

God's Final Call Out Of Babylon

Conrad Baker

www.MaranathaMedia.com.au

An Exposition of Revelation 18:1-24 and Revelation 19:1-6.

We have shown in previous chapters that the great apostate religious system of Babylon has risen and fallen throughout history. Revelation 17 and 18 depict Babylon's final fall and God's final call to his people who still remain in Babylon. There is a close link between Revelation 17 and 18. Revelation 17:18 declares:

"The women which thou saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth."

This is a double symbolism. A woman and a city. Both represent a religious system. There is another double symbolism in Revelation 17:9 where it speaks of seven heads and seven mountains. Both are symbols. Why the change in symbols from Revelation 17 to 18? In Revelation 17 the woman, the whore, represents Babylon's corruption. The great city of Revelation 18 represents Babylon's oppressive and dominating power and is a more fitting symbol to picture the destruction of spiritual Babylon.

It is essential to understand the plan and purpose of Revelation 18.

1. It aptly portrays the utter and final destruction of Babylon.
2. This is portrayed in the form of seven songs or dirges.

Why is so much space given to describe Babylon's end? Her destruction comes suddenly and quickly. Verse 8 declares:

"Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, mourning and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire."

Three times in this chapter also, it says "in one hour", her destruction comes. The extensive scripture used, reveals how large Babylon looms in the sight of heaven. Babylon is a bigger threat than most of us believe. Babylon is more dangerous than we dream. Babylon is more deceptive and more guilty than we have possibly guessed. Babylon is the great enemy of God and man, greater than we have ever estimated. The natural tendency regarding Babylon, is to compromise with her and this has been the story throughout history. Why is this? Because Babylon is the expression of the natural heart. Babylon is the outworking of the sinful nature. Babylon has a powerful appeal to the normal man. The religion of Babylon temporarily satisfies the spiritual longings, but such satisfaction is unsatisfactory to God and will not meet the spiritual need of man.

This section of scripture is constructed in the form of seven songs, in three groups of two and three and two. The first and last duos are heavenly inspired. The central trio is earthly inspired. The first duo tells us why Babylon must be destroyed and the source of that destruction. The central trio tells how Babylon will be destroyed and the totality of her destruction. The final duo of songs tells how long Babylon will be destroyed and the justice of that destruction.

THE FIRST SONG

“After these things I saw.”

This expression denotes that it is a new vision. The term “after” does not mean after the events of chapter 17 but after that vision. Revelation 18 is a second vision concerning the fall of Babylon. Once more we have the principle that is prevalent throughout scripture of repetition and enlargement. Revelation 17 is a repetition and enlargement of Revelation 16:19 where it says:

“The great city was divided into three parts, and great Babylon came in remembrance before God to give to her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.” Revelation 16:19.

Revelation 18 is an enlargement of Revelation 17 especially verse 16 where it says:

“The ten horns and [Greek] the beast, these shall hate the whore and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.” Verse 16.

GOD’S FINAL CALL

“I saw another angel came down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.” Revelation 18:1.

“Another angel”

The previous angel was one of the plague-angels, (Revelation 17:1). This angel is distinctly superior in authority and in his message. Three features reveal this.

1. Having great power or authority. He commands attention and respect.
2. The earth was lightened with his glory indicating that his message is worldwide.
3. He cried mightily with a strong voice. It has a powerful effect. There is no escape from it. When we compare this message with the message of Revelation 10 there are similarities.

Revelation 10

1. “Another mighty angel”
2. “His face as the sun”
3. “Cried with a loud voice.”

Revelation 18

- “Another angel having great power”
- “The earth was lightened with his glory”
- “Cried mightily with a strong voice”

The similarities suggest a similar type of message. The message of Revelation 10 was the First angel’s message of Revelation 14:6, 7. It was fulfilled in the Great Second Advent Movement of 1833-1844. (1) A second angel’s message followed the first angel’s message of Revelation 14 proclaiming the fall of Babylon. The similarities between the second angel’s message of Revelation 14:8 and the message of Revelation 18:1,2 indicate that Revelation 18:1,2 is a repetition of the second angel’s message of Revelation 14:8 which also commenced in 1844.

Similarities Between the Messages of

Revelation 14:8

1. “Babylon is fallen is fallen.”
2. “That great city.”
3. “All nations drink of her wine.”

