

**The Book Of Revelation
Study 88**

Revelation 18:9-19 (NASB)

⁹ *"And the kings of the earth, who committed acts of immorality and lived sensuously with her, will weep and lament over her when they see the smoke of her burning,*

¹⁰ *standing at a distance because of the fear of her torment, saying, 'Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! For in one hour your judgment has come.'*

¹¹ *"And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, because no one buys their cargoes anymore—*

¹² *cargoes of gold and silver and precious stones and pearls and fine linen and purple and silk and scarlet, and every kind of citron wood and every article of ivory and every article made from very costly wood and bronze and iron and marble,*

¹³ *and cinnamon and spice and incense and perfume and frankincense and wine and olive oil and fine flour and wheat and cattle and sheep, and cargoes of horses and chariots and slaves and human lives.*

¹⁴ *"The fruit you long for has gone from you, and all things that were luxurious and splendid have passed away from you and men will no longer find them.*

¹⁵ *"The merchants of these things, who became rich from her, will stand at a distance because of the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning,*

¹⁶ *saying, 'Woe, woe, the great city, she who was clothed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls;*

¹⁷ *for in one hour such great wealth has been laid waste!' And every shipmaster and every passenger and sailor, and as many as make their living by the sea, stood at a distance,*

¹⁸ *and were crying out as they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What city is like the great city?'*

¹⁹ *"And they threw dust on their heads and were crying out, weeping and mourning, saying, 'Woe, woe, the great city, in which all who had ships at sea became rich by her wealth, for in one hour she has been laid waste!'*

Chapter 18 records seven aspects of the Judgment of commercial Babylon and on Antichrist.

Judgment Pronounced,

Judgment Avoided,

Judgment Defined,

Judgment Lamented,

Judgment Enjoyed,

Judgment Completed,

Judgment Justified.

We have already talked about the first three, Judgment Pronounced, Judgment Avoided, and Judgment Defined.

In this study we want to talk about the next three, Judgment Lamented, and Judgment Enjoyed, Judgment Completed.

JUDGMENT LAMENTED

Nothing so clearly reveals the hardness of sinners' hearts as their lack of sorrow over their sin.

Through the years of devastating judgments, the Tribulation sinners will relentlessly refuse to mourn over their sin.

But though they will not lament over their sin, they will cry over the destruction of Babylon.

When the glorious centerpiece, the head of Antichrist's empire, is judged and destroyed, there will be worldwide dismay and mourning.

Now in this passage the first mourners introduced are the leaders, **the kings of the earth**. **This group** includes the ten kings who rule Antichrist's kingdom under his authority,

Revelation 17:12 (NASB)

¹² *"The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour.*

As well as the rest of the world's leaders under them.

They will greet the news of Babylon's destruction with shock and dismay.

The destruction of the seat of Antichrist's political and economic power will strike a fatal blow to his empire.

The fall of Babylon will be a symbol of the fall of that entire evil world system.

These leaders are the same ones **who committed acts of immorality and lived sensuously with her**.

Once again, Babylon is pictured as a harlot, whose death causes her lovers to **weep and lament over her**.

Some of those crossing the Euphrates on their way to Armageddon may actually see **the smoke** rising from the **burning city**.

The rest will watch Babylon's destruction through the world's media.

All will be careful to keep their **distance** from the stricken city.

They will be powerless to help and will **fear** that they may share **her torment**.

This fearful scene supports the idea that Babylon is an actual city, not a symbol of the entire world system.

Obviously the entire world is not destroyed at this point, since those watching Babylon burn are safe for the moment.

Babylon's destruction is, however, a precursor to the doom that will soon fall on the entire world.

As they watch her burn, the leader will cry out in anguish, "**Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! For in one hour your judgment has come.**"

As the crown jewel of Antichrist's empire, Babylon will be a **great city**.

And since it will have survived the devastating judgments of the Tribulation up to that point, the leaders will believe it to be a **strong city**.

Thus Babylon's swift destruction will shock and amaze them, and they will cry out to here in dismay.

The judgment of Babylon will happen rapidly, just as verse 8 predicted.

The next mourners to appear on the scene are **the merchants of the earth**.

These businessmen will **weep and mourn over Babylon because no one buys their cargoes any more**.

The destruction of Antichrist's capital will end any semblance of normalcy on the devastated planet.

Whatever economic activity will have been taking place on an earth reeling under the escalating difficulty brought on by the catastrophic divine judgments will then come to a halt.

Then follows a list of items or categories of merchandise that comprised the merchants cargoes;

Gold,
 Silver,
 Precious stones,
 Pearls,
 Fine linen,
 Purple, silk, scarlet,
 Every kind of citron wood ,
 Every article of Ivory,
 Costly wood and bronze,
 Iron and marble,
 Cinnamon and spice and incense,
 Perfume, frankincense,
 Wine and olive oil,

Fine flour, wheat,
 Cattle and sheep,
 Horses and chariots,
 Slaves and human lives.

