

Revelation #46**July 2, 2023****Series Title: The Revelation of Jesus Christ: Behold I Am Coming Soon****Today's Message: God's Crushing Judgment Against Babylon, pt 2; Revelation 18:1-24**

A future Babylon will be the world wide empire of Antichrist. And Revelation 18 provides in graphic detail God's crushing judgment against Babylon. This is important for us to remember as well as the twin truths concerning this judgment upon Babylon: Truth 1: God is on the throne and it is He who is delivering the coming judgment upon Antichrist and Babylon. And, Truth 2: God is judging Babylon to vindicate His holy name and His chosen people who have trusted in Him and His Christ and refused to follow the Beast by taking His mark, his name and to worship the Beast and his image.

In the message last week, which was part 1 concerning God's crushing judgment on Babylon, there were some questions concerning Babylon. Is Babylon a literal city? Is Babylon a figurative city representing the system of worldwide commerce? Is Babylon Rome, and therefore, the capital city of both a revived Roman Empire and the Empire of Antichrist?

We took the position that Babylon is a literal city called Babylon. The main reason for this is because Babylon is called a *city* 7 times in Revelation 18 (18:10, 16, 18, 19, and 21). I will admit that it is hard to imagine a new Babylon, a world dominating Babylon, situated where the old Babylon stood. It is hard to imagine a new Babylon city springing up and becoming the world center of commerce and the seat of the world government. It is easier to think of Babylon as an amalgamation of nations gathering under one banner united as one economy. It is also easier to think of Babylon as Rome springing up from the revived Roman Empire. But, as many solid commentators point out, that even though it is hard to comprehend, it is hard to argue the very fact that Scripture refers to Babylon seven times as a city, and identifying it as an actual place. However, its reach and influence will be worldwide and its destruction will bring destruction to the entire worldwide empire of Antichrist.

So, what about the verses in the OT that seem to speak about the absolute destruction of ancient Babylon? Could we interpret the prophecies of Jeremiah¹ as having a "near and partial fulfillment and also a distant and complete fulfillment"? It is true that ancient Babylon fell and over the following centuries was repeatedly subjected to harassment by many kingdoms, yet was never left completely desolate. If you read, for example Jeremiah 50:35-40, you can see that there was a severe and heavy destructive judgment that fell upon ancient Babylon. But, Jeremiah 50:40 indicates that the final absolute destruction of Babylon is not complete until it and its neighboring cities are destroyed by God, just like Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities surrounding them were destroyed. And when God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah not even a trace remained. And, Jeremiah 50:39 tells us that Babylon, upon its final judgment, will be suitable for wild beasts and birds, and not for human habitation, just like what is described in Revelation 18:2.

Isaiah 13:17-22 is helpful to think about a near fulfillment and a distant future fulfillment. Isaiah 13:17-18 speaks of the near fulfillment when the Medes and Persians overthrew ancient Babylon. But 13:19-22

¹ Jeremiah 50:26; 51:11; 51:55

indicates that there is a future fulfillment, when **God will overthrow Babylon**, and she will never be inhabited again. This dovetails nicely with Revelation 18:2. And although the OT prophets speak of owls and jackals and beasts, the similarities are striking when you consider the probability that both the OT and Revelation are describing the same desolation. That is, the final desolation of Babylon, the capital of Antichrist's empire.

So, to date, has Babylon been destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah? I think the answer is no, not yet. Why? The short answer is that God has not destroyed it yet.

Ancient Babylon suffered great destruction but not complete destruction. Theodore Epp, in his commentary on Revelation, provides some historical evidence that ancient Babylon was not completely destroyed (and won't be until it is fulfilled by the hand of God as predicted in Revelation 18). Pastor Epps points to the following: 1) When the Medes attacked ancient Babylon they overthrew the city, but did not destroy the city. In fact, they made Babylon their capital. 2) Later, Alexander the Great came against Babylon but before he could make it his capital he died. 3) Epps even uses the Apostle Peter's reference to Babylon in 1 Peter 5:13 as a proof of the existence of Babylon. 4) Then, hundreds of years later there is evidence that there was a very active Jewish population living at Babylon. 5) Also, predating Christ, from Babylon originated the *Babylonian Talmud*, "which is more voluminous and authoritative than even the earlier *Palestinian Talmud*."

These are just a few interesting points which strongly suggest that Babylon in Revelation is an actual city, simply because ancient Babylon was not rendered completely uninhabitable and won't be until the events of Revelation 18. One more point, Isaiah and Jeremiah have yet to be fulfilled completely as is evidenced by archaeological discoveries which uncovered several mosques from the 12th century A.D. Also, a city, Hillah, was built within Babylon which as of 1900 had a population of 10,000 inhabitants. And this just could not be if the prophecy was already fulfilled. In time, the prophecies will be fulfilled just like we see unfold in Revelation 18. Then, and only then will it become true that no stone will be left that can be used for any purpose. **See Jeremiah 51:24-26.**

I. (18:1-8) Babylon will fall (Application)

A. Pay attention to 18:4-5

1. Come out!

a) Flee! Run!

