulfilled by the gradual decay of old Babylon, the site and ruins and remains of which are still to be seen in the land of Shinar.³⁴

"She shall be burned with fire" ([ν πυρ κατακαυθήσεται](#) [en pyri katakauthēsetai]) corresponds closely to the [κατακαύσουσιν ν πυρί](#) [katakausousin en pyri] of Rev. 17:16⁺ and must be the same destruction.³⁵

she will be utterly burned with fire

Like Sodom and Gomorrah, Babylon will be destroyed by fire (Isa. 13:19-20; 47:14; Jer. 50:40; 51:58; Rev. 18:9⁺). Her burning is complete and final: "Her smoke rises up forever and ever!" (Rev. 19:3⁺). The [Beast](#) and the ten kings of the end will assist in her destruction (Rev. 17:16⁺). See [The Destruction of Babylon](#).

for strong *is* the Lord God who judges her

Thus says the LORD of hosts: "The children of Israel *were* oppressed, along with the children of Judah; all who took them captive have held them fast; they have refused to let them go. **Their Redeemer *is* strong; the LORD of hosts *is* His name.** He will thoroughly plead their case, that He may give rest to the land, and disquiet the inhabitants of Babylon." (Jer. 50:33-34) [emphasis added]

Revelation 18:9

the kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament

Will lament is [κόψονται](#) [kopsontai], *they themselves will beat their breasts in anguish and mourning*. Interpreters who take [The Great Harlot](#) as being different from the city Babylon take the destruction of the city described here as a separate destruction from that of the [Harlot](#) in the previous chapter (Rev. 17:16⁺). They understand the remorse of the kings of the earth described here as denoting the kings who give their authority to the [Beast](#):

These are the seven kings who have co-reigned with the Antichrist and submitted their authority to the Antichrist, the king of Babylon. Whatever power or authority they held, was held by the grace of Babylon. Seeing their authority waning with Babylon's destruction, they will lament the swiftness of the judgment. They will be able to see the smoke of Babylon *afar off*, for they will see it from the Valley of Jezreel in Israel.³⁶

We believe the distinction between [The Great Harlot](#) and the city to be arbitrary and that the text identifies the Harlot as the city. See [One or Two Babylons?](#) Since Scripture records that the *city* will be hated and made desolate by the Beast and his kings (Rev. 17:16-18⁺), the kings who bemoan her destruction are not those allied with the beast, but other *kings of the earth* which Scripture mentions at the time of the end (Rev. 16:12-14⁺; 17:2⁺; 18:3⁺, 7⁺; 19:18-19⁺).³⁷

We have before noted that “the ten kings” are never seen apart from the Beast; and “the kings of the earth” are never seen apart from Babylon. It is the former who hate and burn Babylon; it is the latter who weep and wail over her. In both chapters (Rev. 17⁺ and 18⁺) the city is called “Babylon the great.” God and man both so call her. This great city cannot be separated from her own corrupt religion. They must be connected together, just as chapters 17⁺ and 18⁺ are connected; and yet distinguished as they are there distinguished.³⁸

See commentary on [Revelation 17:16](#).

when they see the smoke of her burning

Since they will weep and lament at the time of her destruction, these are kings which exist at the time of the end (see above). Her destruction is permanent: “Her smoke rises up forever and ever!” (Rev. 19:3⁺ cf. Isa. 34:10; Jer. 51:32).

Revelation 18:10

standing at a distance

Her burning will be visible by her kings, merchants, and shipmasters who stand off at a distance (Rev. 18:10⁺, 15⁺, 17⁺).

Alas, alas

“The English word ‘alas’ only partly conveys the feeling in the Greek *ouai*, the very sound of which bespeaks grief and terror. It is the same word translated ‘woe’ elsewhere (as in Revelation 8:13⁺).³⁹ Her luxurious wealth and position as a center of trade had made them rich, but now it was all gone (Rev. 18:16⁺, 19⁺). Their lamentation reflects their sorrow over the loss of their own self-interests rather than the city itself.

that great city Babylon, that mighty city!

The depth of her destruction is magnified by the height which she appeared to have attained prior to her fall. See commentary on [Revelation 18:2](#).

