

NOT YOUR DAD'S END TIMES STUDY

Session 10 - Revelation 16-18

This session should be entitled, "It's the end of the world as we know it...." However, unlike the next line of the song, precious few people will be feeling fine at this point in history. This session looks at the end of the world from various perspectives. The interludes are over and we are returning the "main timeline" of Revelation. Now is the time for God's final judgments to be poured out upon the world which is completely dominated by the devil at this point in human history. These final judgments are called bowl judgments and are incredibly severe. They resemble both the plagues upon Egypt and the trumpet judgments a back in Revelation chapters 8-9. While some have tried to state that these are the trumpet judgments, just rehashed, it is not possible when you consider the language. These are a unique set of judgments through which God brings about the end of the world. As a whole, these bowl judgments are called "the third woe". To give you a road map for this session, the first five judgments are given quickly. The sixth and seventh are described in some degree of detail. Then chapters 17 & 18 are the results of these judgments. While chapter 16 is the end of the world from heaven's perspective, chapters 17 -18 are the results of the judgments upon the world from the two perspectives.

Before we get started, it's important to note that the ten plagues upon Egypt, which some of these bowl judgments mirror in some ways, were judgments upon the false gods of the Egyptians. Each plague was specific in nature to be a direct assault and victory over one of the god's of the Egyptians showing their deities to be nothing compared to the God who called the Hebrew people His own. In the same way, these bowl judgments will be judgments over some power or authority taken by the antichrist but show that he truly isn't omnipotent.

I. The seven bowl judgments - the third woe [Read Revelation 16:1-11]

A. The first bowl has no counterpart in the trumpets but is similar to the sixth plague upon Egypt (Ex. 9:10-11).

Q: Who gets the malignant sores? (16:2 - *Those who worshiped the beast are stricken with malignant sores or ulcers.*)

Q: Are these sores fatal to those who have them? (v.11 - *No - while the sores are not fatal, they do inflict great pain upon those who have them. Those with the sores are still around by the fifth bowl indicating the rapid speed of these bowls being poured out.*)

Q: What was the response of those who received these sores? (v.11 - *they did not repent of their evil deeds*)

The important thing to keep in mind is that Christ has not returned yet. There will be Christians (at least a small remnant) still alive at this point and they will be immune from these sores. Only those who received the mark of the beast will receive the sores.

B. The second bowl turns the sea into polluted blood and all marine life dies. All who depend upon seafood for their sustenance are going to be without a food source. As these creatures decompose, things are going to get smelly.

C. The third bowl turns the rivers and springs into blood. The fresh water which is

essential for human life is now being turned to undrinkable blood.

1. In the Egyptian version of this plague, God turned even the water in jars and storage containers into blood. It doesn't mention that here but we don't know how extensive God's wrath will be at this point.

2. The references to blood begin a dialogue between the angel of the waters and the altar of God concerning these plagues. The blood that sinners are now being forced to drink is justified concerning they shed the blood of the saints. This is the vindication of the martyrs. People have a choice. They can either drink the blood of the saints in God's wrath or they can wear robes dipped in the blood of the Lamb of God's mercy.

D. The fourth bowl brings scorching heat from the sun upon mankind. This is the exact opposite of the fourth trumpet which brought darkness.

Q: What is the response of the lost to this fourth bowl judgment? (*While there is still time for wicked mankind to repent, they won't (or at least in great numbers) as the world will be under the complete domination of the antichrist still. The term in v.9 is literally "great heat". Anyone outdoors will face this burning heat.*)

E. Then the fifth bowl brings darkness over the whole world, just like the eighth plague upon Egypt.

1. The word "throne" here is the same one used in the letter to Pergamum (2:13) where it discusses the throne of Satan. This time, it refers to the throne of the antichrist, which represents his world-wide authority and dominion. The worship and idolatry of the antichrist is being judged. This plague is intended to strike at the very heart of the antichrist's authority over the world. Consider this as God turning the lights out on the antichrist for a moment. While in darkness, it leaves the people of the world free to contemplate their misery and condition for awhile. Their pain is so bad that they are gnawing their tongues in agony. Rather than repent, they choose to blaspheme God.

