

Babylon Is Fallen

Revelation 18:1–24

I. Introduction

- a. That Antichrist will be able to build the greatest commercial empire the world has ever known in the midst of the devastating judgments of the Tribulation reveals his incredible power.
- b. God's destruction of commercial Babylon is the theme of chapter 18. It is thus a very somber chapter; it is a requiem, a dirge for the funeral of humanity.
- c. With the destruction of the satanic last and greatest human empire, the stage is set for the triumphant return of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- d. Though some commentators view it as a symbol for Antichrist's whole godless system, the Babylon described in chapter 18 is most likely an actual city.
- e. It is called a city five times in the chapter (vv. 10, 16, 18, 19, 21), and other features in the text imply that a literal city is in view.
- f. Since the text plainly describes Babylon as a city, and there is nothing in the context to indicate otherwise, it is safest to view it as a real city.
- g. Babylon will have received plenty of warnings of its impending doom by the occurrence of the events of chapter 18. The 144,000 Jewish evangelists, the two witnesses, the rest of the redeemed, and an angel flying in the heavens will have proclaimed the gospel message.
- h. That message includes the truth that God will judge those who refuse to repent. In addition, earlier in the Tribulation an angel specifically warned of Babylon's impending doom, crying out "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her

immorality” (14:8). The angel spoke of Babylon’s yet future fall as if it had already happened, emphasizing the certainty of its doom.

- i. But despite the repeated warnings, the people of the world will refuse to repent (cf. 9:20–21; 16:9, 11), and God’s judgment will fall on Babylon.
- j. Chapter 18 records seven aspects of that judgment on Antichrist’s commercial empire.

II. Judgment Pronounced.

- a. (18:1–3)
- b. This solemn opening pronouncement of judgment gives two reasons for Babylon’s impending destruction: pervasive demonic activity and wretched sensuality.
- c. As it often does in Revelation (cf. 4:1; 7:9; 15:5; 19:1), the phrase **after these things** marks the beginning of a new vision.
- d. While still discussing the general theme of Antichrist’s world empire, destroyed finally by the seven bowl judgments (chap. 16), chapter 18 moves from its religious aspects to its commercial aspects.
- e. As this new vision opened, John **saw another angel**, distinct from the one in 17:1. Some view this angel as Christ, but the use of *allos* (another of the same kind) instead of *heteros* (another of a different kind) indicates that this is an angel of the same type as the one in 17:1.
- f. He may be the angel who had earlier predicted Babylon’s downfall (14:8).
- g. Three features in the text reveal his unusual power and importance.
 - i. First, he came **down from heaven** with **great authority**.

1. He left the presence of God with delegated authority to act on God's behalf.
- ii. Second, when he arrived, **the earth was illumined with his glory**. He will make his dramatic appearance onto a darkened stage, for the fifth bowl will have plunged the world into darkness (16:10).
 1. Manifesting the flashing brilliance of a glorious heavenly being against the blackness, the angel will be an awe-inspiring sight to the shocked and terrified earth dwellers.
- iii. Third, the angel **cried out with a mighty voice**.
 1. No one will be able to ignore him; everyone will hear him as well as see him.
 2. His message will add to the consternation and terror caused by his appearance.
 3. It will be a word of woe, ill tidings for Antichrist and his followers: **"Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great!"**
 4. The judgment predicted in 14:8 will now be carried out.
 5. This will be a greater and more far-reaching judgment than the one pronounced in identical words on ancient Babylon (Isa. 21:9).
 6. A comparison of this passage with 16:17–19 suggests that this judgment takes place when the seventh bowl is poured out: Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl upon the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying, "It is done." And there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder; and there was a great earthquake, such as there had not been since man came to be upon the earth, so

great an earthquake was it, and so mighty. The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath.