For in one hour your judgment has come

The conjunction *for*, [ἵ](#) [hoti], indicates the reason for their outburst: her destruction was so sudden and complete. She had appeared to be so mighty, virtually unassailable, yet now she had been suddenly devastated and brought down to nothing. See [Babylon's Predicted Destruction](#).

Revelation 18:11

the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn

Both verbs are present tense, *they are weeping and they are mourning*, as if John is seeing them as they weep.

for no one buys their merchandise

Merchandise is [ὑμῶν](#) [gomon], indicating a *cargo* or “freight load of goods.”⁴⁰ Not only was Babylon a great consumer of luxury goods, she also served as a center of trade. Commercialism is a key contributor to the materialism and godlessness which

characterize the city at the end. Although material goods are not inherently evil, an abundance of material wealth often contributes to covetousness and idolatry. As people turn their attention increasingly towards making money and obtaining goods, they neglect the more important things of God. In her destruction, God will destroy the idols of commercialism and materialism. Tyre had suffered a similar judgment (Eze. 27:27). The merchants are like the church at Laodicea, whom the Lord threatened to vomit out of His mouth “because you say, ‘I am rich and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked” (Rev. 3:17⁺). See commentary on [Revelation 3:17](#).

Happy *is* the man *who* finds wisdom, and the man *who* gains understanding; for her proceeds *are* better than the profits of silver, and her gain than fine gold. She *is* more precious than rubies, and all the things you may desire cannot compare with her. Length of days *is* in her right hand, in her left hand riches and honor. Her ways *are* ways of pleasantness, and all her paths *are* peace. She *is* a tree of life to those who take hold of her, and happy *are all* who retain her. (Pr. 3:13-18)

Revelation 18:12

merchandise of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, fine linen and purple, silk and scarlet

The [Harlot](#) wears the same merchandise found in the city, she is “arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls” (Rev. 17:4⁺). The city is said to be clothed with this merchandise. She wears the attire of the Harlot: “clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls” (Rev. 18:16⁺). Babylon is perhaps the most wealthy city of the world at this time. See commentary on [Revelation 17:4](#).

The articles divide themselves into seven categories: (1) precious wares (gold, silver, precious stones, pearls); (2) materials of rich attire (fine linen, purple, silk, scarlet); (3) materials for costly furniture (all thyne wood, every vessel of ivory, of most precious wood, brass, iron, marble); (4) precious spices (cinnamon, spice, incense, ointment, frankincense); (5) articles of food (wine, oil, fine flour, wheat); (6) merchandise for agricultural and domestic uses (cattle, sheep, horses, chariots); (7) traffic in men (bodies, the souls of men) (Lee). John drew the list from items known in his day, not from the future time depicted in the prophecy (Alford).⁴¹

Revelation 18:13

chariots

Chariots is [εὐν](#) [hredōn]: “*Chariot, carriage, wagon*, a four-wheeled carriage for traveling.”⁴²

wine and oil

These two items were singled out for protection in the famine attending the opening of the third seal. See [Revelation 6:6](#).

bodies and souls of men

Bodies and souls of men is [σωμάτων καὶ ψυχῶν ἀνθρώπων](#) [sōmatōn kai psychas anthrōpōn]. This undoubtedly refers to the age-old practice of slavery which will not be abolished until the Millennial Kingdom (Ex. 21:16; Deu. 24:7; 28:68; Ne. 5:4-8; 1Ti. 1:10).⁴³ “‘Bodies’ (sōmata) is a Greek idiom for slaves (cf. LXX of Gen. 36:6), while ‘souls of men’ (psychas) means essentially the same as bodies (slaves). Thus the whole expression means ‘slaves, that is, human beings.’”⁴⁴ “The [καὶ](#) [kai] separating the two expressions is ascensive, meaning ‘even,’ as frequently in this book, and the second expression is a restatement of sōmatōn.”⁴⁵ Tyre had also traded in slaves: “Javan, Tubal, and Meshech *were* your traders. They bartered human lives and vessels of bronze for your merchandise” (Eze. 27:13). Such traffic could include related practices such as prostitution, where men and women “barter their bodies and souls for some trifle, something that at best can afford but a momentary satisfaction.”⁴⁶

The international traffic in forced prostitution, both of men and women, is a tragic but financially lucrative business of modern times and will undoubtedly become even bigger in the evil days ahead. These vice barons are particularly venomous “great men” of the earth, not only amassing great wealth for themselves, but destroying both the “bodies and souls” of the hapless girls and boys who come under their control.⁴⁷

Revelation 18:14

The fruit that your soul longed for

Literally, *the fruit of the lust of the soul of you* They had coveted commercial goods which God had now destroyed.

