SMITH FOR CHRIST

TEACHING THE WORD · WATCHING THE TIMES



DEEP DIVE

Revelation

Chapter Eighteen, Verses 1–24

The Fall of Babylon the Great — The Death of Politics and Wealth

NASB 1995 | VERSE BY VERSE | FOUR VOICES

One city, one hour, six silences — read through four teachers — **Amir Tsarfati**, **Mark Hitchcock**, **John MacArthur** and **David Jeremiah** — with the Greek behind the angel's cry, the call to come out, the twenty-eight cargoes, and the millstone thrown into the sea.

THE PASSAGE

Revelation 18:1–24

Announcement · call · three laments · millstone

THE METHOD

Verse by Verse

Color-coded by teacher

WHAT'S INSIDE

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The Death of Politics and Wealth — one city, one hour, two voices

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"Come out of her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive of her plagues." — Revelation 18:4

SECTION I · THE PASSAGE

Revelation 18:1–24

The Fall of Babylon the Great — The Death of Politics and Wealth

† How to Read This Study

This study walks Revelation 18 in four movements, in the order John heard it: an angel's announcement, a voice from heaven, three funerals sung from a safe distance, and a stone thrown into the sea. At each movement you will hear four teachers, each marked in his own color. **Amir Tsarfati**, the Israeli teacher of Behold Israel, reads from Jerusalem — Babylon as Israel's oldest captor, the times we live in, and the pastoral urgency of "come out." **Mark Hitchcock**, pastor and Dallas Seminary professor, reads from the prophetic timeline — where this chapter falls in the sequence, why he takes Babylon to be a literal rebuilt city on the Euphrates, and what the other views say. Between them you will see the Greek John chose and why it matters. Read the Scripture first; then let each voice add its angle. This four-voice edition adds two more: **John MacArthur** of Grace to You, the expositor who works the text phrase by phrase and holds the line on a literal reading, and **David Jeremiah** of Turning Point, who reads the signs of the times and presses the chapter home as a call to live ready.

AMIR TSARFATI · Revealing Revelation — MARK HITCHCOCK · The Second Coming of Babylon
JOHN MACARTHUR · "Babylon Is Fallen" sermons — DAVID JEREMIAH · The Book of Signs

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 18:4–5

"Come out of her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive of her plagues; for her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities."

† Before the Passage

A word about the title first. Chapters 17 and 18 are one funeral held in two services. Seventeen buries the harlot — Babylon as religion, the system that seduces the soul; eighteen buries the city — Babylon as commerce and politics, the system that buys it. Same name, two faces, and heaven ends both. Amir Tsarfati's title for this chapter in *Revealing Revelation* is "The Death of Politics and Wealth," and it is exact: when God is finished here there is no market left to trade in and no throne left to court.

Babylon is the oldest enemy in the Bible. It begins on the plain of Shinar — "let us build for ourselves a city … and let us make for ourselves a name" (Genesis 11:4) — the first city raised against heaven. It is

Nebuchadnezzar on his roof: “Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built?” (Daniel 4:30). It is the golden cup in the Lord’s hand that made the whole earth drunk (Jeremiah 51:7), and the ephah Zechariah watched being carried to Shinar so that wickedness would have a house there again (Zechariah 5:11). Revelation 18 is the last chapter of a story that began at Babel.

Who is she? **Hitchcock** answers plainly, and has since *The Second Coming of Babylon* (2003): Babylon means Babylon. The name appears about 300 times in Scripture and, with the possible exception of 1 Peter 5:13, always means the city on the Euphrates; Revelation is an unveiling, not a code. Isaiah 13 and Jeremiah 50–51 promise a sudden, Sodom-like, never-again-inhabited end that history has not delivered — Cyrus walked in without a siege in 539 BC and the city faded over centuries — so he expects Babylon to rise again as the Antichrist’s economic capital and fall exactly as written. Others read Rome, or the world system as a whole; he rejects the popular claim that it is New York or the United States. **Tsarfati** comes at the same chapter as an Israeli: Babylon is the empire that burned Solomon’s temple and carried Judah away, and its last chapter is the end of every system that ever tried to rule the world without God.

Read it with your ear. The chapter is a dirge, the oldest form of prophetic poetry, and John borrowed the melody on purpose — “Fallen, fallen” from Isaiah 21, “come out of her” and the sinking stone from Jeremiah 51, the dust-on-the-head lament from Ezekiel 27 over Tyre — so that no one who knew the prophets could miss what was happening. Five times the chapter calls her “the great city.” Heaven calls her fallen before she is down.

I
MOVEMENT

REVELATION 18:1–3

Fallen, Fallen

The announcement — a city declared dead while it is still standing

> *“After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and* ⚠ *the earth was illumined with his glory. And he cried out with a mighty voice, saying, “*🔁 *Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a* ⚠ *dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird. For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed acts of immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich by the* ⚠ *wealth of her sensuality.”*
>
> REVELATION 18:1–3

Ἔπεσεν, ἔπεσεν Βαβυλὼν ἡ μεγάλη

EPESEN EPESEN BABYLŌN HĒ MEGALĒ · “FALLEN, FALLEN IS BABYLON THE GREAT”

Epesen is an aorist — a finished act. The city is still standing when the angel speaks; the prophets' habit is to announce the certain as already done (the “prophetic aorist”). The doubling is Isaiah’s (21:9), and John has sounded it once already (14:8). *Strēnos*, “sensuality” (v. 3; the verb in vv. 7, 9), is not wealth but wealth gone to the head — the swagger of luxury. And the manuscripts split by one letter on verse 3: *pepōkan*, the nations “have drunk,” or *peptōkan*, they “have fallen.” SBLGNT prints *peptōkan*; NA28 and NASB95 follow *pepōkan*, “drunk.” Either way the nations went down with her cup in their hands.