Notice that the lost are not blaspheming the antichrist which is strange. He is the one in charge of the world. He has portrayed himself as god to mankind at this point in history but in some way, yet the people of the world will curse God instead of seeing the impotence of the antichrist and thus repent from their evil ways.

2. Since the first five plagues are given in rapid succession with little commentary, this probably indicate that they will be arriving close together with unimaginable horror. Also, not that the sores from the first bowl are still around and causing pain by the end of the fifth bowl.

Now we get to the last two bowl judgments which are presented in some detail and are further explained in the next two chapters as they describe the results upon the physical world after these last two plagues.

Q: When you hear the word "Armageddon" what do you think about? What comes to mind?

[Read Revelation 16:12-21]

F. The sixth bowl brings Armageddon. Armageddon is a Bible term that has found its

way into our common vocabulary meaning doomsday or the end of the world or some sort of epic demise in battle. To make our job more difficult, we need to look at the Bible's references to this location and then try to sort it out from pop cultural expectations.

1. In the Hebrew, this is called Har-Magedon and describes either the town of Megiddo or the Hill of Megiddo. This is a hill in the center of a large valley that is near both to Nazareth and Haifa in the valley of Esdraelon in the northern end of modern Israel. Jesus could have seen this hill from where He grew up in Nazareth.

2. This is the place where Josiah, one of the few good kings of Judah, was soundly defeated by Pharaoh Neco of Egypt. Israel never recovered from this defeat as it paved the downward spiral of Judah. Less than 35 years after the Josiah's defeat, Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon crushed Judah and the captivity of the Jews began. While this was part of God's plan and He had been warning His people about it for hundreds of years, this also made Babylon a permanent enemy of God's people as they would be forever seen as the great anti-God and anti-Israel enemy.

3. Beyond this battle, which was known by all Jews, it was an often used field for battle throughout the whole Old Testament because it is at the crossroads for many ancient trade routes. There were over 200 battles that took place at Megiddo. In fact, Napoleon fought a battle there and it was fought over in WWI. It has been known as a battlefield throughout history.

4. Now, here in Revelation, God is going to use this familiar site which was the site of a stinging defeat for God's people, to balance the scales. It will be the place of God's ultimate victory over the antichrist and the forces of evil by God's sheer might.

5. The Euphrates River is often associated with Babylon and is a symbol of that nation but it was also the boundary between Israel and the pagan lands to the east and north - including Babylon. It was a super-huge river and so it provided some defense against attacks by all but the most serious armies in the ancient world. If it were to dry up, God's people would be defenseless and the armies of Babylon (east and north) would be free to swoop in and invade.

a. Kings don't always mean physical kings in Scripture. In Daniel 10:13 and Ephesians 6:12, this word is used to describe spiritual rulers and authorities. So the word can mean both human rulers and spiritual rulers of darkness.

b. Though there are hundreds of different interpretations for this passage, since the rest of this chapter is dealing with the spiritual side/perspective of God's judgments, the most consistent interpretation is that these kings are spiritual rulers of darkness. It is a real event but it is hidden from human eyes even though the consequences of this event will be felt throughout the world - as discussed in the next few chapters. In Chapter 19, we see this same event but from another perspective.

c. Thus the three "frog demons" in v.13 summon the other demons from the four corners of the world to wage war against the Lord who is the stated target of the attack.

d. What has traditionally and historically held these forces of darkness back is taken out of the way (the Euphrates drying up). In this way the reference to the Euphrates probably refers to the same "restrainer" we saw in II Thessalonians 2:6-7. When this restrainer is removed, evil is free to flood the world.

e. We see the three frog demons coming straight from Satan, the antichrist, and the false prophet's mouths. (Frogs were used by God as a plague against the Egyptian goddess Heqet, the goddess that assisted women in childbirth, frogs were also unclean and thus could not be eaten by Jewish law.) These demons summon other demons and great signs and wonders follow them.