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is

passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever (1Jn. 2:15-17).

the things which are rich and splendid

Things which are rich is [λίπαρ](#) [lipara], oily, fat luxurious things. *Things which are splendid* is [λαμπρ](#) [lampra], bright, shining, glittering things. These items indicate great emphasis upon *self-gratification* and *sensual living* which feeds the flesh:

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: for men will be **lovers of themselves**, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, **without self-control**, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, **lovers of pleasure** rather than lovers of God. (2Ti. 3:1-4) [emphasis added]

you shall find them no more at all

[ο κέτι ο μ α τ ε ρήσουσιν](#) [ouketi ou mē auta heurēsousin], *no longer, no not they shall be found*. The double-negative, [ο μ](#) [ou mē], combined with *no longer* ([ο κέτι](#) [ouketi]) strongly emphasizes the impossibility of ever finding these commercial items in her any more. This hints at the manner of her destruction which is permanent and irreversible.

Revelation 18:15

The merchants of these things, who became rich by her

Her lusting after luxuries provided the stream of revenue by which the merchants became rich (Rev. 18:3₊, 11₊).

will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing

The merchants have no heartfelt pity over the city and her destruction. Their concern and lamentation derives entirely from their own self-interest. Their self-preservation explains both their standing at a distance and their lamentation. For it is their loss of revenue and commercial exchange which causes their sorrow, not the countless lives or devastation associated with the fall of the city. "Your merchants from your youth; they shall wander each one to his quarter. No one shall save you" (Isa. 47:15).

Revelation 18:16

that great city

See commentary on [Revelation 18:2](#).

that was clothed

Babylon was called "the golden city" (Isa. 14:4) and was the head of gold on the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Dan. 2:38). See [Nebuchadnezzar's Dream and Daniel's Vision](#). The [Harlot](#) wears the same clothing (Rev. 17:4₊) and bears the same title (Rev. 17:18₊). See commentary on [Revelation 17:4](#). See [One or Two Babylons?](#)

Revelation 18:17

in one hour

The merchants repeat the same lamentation as the kings concerning the suddenness of her destruction. See commentary on [Revelation 18:10](#).

came to nothing

Came to nothing is [ρημώθη](#) [ērēmōthē]: "Be brought to ruin, become desolate, be devastated."⁴⁸ The same word is translated, *desolate* in Revelation 18:19₊. The manner of her destruction matches that of the [Harlot](#) (Rev. 17:16₊). She will be destroyed in such a way as to be eternally uninhabitable. See [Babylon's Predicted Destruction](#).

Every shipmaster

Like the ships of Tarshish at the loss of Tyre, those who make their living by thesea will wail over Babylon's destruction (Isa. 23:14; Eze. 27:27-36). Like the kings (Rev. 18:10₊) and the merchants (Rev. 18:15₊), the mariners will keep their distance from the destruction of the city which is visible at a distance. Although Babylon on the Euphrates is not directly on the coast, the Euphrates is navigable for many miles:⁴⁹

Rawlinson [Herodotus, i. 512] speaks of the Euphrates as being navigable for ships for some 500 miles from its mouth. And with little

effort could be made available for ships of large size.⁵⁰

Today these two streams [the Tigris and the Euphrates] are joined together and flow as one river, the *Shatt el-Arab*, 190 km (120 mi) to the gulf, where the water is deep enough for warships.⁵¹

There are a number of possible ways that commercial shipping could reach a rebuilt Babylon:

- **Improvements to the Euphrates** - Sections of the Euphrates are dredged and otherwise improved so that ships from the gulf can directly navigate the approximately 370 miles upriver to Babylon.
- **Shuttle from the Gulf** - Large ships anchor in the Persian gulf where cargo is transferred to shallow-draft barges which transport goods upriver to Babylon.
- **Land Transport** - Ships make port at the seacoast and their cargo is transported by rail to Babylon. The port itself serves a strictly secondary role to the magnificent city upriver. The nautical emphasis in this chapter seems against this suggestion, although it must be noted that all the text requires is that Babylon be a major center of shipping. It does not require that ships make their way to dockside in downtown Babylon.