- h. The first cause given for Babylon's destruction is that **she has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit** (a synonym for **demons**, cf. 16:13–14).
 - i. It was in the vicinity of Babylon that 200 million formerly bound demons were released at the sounding of the sixth trumpet (9:13–16).
 - ii. They, along with the demons released from the abyss at the sounding of the fifth trumpet (9:1–11), those cast from heaven with Satan (12:4, 9), and those previously on earth, will be confined in Babylon.
 - iii. God will, so to speak, gather all the rotten eggs into one basket before disposing of them.
- i. Babylon will also be **a prison of every unclean and hateful bird**.
 - i. That phrase symbolizes the city's total destruction (cf. Isa. 34:11).
 - ii. Like grotesque carrion birds, the demons will hover over the doomed city, waiting for its fall.
 - iii. The depiction of the demons as **unclean and hateful** reflects heaven's view of them.
- j. Babylon's destruction will also come because **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**.
- k. Antichrist's evil religious and commercial empire will spread its hellish influence to **all the nations** of the world.

- i. Having **drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality** (cf. 14:8; 17:2), the people of the world will fall into a religious and materialistic stupor.
 - ii. The all-encompassing terms **all the nations, the kings of the earth, and the merchants of the earth** reveal that Babylon will seduce the entire world.
 - iii. The unregenerate people of the world will lust for Babylon, passionately desiring to commit **acts of spiritual immorality** with her. Likewise, **the merchants of the earth will have become rich by the wealth of her sensuality**. In the beginning, the world will cash in on Babylon's financial prosperity.
 - 1. Having thrown off any semblance of self-control or self-restraint, sinners will indulge in a wild materialistic orgy.
 - i. Like those in ancient Babylon, they will be partying when their city is destroyed (cf. Dan. 5:1–30).
- III. Judgment Avoided.
- a. 18:4–5
 - b. God's judgment on this commercially prosperous but morally bankrupt society can be avoided, as **another voice from heaven** makes clear.
 - c. The use of *allos* (**another** of the same kind) suggests that the speaker is an angel like the one in verse 1.
 - d. The message he proclaims, **“Come out of her, my people,”** is a call for God's people to disentangle themselves from the world system.
 - e. It may also be an evangelistic call to God's elect to come to faith in Christ and come out of Satan's kingdom (cf. Col. 1:13).
 - i. In both cases, the message is to abandon the system.
 - f. Throughout the terrifying judgments of the Tribulation, God will save people.

- i. The result of the gospel preaching by the 144,000 Jewish evangelists, the two witnesses, and an angel flying in midheaven will be the greatest harvest of souls the world has ever known (cf. 7:9).
 - ii. Many of these believers will be martyred for their faith in Christ when they refuse to take the mark of the beast (13:15–16).
 - iii. The survivors will face powerful temptations to participate in the system.
 - iv. Family and friends will no doubt pressure them to save themselves by accepting the mark of the beast.
 - v. The need to obtain the basic necessities of life will also pressure them to conform to the system (cf. 13:17).
- g. The exhortation to flee Babylon finds an Old Testament parallel in the prophets' warnings to flee ancient Babylon. "Go forth from Babylon!" cried Isaiah. "Flee from the Chaldeans!" (Isa. 48:20).
- i. Jeremiah echoed Isaiah's warning: "Wander away from the midst of Babylon and go forth from the land of the Chaldeans.... 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.... Come forth from her midst, My people, and each of you save yourselves from the fierce anger of the Lord" (Jer. 50:8; 51:6, 45).
- h. Believers in the present day must also avoid the temptation to get caught up in the world system.
- i. "Do not be conformed to this world," Paul commanded the believers at Rome, "but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the

will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect” (Rom. 12:2).

- ii. To the Corinthians he wrote, Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, “I will dwell in them and walk among them; And I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 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 Cor. 6:14–17)
- i. The biblical truth that believers are not to be involved in the world system will take on new urgency as Babylon faces imminent destruction.
 - i. The angel’s message to the believers still in that city is the same one that the angels brought to Lot (Gen. 19:12–13): Get out before you are caught up in God’s judgment of that wicked place.
- j. Believers are to flee Babylon so that they **will not participate in her sins.**
 - i. The materialistic, pleasure-mad, demon-infested city of Babylon will exert an almost irresistible influence on believers to **participate in her sins.**
- k. God’s people must also flee Babylon so they do not **receive of her plagues.**
 - i. Some view the **plagues** as a reference to the bowl judgments, which are also called plagues (15:1, 6, 8; 16:9).

