REVELATION 18

The Fall of Commercial Babylon

> *"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."*
> REVELATION 18:4–5

A SMITH FOR CHRIST STUDY · WITH TSARFATI · MACARTHUR · GUZIK · HITCHCOCK · JEREMIAH

Where John has brought us

1. Chapters 17 and 18 are one funeral held in two services.

2. Babylon is the oldest enemy in the Bible.

Fallen, Fallen

A city declared dead while it is still standing

REVELATION 18:1

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

AMIR TSARFATI

Tsarfati sets the two chapters side by side. In chapter 17 the beast and his ten kings burn the harlot — God using His enemies to finish religious Babylon.

MARK HITCHCOCK

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.

JOHN MACARTHUR

MacArthur reads two Babylons under one name. The woman of chapter 17 is guilty of religious abominations; the city of chapter 18 is abominable because of its system of commerce.

ἔπεσεν

EPESEN · "FALLEN"

From piptō, to fall. Epesen is an aorist — a finished act. The city is still standing when the angel speaks, but the prophets' habit is to announce the certain as already done, the "prophetic aorist."

Come Out of Her, My People

One command, two measures, one day

REVELATION 18:4

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;

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik notes that a believer cannot belong to religious Babylon, but commercial Babylon is a constant pull on every Christian, like Lot settling in Sodom.

AMIR TSARFATI

For Tsarfati, "my people" here are not the church, which has been home since chapter 4.

DAVID JEREMIAH

Jeremiah is pretribulational, so he does not expect the church to hear verse 4 from inside the rebuilt city; its first hearers are those who come to faith after the church is gone.

κολλάω
KOLLAŌ · "PILED UP"

To glue, to join fast. The aorist passive ekollēthēsan (v5) pictures sins cemented to one another, course on course, like bricks in a tower — the very image of Genesis 11, where Babel's builders used brick and tar to reach the heavens.

Three Laments from a Distance

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

REVELATION 18:9

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

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik notes that the whole section is modeled on Ezekiel's lament over Tyre, down to the dust on the heads and the question "who is like?"

JOHN MACARTHUR

For MacArthur the laments are judgment lamented, and not one mourner repents.

DAVID JEREMIAH

Jeremiah hears these laments as the day the world's money stops.

μιᾷ ὥρᾳ

MIA HŌRA · "IN ONE HOUR"

Three times — from the kings (v10), the merchants (v17) and the sailors (v19) — and three times apo makrothen (G575 + G3113), "at a distance" (vv10, 15, 17).

Three Laments from a Distance



Kings, merchants and sailors all stand back from the burning city and mourn their losses, while heaven alone is told to rejoice.

The Cargo List

The merchants' manifest (vv12–13), in seven groups

TREASURE what she hoarded	gold · silver · precious stones · pearls
CLOTH what she wore	fine linen · purple · silk · scarlet
FURNISHINGS what she built with	citron wood · ivory · costly wood · bronze · iron · marble
FRAGRANCE what she smelled of	cinnamon · spice · incense · perfume · frankincense
TABLE what she ate, drank	wine · olive oil · fine flour · wheat
LIVESTOCK what moved her	cattle · sheep · horses · chariots
PEOPLE whom she sold	**slaves · human lives** *first word gold, last word people*

Twenty-nine cargoes in NASB95, listed in seven groups the way a customs officer would: the first word is gold, the last is people.

The Millstone and the Six Silences

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

REVELATION 18:20

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

AMIR TSARFATI

Tsarfati says heaven throws a party at the funeral. The martyrs who cried "How long?"

MARK HITCHCOCK

For Hitchcock the millstone is the hinge between the prophets and the end. Jeremiah's stone sank in the Euphrates; the strong angel's stone finishes that sign on the scale of the whole world.

