

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

“Fallen, Fallen, is Babylon the Great!” (Revelation 18.1-19)



Review of Revelation 17

1. Revelation 17.1-19.10 is an expansion of the 6th and 7th bowls (Rev 16.12-21)
2. A tale of two cities (the harlot and the bride)

Revelation 17:1-3 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who is seated on many waters, ² with whom the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality, and with the wine of whose sexual immorality the dwellers on earth have become drunk.” ³ And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns.

Revelation 21:9-11 Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, “Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.” ¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, ¹¹ having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.

*judgment
salvation*

3. Harlot cities (Is 1.21-23; Nahum 3.1-4; Is 23.15-18)
4. “Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of the earth’s abominations” (16.3-6)
5. Explanation of the vision of the Great Harlot and the Beast (16.7-18)

cf. Rev. 12. - priestly - golden cup.

- a. the beast (counterfeit divinity; messianic masquerading; ironic reversal of conquest)

6. the harlot (16.15-18)

¹⁵ And the angel said to me, "The waters that you saw, where the prostitute is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages. ¹⁶ And the ten horns that you saw, they and the beast will hate the prostitute. They will make her desolate and naked, and devour her flesh and burn her up with fire, ¹⁷ for God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by being of one mind and handing over their royal power to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled. ¹⁸ And the woman that you saw is the great city that has dominion over the kings of the earth."

b. "the waters" = peoples, multitudes, nations, and languages

Jeremiah 51:13 O you who dwell by many waters, rich in treasures, your end has come; the thread of your life is cut.

c. the harlot's desolation and destruction: stripped, devoured, and burned

d. "for God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by being of one mind and handing over their royal power to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled" (17.17; cf. Daniel 7) *divine sovereignty*

Revelation 18

After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was made bright with his glory. ² And he called out with a mighty voice, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast. ³ For all nations have drunk the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her luxurious living."

⁴ Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues; ⁵ for her sins are heaped high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. ⁶ Pay her back as she herself has paid back others, and repay her double for her deeds; mix a double portion for her in the cup she mixed. ⁷ As she glorified herself and lived in luxury, so give her a like measure of torment and mourning, since in her heart she says, 'I sit as a queen, I am no widow, and mourning I shall never see.' ⁸ For this reason her plagues will come in a single day, death and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for mighty is the Lord God who has judged her."

⁹ And the kings of the earth, who committed sexual immorality and lived in luxury with her, will weep and wail over her when they see the smoke of her burning. ¹⁰ They will stand far off, in fear of her torment, and say,

"Alas! Alas! You great city, you mighty city, Babylon! For in a single hour your judgment has come." ¹¹ And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn for her, since no one buys their cargo anymore, ¹² cargo of gold, silver, jewels, pearls, fine linen, purple cloth, silk, scarlet cloth, all kinds of scented wood, all kinds of articles of ivory, all kinds of articles of costly wood, bronze, iron and marble, ¹³ cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, oil, fine flour, wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and slaves, that is, human souls. ¹⁴ "The fruit for which your soul longed has gone from you, and all your delicacies and your splendors are lost to you, never to be found again!" ¹⁵ The merchants of these wares, who gained wealth from her, will stand far off, in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning aloud, ¹⁶ "Alas, alas, for the great city that was clothed in fine linen, in purple and scarlet, adorned with gold, with jewels, and with pearls! ¹⁷ For in a single hour all this wealth has been laid waste."

And all shipmasters and seafaring men, sailors and all whose trade is on the sea, stood far off ¹⁸ and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning, "What city was like the great city?" ¹⁹ And they threw dust on their heads as they wept and mourned, crying out, "Alas, alas, for the great city where all who had ships at sea grew rich by her wealth! For in a single hour she has been laid waste.

1. "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great!" (18.1-3) *intro - announcement of judgment*

After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was made bright with his glory. ² And he called out with a mighty voice, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast. ³ For all nations have drunk the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her luxurious living." *idolatry → luxury.*

a. John's prophetic oracle against Babylon (cf. Isaiah 13-14, 21, 23, 34, 46-47; Jeremiah 50-51; Ezekiel 26-28)

b. "I saw another angel" . . .

Ezekiel 43:2 And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the east. And the sound of his coming was like the sound of many waters, and the earth shone with his glory,

- stripped - skeleton - cage for demonic loads.

c. Babylon: a haunt for demons (18.2)

R Jeremiah 50:39-40 "Therefore wild beasts shall dwell with hyenas in Babylon, and ostriches shall dwell in her. She shall never again have people, nor be inhabited for all generations. ⁴⁰ As when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighboring cities, declares the LORD, so no man shall dwell there, and no son of man shall sojourn in her."