(1) See the following exhortations that teach us to flee

(a) Genesis 19:12-13; Isaiah 48:20; Jeremiah 50:8; 51:6, 45

(b) 2 Cor. 6:14-17; 2 Tim. 2:22

II. (18:9-20) Babylon will fall hard

A. (18:9-19) The strong lamentation of...

1. (9-10) kings (including the 10 kings who rule with Antichrist, and other leaders)

a) They had joined with "her"

(1) Committed adultery with "her"

(2) Shared in her luxury

b) Now they weep and bitterly mourn at the sight

c) And, **terrified** at God's judgment, they **stand far off**

- (1) **Isn't it interesting that now, at the time of judgment, they separate from "her"?**
- (2) **Now they fear God! Thinking that by distancing themselves they insulate themselves from God's judgment!**
 - (a) But their alliance with Antichrist will not go unnoticed!
- (3) The Gospel calls us to repent now. For once the judgment begins "the time" for repentance will be past!
 - (a) Jeremiah 8:20 paints a picture of deep sorrow because of the **missed opportunities**: "The harvest is past, the summer has ended, and we are not saved."
 - (b) "Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts..." Hebrews 3:15; 4:7
 - (i) Now is the right time to repent and turn to God and receive His Christ, Jesus, our Savior!
- d) The city that was the crown jewel of Antichrist is NO MATCH for the God of Heaven; and its destruction utterly crushes the kings of the earth!
- 2. (11-17a) The Merchants join in the lamentation with deep mourning and woe!
 - a) Why? Because when Babylon is crushed the whole world economy collapses!
 - (1) "No one buys them anymore"
 - (2) They can't sell anything!
 - (a) We have seen and experienced the frustration that accompanies a disrupted supply chain.
 - (i) This will be like no other disruption ever!
 - b) 18:12-13 provides a list of 30 commodities that they can no longer trade, buy or sell!
 - (1) **Keep in mind that these merchants sold these commodities to Babylon**
 - (a) Babylon, Antichrist's empire, had an appetite for these luxuries, and could not be satisfied.
 - (i) They were a consumer driven economy! Now, with their destruction they *want no more*!
 - (2) The source of wealth of the merchants is removed in one hour!
 - (a) See 18:10, 17
 - (3) Can you imagine what would happen to world trade if the U.S. economy crashed in a day?
 - (a) Merchants the world over would lose their source of wealth!
 - (b) And, notice, the last commodity mentioned is "bodies and souls of men (people)"!
 - (i) The U.S. is one of the key markets on earth where human trafficking flourishes!

- (a) Could it be that our nation has reached the level of immorality matched only by Babylon, of which we read in Revelation 18?
 - (b) If God is going to punish this Babylon, what will become of our nation?
 - (c) Friends, we must repent from craving the things of this world! "Come out from them!"
 - c) (14-17a) The merchants realize that judgment has come upon Babylon!
 - (1) And they, too, **stand far off, terrified at her torment!**
 - (a) **They, too, weep and mourn and lament bitterly!**
 - (b) But their sorrow does not bring about repentance!
 - (c) They see her destruction, in **one hour!** Yet, there is no mention of repentance!
 - (i) The human heart is hard!
 - (2) A word to the unrepentant: "See to it that you do not refuse Him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from Him who warns us from heaven?" Hebrews 12:25
 - (a) "Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts!"
- 3. (18-19) The lament of the sea captains and all who earn their living from shipping
 - a) They will **stand far off** and lament, mourn and wail at Babylon's hard fall!
 - (1) But they do not mourn and grieve over their sins!
 - (2) They grieve and mourn over the loss of their source of wealth!
 - (a) And in astonishment, they exclaim, like the rest, "in one hour she has been brought to ruin."
 - (b) The time had come. And it came swiftly and w/ finality!
 - (i) **Judgment will come just like that!**
 - (a) Today, do not harden your hearts!
 - (b) Come out! Repent from your love of the world and the temptations associated with prosperity and wealth!
 - (i) "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 Jn 2:15)
 - (ii) "The world and its desires will pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever." (1 Jn. 2:17)

- (iii) “Come out of her, my people, so that you will not share in her sins...” (Revelation 18:4a)

B. (18:20) The Great rejoicing of the faithful saints of God at the hard fall of Babylon!

1. This rejoicing encompasses all Heaven, including all the saints that came before who were faithful to the Lord!
 - a) The long awaited vindication of the Name of God and His people has come!
 - b) Vengeance has come in answer to the prayers of the martyred saints, as we read in Revelation 6:9-10!
 - c) As MacArthur observes: “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 earth.”

(1) “Today, if you hear His voice do not harden your hearts!”

III. (18:21-24) Babylon will fall hard never to rise again!

A. The destruction comes as the mighty angel throws down the giant millstone!

1. “With such violence the great city of Babylon will be thrown down, never to be found again.”
 - a) This is the final and complete destruction of Babylon as prophesied by the prophet Jeremiah, in Jeremiah 51:61-64
 - (1) Here is the final words of the prophecy concerning Babylon’s utter and final destruction:
 - (a) “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.” (51:64)
 - (2) Did you hear that? Babylon will sink and rise no more!
 - (a) There is no cry of repentance! Their doom is sure!
 - b) But we have a Savior, Jesus, who hears our cry of repentance!
 - (1) Today is the day of salvation!
 - (2) Today is the day for sinners to repent and cry out for mercy!
 - c) I’m reminded of the great hymn, “Love Lifted Me”
 - (1) I was sinking deep in sin, far from the peaceful shore. Very deeply stained with sin, sinking to rise no more; but the Master of the sea heard my despairing cry, from the waters lifted me, now safe am I
 - (a) Love lifted me! Love lifted me! When nothing else could help, love lifted me. Love lifted me! Love lifted me! When nothing else could help, love lifted me!
 - (2) Souls in danger, look above, Jesus completely saves; He will lift you by His love out of the angry waves; He’s the master of the

sea, billows His will obey; He your Savior wants to be, be saved
today!

d) Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts! Come to Him
and be saved!

(1) Tell your friends and families, Jesus saves sinners!