στρῆνος

STRĒNOS · "SENSUALITY" — LUXURY THAT HAS LOST ITS RESTRAINT

Strong's G4764, found only here in the New Testament: "the merchants of the earth have become rich by the *power* of her *strēnos*." The word carries the idea of excess that throws off the bridle — luxury plus arrogance. Its verb, *strēniaō* (G4763), appears twice more and nowhere else: she "lived sensuously" (v. 7) and the kings "lived sensuously with her" (v. 9). The compound *katastrēniaō* (G2691) in 1 Timothy 5:11 is the same reins-off appetite. John's diagnosis is precise: Babylon's merchants did not grow rich on need but on indulgence — the market for more.

κατοικητήριον

KATOIKĒTĒRION · "DWELLING PLACE"

Strong's G2732, from *katoikeō*, "to settle, to dwell" (G2730), with a suffix of place: a residence, not a campsite. The New Testament uses it only twice. Paul uses it of the church — "being built together into a *dwelling* of God in the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:22). John uses it of Babylon: "She has become a *dwelling place* of demons" (18:2), with *phylakē* (G5438), "prison," "haunt," following it. Two cities, two residents. God is building one house out of redeemed Jews and Gentiles; Babylon, built of brick and pride, becomes the other, and when God is finished with her only demons and carrion birds live there. Every city is somebody's house — the question is whose.

AMIR TSARFATI · Behold Israel

In chapter 17 the beast and his ten kings burn the harlot (17:16) — God using His enemies to finish religious Babylon. Here God Himself finishes the other Babylon, the political and economic one — the death of politics and wealth. The kings and the merchants "became rich" on a system that the mark of the beast made mandatory — no one could buy or sell without it (13:16–17) — so what collapses in this chapter is the whole world's economy, not one city's. The angel's glory lighting the earth is the brightest the planet has been in seven years; the light comes to expose a ruin that has already been handed over to demons.

MARK HITCHCOCK · Bible prophecy · DTS

Hitchcock starts with proportion. Babylon fills forty-four of Revelation's 404 verses — about eleven percent of the book — and God does not spend that much ink on a metaphor. He reads the two chapters as two sides of one thing: chapter 17 is Babylon's religious face, chapter 18 its political and economic face — a real city on the Euphrates and the system the Antichrist builds around it. On the timeline this is not a new judgment but a close-up: the seventh bowl has already said that "Babylon the great was remembered before God" (16:19), and chapter 18 slows that moment down, just before Christ returns in chapter 19. The ruin pictured here — a haunt of demons and unclean birds — is the wasteland of Isaiah 13:21 and Jeremiah 50:39 (owls, ostriches, "shaggy goats") kept to the letter.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

MacArthur reads the two chapters as two Babylons under one name: “The woman of 17 is described as guilty of religious abominations. The city of 18 is abominable because of its system of commerce.” The harlot falls to political power; “the city is destroyed by an act of God.” He takes it as a real city, rebuilt — the prophecies of Isaiah 13 and 47 and Jeremiah 50–51 “have not yet been fulfilled,” and “if it has to come, there has to be a Babylon” — while holding that its reach is worldwide and that he does not “want to be absolutely dogmatic.” The angel is *allon*, “another of exactly the same kind,” perhaps the angel of 14:8, his glory lighting a world the fifth bowl had darkened (16:10). The unclean birds are “hovering demons waiting to consume people,” and Babylon is “the headquarters for the whole demon operation.” The fall itself, he believes, comes with the seventh bowl (16:17–21).

DAVID JEREMIAH · Turning Point

Jeremiah reads the chapter from the map outward. In Revelation, says *The Jeremiah Study Bible*, Babylon is “God’s name for the world system the Antichrist will institute during the Tribulation” — and it is also a place with a future. Revelation 18, he writes in *The Coming Economic Armageddon* (2010), shows that “Babylon will once again rule the economic world,” this time as the hub of the Antichrist’s one-world economy. The Turning Point summary of his *Book of Signs* message on this chapter pictures an ancient city “that has lain dormant for ages” rising to “dwarf today’s world-class cities in opulence, commerce, finance, and sin.” So the angel’s “Fallen, fallen” is spoken over the marketplace of the whole earth: the nations drank from it, the kings joined it, and the merchants of every land grew rich on it.

II
MOVEMENT

REVELATION 18:4–8

Come Out of Her, My People

The call and the sentence — one command, two measures, one day

> *“I heard another voice from heaven, saying, “Come out of her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive of her plagues; for her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. △ Pay her back even as she has paid, and give back to her ⟲ double according to her deeds; in the cup which she has mixed, mix twice as much for her. To the degree that she glorified herself and lived sensuously, to the same degree give her torment and mourning; for she says in her heart, ‘⚠ I sit as a queen and I am not a widow, and will never see mourning.’ For this reason ◷ in one day her plagues will come, pestilence and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for △ the Lord God who judges her is strong.”*
>
> REVELATION 18:4–8

Ἐξέλθατε, ὁ λαός μου, ἐξ αὐτῆς

EXELTHATE HO LAOS MOU EX AUTĒS · “COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE”

Exelthate is an aorist imperative — **get out**, decisively, once — the same summons Jeremiah gave the exiles: “Come forth from her midst, My people” (51:45), “Flee from the midst of Babylon” (51:6). Then verse 5: her sins *ekollēthēsan*, “piled up” — literally *glued*, stuck one on another until the heap reached heaven. Babel built a tower to heaven; Babylon built one out of sins. And verse 6, *diplōsate ta dipla*, “double the double,” is the Hebrew idiom of full measure (Jeremiah 16:18; Isaiah 40:2) — not twice what she deserves, but all of it.