- ii. The bowl judgments, however, are worldwide in scope; hence, there would be no place to escape to (cf. 18:9–10).
 - iii. Therefore it is best to see these **plagues** as specific judgments on Babylon, perhaps, as noted above, in conjunction with the outpouring of the seventh bowl (cf. 16:17–19).
1. Finally, believers must flee Babylon because **her sins have piled up as high as heaven** (cf. Jer. 51:9).
- i. **Piled** is from *kollaō*, which literally means “to glue together,” or “to join.” Babylon’s sins will pile up like a new Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:3–4), but unlike the ancient tower, her sins will reach **as high as heaven**. Then the angel adds that **God has remembered her iniquities** (cf. 16:19).
 - ii. He will take note of them as He did that earlier monument to man’s sinful, arrogant, prideful rebellion at Babel.
 - iii. The blessed truth is that God says of believers, “I will not remember your sins.... I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more” (Isa. 43:25; Jer. 31:34). But for defiant, unrepentant Babylon there will be no forgiveness, only judgment.
- IV. Judgment Defined.
- a. 18:6–8
 - b. Babylon’s judgment is defined as the angel now speaks not to John, but to God.
 - c. His call for vengeance on Babylon, **pay her back even as she has paid**, parallels the prayers of the martyred saints recorded in 6:9–10: “When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the

testimony which they had maintained; and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?’ ”

- d. The angel’s prayer for justice is based on the Old Testament principle of *lex talionis*, the law of retaliation, the principle of “an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth” (Matt. 5:38; cf. Ex. 21:23–24; Lev. 24:19–20; Deut. 19:21).
- e. Babylon has been extended enough grace and heard enough warnings. It is time for vengeance. It is time for her destruction.
 - i. The angel’s plea is reminiscent of the Old Testament saints’ pleas for vengeance on ancient Babylon. In Psalm 137:8 the psalmist wrote, “O daughter of Babylon, you devastated one, how blessed will be the one who repays you with the recompense with which you have repaid us.”
 - ii. Jeremiah also pleaded for vengeance on Babylon (Jer. 50:14–15)
- f. It is important to note that retaliation belongs to God alone.
 - i. The Bible explicitly forbids Christians to take their own vengeance.
 - ii. Believers must “not say, ‘I will repay evil’ ”; instead they are to “wait for the Lord, and He will save [them]” (Prov. 20:22).
 - iii. They are to “bless those who persecute [them]” (Rom. 12:14), “never pay[ing] back evil for evil to anyone” (Rom. 12:17).
 - iv. They must “never take [their] own revenge ... but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord.” If their “enemy is hungry, [they must] feed him, and if he is thirsty, give

him a drink; for in so doing [they] will heap burning coals on his head.”

- v. Instead of being “overcome by evil, [they must] overcome evil with good” (Rom. 12:19–21).
- vi. Christians are to “see that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people” (1 Thess. 5:15), “not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead” (1 Pet. 3:9).
- g. But those commands do not preclude holy God’s righteous judgment of sinners.
- h. The angel’s request that God **give back to Babylon double according to her deeds** (literally in the Greek “double the double things”) is a request that Babylon’s punishment fit her crimes.
 - i. Double has been her iniquity; double must be her punishment.
 - ii. Babylon’s sins have overflowed, piling up as high as the heavens, and the angel calls for God’s judgment to overflow on her in equal measure.
- i. Further stating his request that God fully punish Babylon, the angel asks that **in the cup which she has mixed, God would mix twice as much for her.**
 - i. Fittingly, in the very cup that Babylon used to deceive the nations (v. 3; 14:8; 17:2, 4; Jer. 51:7) she is to receive a double portion of God’s wrath.
 - ii. The imagery of the cup of God’s wrath also appears in 14:10 and 16:19.
- j. Then the angel calls on God a third time to exact complete vengeance on Babylon: **“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.’ ”