Revelation 18:1-3.

- “Babylon is fallen is fallen!” Verse 2
- “That great city.” Verse 3
- “All nations have drunk of the wine.” Verse 3

On the other hand, the contrasts between the two messages reveal that this message of Revelation 18 comes later.

Contrasts Between the Message of Revelation 14:8 and Revelation 18:1-3

1. Proclaimed in 1844.
1. Proclaimed prior to the seven last plagues.
2. No mention of Babylon's supremacy.
2. Babylon is supreme. Verse 7
3. No mention of kings, merchants etc. supporting Babylon.
3. Receives universal support including kings and merchants.
4. No mention of the depth of Babylon's fall.
4. Babylon has fallen to the depths of apostasy. Under Satanic control.
5. No mention of the extent of her guilt.
5. Babylon's guilt is as high as heaven.
6. No mention of her destruction.
6. Babylon is fully ripe for destruction.
7. Fulfilled in the Protestant churches of the USA in 1844 rejected the first angel's message of Revelation 14:6, 7.
7. Fulfillment yet future when Christendom will be fully apostate and corrupt.

There are further points which reveal the time setting of this message of Revelation 18.

1. Babylon is termed, "Babylon the great". In the Old Testament from whence this term is borrowed, Babylon was called "great" when she gained universal sway.

"Is not this Great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power and for the honor of my majesty." Daniel 4:30.

Likewise, with spiritual Babylon. She will be called great when she gains universal sway.

2. The depth of Babylon's fall from grace. This fall was a fall of the Protestant division of Babylon and it began in 1844 when the Protestant churches in the USA, in general, began to reject the truth of God. Ever since, they have been sliding deeper and deeper into apostasy. At the very time when the churches are making lofty claims, God reveals that these churches are coming under the control of occult powers.

"Babylon is become the habitation of devils, the hold of every foul spirit and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." Verse 2.

The condition of the churches of spiritual Babylon is described in three different ways. "In the mouth of two or three witnesses, a thing is established." Matthew 18:16

1. Babylon becomes "the habitation of devils". Habitation means dwelling place or residence. This word is used only twice in the New Testament. St. Paul declared of believers, "In whom [Christ] you also are built together, for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Ephesians 2:22.

The Christian Church is to be the habitation of God, the dwelling place of God the Holy Spirit, but if the church disobeys or apostatizes and grieves away the Holy Spirit, His place is taken by another spirit, "the spirits of devils". This will be the situation with the churches of Babylon. What a warning to all churches

and individual Christians. Christian bodies that were once the habitation of God are now fast becoming the habitation of devils. What is true of a church, may also be true of an individual.

2. Babylon becomes “the hold of every foul spirit”. That is, of every unclean angel. The word to hold” means “keep” or prison. The unclean spirits are spiritually and morally unclean. They are filthy. They defile those who do not shun them.

“Regard not them that have familiar spirits, [spirit – mediums] neither seek after wizards to be defiled by them.” Leviticus 19:31.

Spiritualism defiles. Evil spirits defile and today the churches are in the process of becoming the hold or prison of these spirits, and once they have gained entrance, it will be impossible to be rid of them.

3. Babylon becomes “a cage of every unclean and hateful bird”. John draws on the Old Testament description of ancient Babylon, Nineveh and Edom, in their desolate, ruinous state, in which they were the abode of unclean birds. (2) This represents the spiritual desolation that modern Babylon will ultimately reach.

How does Babylon finally gain world pre-eminence? The answer is given in verse 3.

“For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.”

This is a repetition of Revelation 14:8 – “Babylon is fallen because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.” Revelation 18 reveals the final result of Babylon leading the nations to drink of her wine. Wine represents teachings or doctrines. Intoxicating wine denotes false or erroneous doctrines.

As a result of the nations absorbing the false teachings of spiritual Babylon, they have become spiritually benumbed. Just as intoxicating wine benumbs the senses and paralyses the brain, so the wine of Babylon does the same. It benumbs the spiritual faculties; it prevents people from discerning truth from error and right from wrong. False teaching enables leaders of false religion to manipulate the people, to deceive them and secure their support, so that they will gain their goal—the domination of mankind. Why is this wine spoken of as “the wine of the wrath of her fornication”? The answer is that Babylon’s doctrines lead those who assimilate them, to become wrathful and intolerant toward those who differ from them. Babylon begets intolerance. Why the term fornication? “The kings of the earth have committed fornication with her”. This denotes unlawful or illicit union.