The prominence given to shipping in this passage provides evidence against identifying Babylon as Rome.⁵²

Rome was not a major seaport or trading city. Rome was never a great city of commerce described in Revelation 18[±]. Revelation 18:17[±] actually fits Babylon better than Rome because Rome had no seaport. . . . Revelation 18:17-18[±] which describes those who make their living from the sea standing a far off and wailing at the sight of Babylon's destruction, fits well with the geography of Babylon on the Euphrates. In ancient times, the Euphrates was navigable for ships for some 500 miles from its mouth.⁵³

It is perfectly well known that Rome was never either "great" or commercial. It is no Port; and no "shipmaster" goes thither. . . . if Rome be the city, Rome must yet become the great political and religious centre; with port and harbour. And it is quite as difficult to believe in this revival of Rome, as to believe in the revival of Babylon.⁵⁴

See [Babylon is Rome?](#)

Revelation 18:18

the smoke of her burning

See commentary on [Revelation 18:8](#).

this great city

See commentary on [Revelation 18:10](#).

Revelation 18:19

they threw dust on their heads

An action indicating great mourning and grief over loss (Jos. 7:6; 1S. 4:12; Lam. 2:10; Eze. 27:30). Here, the loss is their commercial market.

that great city

See commentary on [Revelation 18:10](#).

in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth

Like the kings who had lived luxuriously with her (Rev. 18:9[±]) and the merchants who had become wealthy by her (Rev. 18:15[±]), those who made a living by shipping had become wealthy. She is a great center of commerce and a major destination for shipping.

See commentary on [Revelation 18:17](#).

in one hour

The mariners repeat the same lamentation as the kings (Rev. 18:10[±]) and the merchants (Rev. 18:17[±]) concerning the suddenness of her destruction. See commentary on [Revelation 18:10](#). This threefold pattern of lamentation is intended to indicate the completeness of her destruction. See [Three: Life, Resurrection, Completeness, the Trinity](#).

she is made desolate

See commentary on [Revelation 18:17](#). See [Babylon's Predicted Destruction](#).

Revelation 18:20

Rejoice over her, O heaven and *you* holy apostles and prophets

Rejoice is [εὐφραίνου](#) [euphrainou], an imperative command, *you all be glad!* Heaven rejoiced when the devil and his angels were cast out (Rev. 12:12+). Jeremiah prophesied that in the day that God destroyed Babylon “the heavens and the earth and all that is in them shall sing joyously over Babylon” (Jer. 51:48). The [MT](#) and [NU](#) texts have *saints and apostles* instead of *holy apostles*.

The apostles and prophets, leaders of the saints of all ages, who have, themselves, borne the brunt of the world’s hatred, are given special prominence in the rejoicing. . . . Take Paul for an example. He pointed out that he and the other apostles had been chosen by God for special sufferings [1Cor. 4:9-13].⁵⁵

God has avenged you on her

Has avenged you on her is [κρίνειν θεος τὰ κρίμα μὴ ξατς](#) [ekrinen ho theos to krima hymōn ex autēs], *God has judged the judgment of you against her*. “God has pronounced on her the judgment she wished to impose on you.”⁵⁶ A great multitude in heaven rejoices at the destruction of [The Great Harlot](#) which is said to be God’s vengeance of “the blood of His servants shed by her” (Rev. 19:2+). She is “drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus” (Rev. 17:6+) because “in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth” (Rev. 18:24+). This is God’s answer to the prayers of the martyrs revealed at the opening of the fifth seal (Rev. 6:10+) and the prayers offered upon the altar of incense prior to the trumpet judgments (Rev. 8:3-4+). The song which Moses taught Israel prior to crossing into the Promised Land ends with the promise of God’s vengeance concerning the spilled blood of His servants: “Rejoice, O Gentiles, *with* His people; for He will avenge the blood of His servants, and render vengeance to His adversaries; He will provide atonement for His land *and* His people” (Deu. 32:43). As Jesus said in his [parable](#) of the unjust judge, “And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily” (Luke 18:7-8a).

