

# The Fall of Babylon

Revelation 18:1-24; 19:1-3

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## Introduction

- Babylon has always been associated with the anti-God movement
  - Began with the world coming together at the tower of Babel
    - Genesis 11:1-9-- *"Now the whole earth had one language and one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there. Then they said to one another, 'Come, let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly.' They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar. And they said, 'Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.' But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. And the LORD said, 'Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.'" So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth."*
  - The city itself was built by Nimrod, the "rebel", the "mighty hunter before the Lord."
    - Genesis 10:10-11-- *"the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. From that land he went to Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Calah, 12 and Resen between Nineveh and Calah (that is the principal city).*
  - Babylon was the source of pagan religions
  - When God scattered those "rebels" from Babel, they took with them their false religions.
  - In the end, the false religions will come back to their starting place-- Revelation 17
- Babylon is to become the world's economic capital
  - Zechariah 5:5-11-- *"Then the angel who talked with me came out and said to me, 'Lift your eyes now, and see what this is that goes forth.'" So I asked, "What is it?" And he said, "It is a basket that is going forth." He also said, "This is their resemblance throughout the earth: Here is a lead disc lifted up, and this is a woman sitting inside the basket"; then he said, "This is Wickedness!" And he thrust her down into the basket, and threw the lead cover over its mouth. Then I raised my eyes and looked, and there were two women, coming with the wind in their wings; for they had wings like the wings of a stork, and they lifted up the basket between earth and heaven. So I said to the angel who talked with me, "Where are they carrying the basket?" And he said to me, "To build a house for it in the land of Shinar; when it is ready, the basket will be set there on its base."*

## The Fall of Babylon

### A. The Pronouncement of the Fall

- Revelation 18:1-3-- *"After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. 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! 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.'"*

## 1. Response of the kings, merchants, and shippers to the fall

- Revelation 18:9-19-- *"The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning, standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, "Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come." "And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore: merchandise of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, fine linen and purple, silk and scarlet, every kind of citron wood, every kind of object of ivory, every kind of object of most precious wood, bronze, iron, and marble; and cinnamon and incense, fragrant oil and frankincense, wine and oil, fine flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and bodies and souls of men. The fruit that your soul longed for has gone from you, and all the things which are rich and splendid have gone from you, and you shall find them no more at all. The merchants of these things, who became rich by her, will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, and saying, "Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls! For in one hour such great riches came to nothing." Every shipmaster, all who travel by ship, sailors, and as many as trade on the sea, stood at a distance and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, "What is like this great city?" "They threw dust on their heads and cried out, weeping and wailing, and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city, in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth! For in one hour she is made desolate.'"*

2. Over and over again, Babylon the Great is called a "great city".

### 3. **But is "Babylon" a city, and if so, where is it located?**

- a. Some believe that Babylon does not refer to a literal city, but rather to the political, economic, and religious empire of the Antichrist, wherever that might be located.
- b. Others believe that "Babylon" is a code-word for...
  - 1) Rome, which was the capital of the ancient Roman empire.
  - 2) New York City, which today is the capital of world commerce and trade
- c. Others hold that Babylon refers to a literal, rebuilt Babylon located 50 miles south of Baghdad, Iraq

## B. The Prophecies concerning the Fall from Isaiah and Jeremiah

### 1. The Prophecies Stated:

#### a. The destruction of Babylon will take place at the time of the "day of the Lord"

- 1) Isaiah 13-14 time is set "in the day of the Lord".
  - Isaiah 13:6-- *"Wail, for the day of the LORD is at hand! It will come as destruction from the Almighty."*
  - Isaiah 13:9-11-- *"Behold, the day of the LORD comes, cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; And He will destroy its sinners from it. For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not give their light; The sun will be darkened in its going forth, and the moon will not cause its light to shine. "I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; I will halt the arrogance of the proud and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible."*
- 2) Jeremiah 50-51 time is set "In those days and at that time", referring to the "day of the Lord" when God will judge the nations, including Babylon.
- 3) Revelation 18 also record events happening "in the day of the Lord", the "great day of His wrath"

#### b. The destruction of Babylon will happen suddenly.

- Jeremiah 15:7-9-- *"Babylon was a golden cup in the LORD'S hand, that made all the earth drunk. The nations drank her wine; Therefore the nations are deranged. Babylon has suddenly fallen and been destroyed. Wail for her! Take balm for her pain; Perhaps she may be healed. 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."*
- Isaiah 13:19 -- *" Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldeans' pride, will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah."*
- Revelation 18:8-- *"she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her."*