Their message is to urge the world to remain unrepentant and remain faithful to the antichrist. (Remember, the antichrist and false prophet will be performing mighty fake miracles to deceive the masses. This is probably a reference to that same sort of thing.) So there are great lies spread by the demons as well as great signs being performed so that mankind stays lost.

f. Geography is not the concern about Armageddon. It is symbolic of the antichrist's final overthrow by God Himself. V.14 says this is "the war of the great day of God, the Almighty". This will be God's day to end all days. This symbol is used to show God bringing justice to this symbol by defeating the forces of darkness all at once.

g. What the language doesn't indicate is a physical war. God is spiritual and so are demons. Physical armies would not gather to fight against a broken remnant of God's people and they couldn't fight against God who is a spirit. Notice that God's people are not mentioned in this passage at all. In fact, only the kings are mentioned - not the armies. With the exception of Satan himself, all the other forces of evil are eliminated at this time. We see this again in Chapter 19:20 and following. Though not mentioned here (but in chapter 20) the false prophet and antichrist are thrown into hell at this event along with all the other demons.

h. Into this judgment is a rather abrupt warning. Those who worship the Lamb (and are still alive at this point) are to remain vigilant lest their loyalty to Christ be diverted by the schemes of the antichrist. This warning is similar to the warnings given to the churches of Sardis (3:2-4) and Laodicea (3:18) about the manner of Jesus' coming. We are to remain steadfast in our hope and faith in Christ. The allusion to sleeping is that one takes off one's clothes to sleep and is thus caught unprepared for Christ's return. Christians cannot look to the world for security on any level at all. It just won't exist. We need to be watchmen to look out for ourselves but also those around us. Righteous actions in the face of evil give others courage to continue living out their faith even in the face of outrageous evil.

G. The seventh bowl brings a great cosmic disturbance and the end of the world. God has shaken creation as hard as it can be shaken.

1. This bowl is poured out into the air which is essential for life.

Q: [Read Ephesians 2:1-2] What is the title given to Satan in this passage? (v.2 - Satan is called the prince of the power of the air.)

This is a way to show the end of his reign of terror and deception. Those who chose to follow him will now receive what they deserve.

2. When the bowl is emptied, a voice cries out that "It is done!" The last time we heard these words were when Jesus died on the cross. He paid the price for our redemption from sin and now that victory is complete.

3. The earthly representations of Satan's power on earth come under judgment as well as all the cities of the pagan nations. V.20 doesn't describe the destruction of the earth but rather the results of the great earthquake and hailstones. Yet, even these signs do not convince sinful men to repent. They continue to blaspheme God. The power of the lies behind the antichrist have them locked in darkness.

4. Keep in mind, the force of this vision is that it is a spiritual view of the day of the Lord. These are real events but they are couched in symbolism as God's wrath is being poured out upon the whole world. The language is that God is putting down all His enemies in one final act while giving mankind one last chance to repent.

5. The ability for humanity to live on the earth will be greatly diminished after these judgments. However, there won't be a real need for anyone to live on the earth much longer as Christ is returning and restoring things by His power when He comes. While we don't know the exact timing of Christ's return, we do get the idea that it is the next major event to take place - whether it be the blink of an eye or a breath or two away or some other really short period of time, His coming is next.

6. The images of v.18 let us know that by the peals of thunder and flashes of lightning - this is God's presence at work. He is personally doing this. The earthquake is the symbol of divine judgment and this is the most serious judgment of all time - considering it brings about an end to the evil of the world it's easy to see the truth of this statement. Look at the language of v.19. the great city was split into three parts. Three is the number that deals with the spirit world (again this isn't a literal city but a view of the heavenly side of God's final judgments). The great city was destroyed by God followed by the cities of the nations falling along with it. They were built upon the systems of evil and now are collapsing due to their dependence upon evil.

As we'll see in chapter 17 & 18, the world system that the devil erected over the course of human history will now be in shambles after encountering God's wrath. Chapter 18 is concurrent with chapter 16 as we see the end of the world from man's perspective.

Chapters 17 & 18 are a unit that are essential to take together with chapter 16. They are the third vision given to John in Revelation, now that the second vision - that of judgment is completed. This vision deals with the fall of Babylon, the great anti-God city of the world where the devil's authority is exercised freely until God's wrath brings it to an end.