These items were common commodities in the ancient world and were the source of immense financial gain. They are only representative of the great wealth of Antichrist's future commercial empire.

John Phillips writes;

What a catalog of opulence! What a vivid picture of a great, commercial city, trafficking in every luxury the heart could desire. This is the world's great Vanity Fair. It offers articles of adornment and display, beautiful things to grace the mansions of the world's millionaires. It deals in exotic spices and perfumes in delicacies for the table, in provisions for banquets, in slaves, and in the souls of men. And Babylon imported all these things. Babylon's demand for this world's goods was insatiable; ever it clamored for more and more! (Exploring Revelation, rev. ed. [Chicago: Moody, 1987; reprint, Neptune, N.J.: Loizeaux, 1991], 225)

Continuing their lament, the merchants now address Babylon directly: **the fruit you long for has gone from you, and all things that were luxurious and splendid have passed away from you and men will no longer find them.**

They will be gone forever as God bankrupts the system.

The words **no longer** translate a double-double negative in the Greek text, which is the strongest form of negation in the Greek language.

That indicates these items will never be found again.

Joining the leaders, **the merchants of these things, who became rich from her, will stand at a distance because of the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning, saying, "Woe, woe, the great city, she who was clothed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls; for in one hour such great wealth has been laid waste!!"**

They weep and mourn, not out of some emotional sympathy for the decimated city, but because with its collapse they have been stripped of the key source of their financial resources.

The merchants lament because their materialistic passions can no longer be fulfilled.

The weeping that begins then will last for eternity in hell.

Matthew 13:50 (NASB)

⁵⁰ *and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

These greedy merchants are the classic illustration of all those in all times who gain the whole world, but forfeit their souls;

Mark 8:36 (NASB)

³⁶ *"For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?"*

Then there is a third and final group in the vision and they join the funeral dirge for Babylon;

Every shipmaster and every passenger and sailor and as many as make their living by the sea.

In addition to her political and economic importance, Babylon will also be an important distribution center.

With its destruction, there will be no more goods to be transported by those who **make their living by the sea.**

Like the rulers and the merchants, the sailor were careful to stand at a safe **distance** from the city.

As they gazed on the ruined city they **were crying out as they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, "What city is like the great city?"**

Their lament is reminiscent of the proud boast of Antichrist's deluded follower in 13:4

Revelation 13:4 (NASB)

⁴ *they worshiped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?"*

But the seemingly indestructible city is already destroyed before their eyes, and its seemingly invincible ruler will shortly meet his end as well. (19:20)

Then in a typical ancient expression of grief the sailors **threw dust on their heads.**

Like the rulers and the merchants they too will cry out, **"Woe, woe, the great city."**

That is an expression of pain, suffering, and grief, but not of repentance.

The sailors do not mourn over their sins, or those of Babylon, but because of their lost business, since **all who had ships at sea became rich by Babylon's wealth.**

Like the rulers and the merchants the sailor also express amazement at the swiftness of Babylon's downfall, exclaiming, **"In one hour she has been laid waste!"**

In an astonishingly short period of time, the city that was the source of their wealth was destroyed.

While these all lamented the judgment that comes on Babylon there are those who will rejoice.

JUDGMENT ENJOYED

Revelation 18:20 (NASB)

²⁰ *"Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, because God has pronounced judgment for you against her."*

Heaven will have quite a different perspective on Babylon's judgment than that of Antichrist's earthly followers.

The angel who began speaking in verse 4 then addressed the redeemed in heaven:

The **saints and apostles and prophets.**

He calls on them to **rejoice over Babylon's fall, because God has pronounced judgment for them against her.**

The long awaited moment of vindication, retribution, and vengeance, for which the martyred Tribulation believers prayed;

Revelation 6:9-10 (NASB)

⁹ *When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained;*

¹⁰ *and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"*

This is that which the redeemed hoped for, and now it has arrived.

Heaven rejoices, not over the damnation of sinners, but because of the triumph of righteousness, the exaltation of Jesus Christ, the elimination of His enemies, and the arrival of His kingdom on the earth.

JUDGMENT COMPLETED

Revelation 18:21-23a (NASB)

²¹ *Then a strong angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "So will Babylon, the great city, be thrown down with violence, and will not be found any longer.*

²² *"And the sound of harpists and musicians and flute-players and trumpeters will not be heard in you any longer; and no craftsman of any craft will be found in you any longer; and the sound of a mill will not be heard in you any longer;*

²³ *and the light of a lamp will not shine in you any longer; and the voice of the bridegroom and bride will not be heard in you any longer*

Another **strong angel** now appeared in the vision.