κολλάω

KOLLAŌ · "TO GLUE, TO JOIN FAST" — HER SINS "HAVE PILED UP"

Strong's G2853. The aorist passive *ekollēthēsan* (v. 5) pictures sins cemented to one another, course on course, like bricks in a tower — the very image of Genesis 11:3–4, where Babel's builders used brick for stone and tar for mortar to reach the heavens. Elsewhere the word is about attachment: the prodigal "hired himself out" — glued himself — to one of the citizens of that country (Luke 15:15); believers are to "cling to what is good" (Romans 12:9); and Paul sets two unions side by side — the one who joins himself to a prostitute, and the one who joins himself to the Lord (1 Corinthians 6:16–17).

βασανισμός

BASANISMOS · "TORMENT"

Strong's G929, from *basanizō*, "to torment" (G928). Its root, *basanos*, was first the touchstone used to test gold, and the word family moved from testing to torture. All six New Testament uses are in Revelation: the locusts' sting (9:5, twice), "the smoke of their torment" for those who worship the beast (14:11), and three times here — "give her torment and mourning" (v. 7), and the kings and merchants standing off "because of the fear of her torment" (vv. 10, 15). MacArthur draws out its weight: "It is the pain in the torture that is bound up in *basanismon*." The measure is exact — "to the degree that she glorified herself … to the same degree give her torment."

AMIR TSARFATI · Behold Israel

"My people" here are not the church — the church has been home since chapter 4. These are the people saved during the tribulation, Jew and Gentile, living inside the beast's economy with every pressure to take its mark, and God tells them to get out before the fire falls, as the angels told Lot (Genesis 19). The words are older than John: "Come forth from her midst, My people" was first spoken to Jewish exiles by the rivers of Babylon (Jeremiah 51:45), and a remnant obeyed under Zerubbabel and Ezra. Her boast is Isaiah 47:7–8 almost word for word — "I will be a queen forever … I will not sit as a widow" — and "in one day" the whole menu of judgment arrives at once: pestilence, mourning, famine, fire. Do not wait for the smoke to decide which side you are on.

MARK HITCHCOCK · Bible prophecy · DTS

Hitchcock hears Jeremiah throughout this paragraph. "Flee from the midst of Babylon" (Jeremiah 51:6), "Wander away from the midst of Babylon" (50:8), and "Come forth from her midst, My people" (51:45) are the same summons, and Revelation 18:4 is their last and literal sounding — believers alive in the tribulation told to leave a real city before it burns. Verse 8's "in one day" is the other half of his case: Isaiah 47:9 promised loss of children and widowhood "in one day," and Jeremiah 51:8 said "suddenly Babylon has fallen." Ancient Babylon never died that way; it declined. A sudden, total, fiery end is still waiting on the calendar — which is why he places it at the close of the tribulation, just before the second coming.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

MacArthur hears “my people” as God’s own in the tribulation, called “to disentangle themselves with this system” — separate from her sins and so from her plagues, as with Lot, Jeremiah 50–51, Isaiah 48:20 and 2 Corinthians 6:17. The plagues cannot be the worldwide bowls, he reasons, or “there wouldn’t be anywhere to escape to”; this judgment is aimed at the capital. Her sins “piled up” — “literally ‘glued together,’ or ‘welded together’” — into a new Babel: “The ancient Tower of Babel didn’t reach the heaven, but the sins of Babylon will.” The “double” of verse 6 is not arithmetic: “Double means full,” as in Isaiah 40:2. The queen’s boast is “self-sufficiency, an over-estimation of one’s power,” and “in one day” means sudden — Babylon fell in a night in Daniel 5 — “like an instant incineration, like Pompeii, or Sodom and Gomorrah.” What God burns, he says, is “capitalism gone berserk.”

DAVID JEREMIAH · Turning Point

Jeremiah is pretribulational, so he does not expect the church to hear verse 4 from inside the rebuilt city: his Age of Signs teaching says believers “won’t experience Babylon’s rebirth during the Tribulation.” Its first hearers are those who come to faith after the church is gone. But “the spirit of Babylon is evident in our world today” — materialism and selfish pursuits — and so the command has a present tense. His counsel for coming out now is Jesus’ own: “store up for yourselves treasures in heaven” (Matthew 6:19–21), investing time and money in the work of God rather than trusting a fragile economy. When the call comes in its final form, it will be to people who have already learned that Babylon’s wealth cannot be kept.

III
MOVEMENT

REVELATION 18:9–19

Three Laments from a Distance

Kings, merchants, mariners — and the twenty-eight cargoes

> *“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, 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.’”*
>
> REVELATION 18:9–10

> *“And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, because no one buys their cargoes any more—”*
>
> REVELATION 18:11

Twenty-eight cargoes if “bodies and souls of men” is read as one — twenty-nine in NASB95, which lists “slaves” and “human lives” apart. John lists them the way a customs officer would, in seven groups, and the order is the sermon.

