

Chapter 18

Emphasis has been added in this chapter for clarity.

The Fall of Babylon the Great

18 After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. ² 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!

³ 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."

The Angel that presents this message is considered a mighty and authoritative Angel. What type of authority this Angel has is open to interpretation but it can be contrasted with the previous one that held one of the judgment bowls and the other Angels that we have seen. This one is so important that "the earth was illuminated with his glory" and is possibly Michael; Jesus himself in his role as Archangel. That is unconfirmed here but seems most likely. Either way, this Angel is powerful and holds authority, so we won't debate if this is Jesus or not.

When he steps down, he makes a bold declaration. "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen". We have seen this in Chapter 14, and this declaration is mirrors what we have seen in 14 but adding more detail.

In Chapter 14, Babylon was called "that great city," while here, it has now become "a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!". This, again, mirrors the descent of the Christian Church through the Roman Power.

The connection between this and the woman of the last chapter is found in the title given to her. "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT". This woman is the modern embodiment of Babylon, which is why she was described in the last chapter as a prostitute and why both here and Chapter 14 mentioned the "wine of the wrath of her fornication." In this Chapter, however, more detail is added. We have already explained how the "the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her" but now we have an addition that "the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury". Again, we have discussed at some length the power of

the Roman Church and, while we have not looked at the wealth of the Church and its patronage of the arts, that should go without requiring a detailed explanation. Since Constantine in the 4th Century, Church buildings have been the apex of demonstrating the skills of craftsmen and artists alike. Some of the most magnificent art and creative endeavours have been commissioned by or designed for the Roman Church, and any list of the most beautiful work must include elements commissioned for either the Papacy itself or for Bishops. Gold and jewels adorn Papal vestments and even the poorest bishop wears cloth-of-gold and heavily jewelled rings valued at several years wages for the average worker.

Again, this reinforces our conclusion that the Roman Church holds the Babylon Mysteries, and that our identification of the woman in the previous chapter is also correct.

⁴ 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. ⁵ For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. ⁶ 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. ⁷ 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.' ⁸ 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.

Another voice is heard from Heaven, again mirroring Chapter 14. Once again, the command is to "**Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues**". The declaration that Babylon had fallen really should be grouped into the previous chapter, because, clearly, the timeline is readdressed here.

To be clear, the 'Mighty Angel' from the first 3 Verses declares that Babylon has fallen to link to the inscription referred in Chapter 17. In verse 4, the scene moves from the 'story' to John being given the message to pass onto God's people. Have no relationship to Babylon/the Roman Church, because if you buy into her luxuries, you will reap the results of her sins. Don't commit fornication with her as you will have to reap the results.

As we saw in the previous chapter, this voice acknowledges that "**her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.**" The direction given is a dual one; both God and his people should "**Render to her just as she rendered to**

you, and repay her double according to her works". This is a dual instruction. Firstly, it references the judgement that was described in the previous chapter, where God took "the cup which she has mixed" and poured out a "mix double for her." Secondly, it also refers to God's people who are instructed to stand against Babylon boldly and not be corrupted by her.

The depressing mention, however, is that God's people, clearly, will not win. It is made abundantly clear that the stand God's people make against the Woman will have little, broader impact as "she glorifie(s) herself and live(s) luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow". The same measure that she torments and tortures those she considers beneath her is the same degree that she experiences luxury – which matches what we saw in history. The incredible wealth that came from the Crusades and the use of land throughout Europe, as well as kings trying to buy their own way to heaven, nobody could deny that the several palaces in Rome are extremely luxurious. The Papacy is so secure in her position and authority world wide that she believes nothing would be able to damage her position; "for she says in her heart, 'I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.' "

Yet, like all things, this is temporary. "Therefore", because of her absolute surety in her own security, "her plagues will come in one day". This has long been interpreted to mean that the plagues of Chapter 16 will all happen over only 1 day. All of it; the seas and rivers turning to blood, the darkness, pain and sores will all happen in 1 prophetic day – a literal year. That is open to interpretation, but it makes logical sense. If the impression here is that the absolute arrogance of the Roman Church makes it think of itself as separate from trouble, the speed of her judgement is a demonstration of God's power. Wracked with "death and mourning and famine... she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her."