It is spiritual adultery. Scripture associates fornication with three practices.

1. Idolatry. This is spiritual unfaithfulness to God. The prophet Ezekiel declares:

“Thou hast made to thyself images of men, [idols] and didst commit whoredom with them.” Ezekiel 3:6, 9 (referring to idolatry.)

2. Friendship with the degenerate world is classed as spiritual adultery.

“You adulterers and adulteresses know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?” James 4:4.

3. The union of church and state. This is what is emphasized in Revelation 17 and 18.

The first form of spiritual adultery has been exhibited through the centuries in Catholic forms of worship; by the use of statues, pictures and the adoration of the wafer in the mass, etc. The second form has been exhibited in the Papacy by its worldly practices. The same applies to apostate Protestantism with its worldly standards and the acceptance of worldly practices. The union of church and state has been practiced by the church of Rome through the ages, in her union with civil governments. Today the apostate Protestant churches also seek political support for their policies. (3)

Verse 3 tells how the commercial, economic and financial world will also support Babylon in the final conflict.

“The merchants of the earth are waxed rich, through the abundance of her delicacies.” Verse 3 [or “the power or influence of her luxuries” as one puts it.]

“The reference is to spiritual wares, indulgences, idolatries, superstitions, worldly compromises, wherewith the apostate church has made merchandise of men. This applies especially to Raw, but the Greek and even in a less degree the Protestant churches are not guiltless.”(4)

Undoubtedly, it has a literal application in the enrichment of financiers, multinationals, etc, through their co-operation with spiritual Babylon. Avro Manhattan has declared:

“The Catholic church is the biggest financial power, wealth accumulator and property owner in existence. She is a greater possessor of material riches than any other single institution, corporation, bank, giant trust government or state, of the whole globe. The Pope as the visible ruler of this immense amassment of wealth, is consequently the richest individual of the 20th century. No one can realistically assess how much he is worth in term of billions of dollars.” (5)

The Church of Rome is the largest multi-national in the world. Her tentacles spread through nearly all other multi-nationals as a result of clever financial investment. This means that she influences much or most of the finance of the world. By their co-operation with Babylon, the world’s merchants will be entrenched and in this way, Babylon will be able to boycott all who do not comply with her policies as predicted in Revelation 13:17.

There are three features that reveal the timing of this message of Revelation 18.

1. It is in the end time, prior to the close of probation and the outpouring of the seven last plagues.
2. It is when spiritual Babylon is supreme - receiving universal support.
3. It is when Christendom is enveloped in dense spiritual darkness, when satanic powers are in full control of religious bodies.

How may this heavenly message of Revelation 18:1 be identified? The key is found in the Old Testament. There are two sources from which the imagery of the message is drawn. (Isaiah 60; Ezekiel 43:2.) Initially these two predictions applied to literal Israel but were not fulfilled. They now apply to spiritual Israel. (6)

Isaiah describes a time of worldwide spiritual darkness and how God’s people will receive spiritual light and glory in such a measure, that it will enlighten the world. The result will be a vast ingathering of converts to Christ and the afflicted remnant will become a great people. The second source from which John draws is the prophet Ezekiel.

“And behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: his voice was like the noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory.” Ezekiel 43:2.

This prediction would have been fulfilled to literal Israel if she had been faithful. It now applies to spiritual Israel in the last days. Revelation 18:1 will be its fulfillment. It is yet future. This prediction indicates that the spiritual temple of the church will be fully restored.

The glory of God will flow into it and this glory - the spiritual glory of character, will shine throughout the earth. As a result, the voice of God, the message of God, will sound throughout the world like the sound of many waters, i.e. with great power.

Other scriptures confirm the above conclusions. The prophet Joel predicted that at the time of the day of the Lord (the time of judgment) dramatic events will occur to complete the work of the gospel to the world. Initially, Joel’s prediction applied to the invasion of the Babylonians and their desolation of Israel. God promised Israel that if they repented, he would restore their land and prosperity. Instead of drought there

would have been abundant rain - both the former and the latter rain. (7) The rain represents the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28). This would have been poured in great measure and as a result, there would have been deliverance from the forces of Babylon. This prediction was not fulfilled, therefore in the New Testament it applies in a spiritual sense to spiritual Israel, particularly in the last days. It had a partial fulfillment at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out in great measure on the early church as brought to view in Acts 2:16-21. Its final and complete fulfillment will be in the last days, for Peter at Pentecost declared:

“It shall come to pass in the last days before that great and notable day of the Lord came.” Act 2:17, 20.