NASB 1995	GREEK	WHAT IT MEANS
TREASURE · WHAT SHE HOARDED		
gold	χρυσοῦ chrysou	The first word of the list; the last word is people.
silver	ἀργύρου argyrou	

NASB 1995	GREEK	WHAT IT MEANS
precious stones	λίθου τιμίου lithou timiou	Singular in Greek — "precious stone," stone as a commodity.
pearls	μαργαριτῶν margaritōn	The harlot wore them (17:4); the merchants shipped them.
CLOTH · WHAT SHE WORE		
fine linen	βυσσίνου byssinou	Byssus, the finest Egyptian linen — in 19:8 the bride's dress.
purple	πορφύρας porphyras	Tyrian dye from the murex shell; the color of rule.
silk	σιρικοῦ sirikou	From the Seres — China — at the far end of the Silk Road.
scarlet	κοκκίνου kokkinou	Kermes-dyed; the beast and the harlot are both in it (17:3–4).
FURNISHINGS · WHAT SHE BUILT WITH		
citron wood	ξύλον θύϊνον xylon thyinon	Thyine wood from North Africa; a single table could cost a fortune in Rome.
ivory	ἐλεφάντινον elephantinon	
very costly wood	ξύλου τιμιωτάτου xylou timiōtatou	Superlative: the most precious wood.
bronze	χαλκοῦ chalkou	
iron	σιδήρου sidērou	
marble	μαρμάρου marmarou	Quarried and shipped by the ton for the wealthy's houses.
FRAGRANCE · WHAT SHE SMELLED OF		
cinnamon	κιννάμωμον kinnamōmon	From Ceylon and the east; the holy anointing oil used it (Exodus 30:23).
spice	ἄμωμον amōmon	Amomum, an Indian aromatic; only here in the New Testament.
incense	θυμιάματα thymiamata	Plural: incense of every kind.
perfume	μύρον myron	The ointment poured on Jesus (Mark 14:3).
frankincense	λίβανον libanon	A magi's gift (Matthew 2:11), now a commodity.
TABLE · WHAT SHE ATE AND DRANK		
wine	οἶνον oinon	
olive oil	ἔλαιον elaion	
fine flour	σεμίδαλιν semidalin	The flour of the grain offering (Leviticus 2:1) — and of the rich man's bread.

NASB 1995	GREEK	WHAT IT MEANS
wheat	σῖτον sitón	
LIVESTOCK & TRANSPORT · WHAT MOVED HER		
cattle	κτήνη ktēnē	
sheep	πρόβατα probata	
horses	ἵππων hippōn	
chariots	ῥεδῶν rhedōn	*Rheda* — a Latin loanword, the four-wheeled carriage of the wealthy Roman.
PEOPLE · WHOM SHE SOLD		
slaves	σωμάτων sōmatōn	Literally “bodies” — the slave-market’s term for the merchandise.
human lives	ψυχὰς ἀνθρώπων psychas anthrōpōn	“Souls of men” — Ezekiel’s phrase for Tyre’s trade in people (27:13, NASB “the lives of men”).

> *“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. 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!’ And every shipmaster and every passenger and sailor, and as many as make their living by the sea, stood at a distance, and were crying out as they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, ‘What city is like the great city?’ 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!’”*
>
> REVELATION 18:14–19

μιᾷ ὥρᾳ

MIA HŌRA · “IN ONE HOUR”

Three times — from the kings (v. 10), the merchants (v. 17), the sailors (v. 19) — and three times *apo makrothen*, “at a distance” (vv. 10, 15, 17). The city that took a millennium to build ends in sixty minutes, and the people who loved her watch from where the heat cannot reach. Verse 13 ends the cargo list with *sōmatōn kai psychas anthrōpōn* — “bodies,” the slave-market’s own word, and “souls of men,” Ezekiel’s phrase for Tyre’s trade in people (27:13, NASB “the lives of men”). The ledger runs from gold to human beings, and the last line is the one God reads first.

ἰσχυρός

ISCHYROS · "STRONG, MIGHTY"

Strong's G2478, and the chapter's quiet argument. Four times: the angel cries "with a *mighty* voice" (v. 2); "the Lord God who judges her is *strong*" (v. 8); the kings mourn "the *strong* city" (v. 10); and "a *strong* angel" lifts the millstone (v. 21). Earth gives the word once, to Babylon; heaven uses it three times — for God and His messengers. The same adjective names the "strong angel" of 5:2 and 10:1 and the "mighty" peals of the Hallelujah chorus (19:6). Jeremiah had already posed the contest: "Their Redeemer is strong, the LORD of hosts is His name" (Jeremiah 50:34).

ἔμπορος

EMPOROS · "MERCHANT"

Strong's G1713: first a passenger or traveler, then the wholesale trader who travelled with his goods by sea or land (our "emporium" comes from the same family). Four of its five New Testament uses are in this chapter: the merchants who grew rich (v. 3), who weep that no one buys (v. 11), who stand at a distance (v. 15), and who "were the great men of the earth" (v. 23). The fifth is in Jesus' parable: "a merchant seeking fine pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it" (Matthew 13:45–46). Pearls are on Babylon's manifest too (vv. 12, 16). One merchant sold everything for the one pearl; these lost everything, pearls included.

