The Book of Revelation

Zanesville, OH | Wednesday/Sunday Bible Study

**Chapter 18**

* **18:1-3– Babylon’s Great Fall**
  + **Verse 1**– After the vision of chapter 17, another angel comes to announce the destruction of Babylon the Great. He descends from heaven, having great authority and the earth is said to be illumined with his glory (cf. Isa. 6:1; 60:1-3; Rev. 21:23). The glory and authority descriptions lend validity to the subsequent judgment to be announced.
  + The angel himself does not possess such authority and glory but the meaning is that because he comes down out of heaven, he is reflecting the glory of God and His sovereign authority. Some suggest it might be Christ (cf. 10:1; 21:11, 13).
  + **Verse 2**– The angel loudly announces the fate of Babylon echoing Isa. 21:9 and Rev. 14:8. The fall of Babylon is stated the in the past tense which is the prophetic way of guaranteeing their future judgment.
  + The result of her judgment is complete desolation. The once vibrant and proud city will come a habitation for volatile beasts and every unclean thing (cf. Isa. 13:19-22; 14:3-23; 34:11-15; Jer. 50:39-40; 51:37).
  + **Verse 3**– The reason for Babylon’s fall is not withheld in this verse. She is being judged because of making all the nations drink of her immorality. This is a metaphor for idolatry and all things that stand in opposition to God (cf. Jer. 3:1-10).
  + Wealth, luxury and economic success was all derived because of pagan and idolatrous practices. Such practices required an abandonment of faith in God, if there was any, and a constant practice of blaspheming Him.
* **18:4-8– The Reason for the Fall of Babylon**
  + **Verse 4**– John hears another voice from heaven (perhaps The Father or Jesus) encourages the saints to be separated from Babylon (cf. Num. 16:26-27; Isa. 52:11; Jer. 51:6, 45; 2 Cor. 6:17). This idea of moral separation is well established throughout the OT scriptures and it continues in the NT.
  + It is rooted in the idea of being holy as God is holy (Lev. 11:44-45; 1 Pet. 1:15-16). This separation is wise because it will allow them to not engage in the sins of Babylon but it will also prevent them from experiencing their fate.
  + **Verse 5**– The sins of Babylon are so much that they are described as piling up as high as heaven (cf. Gen. 18:20-21; 19:13; Jer. 51:9; Jon. 1:2). The point is that their sins cannot be ignored by God since it is blatant and in His face. He will not forget what they have done (cf. Rev. 16:19).
  + **Verse 6**– The voice now urges possible angelic executioners or agents to carry out judgment to repay Babylon “twice “as much for all she has done. The concept of Lex Talionis is prevalent here (Ex. 21:23-25; Psa. 137:8; Jer. 50:15, 29; 51:24, 49).
  + The “doubling” may be a way of describing that they will receive their full portion of judgment (Isa. 40:2; Jer. 16:18; 17:18). Hence, Lex Talionis applies. “Doubling” is also used to describe the joy for the faithful (Isa. 61:7; Zech. 9:12).
  + **Verse 7**– The Lex Talionis principle continues in this verse. Babylon glorified herself and exalted herself (cf. 2 Sam. 22:28; Prov. 16:18) and God will repay her accordingly for her arrogance.
  + Glory and exaltation is explicitly reserved for God (Rev. 15:4; 19:1) and those that honor themselves (Ezek. 28:2-10; Rom. 1:18-32) will be tormented. This exaltation is further seen in thinking herself as a queen instead of a widow (Isa. 47:7-9; Zeph. 2:15).
  + The irony is that God will turn her into that which she claims not to be. The same fate befell the OT nations that rejected God (Lam. 1:1; Ezek. 26:4-5). They will mourn as they see their destruction.
  + **Verse 8**– Her arrogance will be the source of her downfall (cf. Jer. 50:31). Her plagues will come in one day (cf. Isa. 47:9). She will experience famine, mourning, pestilence and burning by fire (Isa. 47:14; Jer. 51:58). Her judgment is the same as she has dealt out to God’s people.
* **18:9-20– Lament for Babylon**
  + **Verse 9**–
  + **Verses 10**–
  + **Verse 11**–
  + **Verse 12**–
  + **Verses 13**–
  + **Verse 14**–
  + **Verse 15**–
  + **Verse 16**–
  + **Verse 17**–
  + **Verse 18**–
  + **Verse 19**–
  + **Verse 20**–
* **18:21-24– Babylon’s Violence and Judgment**
  + **Verse 21**–
  + **Verse 22**–
  + **Verse 23**–
  + **Verse 24**–