II. Unlocking the mystery of Babylon

A. As we open chapter 17, we are at another crossroads in interpreting Revelation. How you interpret the city of Babylon dictates how you interpret much of the rest of the book. This chapter deals with the identity of the "great city" and what it means. Before we can fully realize just how important the judgments of God were upon Babylon that brought it low and ended its existence, we need to know how glorious this city was and the height of its power and influence in the world.

1. Many commentators over the years have tried to identify this city as a resurrected Rome. This is natural as when Revelation was written, Rome was actively persecuting Christians severely. There are other commentators who see this city as this city as a reconstituted Babylon as it was the seat of great evil against God's people.

2. The problem with this (and ALL) such attempts to pin down this city to one physical, historical location/city is that no city has ever existed that fits neatly into John's description here in chapter 17. Rome, Babylon, Egypt, Sodom, Jerusalem all fail to measure up to the literal interpretation of this city.

3. A much stronger interpretation (as given throughout this study) is that Babylon is symbolic of the world where satanic deceptions exist and are worshiped. Babylon is the archetype of all entrenched resistance to God and His rightful rule over His creation. Thus, Babylon is a great end time symbol of satanic power and deception over the entire lost world. In this sense the symbol of Babylon here in Revelation is the same as the word "world" used in the New Testament to describe not creation but rather the systems of evil that undergird all the

structures of human life apart from faith in Christ. (As we'll see, this is how John used the word "world" in I John 2.) It represents a world apart from God which is in contrast to the New Jerusalem, which is always presented as the divine system of government at work.

B. Let's look at Babylon and its glory. **[Read Revelation 17:1-6]**

Q: Who is showing John this vision of the great harlot? *(v.1 - This vision is being shown to John by one of the angels who had one of the bowl judgments.)*

Q: What does this imply? *(This note then links this chapter with the final set of judgments we just read about in chapter 16.)*

This vision is an explanation of the judgments upon the world system of evil set up by Satan and how God will bring an end to those worldly systems. However, to see the full sting of just how potent and complete God's judgments were, we have to understand the full glory and power Babylon possessed before the wrath hit.

1. The first picture of Babylon is of a harlot who is sitting on many waters. In v.18 we see that the harlot is the great city of Babylon and the waters (v.15) are the people of many nations, the masses who Babylon has dominion over (in short, the lost masses of the entire planet). This woman is a harlot because she commits acts of immorality. The rulers of the world have always lusted after her and honored her. There are places in the Old Testament where God accused Israel of being a harlot or some other earthly power as being one (Jeremiah 51:7). The symbol means that the people of the world have become drunk with abundance, power, pride, violence and false worship. The best places in the Scripture to see a picture of this is not in Rome but rather in Jerusalem in Ezekiel 16 & 23 where it describes religion gone wrong.

Q: Do you remember that the significance of a wilderness is in Revelation? *(It is a place in the world, set up by God for His people, that is apart and distinct from the systems of this world. It is different from the normal places where the "lost" mankind are found and dwell. We'd call this "off the grid" living or not being plugged into modern culture or society.)*

2. After this glimpse of Babylon, John is whisked away in the Spirit to the wilderness so that he can be free from the charms and attractions of the woman and better understand her nature.

a. In the wilderness, John sees the harlot sitting on a scarlet beast.

Q: Who is the scarlet beast? *(When you take the scarlet, the seven heads, and ten horns into account, this beast is the Beast from Rev. 13 - the antichrist. In other words, all the harlot's power, pride and abundance come from her association with the antichrist.)*

b. What is the identity of this woman?

1) While she is beautifully dressed and wealthy she is totally impure. The word "abominations" is often used in conjunction with evil or unclean spirits (Mt. 10:1, 12:3). and idolatry (II Cor. 6:17). She is drunk with the blood of the saints. There is outward beauty but inward chaos and moral filth. Her attire is both scarlet and purple. Purple, is the color of royalty or power (in Revelation and elsewhere) and scarlet is the color of vast wealth.