ἐρημόω

ERĒMOŌ · "TO LAY WASTE, MAKE DESOLATE"

Strong's G2049, from *erēmos*, "desert": to turn a place into wilderness. The merchants and the sailors both use the aorist passive *ērēmōthē*: "in one hour such great wealth has been *laid waste*" (v. 17); "in one hour she has been *laid waste*" (v. 19). A chapter earlier the beast and the ten horns make the harlot "*desolate*" (17:16) with the same verb. Its only other uses are Jesus' words: "Any kingdom divided against itself is *laid waste*" (Matthew 12:25; Luke 11:17). Both faces of Babylon end as desert — the religious one torn down by her own allies, the commercial one by God — the wilderness Isaiah foresaw (13:20–22).

AMIR TSARFATI · Behold Israel

Three groups, three sectors: kings are politics, merchants are wealth, shipmasters are the trade that moves it — the whole global economy singing at the graveside of the city that made it. Notice what they mourn. Not one tear for the city; every tear for the money. And notice where they stand: at a distance — no one runs in to help. The dust on the head is Ezekiel 27, the funeral of Tyre, the last great sea-trading empire God sank; John expects his reader to have read it. For the believer the lesson is Matthew 6:19–21 in prophetic form: do not invest your life in what God has already scheduled for demolition.

MARK HITCHCOCK · Bible prophecy · DTS

These laments are where readers most often reach for a modern skyline — New York, the United States, a global trading network — and Hitchcock has answered that popular claim directly: it does not fit. Revelation 17:18 calls Babylon a city, "the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth," and the dirges here borrow their every line from prophecies about one particular place. He sees instead a stage being set: a rebuilt Babylon rising as the Antichrist's commercial capital until, in one hour, the world's trade stops. Alexander the Great died there planning to make it his eastern capital; the Antichrist, he argues, will do what Alexander never did — and lose it all in sixty minutes.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

For MacArthur the three laments are "judgment lamented," and not one of them repents. The kings weep because "they lose their harlot, they lose their lover." The merchants grieve "not for something that is necessary, but for something that is a luxury," though they have heard the gospel from the 144,000, the two witnesses and the angels (James 5; Matthew 16:26). He reads the cargo list as the ancient trade of Ezekiel 27 and finds a warning in its last line: "one of the ways this Antichrist's system is going to survive in the end is by slave labor." The city may be a computerized banking center; when it goes, the world's trade stops. Standing "at a distance" proves a located city — "If the Babylon that was burning was the whole world, you couldn't stand at a distance from it" — and "one hour" is "not literally sixty minutes," but sudden.

DAVID JEREMIAH · Turning Point

Jeremiah hears these laments as the day the world's money stops. "We live in an era of global markets," runs the summary of his Revelation message *The Collapse of the World Market*, "and they will be tightly consolidated under the Antichrist," so that when he falls the whole world market falls with him. Kings, merchants and shipmasters are that consolidation in mourning. In the *Book of Signs* series the chapter becomes "The Collapse of the Global Financial Market": Babylon "was the center of wealth and commerce, the birthplace of the world's financial systems," and the effects of its destruction "are both symbolic and very real." He reads today's drift toward a cashless economy as a sign of how readily one ruler could control all buying and selling (13:17).

IV
MOVEMENT

REVELATION 18:20–24

The Millstone and the Six Silences

Heaven's one verse of joy, a stone in the sea, and the sound of nothing

"Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, because God has pronounced judgment for you against her." 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. 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; 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; for your merchants were the great men of the earth, because all the nations were deceived by your sorcery. And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who have been slain on the earth."

REVELATION 18:20–24

οὐ μὴ … ἔτι

OU MĒ … ETI · "NEVER AGAIN"

Ou mē is the strongest "never" Greek owns, and John stacks it six deep in verses 21–23: not the city, not music, not craft, not the mill, not the lamp, not the bride. Everything that makes a city a home goes quiet in order — art, work, bread, light, love. The stone is thrown *hormēmati*, "with violence" — with a rush, a hurl, no slow decline. And the charge is *pharmakeia*, "sorcery": drugs, potions, spells, the drugging of the nations (the cognate word in 9:21; the same word in Galatians 5:20). Babylon did not argue the world into her markets; she enchanted it.

μύλος

MYLOS · "MILLSTONE, MILL" — THE SOUND OF BREAD

Strong's G3458. Verse 21 uses the adjective (*lithon hōs mylinon megan*, "a stone like a great millstone"; the Majority Text reads *mylon*) and verse 22 the noun: "the sound of a mill will not be heard in you any longer." The same stone appears in Jesus' warning about causing a little one to stumble (Matthew 18:6). The list of silences is borrowed from Jeremiah 25:10, spoken first over Jerusalem: "the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones and the light of the lamp." The sentence Babylon carried out on Judah in 586 BC comes home to Babylon.

εὐφραίνω

EUPHRAINŌ · "REJOICE, MAKE MERRY"

Strong's G2165, from *eu*, "well," and *phrēn*, "mind": to be glad, to make merry, often at a feast. Verse 20's *Euphrainou*, "Rejoice over her, O heaven," is a present imperative, and the identical form is the rich fool's word to his soul: "take your ease, eat, drink and be merry" (Luke 12:19). The rich man "dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day" is the same verb (Luke 16:19) — Babylon's cargo on one man's back. Revelation turns it: the earth-dwellers "celebrate" over the slain witnesses (11:10), but heaven is told to "rejoice" when the devil is thrown down (12:12) and again here. Earth's party ends; heaven's begins.