- k. **To the degree** is a call to match the punishment to the crime, a biblical principle (Isa. 3:16ff.; Prov. 29:23; Luke 1:51; 14:11).
- l. Three sins call for Babylon’s judgment.
 - i. First, she was proud; **she glorified herself**.
 - 1. God, who said, “I will not give My glory to another” (Isa. 42:8), hates pride (Prov. 6:16–17; James 4:6).
 - ii. Second, she pursued self-gratification; she **lived sensuously**.
 - 1. The Bible pronounces those who do so to be dead even while they live (1 Tim. 5:6).
 - iii. Third, she was guilty of self-sufficiency, of presumptuously overestimating her power; **she said in her heart, “I sit as a queen and I am not a widow, and will never see mourning.”**
 - 1. That proud boast echoes that of ancient Babylon, who said “I will be a queen forever.... I will not sit as a widow, nor know loss of children” (Isa. 47:7, 8; cf. Ezek. 27:3; 28:2; Zeph. 2:15).
 - 2. Yet God’s devastating reply was that “these two things shall come on you suddenly in one day: Loss of children and widowhood. They shall come on you in full measure in spite of your many sorceries, in spite of the great power of your spells” (Isa. 47:9).
- m. For those three sins Babylon will receive **torment and mourning**.
- n. *Basanismos* (**torment**) literally means torture (cf. vv. 10, 15; 9:5; 14:11).

- o. **Mourning** refers to the grief that the torture produces.
 - i. Hell will be a place of both unimaginable torment (20:10; Luke 16:23–24, 28) and crushing grief (Matt. 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30).
 - p. Then the angel notes that **for this reason**, the sins I just shared, **in one day her plagues will come**.
 - q. Babylon’s destruction will not be progressive.
 - i. The wicked city will be instantly destroyed (cf. vv. 10, 17, 19).
 - r. Three **plagues** will result in Babylon’s complete devastation: **pestilence and mourning and famine**—heaven’s fitting answer to her proud boast in verse 7.
 - i. After those three plagues have run their course, **Babylon will be burned up with fire**.
 - s. Babylon’s doom is certain and cannot be avoided **for the Lord God who judges her is strong**.
 - i. No one can frustrate God’s plans, or keep Him from accomplishing what He purposes to do.
 - ii. Job said to God, “I know that You can do all things, and that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted” (Job 42:2).
 - iii. Despite the “plans [that] are in a man’s heart ... the counsel of the Lord, it will stand” (Prov. 19:21).
 - iv. “For the Lord of hosts has planned,” declared Isaiah, “and who can frustrate it? And as for His stretched-out hand, who can turn it back?” (Isa. 14:27).
 - t. All the power of wicked men and demons will not be enough to deliver Babylon from God’s judgment.
- V. Judgment Lamented.
- a. 18:9–19
 - b. Nothing so clearly reveals the hardness of sinners’ hearts as their lack of sorrow over their sin.

- c. Through the years of devastating judgments, the Tribulation sinners will relentlessly refuse to mourn over their sin.
 - i. But though they will not lament over their sin, they will cry over the destruction of Babylon.
 - ii. When the glorious centerpiece, the head of Antichrist's empire, is judged and destroyed, there will be worldwide dismay and mourning.
- d. The first mourners introduced are the leaders, **the kings of the earth**.
 - i. This group includes the ten kings who rule Antichrist's kingdom under his authority (17:12), as well as the rest of the world's leaders under them.
 - ii. They will greet the news of Babylon's destruction with shock and dismay.
 - iii. The destruction of the seat of Antichrist's political and economic power will strike a fatal blow to his empire.
 - iv. The fall of Babylon will be a symbol of the fall of that entire evil world system.
- e. These leaders are the same ones **who committed acts of immorality and lived sensuously with her** (v. 3).
 - i. Once again, Babylon is pictured as a harlot (cf. 17:1, 15, 16), whose death causes her lovers to **weep and lament over her**.
 - ii. Some of those crossing the Euphrates on their way to Armageddon (16:12) may actually **see the smoke** rising from the **burning** city (cf. Gen. 19:28; Josh. 8:20–21; Isa. 34:10).
 - iii. The rest will watch Babylon's destruction through the world's media.
 - iv. All will be careful to keep their **distance** from the stricken city.