The Roman Church will fall and the world will not be able to deny that God was responsible as her judge.

The World Mourns Babylon's Fall

⁹ "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, ¹⁰ 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.'

The kings of the earth will 'mourn' for the woman who has fallen, but they won't be rushing to her aid. Instead, they will "stand(ing) at a distance for fear" that they might share in "her torment". Yet, again, they will recognise that "in one hour (her) judgment has come." The timeframe is repeated for emphasis 3 times. The space of 'one hour' translates to a literal 2-week period. The 7th bowl of judgment; the drying up of Babylon's power, is said to happen in a literal fortnight, during which the Roman Church will fall.

¹¹ "And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore: ¹² 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; ¹³ 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. ¹⁴ 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. ¹⁵ The merchants of these things, who became rich by her, will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, ¹⁶ 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! ¹⁷ For in one hour such great riches came to nothing.'

Again, "the merchants of the earth" are brought into the picture, stipulating that everything that was good that they sold is now worthless. Money means nothing and the merchandise that once "your soul longed for" is now "gone from you, and you shall find them no more at all." These selfish and self-absorbed merchants, "who became rich by her, will" also "stand at a distance for fear of" participating in "her torment, weeping and wailing" at the loss they are enduring through her end. They are only concerned by their own, selfish measures.

Among the things these traders are listed as having dealt in includes the "bodies and souls of men" which fits right in the list of the Roman Church. Wars were fought in their name, unspeakable torments were meted out by the Roman Church and it was the sale of indulgences – the purchase of freedom for the very soul itself – that sparked Martin Luther's rage.

Again, the speed of the fall is reinforced as we are reminded that "in one hour such great riches came to nothing." We have seen the speed of such collapses in recent times; between the South Sea Bubble in 1720, the 1929 Stock Market Crash and the 2008 Financial Crisis. We have not learned and we know how real the speed of such a fall can be.

Every shipmaster, all who travel by ship, sailors, and as many as trade on the sea, stood at a distance ¹⁸ and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What is like this great city?'

¹⁹ "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.'

Even the people that move around the world are devastated at the destruction of Rome, but with the natural world being turned upside down, its no surprise that ships can't travel on seas of blood. These too had become rich because of the wealth of Babylon and they also had been devastated by its fall.

Again, these sailors and shipmasters have abandoned Rome and stand apart from her as they want no part in her torments.

²⁰ "Rejoice over her, O heaven, and *you* holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!"

But Heaven rejoices! The martyrs, apostles and prophets that have been tormented for 3,500 years by Babylon and her descendants are now avenged by God. Paul, quoting Moses in Romans 12:19, said "'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord" and this is God's chance to do so. God is able to take out all the anger, bitterness and aggression that had been wrought on his people and repay it back "mixed... double". Whether this comes before or after the 2nd Coming, Heaven will be full of cheering and rejoicing!

Finality of Babylon's Fall

²¹ Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw *it* into the sea, saying, "**Thus with violence the** great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore.

Another “mighty angel” now steps into the mix and makes a clear demonstration of violence, concluding that “**with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down**”. This should not be unusual as in the last chapter we were reminded that the Roman Church is both a religion and a military power. It has certainly used military powers in the past and there is no reason to assume its fall would be any different.

This also mirrors what we read in the last chapter when we were informed that “**the ten horns ... will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire.**” The world itself will turn on the Roman Church, militarily attack and destroy her and when we look at her current state, there is nothing that she would be able to do to stop it. This would mirror her first destruction at the hands of the French in 1798, but this time there would be no recovery from the deadly wound.

This is also why we can clearly state that this military destruction is not the same as the “**deadly wound... healed**” from Chapter 13 but is that powers second and final death.

It mirrors the sinners it has led astray by living a life of evil, dies and is resurrected only to be defeated by Christ himself when he demonstrates his absolute authority as creator-God.

²² 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. ²³ 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. ²⁴ And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth.”

Can there be a harsher obituary? Nobody will play music to remember you, no craftsmen will miss your patronage, no light will be found in you at all, and no couples will want anything to do with you. You have deceived merchants and great men, tricked the wealthy and slaughtered all those doing God’s will and just living as God’s people. Nobody mourns for your evil, but Heaven rejoices at your death.

What a powerful statement.