Revelation 18:21

a mighty angel

The appearance of a mighty angel indicates an important declarative action is to follow. A strong angel asked who was worthy to open the scroll (Rev. 5:2+). A mighty angel stood upon the sea and the land to proclaim the dominion of God in retaking the earth (Rev. 10:1+).

took up a great millstone and threw *it* into the sea

The angel now reenacts the declaration which Jeremiah told Seraiah to speak over the city thousands of years before:

So Jeremiah wrote in a book all the evil that would come upon Babylon, all these words that are written against Babylon. And Jeremiah said to Seraiah, “**When you arrive in Babylon and see it, and read all these words**, 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.’ 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**. 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. (Jer. 51:60-64) [emphasis added]

Jeremiah’s declaration is another evidence which points to Babylon of the end being the literal city reconstructed on the banks of the Euphrates. For Seraiah was sent to the literal city in order to declare a literal judgment over her. The judgment he read has never been fulfilled in history (see [Babylon's Historic Fall](#)). At the time of the end, the words of God regarding the city, as written by Jeremiah and declared by Seraiah, will find their ultimate fulfillment in the destruction of the rebuilt city of old. See [Babylon is Babylon!](#)

Every word is employed to impress us with its suddenness and completeness. And inasmuch as all other fulfilled prophecies have been fulfilled *to the very letter*; and Babylon, though fallen gradually, and very low, has never suffered such a destruction. There is only one conclusion . . . it will be revived, and exceed all its former magnificence.⁵⁷

Jesus alluded to Jeremiah’s predicted destruction of Babylon when he taught about the gravity of “causing one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin” (Mat. 18:6; Mark 9:42; Luke 17:2).

Thus with violence

The angel's actions demonstrate the severity and finality of Babylon's destruction.

the great city

The angel parodies her boastful title when announcing her destruction. She considered herself *great*, nevertheless she will be completely overthrown. See commentary on [Revelation 18:10](#).

shall not be found anymore

Shall not be found anymore is ο μ ε ρ ε θ η [ou mē heurethē eti], *no not it should be found still*. The double-negative emphasizes her utter and permanent destruction. A similar prediction attended the destruction of Tyre (Eze. 26:18).

Revelation 18:22

The sound of harpists . . .

Various occupations within the city are listed together with an indication that they will no longer be found. This harmonizes with [Babylon's Predicted Destruction](#) which indicates she will be perpetually uninhabited. The diversity of occupations also indicates the impossibility of escape—the destruction will fall on all classes of people alike (cf. Isa. 24:1-2). Thus, the saints are instructed to escape the city to avoid her plagues (Rev. 18:4+). Musicians may be listed first as an intentional contrast to the resounding praise from heaven over her destruction. The tumultuous praise in heaven correlates with the deathly silence in Babylon below (Rev. 19:1-4+). Similar results attend the destruction of Tyre (Eze. 26:13).

No craftsman . . . and the sound of a millstone

Not only will there be no entertainment or rejoicing, there will be no more industry. *Craftsman* is τεχνίτης [technitēs], related to our word *technician*: "A skilled workman *craftsman, artisan . . . architect*."⁵⁸

shall not be heard, shall not be found

In each of these phrases, the double negative, ο μ [ou mē], emphasizes the certainty of the declaration.

Revelation 18:23

the voice of bridegroom and bride

The voice of bridegroom and bride attends normalcy and stability (Mat. 24:38). There would be nothing approaching normalcy nor any future for Babylon.

shall not shine, shall not be heard

In each of these phrases, the double negative, ο μ [ou mē], appears emphasizing the permanence of the declarations.

your merchants were the great men of the earth

See commentary on [Revelation 18:3](#).