- v. They will be powerless to help and will **fear** that they may share **her torment**. This fearful scene supports the idea that Babylon is an actual city, not a symbol for the entire world system. Obviously, the entire world is not destroyed at this point, since those watching Babylon burn are safe for the moment. Babylon's destruction is, however, a precursor to the doom that will soon fall on the entire world.
- f. As they watch her burn, the leaders will cry out in anguish, **“Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! For in one hour your judgment has come.”**
 - i. As the crown jewel of Antichrist's empire, Babylon will be a **great city**.
 - ii. And since it will have survived the devastating judgments of the Tribulation up to that point, the leaders will believe it to be a **strong city**.
 - iii. Thus, Babylon's swift destruction will shock and amaze them, and they will cry out to her in dismay, **“For in one hour your judgment has come.”**
 - iv. The judgment on Babylon will happen rapidly, just as verse 8 predicted.
- g. The next mourners to appear on the scene are **the merchants of the earth**.
 - i. These businessmen will **weep and mourn over Babylon because no one buys their goods any more**.
 - ii. The destruction of Antichrist's capital will end any
 - iii. Whatever economic activity will have been taking place on an earth reeling under the escalating difficulty brought on by the catastrophic divine judgments will then come to a halt.
- h. Then follows a list of twenty-eight items or categories of merchandise that comprised the merchants' goods.

- i. These items were common commodities in the ancient world (many of them are included on the list in Ezek. 27:12–24) and were the source of immense financial gain.
- i. Continuing their lament, the merchants now address Babylon directly:
 - i. **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.**
 - ii. All of the city's **luxurious and splendid** (Gk., *lampros*, a word that may refer to clothing) possessions **have passed away from her and men will no longer find them.**
 - iii. They will be gone forever as God bankrupts the system.
- j. Joining the leaders, **the merchants** weep and mourn, not out of some emotional sympathy for the decimated city, but because with its collapse they have been stripped of the key source of their financial resources.
 - i. The merchants lament because their materialistic passions can no longer be fulfilled.
 - ii. The weeping that begins then will last for eternity in hell (Matt. 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30).
 - iii. These greedy merchants are the classic illustration of all those in all times who gain the whole world, but forfeit their souls (Mark 8:36).
- k. Then a third and final group in the vision joins the funeral lament for Babylon: **every shipmaster and every passenger and sailor, and as many as make their living by the sea.**
 - i. In addition to her political and economic importance, Babylon will also be an important distribution center.
 - ii. With its destruction, there will be no more goods to be transported by those who **make their living by the sea.**

- iii. Like the rulers and merchants, the sailors were careful to stand **at a safe distance** from the city.
 - iv. As they gazed on the ruined city they **were crying out as they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, “What city is like the great city?”**
 - v. Their lament is reminiscent of the proud boast of Antichrist’s deluded followers in 13:4, “Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?”
 - vi. But the seemingly indestructible city is already destroyed before their eyes, and its seemingly invincible ruler will shortly meet his end (19:20).
 - l. Then, in a typical ancient expression of grief, the sailors **threw dust on their heads.**
 - m. Like the rulers (vv. 9–10) and the merchants (vv. 15–16), they too will cry out, **“Woe, woe, the great city.”**
 - i. That is an expression of pain, suffering, and grief, but not of repentance, exclaiming, **“In one hour she has been laid waste!”**
 - ii. In an astonishingly short period of time, the city that was the source of their wealth was destroyed.
- VI. Judgment Enjoyed.
- a. 18:20
 - b. Heaven will have quite a different perspective on Babylon’s judgment than that of Antichrist’s earthly followers.
 - c. The angel who began speaking in verse 4 then addressed the redeemed in heaven: the **saints** (a general term for all believers) **and apostles and prophets** (the special class of saints given to the church, as indicated in Eph. 2:20; 4:11).
 - d. He calls on them to **rejoice over** Babylon’s fall, **because God has pronounced judgment for them against her.**
 - e. The long-awaited moment of vindication, retribution, and vengeance, for which the martyred Tribulation believers

prayed (6:9–10) and for which all the redeemed hoped, will have arrived.