μεγιστᾶνες

MEGISTANES · "GREAT MEN, LORDS"

Strong's G3175, from the superlative of "great": grandees, magnates, the men at the top of a court. Only three New Testament uses. Herod "on his birthday gave a banquet for his *lords*" (Mark 6:21) — the night John the Baptist's head was brought in on a platter. At the sixth seal "the kings of the earth and the *great men*" hide in caves from the wrath of the Lamb (6:15). And verse 23: "your merchants were the *great men* of the earth." In Babylon the traders had become the aristocracy. The chapter's last line, "the blood of prophets and of saints," is the account Herod's banquet table had already opened.

AMIR TSARFATI · Behold Israel

Heaven throws a party at the funeral. The martyrs who cried "How long?" under the altar (6:10) get their answer in verse 20, and chapter 19 opens on the first "Hallelujah" in the New Testament (19:1–3). The millstone is twenty-six centuries old: Jeremiah told Seraiah to tie his scroll to a stone and throw it into the Euphrates — "just so shall Babylon sink down and not rise again" (Jeremiah 51:63–64). The six silences are the end of normal life — this is what the death of politics and wealth sounds like. And the chapter closes on blood, because the bottom line of every godless empire is the blood of the saints, and God has kept the account.

MARK HITCHCOCK · Bible prophecy · DTS

For Hitchcock the millstone is the hinge between the prophets and the end. Jeremiah's stone sank in the Euphrates as a sign that Babylon would "sink down and not rise again" (51:64); the strong angel's stone finishes that sign on the scale of the whole world. Jeremiah 51:26 said no stone of the city would ever be taken for a corner or a foundation again, and Isaiah 13:20 that it would never be inhabited — yet bricks from Babylon have been carried off for centuries and people have lived on the site. Read literally, those words are still waiting, and verses 21–23 keep them. Then the timeline turns the page: the Hallelujahs of 19:1–6 and the King on the white horse.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

Verse 20 is "judgment enjoyed": heaven rejoices "because righteousness triumphs, because Christ is exalted, because the kingdom comes." The millstone is "judgment completed," and MacArthur sends the reader to Jeremiah 51:61–64, where Seraiah was to "tie a stone to it and throw it into the middle of the Euphrates" — a prophecy he holds was never fully kept, noting Babylon's rebuilding in his own day. He walks the silences as the end of ordinary life — music, craft, the mill, courtship and weddings — and observes that "the world's been dark since the fifth bowl," so the lamp was the city's only light. Verses 23–24 are "judgment justified": corrupt great men, sorcery that deceived the nations, the blood of the saints, answered in 19:1–2. He closes with the rich fool of Luke 12 and the call to be "rich toward God."

DAVID JEREMIAH · Turning Point

Jeremiah's reading of the millstone follows from his reading of the city: "In the End Times, it will rise—and fall —again." The verses he gathers on Babylon's end set Isaiah 13:19–20 — overthrown like Sodom, never inhabited — beside Revelation 18:10's "in one hour your judgment has come." *The Jeremiah Study Bible* calls Revelation 14:8 "a preliminary announcement of the final overthrow"; verses 21–24 are that overthrow carried out, with no city left to rebuild. For the believer his counsel is the one he gives throughout: what this chapter destroys was never the place to store treasure.

V
THEME

CROSS-REFERENCES

The Passage in the Whole Bible

Where the dirge was first sung, and where the believer's exit is

> *"Now behold, here comes a troop of riders, horsemen in pairs." And one said, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon; And all the images of her gods are shattered on the ground."*
>
> ISAIAH 21:9

> *"Flee from the midst of Babylon, And each of you save his life! Do not be destroyed in her punishment, For this is the Lord's time of vengeance; He is going to render recompense to her. Babylon has been a golden cup in the hand of the Lord, Intoxicating all the earth. The nations have drunk of her wine; Therefore the nations are going mad. Suddenly Babylon has fallen and been broken; Wail over her! Bring balm for her pain; Perhaps she may be healed."*
>
> JEREMIAH 51:6–8

> *"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, 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.*
>
> JEREMIAH 51:63–64

> *"And Babylon, the beauty of kingdoms, the glory of the Chaldeans' pride, Will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. 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."*
>
> ISAIAH 13:19–20

> *"I said to the angel who was speaking with me, "Where are they taking the ephah?" Then he said to me, "To build a temple for her in the land of Shinar; and when it is prepared, she will be set there on her own pedestal.""*
>
> ZECHARIAH 5:10–11

> *"Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate," says the Lord. "And do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you."*
>
> 2 CORINTHIANS 6:17

> *"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; 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.""*
>
> REVELATION 19:1–2

> *"Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever."*
>
> 1 JOHN 2:15–17

AMIR TSARFATI · Behold Israel

Read these passages as a Jew would, and they are family history. Isaiah and Jeremiah wrote them for a people about to be carried to Babylon or already sitting by its rivers; Daniel read Jeremiah there and prayed for the end of the exile (Daniel 9:2). The first "come out" was an exodus home to the land. 2 Corinthians 6:17 carries the same call to the church, and 1 John 2:15–17 brings it to a Tuesday: the believer's exit from Babylon is a daily refusal to love what God has already judged, because the world is passing away — "in one hour" spoken quietly.