for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived

Sorcery is φαρμακεία [pharmakeia]. This term describes "sorcery, magic, . . . magic arts"⁵⁹ and includes "the use of drugs of any kind for magical effect."⁶⁰ Isaiah lists her sorceries: *enchantments, astrology, star-gazing, and monthly prognostication* (Isa. 47:12-13).⁶¹ It is because of the multitude of her sorceries that her destruction has come (Isa. 47:9 cf. Nineveh, Nah. 3:3).⁶² Her magical arts were employed in the deception of the nations at the direction of the master deceiver, Satan (Rev. 12:9+). He empowered the beast upon which she rode (Rev. 13:2+; Rev. 17:3+). The city is like [Jezebel](#): having known "the depths of Satan" (Rev. 2:24+ cf. 2K. 9:22).⁶³ Those who practice sorcery "have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone" (Rev. 21:8+) and never enter the New Jerusalem (Rev. 22:15+).⁶⁴ See commentary on [Revelation 9:21](#).

Revelation 18:24

in her was found the blood of prophets and saints and of all who were slain on the earth

Who were slain is σφαγμένων [sphagmenōn], perfect passive participle, *ones having been violently murdered*.⁶⁵ The city is guilty of

great religious persecution. She is identical to the [Harlot](#), who drinks the blood of the saints (Rev. 17:6+). See [One or Two Babylons?](#) Since she is the mother of all harlots (Rev. 17:5+), the blood of the godly shed by all her daughter harlots is put to her account. One such daughter harlot was Jerusalem in the days of Jesus (Luke 11:47-51; Acts 7:52; 1Th. 2:15). Many other daughter harlots have been birthed from her. At the bottom of her cup (Rev. 17:6+) is the blood of Abel (Gen. 4:10). Her cup continues to fill this very hour. See commentary on [Revelation 17:6](#).

So far as this present world is concerned, the general verdict of mankind, sustained by the great current of human history for 6,000 years is against the faith and testimonies of the saints, apostles, and prophets of God. To the general population of the earth their profession stands branded as mere hallucination and lies. But at last their vindication comes. When the vaunted wisdom, and progress, and experiments of unregenerate man are consummated, and there is nothing to show from it but a valley of burning cinders and desolation, with the whole earth from highest kings to meanest subjects howling in helpless lamentations, terror, and despair, history will have added its seal to all that the saints, apostles, and prophets have said and maintained. Then will their judgment have been judged out of that world which despised and persecuted them, and spurned their hated *pessimism* for more flattering philosophies.⁶⁶

Notes

¹E. W. Bullinger, [Commentary On Revelation](#) - ONLINE (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1984, 1935), Rev. 18:10.

²Charles Feinberg, [The Prophecy of Ezekiel: The Glory of the Lord](#) (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1969), 150.

³Bullinger, [Commentary On Revelation](#) - ONLINE Rev. 18:1.

⁴Alan F. Johnson, [Revelation: The Expositor's Bible Commentary](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966), Rev. 18:1.

⁵Bullinger, [Commentary On Revelation](#) - ONLINE Rev. 18:1.

⁶Many commentators miss the importance of the aorist tense here: "One has only to walk down the mainstreets of a great city like New York or London to see the aptness of such a description. Lust is unbridled and tens of thousands of girls each year go on their way to prostitution."—Donald Grey Barnhouse, [Revelation](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1971), 337. Similarly: "The first cause given for Babylon's destruction is that she has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit."—John MacArthur, [Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#) (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 2000), Rev. 18:1. Yet the angel is not describing the condition of the city *before* its fall, but *afterwards*, as is made plain by the parallel passages in Isaiah and Jeremiah which describe her demonized condition as the *result* of her destruction (Isa. 13:21-22; 14:23; Jer. 50:39; 51:37). Although demons undoubtedly frequent major cities, they are not *imprisoned* there as this verse describes. "Evidence of the city's fall is its transition into 'the habitation of demons.'"—Robert L. Thomas, [Revelation 8-22](#) (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1995), Rev. 18:2.

⁷"With its destruction, Babylon is to become a habitation of demons. This will be the dwelling place of demonic abode and confinement during the Messianic Age."—Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, [The Footsteps of Messiah](#), rev ed (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 2003), 330.

⁸Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva F. Miller, [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 226.

⁹Frederick William Danker and Walter Bauer, [A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature](#) (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 867.

¹⁰Friberg, [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#), 403.

¹¹James Swanson, [Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Hebrew \(Old Testament\)](#), electronic ed (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997), H6716.