R Isaiah 21:9 And behold, here come riders, horsemen in pairs!" And he answered, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon; and all the carved images of her gods he has shattered to the ground."

sum Isaiah 13:19-22 And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the splendor and pomp of the Chaldeans, will be like Sodom and Gomorrah when God overthrew them. ²⁰ It will never be inhabited or lived in for all generations; no Arab will pitch his tent there; no shepherds will make their flocks lie down there. ²¹ But wild animals will lie down there, and their houses will be full of howling creatures; there ostriches will dwell, and there wild goats will dance. ²² Hyenas will cry in its towers, and jackals in the pleasant palaces; its time is close at hand and its days will not be prolonged.

R Isaiah 34:9-15 And the streams of Edom shall be turned into pitch, and her soil into sulfur; her land shall become burning pitch. ¹⁰ Night and day it shall not be quenched; its smoke shall go up forever. From generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it forever and ever. ¹¹ But the hawk and the porcupine shall possess it, the owl and the raven shall dwell in it. He shall stretch the line of confusion over it, and the plumb line of emptiness. ¹² Its nobles – there is no one there to call it a kingdom, and all its princes shall be nothing. ¹³ Thorns shall grow over its strongholds, nettles and thistles in its fortresses. It shall be the haunt of jackals, an abode for ostriches. ¹⁴ And wild animals shall meet with hyenas; the wild goat shall cry to his fellow; indeed, there the night bird settles and finds for herself a resting place. ¹⁵ There the owl nests and lays and hatches and gathers her young in her shadow; indeed, there the hawks are gathered, each one with her mate.

d. Reason for judgment: idolatry and economic injustice (18.3)

Isaiah 23:8-9, 15-18 Who has purposed this against Tyre, the bestower of crowns, whose merchants were princes, whose traders were the honored of the earth? ⁹ The LORD of hosts has purposed it, to defile the pompous pride of all glory, to dishonor all the honored of the earth . . . In that day Tyre will be forgotten for seventy years, like the days of one king. At the end of seventy years, it will happen to Tyre as in the song of the prostitute: ¹⁶ "Take a harp; go about the city, O forgotten prostitute! Make sweet melody; sing many songs, that you may be remembered." ¹⁷ At the end of seventy years, the LORD will visit Tyre, and she will return to her wages and will prostitute herself with all the kingdoms of the world on the face of the earth.

2. "Come out of her, my people!" (18.4-8)

Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues; ⁵ for her sins are heaped high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. ⁶ Pay her back as she herself has paid back others, and repay her double for her deeds; mix a double portion for her in the cup she mixed. ⁷ As she glorified herself and lived in luxury, so give her a like measure of torment and mourning, since in her heart she says, 'I sit as a queen, I am no widow, and mourning I shall never see.' ⁸ For this reason her plagues will come in a single day, death and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for mighty is the Lord God who has judged her."

- a. "Come out! ... for her sins are heaped high as heaven" (cf. Gen 19, where Lot flees)

read **Jeremiah 51:5-10** For Israel and Judah have not been forsaken by their God, the LORD of hosts, but the land of the Chaldeans is full of guilt against the Holy One of Israel. ⁶ "Flee from the midst of Babylon; let every one save his life! Be not cut off in her punishment, for this is the time of the LORD's vengeance, the repayment he is rendering her. ⁷ Babylon was a golden cup in the LORD's hand, making all the earth drunken; the nations drank of her wine; therefore the nations went mad. ⁸ Suddenly Babylon has fallen and been broken; wail for her! Take balm for her pain; perhaps she may be healed. ⁹ We would have healed Babylon, but she was not healed. Forsake her, and let us go each to his own country, for her judgment has reached up to heaven and has been lifted up even to the skies. ¹⁰ The LORD has brought about our vindication; come, let us declare in Zion the work of the LORD our God.

Jeremiah 51:35-45 The violence done to me and to my kinsmen be upon Babylon," let the inhabitant of Zion say. "My blood be upon the inhabitants of Chaldea," let Jerusalem say. ³⁶ Therefore thus says the LORD: "Behold, I will plead your cause and take vengeance for you. I will dry up her sea and make her fountain dry, ³⁷ and Babylon shall become a heap of ruins, the haunt of jackals, a horror and a hissing, without inhabitant. ³⁸ "They shall roar together like lions; they shall growl like lions' cubs. ³⁹ While they are inflamed I will prepare them a feast and make them drunk, that they may become merry, then sleep a perpetual sleep and not wake, declares the LORD. ⁴⁰ I will bring them down like lambs to the slaughter, like rams and male goats. ⁴¹ "How Babylon is taken, the praise of the whole earth seized! How Babylon has become a horror among the nations! ⁴² The sea has come up on Babylon; she is covered with its tumultuous waves. ⁴³ Her cities have become a horror, a land of drought and a desert, a land in which no one dwells, and through which no son of man passes. ⁴⁴ And I will punish Bel in Babylon, and take out of his mouth what he has swallowed. The nations shall no longer flow to him; the wall of Babylon has fallen. ⁴⁵ "Go out of the midst of her, my people! Let every one save his life from the fierce anger of the LORD!