MARK HITCHCOCK · Bible prophecy · DTS

Hitchcock's case rests on this page. Isaiah 13 and Jeremiah 50–51 promise a sudden, Sodom-like overthrow — never again inhabited, no Arab's tent, no shepherd's flock — and none of it has happened: Cyrus took the city without a battle, it declined for centuries, and Saddam Hussein rebuilt parts of it. Zechariah 5 shows wickedness carried to Shinar to have a house built for it — a vision he holds is still future — and Revelation 18 is the day that house burns. Today's headlines in the region are stage-setting, not fulfillment.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

MacArthur's cross-references build the case for a literal Babylon and the call to leave it. Isaiah 13 and 47, Jeremiah 50–51 and Ezekiel 26–27 speak of a judgment history has not delivered — "And if it has to come, there has to be a Babylon." Zechariah 5 carries wickedness to "the land of Shinar; that's another name for Babylon." Daniel 5 shows Babylon falling in one night. "Double" is read from Exodus 22, Isaiah 40:2 and 61:7 and Jeremiah 16:18; the boast from Isaiah 47 and 1 Corinthians 10:12; the exit from Lot to 2 Corinthians 6:17. The warning reaches the church through 1 John 2:15 — "Do not love the world" — and the rich fool of Luke 12:16–21, and Revelation 19:1–2 is the doxology that answers verse 24.

DAVID JEREMIAH · Turning Point

Jeremiah's cross-references run from the first city to the last. *The Jeremiah Study Bible* traces Babylon to Genesis 10–11, "a city founded by a spiritual rebel named Nimrod," and through Judah's exile in 586 B.C. to the announcement of Revelation 14:8. His Age of Signs list of Babylon verses sets Isaiah 13:19–20 and Jeremiah 51:58 beside Revelation 14:8, 16:19, 17:3–6 and 18:10. Nebuchadnezzar's boast in Daniel 4:30 frames his account of Saddam Hussein, who saw himself as Nebuchadnezzar reborn, restoring the ruins — "I believe these steps signal the beginning of the fulfillment of biblical prophecy." For the believer the key text is Matthew 6:19–21.

SECTION II · STUDY HELPS

At a Glance

Four voices, one chapter

The same chapter, read four ways. Tsarfati listens as an Israeli — Babylon as Israel's oldest captor, the times, and the urgency of getting out; Hitchcock places the chapter on the prophetic timeline and argues for a literal, rebuilt Babylon on the Euphrates. Together they keep Revelation 18 from becoming either a newspaper or a mood. MacArthur adds the expositor's precision and Jeremiah the pastor's call to readiness — four men who share one framework (a future, literal fulfillment, the church caught up before the wrath) and still hear different notes.

THE MOMENT	TSARFATI · the times	HITCHCOCK · the timeline	MACARTHUR · the text	JEREMIAH · the signs
The announcement (18:1–3)	Chapter 17 by the beast, chapter 18 by God; the mark's economy collapsing.	44 of 404 verses on Babylon; 17 religious, 18 political-economic; a close-up of the seventh bowl (16:19).	Ch. 17 religious, ch. 18 commercial; a rebuilt city destroyed by God at the seventh bowl; demons' headquarters.	Babylon "will once again rule the economic world" — hub of the Antichrist's one-world economy, then fallen.
The call (18:4–8)	Tribulation saints out of the beast's economy, like Lot; Jeremiah 51:45 to the exiles first.	Jeremiah's "flee" sounded for the last time; "in one day" — a sudden end ancient Babylon never had.	God's own told to disentangle; sins "glued" into a new Babel; "double means full"; an instant incineration.	The church won't see Babylon reborn, but resists its spirit now: treasure in heaven (Matthew 6:19–21).
The laments (18:9–19)	Politics, wealth and trade at the graveside; dust on the head from Ezekiel 27.	Not New York or the United States; a rebuilt commercial capital where the world's trade flows.	No repentance, only lost luxury; slave labor sustains the system; "one hour" means sudden, not sixty minutes.	Global markets consolidated under the Antichrist; when he falls, the whole world market falls with him.
The millstone (18:20–24)	The martyrs answered; Jeremiah's stone fulfilled; the sound of the end of politics and wealth.	Jeremiah 51:26 and Isaiah 13:20 kept at last; the page turns to the Hallelujahs and the King.	Judgment enjoyed, completed, justified; Jeremiah 51's stone; dark since the fifth bowl; be "rich toward God."	Babylon will "rise—and fall—again"; Isaiah 13:19–20 beside "in one hour"; 14:8's announcement carried out.
The whole Bible	Family history: the exile, Daniel 9:2, the return; 2 Cor 6:17 and 1 John 2 for a Tuesday.	Isaiah 13 and Jeremiah 50–51 unfulfilled; Zechariah 5 still future; headlines are stage-setting.	Isaiah 13, 47; Jeremiah 50–51; Ezekiel 26–27 unfulfilled; Zechariah 5's Shinar; 2 Cor 6:17; 1 John 2:15.	Nimrod's city (Genesis 10–11) to Saddam's restoration; Daniel 4:30's boast; Matthew 6:19–21 for today.