- f. 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 the earth.
- VII. Judgment Completed.
- a. 18:21–23*a*
 - b. Another **strong angel** (cf. 5:2; 10:1) now appeared in the vision.
 - c. In a dramatic act picturing Babylon’s destruction, he **took up a stone like a great millstone** (like those used to grind grain; they were four to five feet in diameter, a foot thick, and very heavy) **and threw it into the sea.**
 - d. **“So,”** explained the angel, **“will Babylon, the great city, be thrown down with violence, and will not be found any longer.”**
 - e. In one moment, as that stone disappeared into the sea, Babylon will disappear.
 - f. A similar demonstration predicted the doom of ancient Babylon: Then Jeremiah said to Seraiah, “As soon as you come to Babylon, then see that you read all these words aloud, and say, ‘You, O Lord, have promised concerning this place to cut it off, so that there will be nothing dwelling in it, whether man or beast, but it will be a perpetual desolation.’ And it will come about 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.’ ” (Jer. 51:61–64)

- g. So complete will be Babylon's destruction that none of the normal activities of human life will take place.
 - i. There will be no one making music at all; **the sound of harpists and musicians and flute-players and trumpeters will not be heard.**
 - ii. There will be no one working; **no craftsman of any craft will be found.**
 - iii. There will be no one preparing food; **the sound of a mill will not be heard.**
 - iv. The city will be so completely abandoned that even **the light of a lamp will not shine in her any longer.**
 - v. There will be no more falling in love; **the voice of the bridegroom and bride will not be heard in her any longer.**
 - h. Babylon will be so thoroughly destroyed that it will never rise again, as predicted by the Old Testament prophets (Isa. 13:19–22; 14:22–23; Jer. 50:13, 39; 51:37).
- VIII. Judgment Justified.
- a. 18:23b–24
 - b. Three final reasons are given for Babylon's judgment.
 - c. First, her **merchants were the great men of the earth**, using their wealth to ascend to positions of power, prominence, and influence.
 - i. The abuses of the proud, arrogant rich are well documented in Scripture. "Is it not the rich who oppress you and personally drag you into court?" asked James (James 2:6).
 - ii. Later in his epistle James further indicted the rich for their abuse of the poor: Behold, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields, and which has been withheld by you, cries out against you; and the outcry of those who did the harvesting has reached the ears of the Lord

of Sabaoth. You have lived luxuriously on the earth and led a life of wanton pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. You have condemned and put to death the righteous man; he does not resist you. (James 5:4–6)

- d. A second reason for Babylon’s being judged is that **all the nations were deceived by her sorcery**. **Sorcery** is from *pharmakeia*, the root word of the English words “pharmacy” and “pharmaceuticals.”
 - i. The word is used in the New Testament to refer to magic and occult practices (9:21; Gal. 5:20).
 - ii. Babylon’s hold on the world will not be entirely due to her military and economic power, but also to her occult influence.
- e. A final reason given for Babylon’s judgment is her murderous slaughter of God’s people; **in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who have been slain on the earth** (cf. 6:10; 11:7; 13:7, 15; 16:6; 17:6).
 - i. The heavenly rejoicing over Babylon’s downfall also mentions this: “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’ ” (19:1–2).
- f. The words of Jesus in Luke 12:16–21 form a fitting conclusion to the message of judgment on commercial Babylon: And He told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man was very productive. And he began reasoning to himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?’ Then he said, ‘This is what I will do: I will

tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.” But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?’ So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”¹

¹ John F. MacArthur Jr., *Revelation 12–22*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 2000), 175–192.