¹²James Strong, [The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible](#) (Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1996), H8162.

¹³Swanson, [Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Hebrew \(Old Testament\)](#), H8163.

¹⁴W. E. Vine, [Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words](#) (Nashville, IL: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996), H8163.

- ¹⁵“The city of Babylon on the Euphrates during the millennium will be a jail of demons. Compare Isaiah 24:21-23; which is millennial also, and the judgment upon Edom, in Isaiah 34:13-15; also millennial. (Of course these conditions give way to the last judgment—when the earth is destroyed, in Rev. 20:11-15⁺, and all lost beings are finally sentenced.)”—William R. Newell, [Revelation: Chapter by Chapter](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1994,c1935), 286.
- ¹⁶Fruchtenbaum, [The Footsteps of Messiah](#), 512-513.
- ¹⁷“The Committee was of the opinion that all three elements (each of which involves an allusion to Isa. 13:21; 34:11) probably belonged to the original text of Revelation; since, however, [κα φυλακ παντ ς θηριου καθαρτου](#) [kai phylakē pantos thēriou akathartou] is absent from such important witnesses as 2080 2053 [x](#) vg *al*, it was decided to enclose these words within square brackets.”—Bruce M. Metzger, [A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament](#) (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), Rev. 18:2.
- ¹⁸Friberg, [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#), 147.
- ¹⁹Vine, [Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words](#), G1713.
- ²⁰Henry Morris, [The Revelation Record](#) (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1983), Rev. 18:11.
- ²¹J. A. Seiss, [The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966), 418.
- ²²Fruchtenbaum, [The Footsteps of Messiah](#), 319.
- ²³“They were warned to *flee from the land of the north*, that is, from Babylon, so called because armies and trading caravans from that land entered Palestine from that direction due to the desert on the east and southeast (Jer. 1:13-14).”—Merrill F. Unger, [Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament](#) (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2002), Zec. 2:6. The context is immediately prior to the Millennial Kingdom: “Many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and they shall become My people. And I will dwell in your midst. And the LORD will take possession of Judah as His inheritance in the Holy Land, and will again choose Jerusalem.” (Zec. 2:11-12).
- ²⁴Morris suggests the call comes earlier, before the mark has been imposed. [Morris, [The Revelation Record](#), Rev. 18:4] But this seems unlikely given the immediacy of the warning and impending judgment and that the mark is in place by the time of the first bowl (Rev. 16:2⁺) whereas the destruction occurs at the seventh bowl (Rev. 16:19⁺).
- ²⁵Newell, [Revelation: Chapter by Chapter](#), 287.
- ²⁶Danker, [A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature](#) 774.
- ²⁷How many believers in our own day deny biblical teachings out of sympathy with the ungodly culture? Bullinger suggests a figure of speech which puts the *sins* for *judgment*: “The word ‘sins’ is put by *Metonymy* for the *judgment* brought about by her sins. (Compare Jer. 51:9.) It is because God’s people will not have fellowship in her sins that this gracious call to ‘Come out’ from her judgments is given.”—Bullinger, [Commentary On Revelation](#) - ONLINE Rev. 18:4.
- ²⁸Thomas, [Revelation 8-22](#), Rev. 18:6.
- ²⁹Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, [Commentary on the Old Testament](#) (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), Jer. 50:21.
- ³⁰Danker, [A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature](#) 771.
- ³¹Friberg, [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#), 358.
- ³²MacArthur, [Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#), Rev. 18:3.
- ³³*Ibid.*, Rev. 18:1.
- ³⁴Bullinger, [Commentary On Revelation](#) - ONLINE, Rev. 18:8.
- ³⁵Thomas, [Revelation 8-22](#), Rev. 18:8.
- ³⁶Fruchtenbaum, [The Footsteps of Messiah](#), 331.
- ³⁷Morris holds to the two-destructions view: “The kings of the earth had burned Mystery Babylon, the harlot religious system, with

fire, but these same kings mourn the burning of commercial Babylon (Rev. 17:16_±; 18:9_±), so obviously these are not the same burnings.”—Morris, [The Revelation Record](#), Rev. 18:8. His premise is incorrect. It is not the *kings of the earth* who destroy the harlot, but the *ten kings* with the Beast (Rev. 17:16_±). Therefore, the mourning of the kings of the earth over the destruction of Babylon does not provide evidence for a different destruction of the city subsequent to that of the Harlot.