REVELATION 18:1–24 · A COMPARATIVE READING

† Key Insights to Carry

- **Two Babylons, two funerals.** Chapter 17 is religion, burned by the beast and his kings (17:16); chapter 18 is politics and wealth, burned by God at the end (18:8). Same name, two deaths. TSARFATI
- **"Fallen" is spoken before it happens.** *Epesen* is an aorist — a done deed — announced while the city still stands. God's verdicts are past tense before the fire is lit. TEXT
- **Babylon means Babylon.** The name appears about 300 times in Scripture and, with perhaps one exception (1 Peter 5:13), always means the city on the Euphrates; 44 of Revelation's 404 verses concern her. Revelation unveils; it does not encode. HITCHCOCK
- **"Come out" is the Bible's oldest word about Babylon.** Jeremiah 50:8, 51:6 and 45, Isaiah 48:20, 2 Corinthians 6:17 — the same summons in every age. It was first obeyed by Jewish exiles going home. TEXT

- **Her sins were glued to heaven.** *Ekollēthēsan* (v. 5, G2853) — stuck one on another till the heap reached the sky. Babel's tower built again, out of crimes. TEXT
- **The prophets are still waiting.** Isaiah 13:19–20 and Jeremiah 50–51 promise a sudden, Sodom-like end and a site never inhabited or quarried again. History gave Babylon a slow decline instead — so the literal fulfillment is still ahead. HITCHCOCK
- **The cargo list ends in people.** Gold is the first word, "souls of men" the last. *Sōmata*, "bodies," was the slave trade's own word; an economy is judged by what it is willing to sell. TEXT
- **Six "never again"s — borrowed from Jeremiah.** *Ou mē … eti* six times in vv. 21–23: city, music, craft, mill, lamp, bride — the silences Jeremiah 25:10 first pronounced over Jerusalem. In the New Jerusalem it is death, mourning, crying and pain that are "no longer" (21:4). TEXT
- **The millstone is twenty-six centuries old.** Jeremiah 51:63–64: Seraiah's stone in the Euphrates, "just so shall Babylon sink down and not rise again." Revelation 18:21 is that sign kept. TSARFATI
- **"Strong" four times — and only once on earth's lips.** *Ischyros* (G2478): the angel's mighty voice (v. 2), the strong Lord God (v. 8), the strong angel (v. 21) — and the kings' "strong city" (v. 10). The chapter is about which one is. TEXT
- **"Capitalism gone berserk."** MacArthur's phrase for the system of chapter 18: a worldwide economic boom "centered in a rebuilt Babylon," which God destroys, starting with its capital city. The harlot of chapter 17 falls to politics; this city falls to God. MACARTHUR
- **"Double means full."** "Give back to her double" (v. 6) is not arithmetic but completeness, MacArthur explains — the measure of Isaiah 40:2 and Jeremiah 16:18, "complete, as the sin deserves." God repays Babylon exactly, and exactly is everything she earned. MACARTHUR
- **When he falls, the whole market falls.** Jeremiah sees today's global markets as preparation: consolidated under the Antichrist, they collapse with him. A city that "has lain dormant for ages" will rise to outshine every modern capital — and be laid waste in one hour. JEREMIAH
- **The spirit of Babylon is already here.** Believers will not see Babylon reborn in the tribulation, Jeremiah teaches, but they live with its spirit now — materialism and selfish pursuits. The guard against it is Matthew 6:19–21: treasure sent ahead into the work of God. JEREMIAH

† Questions for the Table

1 **The merchants wept because "no one buys their cargoes any more." What in your life would you grieve if it stopped selling — and what does that tell you about where your treasure is?**

Their grief measured their god. Matthew 6:21 is the diagnostic.

REVELATION 18:11; MATTHEW 6:19–21

2 **"Come out of her, my people" was spoken to people living inside the system. Name one place where your loyalty is still inside Babylon — a habit, a purchase, a fear of missing out.**

You cannot share her sins without sharing her plagues; the two come as a set.

REVELATION 18:4

3 **Babylon said in her heart, "I sit as a queen … and will never see mourning." What does your household quietly assume can never be taken from it?**

God sentenced a city for what it assumed, not only for what it said.

REVELATION 18:7; ISAIAH 47:7–8

4 **Kings, merchants and sailors all stood “at a distance” — the kings and merchants “because of the fear of her torment.” Where does fear of loss keep you standing near something God has already judged?**

Fear kept them close enough to watch and too far to be burned — the worst of both.

REVELATION 18:10, 15, 17

5 **The cargo list ends with “slaves and human lives.” Where, in what you buy and how you work, does a person become a line item?**

The ledger runs from gold to souls; God reads the last line first.

REVELATION 18:13

6 **Heaven is told to rejoice over the same event earth mourns. By what you would actually lose, which side of the street are you standing on this week?**

Rejoicing is vindication, not gloating — God proved true, and the martyrs were answered.

REVELATION 18:20; 19:1–3

❖

One hour. The city that took a thousand years to build and a world to feed ends between the angel’s first word and his last — and heaven sings. Come out of her, My people.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

Scripture: New American Standard Bible® (NASB), © 1960–1995 The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. · The teacher sections are the study author's faithful summaries — not verbatim quotations — of Amir Tsarfati (with Rick Yohn, Revealing Revelation, Harvest House, 2022, and Behold Israel teaching) and Mark Hitchcock (The Second Coming of Babylon, Multnomah, 2003; The Revelation Answer Book, “What Is Babylon in Revelation 17–18?”; and published interviews) as they bear on Revelation 18. Consult each author's own work for his exact words. · Greek text: SBL Greek New Testament; Strong's numbers for reference. · Smith For Christ deep dive series. · John MacArthur (“Babylon Is Fallen,” Parts 1–3, Grace Community Church, 1994, transcripts at gty.org; Revelation 12–22, MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Moody, 2000) and David Jeremiah (The Coming Economic Armageddon, 2010; the Turning Point messages “The Collapse of the World Market” and “The Collapse of the Global Financial Market” from The Book of Signs series; The Jeremiah Study Bible; and the Age of Signs articles at davidjeremiah.org) are summarized as they bear on Revelation 18.