In a dramatic act picturing Babylon's destruction, he **took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea.** "So," explained the angel, "**will Babylon, the great city, be thrown down with violence, and will not be found any longer.**"

In one moment, as that stone disappeared into the sea, Babylon will disappear.

A similar demonstration predicted the doom of ancient Babylon.

Jeremiah 51:61-64 (NASB)

⁶¹ *Then Jeremiah said to Seraiah, "As soon as you come to Babylon, then see that you read all these words aloud,*

⁶² *and say, 'You, O LORD, have promised concerning this place to cut it off, so that there will be nothing dwelling in it, whether man or beast, but it will be a perpetual desolation.'*

⁶³ *"And as soon as you finish reading this scroll, you will tie a stone to it and throw it into the middle of the Euphrates,*

⁶⁴ *and say, 'Just so shall Babylon sink down and not rise again because of the calamity that I am going to bring upon her; and they will become exhausted.'" Thus far are the words of Jeremiah.*

So complete will be Babylon's destruction that none of the normal activities of human life will take place. There will be no one making music at all; **"the sound of harpists and musicians and flute players and trumpeters will not be heard."**

There will be no one working; **"No craftsman of any craft will be found."**

There will be no one preparing food; **"The sound of a mill will not be heard."**

The city will be so completely abandoned that even **the light of a lamp will not shine in her any longer.**

There will be no more falling in love; **"The voice of the bridegroom and bride will not be heard in her any longer.**

Babylon will be so thoroughly destroyed that it will never rise again, as predicted by the Old Testament prophets;

Isaiah 13:19-22 (NASB)

¹⁹ *And Babylon, the beauty of kingdoms, the glory of the Chaldeans' pride, Will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.*

²⁰ *It will never be inhabited or lived in from generation to generation; Nor will the Arab pitch his tent there, Nor will shepherds make their flocks lie down there.*

²¹ *But desert creatures will lie down there, And their houses will be full of owls; Ostriches also will live there, and shaggy goats will frolic there.*

²² *Hyenas will howl in their fortified towers And jackals in their luxurious palaces. Her fateful time also will soon come And her days will not be prolonged.*

Isaiah 14:22-23 (NASB)

²² *"I will rise up against them," declares the LORD of hosts, "and will cut off from Babylon name and survivors, offspring and posterity," declares the LORD.*

²³ *"I will also make it a possession for the hedgehog and swamps of water, and I will sweep it with the broom of destruction," declares the LORD of hosts.*

Jeremiah 50:13 (NASB)

¹³ *"Because of the indignation of the LORD she will not be inhabited, But she will be completely desolate; Everyone who passes by Babylon will be horrified And will hiss because of all her wounds.*

Jeremiah 50:39 (NASB)

³⁹ *"Therefore the desert creatures will live there along with the jackals; The ostriches also will live in it, And it will never again be inhabited Or dwelt in from generation to generation.*

Jeremiah 51:37 (NASB)

³⁷ *"Babylon will become a heap of ruins, a haunt of jackals, An object of horror and hissing, without inhabitants.*

JUDGMENT JUSTIFIED

Revelation 18:23b-24 (NASB)

²³ *for your merchants were the great men of the earth, because all the nations were deceived by your sorcery.*

²⁴ *"And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who have been slain on the earth."*

Three final reasons are given for Babylon's judgment.

1st Her merchants were the great men of the earth, using their wealth to ascend to positions of power, prominence, and influence.
The abuses of the proud, arrogant rich are well documented in Scripture;

James 2:6b (NASB)

⁶ Is it not the rich who oppress you and personally drag you into court?.

Isaiah (Isa. 3:14-15; 5:8) and Amos (Amos 4:1; 5:11; 8:4-6) also condemned the rich for their self-aggrandizement and maltreatment of the poor.

2nd Babylon is being judged because of her deception and sorcery. Sorcery is from *pharmakeia*, the root word of the English words "pharmacy" and "pharmaceuticals"

The word is used in the new Testament to refer to magic and occult practices.
Babylon's hold on the world will not be entirely due to her military and economic power, but also for her occult influence.

3rd Babylon will be judged for her murderous slaughter of God's people. **"In her was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who have been slain on the earth."**

The heavenly rejoicing over Babylon's downfall also mentions this;

Revelation 19:1-2 (NASB)

¹ After these things I heard something like a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God;

² BECAUSE HIS JUDGMENTS ARE TRUE AND RIGHTEOUS; for He has judged the great harlot who was corrupting the earth with her immorality, and HE HAS AVENGED THE BLOOD OF HIS BOND-SERVANTS ON HER."

The words of Jesus in Luke 12 form a fitting conclusion to the message of judgment on commercial Babylon;

Luke 12:16-21 (NASB)

¹⁶ And He told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man was very productive.

¹⁷ "And he began reasoning to himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?'

¹⁸ "Then he said, 'This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.

¹⁹ ~'And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry."'

²⁰ "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?'

²¹ "So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."