2) The name written on her head is called a mystery (v.5). This name then symbolizes her true nature. In those days it was common for a prostitute to wear their name on a small piece of jewelry over one of their eyebrows. This is how John identifies her as a prostitute. The idea of a mystery in the New Testament means something was hidden in the past but is now been revealed by God through His Spirit. The name is “Babylon the great. Mother of all harlots and abominations of the earth”. This city is the womb that gives birth to all the cases of historical resistance to God’s will on earth. She is the unholy antithesis of the New Jerusalem. This city is not one city but rather the womb that gave birth to Rome, Babylon, Sodom, Jerusalem, and all other anti-God bases of power in history.

3) The woman is the source of the shed blood of the saints - all of them. She is described as being drunk with the blood of the saints, which is an ancient way to say she was hungry for violence. All the oppressive societies have shared these following traits: self-trust, boastfulness, power, violence, overabundance, wanton luxury as well as oppression and injustice. While we have seen in this throughout history, there are examples in the world today.

C. The interpretation of the vision. **[Read Revelation 17:7-18]**

1. The problem of most scholars is that they try to link Babylon with an actual, historical city and there is no city that neatly fits this description. The key is to understand the verb tense and play on words with the phrase “was and is not and is about to come out of the abyss.” (v.8) (Keep in mind that when wrote Revelation around 95 A.D. - the antichrist had not yet risen to power. He was still to come out of the abyss.) What John is referring to is a three-stage history of the beast which is consistent with our previous interpretations concerning Revelation. We don’t need to play linguistic or historical gymnastics in order to get things to fit properly in place. The beast, as stated before, is the antichrist. We don’t have to go digging through the archives of Rome’s emperors in order to find the true meaning here.

a. In the Old Testament, Isaiah refers to the chaos monster as “Rahab the Do-Nothing”. (Is. 30:7). The monster supposedly gave Egypt its power but in reality, it was inactive due to the Lord’s hand rendering it impotent. This passage is very similar to that passage.

b. The “is not” refers to this beast’s defeat by Jesus at Calvary. To those who worship the One True God, all other gods are non-existent. We know that there is only one God.

c. Satan once had unchallenged power on the earth - that refers to the “was” or past tense of the beast’s existence. (Luke 4:6).

[Read Hebrews 2:14-15] - notice the devil’s power over death is in the past tense. He doesn’t have it any longer because Christ rendered him powerless at the cross. The verb for rendered is in the aorist which means it happened in the past but that rendering powerless extends to the present and beyond.

d. Now the devil is a defeated sovereign. This is the “is not” or present tense of the statement by the angel. (John 12:31-32). Yet, despite this, he is given “a little time” to oppose God and His people before the final sentence of destruction is leveled upon him.

e. It is the antichrist’s apparent revival after the fatal wound of the cross which causes the world to be deceived and follow him.

f. Notice the subtle ways in which the description of the beast changes from the front part of v.8 to the back part.

1) The first description puts him of satanic origin, out of the abyss and his final

destruction was a divine revelation to believers.

2) The second description is purely the one of “he was, is not, and yet comes” which is the world’s way of seeing him without faith. The people whose names are not written in the book of life, those without faith in Christ, they only see the external aspect of the beast without understanding his origin or destiny. They do not know of his demonic origin. This same two-fold viewpoint is paralleled in vv.9-10 where one of the kings “is” (v.10) and an eighth king “is” (v.11) yet the beast “is not” (v.11). (He’s not present at the present time.)

2. The meaning of the seven hills is again symbolic. Though it is a description of Rome, we know it isn’t historical Rome in that the number of emperors is wrong. If you start with Nero you have too few emperors and if you start with Domitian, you have too many. There are way too many emperors who fostered emperor worship to fit this scheme. AND to put the nail in his coffin once and for all - the hills refer to the beast - NOT the city (the woman). (So don’t go looking for literal interpretations of these verses - like the rest of Revelation, this is symbolism. Look for the meaning of the symbol - not a real-world literal “thing” described.)

a. The number seven signifies spiritual completeness. In this case it refers to a completeness of evil, a fulness of blasphemies.