This will be prior to the close of probation and the Second Advent of Christ. Thus, there is a final Pentecost coming, and this is the significance of Revelation 18:1-4.

There are at least ten parallels between the first Pentecost and the final Pentecost. The first Pentecost is an illustration of what the final great Pentecost will be, when the gospel will be proclaimed with tremendous power to the whole world.

Parallels Between the Two Pentecosts

1. Fulfilled at commencement of the Christian era.
1. Will be fulfilled at the conclusion of the Christian era.
2. The Holy Spirit was likened to the early rain of the natural world.
2. The Holy Spirit is likened to the latter rain of the natural world.
3. The Holy Spirit fell upon a purified people.
3. The Latter Rain will fall upon a purified people.
4. The Holy Spirit manifested Himself in spiritual glory in the lives of believers.
4. The Spirit will manifest Himself in spiritual glory in the lives of those comprising the remnant.
5. The Gospel was proclaimed with power and speed to the Jews and the world of that day-multitudes converted to Christ.
5. The final gospel message will also be proclaimed with power and speed to the whole world and multitudes will be converted to Christ.
6. The believers sold or shared their possessions and they had all things common.
6. Believers' possessions will be sold or shared and they also will have all things common.
7. Wonders and miracles were wrought among the people by the power of the Spirit.
7. Wonders and miracles will be wrought among the people under the power of the Latter Rain.
8. Fierce persecution fell upon believers.
8. Fierce persecution will come to true believers in reaction to the power of the Latter Rain.
9. The Gospel among the Jewish people was completed. The probation of the Jewish nation closed.
9. The “everlasting gospel” to the world will be completed and the probation of the world will close.
10. The judgments of God fell upon and ended the Jewish nation that had rejected Christ.
10. The judgments of God will fall upon and end the civilization of this world which has rejected Christ.

THE SECOND SONG

The second song of the first duo is in verses 4-8. It tells us the reason and the source of Babylon's destruction.

“And I heard another voice from heaven saying, Cane out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you and double unto her double according to her works; in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her; for she said in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day; death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire for strong is the Lord God who judges her.” Revelation 18:4-8.

“Another voice.” Verse 4.

This denotes a distinctive call that joins with the message exposing Babylon. “Come out of her my people”. This indicates that almost to the close of probation some of God's people will still be in Babylon, in the false churches. But are not God's people to be called out prior to this time? Yes, all through history God has been calling his people out of apostasy and spiritual corruption. As St. Paul declared,

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness and light with darkness. Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate said the Lord.” 2 Corinthians 6:14, 17.

This call is the final call to come out of spiritual Babylon. This call commenced in 1844, when the Protestant churches rejected the first and second angels' messages. At that time thousands came out of the apostate churches. The call out of Babylon will reach its climax in the message of Revelation 18.

How is it that true believers are in Babylon almost till the close of probation? We suggest two reasons.

1. These people have not received the light to reveal to them the errors of Babylon.
2. While in Babylon they could have found Christ and become children of God. Therefore they will need to be called out.

Why must they be called out? The answer is given in verse 4, “That ye be not partakers of her sins.” A man who is aware of Babylon's sins and remains there becomes a partaker of Babylon's sins. He is judged as sharing the responsibility for those sins. This is why God has called his people out of apostasy through the years. One's example influences others. If a man remains in Babylon and supports it, he is publicly declaring that he believes in that organization, whereas by his coming out of it, he declares that he rejects that organization. He bears witness for Christ to his fellow men. This call of God flies in the natural trend of our world today. The calls sounding from the fallen churches are sounding to tell us to unite, to drop our differences, to find accord. Union is the order of the day and this is apparent in almost every sphere of modern life. But God's call is the opposite: “Come out”, separate, divide, polarize. Instead of fellowshiping together, separation. Instead of forgetting our differences, cherish them if they are Biblical. Instead of unity 'n error, it must be unity only in truth. Instead of sentimental love, it must be love as a principle.