³⁸Bullinger, [Commentary On Revelation](#) - ONLINE Rev. 18:9.

³⁹Morris, [The Revelation Record](#), Rev. 18:10.

⁴⁰James Swanson, [Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Greek \(New Testament\)](#), electronic ed (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997), G1117.

⁴¹Thomas, [Revelation 8-22](#), Rev. 18:11.

⁴²Friberg, [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#), 342.

⁴³Fausset attempts to find fulfillment in Roman Catholicism: “Popery has derived its greatest gains from the sale of masses for *the souls of men* after death, and of indulgences purchased from the Papal chancery by rich merchants in various countries, to be retailed at a profit [Mosheim, III, 95, 96].”—A. R. Fausset, “[The Revelation of St. John the Divine.](#)” in Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, [A Commentary. Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments](#) (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997, 1877), Rev. 18:13.

⁴⁴Johnson, [Revelation: The Expositor's Bible Commentary](#), Rev. 18:9-19.

⁴⁵Thomas, [Revelation 8-22](#), Rev. 18:13.

⁴⁶Barnhouse, [Revelation](#), 341.

⁴⁷Morris, [The Revelation Record](#), Rev. 18:13.

⁴⁸Friberg, [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#), 172.

⁴⁹“The Euphrates is about 2,890 kilometers (1,780 miles) long and is navigable for smaller vessels for about 1,950 kilometers (1,200 miles).”—Ronald F. Youngblood and R. K. Harrison, eds., [Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary](#) (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1995), s.v. “Euphrates.” “The entire course is 1780 miles, and of this distance more than two-thirds (1200 miles is navigable for boats).”—William Smith, [Smith's Bible Dictionary](#) (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997), s.v. “Euphrates.”

⁵⁰Bullinger, [Commentary On Revelation](#) - ONLINE Rev. 18:17.

⁵¹C. E. Harrington and W. S. Lasor, “[Euphrates.](#)” in Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed., [The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Revised](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1979, 1915), 2:203.

⁵²Some recognize the unsuitability of Rome, but are so set in their identification of Babylon as Rome, they attempt to circumvent Rome's failure in fulfillment by spiritualizing the commerce: “Rome was not a commercial city, and is not likely from her position to be so. The merchandise must therefore be spiritual, even as the harlot is not literal, but spiritual.”—Fausset, [The Revelation of St. John the Divine](#), Rev. 18:10.

⁵³Andy Woods, [What is the Identity of Babylon In Revelation 17-18?](#)

⁵⁴Bullinger, [Commentary On Revelation](#) - ONLINE Rev. 18:1.

⁵⁵Barnhouse, [Revelation](#), 344.

⁵⁶Danker, [A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature](#), 450.

⁵⁷Bullinger, [Commentary On Revelation](#) - ONLINE Rev. 17:21-23.

⁵⁸Friberg, [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#), 379.

⁵⁹Danker, [A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature](#), 854.

⁶⁰Friberg, [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#), 397.

⁶¹Several of which are available at most supermarket checkout stands in our own country.

⁶²“We can be certain that, in the wicked and terrifying days of the tribulation, ungodly men will turn to intoxicants and drugs far more than ever in history. . . . The great demand for intoxicants and drugs in these coming days will surely be further stimulated by the ungodly and covetous merchants who profit so greatly from them.”—Morris, [The Revelation Record](#), Rev. 18:13.

⁶³This is one of many reasons why Satan will be confined during the Millennial Kingdom, so that he shall no longer *deceive* the nations (Rev. 20:3⁺).

⁶⁴Concerning prohibitions against witchcraft and sorcery: Ex. 22:18; Lev. 19:26, 31; Deu. 18:10; 2Chr. 33:6; Isa. 8:19; 19:3; 44:25; Acts 16:16; Gal. 5:20; Rev. 18:23⁺; 21:8⁺; 22:15⁺.

⁶⁵Danker, [A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature](#), 796.

⁶⁶Seiss, [The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation](#), 418.

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