b. The message is that five of the beast’s seven heads are already defeated by the power of the Lamb’s death (12:11). One head is operating and active in the present tense (17:10). This shows the reality of the beast’s contemporary agents who will afflict the saints. One head remains. This indicates that the battle will soon be over but not just the defeat of the contemporary agents (those who will be visibly at work - such as the antichrist himself and his false prophet). However, there will be one final manifestation of the beast’s blasphemous power but it will be short - “one hour”. This statement goes with the function of the ten horns - the authority/rule of the beast. (I John 2:18)

c. The seventh head (king) represents the final short display of satanic evil before the divine blow falls on the beast.

d. V.11 can only be understood properly when you understand the ancient way of thinking. The seven that goes to eight and one is a way of story telling that doesn’t break up the narrative. It is uncommon to us today but it was well-known and used by the ancients.

1) Think to the resurrection of Jesus. He was crucified and finished His labors on the sixth day of the week (Friday). On the seventh day (Saturday), nothing happened other than He rested from His labors. On the eighth day (Resurrection Sunday, which was the eighth day of the passion week drama - and rather than break up the week or start it over, it just is called the eighth day even though technically it’s the first day of the new week but the action started in the last week.) He rose from the dead which also happened to be the first day of the week (Sunday). In this sense, it makes sense to chart the action of the week into eight days but in the calendar sense - the eighth day is the first day of the new week so it’s part of this new week.

2) So in our current application, Christ has defeated the monster by His death and for believers, he (the beast) “is not” (has no power), yet on the other hand, the beast still has life (“one is”) and will attempt one final battle against the Lamb and His followers (“the other has not yet come... he must remain for a little while”). In order to recruit as many unsuspecting lost people to his cause as possible, the beast will imitate the resurrection (the fake one we spoke of in chapter 13) of Christ (he “is an eighth king”) and will give the appearance that he is alive and in control of the world. But John quickly adds, for the comfort of believers, that this beast belongs to the seven (qualitatively - not numerically). This eighth will appear to be a new life for

the beast but it really won't be. It isn't a new beast. While this seems overly obscure to us, it exposes the dynamics of satanic deception and now every Christian can be forewarned. It's the same old beast that's been at work. Don't take the fake resurrection as a new story line of evil but rather an continuation of the same story line.

3. The defeat of the ten horns.

Q: What does the number 10 represent in Revelation? (*completeness - all of something*)

a. Since the number ten is the number of worldly completeness. So rather than looking for ten actual kingdoms it's better to see this as all the world's kingdoms (or a complete number) give their power to the beast. They have all been deceived and will rule with him for "a little while". These kings have one goal - to oppose the Lamb. However, the Lamb overcomes them. Christ conquers them by His own death and those who are with Him aid in this defeat by their loyalty to the Lamb (5:5,9; 12:11). These kings have not yet received a kingdom which means that they are not existing nations but rather will be something new under the antichrist - probably rulers of the entire world under some new world-wide government established by the antichrist.

b. V. 15 shows us the relationship between the harlot and the horns. The influence of the harlot's idolatrous satanic system (known as Babylon) is universal. From the lowest to highest person, the devil's system embraces them and they it.

c. VV. 16-17 the idea of a revived Roman empire completely breaks down. The attack on the harlot indicates that in the final judgment upon the kingdom of Satan, it will be divided against itself by divine purpose. The ravaging of the harlot by the beast is a vivid symbol of the self-destructing power of evil. God has put it in the hearts of these kings to destroy the harlot. God is using evil to destroy evil. It's the picture of evil tearing itself apart due to jealousy, rivalry and covetousness of the wicked leaders for one another's position.

d. The woman and the great city are one (v.18). This evil system has opposed God at every turn in history. She holds sway over every power on earth and now we see the great city of Satan's glory and how the leaders have coveted her to gain their power over others.