- c. **Prior to the massive destruction of Babylon, a warning will be issued to the Jews still living there to get out before it is too late.**
- Jeremiah 50:6-8-- *"My people have been lost sheep. Their shepherds have led them astray; They have turned them away on the mountains. They have gone from mountain to hill; They have forgotten their resting place. All who found them have devoured them; And their adversaries said, "We have not offended, because they have sinned against the LORD, the habitation of justice, the LORD, the hope of their fathers." "Move from the midst of Babylon, Go out of the land of the Chaldeans; And be like the rams before the flocks."*
  - Jeremiah 51:5-6-- *"For Israel is not forsaken, nor Judah, by his God, the LORD of hosts, though their land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel." 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."*
  - Revelation 18:4-- *"Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues."*
- d. **The ruins from the city are never to be used to build another city.**
- Jeremiah 51:26 -- *"They shall not take from you a stone for a corner nor a stone for a foundation, but you shall be desolate forever,"*
  - Revelation 18:8-- *"she will utterly be burned with fire, for strong is the Lord who judges her."*
  - Revelation 18:9-- *"kings of the earth... will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning."*
- e. **The destroyed city of Babylon will never again be inhabited.**
- Isaiah 13:19-22-- *"Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldeans' pride, will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. 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. 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.*
  - Jeremiah 50:39-40-- *"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. As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighbors," says the LORD, "So no one shall reside there, nor son of man dwell in it."*
  - Revelation 18:21-24-- *"Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore. The sound of harpists, musicians, flutists, and trumpeters shall not be heard in you anymore. No craftsman of any craft shall be found in you anymore, and the sound of a millstone shall not be heard in you anymore. The light of a lamp shall not shine in you anymore, and the voice of bridegroom and bride shall not be heard in you anymore. For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth."*

## 2. **The Prophecies Evaluated in light of the history of Babylon**

- a. The city of Babylon, while conquered by various foreign powers, has never been completely destroyed nor uninhabited.
- b. The modern city of Hillah, a suburb of the ancient city of Babylon, today has over half million people today.
- c. The late Saddam Hussein spent over a billion dollars rebuilding the ancient city of Babylon.

## C. The Predicament: the Sudden Destruction of Babylon

### 1. How does it happen?

#### a. Destroyed by the “nations from the north”

- 1) The Antichrist hears disturbing news *“from the east and from the north”*. (Daniel 11:44)
  - a) The *“news from the east”* is the movement of the kings of the east crossing the river Euphrates to engage in battle with the Antichrist.
  - b) But what about the *“news from the north”*?
- 2) The *“news from the north”* is the report of the nations from the north attacking and destroying the city of Babylon.
  - Jeremiah 50:9-10-- *“For behold, I will raise and cause to come up against Babylon an assembly of great nations from the north country, and they shall array themselves against her; From there she shall be captured. Their arrows shall be like those of an expert warrior; None shall return in vain. And Chaldea shall become plunder; All who plunder her shall be satisfied,”* says the LORD.”
  - Jeremiah 50:13-- *“Because of the wrath of the LORD she shall not be inhabited, but she shall be wholly desolate. Everyone who goes by Babylon shall be horrified and hiss at all her plagues.”*
- 3) The Antichrist, the future king of Babylon, will not be in the city at the time of the attack, but will hear of it through messengers.
  - Jeremiah 50:43-- *“The king of Babylon has heard the report about them, and his hands grow feeble; Anguish has taken hold of him, pangs as of a woman in childbirth.”*
  - Jeremiah 51:31-32-- *“One runner will run to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to show the king of Babylon that his city is taken on all sides; The passages are blocked, the reeds they have burned with fire, and the men of war are terrified.”*

#### b. Destroyed by plagues from God.

- Revelation 18:4-8-- *“And I heard another voice from heaven saying, ‘Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. Render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her. In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, ‘I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.’ Therefore her plagues will come in one day—death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her.”*
- 1) The plagues could be related to the seventh Bowl Judgment
    - Revelation 16:18-21-- *“there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth. Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.”*
  - 2) Whatever the plagues are, they will cause *“death, mourning, and famine”*.
  - 3) Destruction will be so complete that the city *“shall not be found again”* (Revelation 18:21) and *“her smoke will rise up forever and ever.”* (Revelation 19:3)
  - 4) Babylon will become the dwelling place for *“demons... foul spirits... and unclean and hated birds”* (Revelation 18:2)

### 2. Why does it happen?

- Revelation 19:1-3-- *“After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, ‘Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God! For true and righteous are His*

*judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her.” Again they said, “Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!”*

a. **God refuses to share His glory with another.**

- Revelation 18:7-8-- *“In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, “I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.” Therefore her plagues will come in one day—death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her.”*

b. **Because God is true and righteous in His judgments, He will judge Babylon and the Antichrist for how they have corrupted the world through immorality and materialism.**

- Revelation 18:3--*“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.”*
- Revelation 18:23-- *“by your sorcery all the nations were deceived.”*

c. **God’s judgment is severe because of the “blood of His servants shed by her”.**

- Revelation 18:5-6-- *“have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. Render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her.”*
- Revelation 18:24-- *“And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth.”*
- Revelation 18:20-- *“Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!”*
- Revelation 6:10-- *“How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”*

## **APPLICATION FOR US TODAY?**

1. **Much of the Old Testament prophecies still need to be fulfilled literally in the future.**

- 2 Peter 1:19-21-- *“have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation. For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”*

2. Just as the Jews living in Babylon are urged to flee the city before destruction, so we as believers in Christ are urged to live apart from the godless world system. **We are to be “in the world, but not of the world.”**

- Romans 12:2-- *“be... conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”*
- Philippians 2:14-16a-- *“Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life.”*

3. When God mercifully calls the Jews living in Babylon to flee the coming judgment, so today **God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.**