- b. Babylon's pride and *lex talionis* (18.6-8)

read **Daniel 4:29-33** At the end of twelve months he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, ³⁰ and the king answered and said, "Is not this great Babylon, which I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty?" ³¹ While the words were still in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, "O King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: The kingdom has departed from you, ³² and you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. And you shall be made to eat grass like an ox, and seven periods of time shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will." ³³ Immediately the word was fulfilled against Nebuchadnezzar. He was driven from among men and ate grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair grew as long as eagles' feathers, and his nails were like birds' claws.

Isaiah 47:9-11 These two things shall come to you in a moment, in one day; the loss of children and widowhood shall come upon you in full measure, in spite of your many sorceries and the great power of your enchantments. ¹⁰ You felt secure in your wickedness, you said, "No one sees me"; your wisdom and your knowledge led you astray, and you said in your heart, "I am, and there is no one

besides me.”¹¹ But evil shall come upon you, which you will not know how to charm away; disaster shall fall upon you, for which you will not be able to atone; and ruin shall come upon you suddenly, of which you know nothing.

repay

Jeremiah 50:29-32 “Summon archers against Babylon, all those who bend the bow. Encamp around her; let no one escape. Repay her according to her deeds; do to her according to all that she has done. For she has proudly defied the LORD, the Holy One of Israel.³⁰ Therefore her young men shall fall in her squares, and all her soldiers shall be destroyed on that day, declares the LORD.³¹ “Behold, I am against you, O proud one, declares the Lord GOD of hosts, for your day has come, the time when I will punish you.³² The proud one shall stumble and fall, with none to raise him up, and I will kindle a fire in his cities, and it will devour all that is around him.

Jeremiah 51:24-25 “I will repay Babylon and all the inhabitants of Chaldea before your very eyes for all the evil that they have done in Zion, declares the LORD.²⁵ “Behold, I am against you, O destroying mountain, declares the LORD, which destroys the whole earth; I will stretch out my hand against you, and roll you down from the crags, and make you a burnt mountain.

3. “Alas! Alas!”: The Kings, Merchants, and Shipmasters Lament the Fall of Babylon (18.9-19) * read Ezek 27-28

- a. The Kings, “who committed sexual immorality and lived in luxury with her” (18.9-10)

And the kings of the earth, who committed sexual immorality and lived in luxury with her, will weep and wail over her when they see the smoke of her burning.¹⁰ They will stand far off, in fear of her torment, and say, “Alas! Alas! You great city, you mighty city, Babylon! For in a single hour your judgment has come.”

- i. Babylon: “great and mighty”

- b. The Merchants, “who gained wealth from her ...” (18.11-17)

“And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn for her, since no one buys their cargo anymore,¹² cargo of gold, silver, jewels, pearls, fine linen, purple cloth, silk, scarlet cloth, all kinds of scented wood, all kinds of articles of ivory, all kinds of articles of costly wood, bronze, iron and marble,¹³ cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, oil, fine flour, wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and slaves, that is, human souls.¹⁴ “The fruit for which your soul longed has gone from you, and all your delicacies and your splendours are lost to you, never to be found again!”¹⁵ The merchants of these wares, who gained wealth from her, will stand far off, in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning aloud,¹⁶ “Alas, alas, for the great city that was clothed in fine linen, in purple and scarlet, adorned with gold, with jewels, and with pearls!¹⁷ For in a single hour all this wealth has been laid waste.”

- i. her cargo (delicacies and splendours):

gold, silver, jewels, and pearls

fine linen, purple cloth, silk, scarlet cloth

all kinds of scented wood, all kinds of articles of ivory, all kinds of articles of costly wood, bronze, iron and marble,

cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense,

wine, oil, fine flour, wheat,

cattle and sheep, horses and chariots,
and slaves, that is, human souls

ii. Babylon: royal riches and priestly pretence

c. The Shipmasters (18.18-19)

And all shipmasters and seafaring men, sailors and all whose trade is on the sea, stood far off¹⁸ and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning, "What city was like the great city?"¹⁹ And they threw dust on their heads as they wept and mourned, crying out, "Alas, alas, for the great city where all who had ships at sea grew rich by her wealth! For in a single hour she has been laid waste.