III. The fall of Babylon

A. This chapter is broken down into three laments.

1. The lament for the kings of the earth
2. The lament for the merchants who traded with her
3. The lament for the sea captains who became rich off her cargo

B. This chapter represents fantastic news for believers. The great city which deceived the entire lost world and killed God's people has been overthrown. The news of the angel is so glorious and good, that his light shines over all the world. **[Read Revelation 18:1-3]**

1. The word "haunt" or "prison" means watchtower - a place for keeping watch over evil-doers. These evil and detestable beings are watching over Babylon like birds waiting for their prey. Babylon was a great city and now is a wilderness. V.3 gives us the reason for her demise. Her corrupting influence and excessive wealth and pride lead to her destruction.

2. There is a warning given to God's people. **[Read Revelation 18:4-8]** God's people, who live in the world, are told to distance themselves from Babylon at this time.

[Read I John 2:15-18]

Believers and churches are to shun the charms and allure of the queen of harlots and all she offers. Those who continue to live and operate within her will share in her destruction. It is a warning for believers to not be seduced by the devil by abandoning their loyalty and love for Christ.

3. There is a cry for vengeance in v.6 and it has come. The Lord's power and will is greater than anything in this world and will end Babylon.

C. The laments

1. **[Read Revelation 18:9-10]**

Q: Who is lamenting the loss of Babylon in this passage? (*v. 9 - The kings of the earth*)

The connection between the kings' love for luxury and their adultery with Babylon. They participated in her acts and blasphemies. The heat is so intense that they must stand at a distance to mourn her loss. They don't want to be close to this disaster. This symbolizes the totality of Babylon's destruction. The kings now realize the emptiness of their existence without Babylon.

[Read Revelation 18:11-16]

Q: Who is lamenting the loss of Babylon in this passage? (*the merchants of the earth*)

b. The lament of the merchants - These people have the most to lament because when Babylon falls, industry and commerce comes to a stand-still. This one affluent system has been torn down and laid bare. Now it is seen that what Babylon had to offer was fluff. The items listed in the list given here are all luxury items. Things lusted for by the rulers and "important" people of the world.

[Read Revelation 18:17-19]

Q: Who is lamenting the loss of Babylon in this passage? (*the sea-captains, sailors and passengers on ships*)

c. The lament of sea captains. Like the others, their hope of profits have just gone up in smoke - literally. Everything of Babylon is gone. Everything of the evil, anti-God city is now in ruins and what they used to expand their power is ruined. All of these people from the kings downward have lost their fortunes and their power and influence. The devil's system he carefully set up throughout human history to keep people in bondage to him and sin has been destroyed by God.

d. What these laments show us is the bond between evil and excess in this world. The desire for riches and worldly power to the exclusion of God's will is sinful and will be judged. (Keep in mind the fate of the living Christians at this time will be that of poverty and starvation and continued persecution.)

e. The three laments of the world is balanced by a song of heavenly jubilation. **[Read Revelation 18:20]** Babylon may have been loved by the world but not by Christ or His church. She will no longer be an influence over those in the world. (Imagine a world where the systems of hatred, oppression, greed, tyranny, lust and immorality (among others) aren't at work any

longer.)

D. The angel's word on the judgment of Babylon

1. **[Read Revelation 18:21-24]**

2. The angel picks up a huge stone and throws it into the sea and says this will resemble how Babylon will fall. When a huge rock is thrown into the sea, there was no way to recover that rock - in ancient times. It was gone for good. The act is final.

a. All semblance of worldly pleasure and business are now gone. The life of the city has been fully extinguished.

b. vv. 23-24 give us the reasons (again) why Babylon was destroyed. Her pride and murders hit the end of what God was allowing it to get to and it was ended by Him.

c. Civilization is not being condemned here. Only the misuse and satanic use of power and wealth is condemned. It does show the fleeting nature of wealth and the things of this world. In one hour - a very short time - all this happens and the structures that held the world in place are now gone. The government will now shortly shift to Christ and His shoulders (Is. 9:7).

d. There is real reason to rejoice. As Babylon was the source of all worldly evil influence and was used by the devil to exercise control over the world, now that its gone - the world is ready for a new leader. This will mark the end of the beast's reign of terror and the long anticipated return of Christ.

Q: Do you have any questions, comments, rebukes or rebuttals?