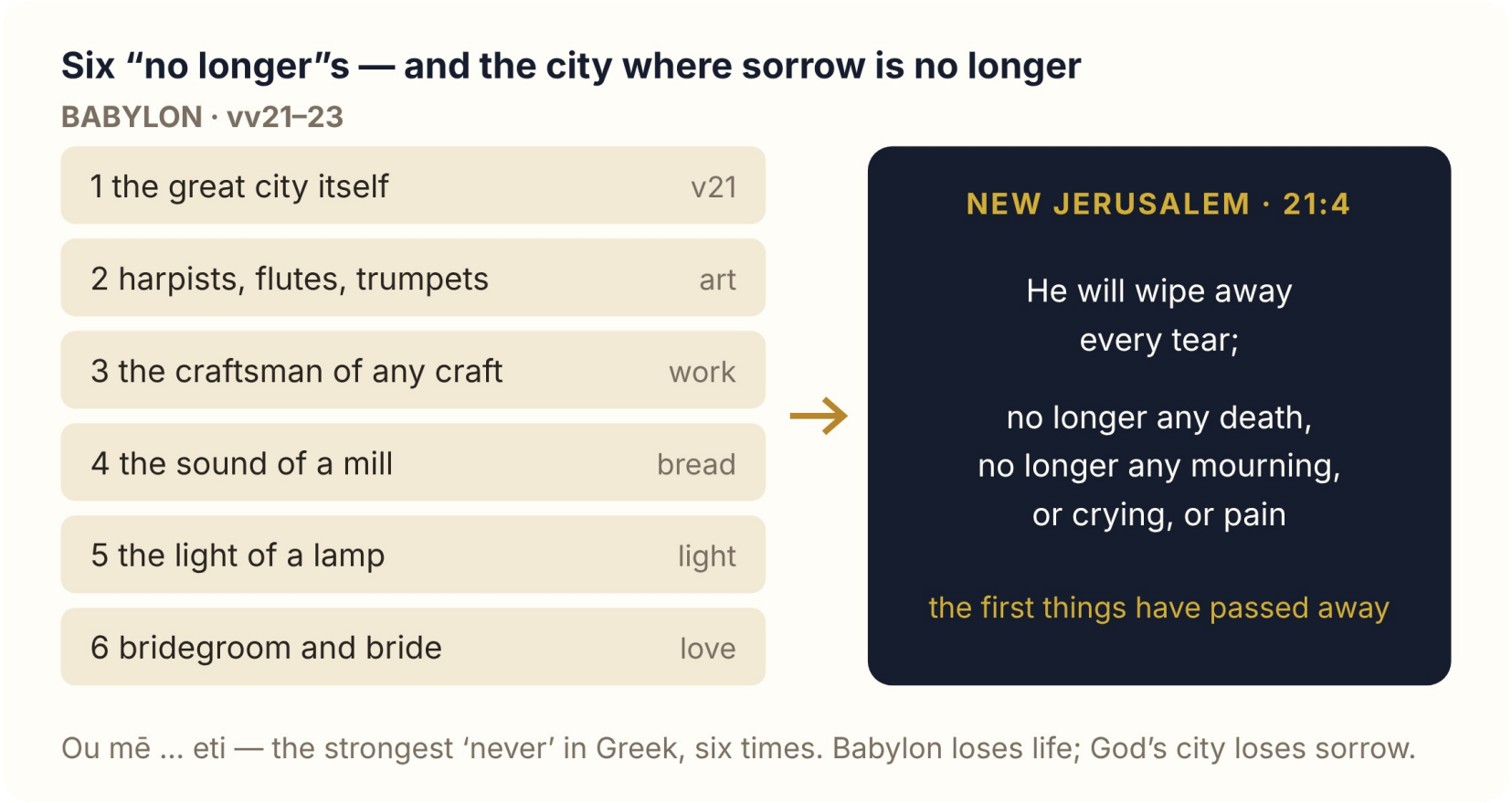
DAVID GUZIK

Guzik insists that rejoicing over judgment is not gloating but vindication: heaven rejoices in the righteous resolution, not in the destruction itself.

φαρμακεία
PHARMAKEIA · "SORCERY"

The root of our word 'pharmacy.' In the ancient world it meant drugs, potions and the occult working together; it is the same word Paul lists among the deeds of the flesh (Gal 5:20).

Six Silences



Six times Babylon hears “not any longer”; in the New Jerusalem it is death, mourning, crying and pain that are no longer.

What to carry from this chapter

1

Two Babylons, two funerals.

Chapter 17 is religion, burned by the beast; chapter 18 is politics and wealth, burned by God at the end.

2

Fallen before it falls.

Epesen is an aorist — God's verdicts are past tense before the fire is lit.

3

Sins glued to heaven.

Ekollēthēsan (v5): her sins stuck one on another until the heap reached the sky — Babel's tower built again, out of crimes.

4

Double means full.

"Give back to her double" (v6) is not arithmetic but completeness — exactly what she earned.

More to carry

5

Loyalty before geography.

A believer leaves Babylon by loyalty before he leaves it by geography; her sins and her plagues come as a set.

6

Three clocks, three distances.

“In one hour” and “at a distance” each sound three times — fear, not love, kept every mourner back.

7

The ledger ends in people.

Gold is the first cargo and human lives the last; an economy is judged by what it is willing to sell.

8

Strong — but only once truly.

The kings call her “the strong city” (v10), but it is the Lord God who judges her who is strong (v8).

Talk it through

1. The merchants wept because no one buys their cargoes any more (v11). What would you grieve if it stopped — and what does that say about where your treasure is?

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.

3. Babylon said in her heart that she would never see mourning (v7). What does your household quietly assume can never be taken from it?

4. Heaven is told to rejoice over the same event earth mourns (v20). By what you would actually lose, which side of the street are you standing on?

CLOSING

Babylon's lights go out, her music stops, and her merchants stand far off weeping for their money. But heaven sings, and a better city is coming. Come out of her while it is still today — and store your treasure where no fire can reach it.

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

O·I·A study, slides, reflection journal and film: see the Revelation study page.