“For this is the love of God that we keep his commandments and his commandments are not grievous.” 1 John 5:3.

True love involves obedience to Christ and this is unpopular. In the end time Babylon's sins will be so evident, that to remain in Babylon will mean that one is equally guilty. To remain in Babylon means that one loves popularity more than Christ, that one loves error more than truth, that one loves tradition more than the commandments of God, that one loves the praise of men more than the praise of God.

This final call also means escape from Babylon's punishment.

"Come out of her my people that you receive not of her plagues."

The seven last plagues are for Babylon. "Therefore shall her plagues come in one day." (Verse 8) Finally the whole world will comprise Babylon, because:

"All the world wondered after the beast. All that dwell on the earth shall worship him." Revelation 13:3, 8.

"For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." Revelation 18:3.

This is why all the plagues, though not universal, must be worldwide. Verse 5 reveals the extent of Babylon's sins - "For her sins have reached unto heaven and God has remembered her iniquities."

The word "reached" means "to mass together in a great pile". The RSV says, "her sins are heaped high as heaven". This is how God regards the sins of Babylon. What further reason does one need to come out of Babylon when her sins appear like that to God. This description maybe an allusion to the Tower of Babel of Genesis 11. There are four parallels between the building of the Tower of Babel and the building of Spiritual Babylon.

1. Anciently it was a literal tower that was built. In these last days a great spiritual tower is being built.
2. The Tower of Babel was built in defiance of God. Today a great spiritual tower is being built in defiance of the true God.
3. The Tower of Babel was inspired by Lucifer. The great spiritual tower of Spiritual Babylon in the end time is inspired also by Lucifer.
4. The Tower of Babel was destroyed by the judgments of God. The great spiritual tower of Spiritual Babylon will also be destroyed by the judgments of God.

The call out of Babylon is typified in the Old Testament by the call of Lot and his family out of Sodom. There are several parallels in that experience that apply to our day.

1. The sin of Sodom was 'very grievous.' The sins of Spiritual Babylon are so grievous that "her sins have reached unto heaven".
2. God decreed the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:13). God also decrees the destruction of spiritual Babylon.
3. A remnant of believers were in Sodom. A remnant of believers are in Babylon.
4. The remnant from Sodom were protected by angels. Angels again will protect the remnant in Babylon.
5. The remnant were called out of Sodom. God calls the remnant in Babylon to come out.
6. Three angels were involved in the deliverance of Lot from Sodom. There were three calls (Genesis 19:12, 15, 17). Likewise, in the call out of Spiritual Babylon, three angels with three messages are involved in bringing out the remnant.

There were three people delivered from Sodom, Lot and his two daughters. Those who will be delivered from Spiritual Babylon will be those of the three angels' messages.

When God's people come out of Babylon, where do they go? In the end time there are finally two groups, Babylon and the Remnant. The majority and the minority. The worshippers of the Beast and the

worshippers of the Lamb. Those who have the mark of the beast and those who have the seal of God. Those who have the character of Satan and those who have the character of Christ. When the remnant in Babylon come out, they come into God's final remnant. They bring to completion the final remnant of God. This will be a repetition of the experience of the early church. At that time Jesus said,

"Other sheep I have which are not of this fold, [the early church] them also I must bring [out of the Gentiles] and they shall hear my voice [the gospel] and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." John 10:16.

There are six parallels between the early church and the final Remnant.

1. There were other sheep - the Gentiles.

Today there are other sheep.

2. Which are not of this fold, the early church.

Today there are other sheep, not of God's final remnant.

3. "Them also I must bring" into the Christian faith.

Today the remnant are to be brought out of Babylon, into the faith of the final Remnant.

4. "They shall hear my voice" in the gospel. In the end time Christ's scattered sheep will hear the voice of Christ in the special message of Revelation 18.

5. There shall be one fold" or one flock, the early Christian church. In the end there will be one remnant, the final flock of Revelation 12:17, "the remnant of her seed" on whom the dragon makes war, the remnant It which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

6. Jesus finally said of his day, "There shall be one fold and one shepherd" - himself. In the end there will be only one shepherd. No earthly leaders claiming to be divine shepherds, but the Lord Jesus Christ alone. His people shall be gathered together in a final union with Christ alone as their shepherd. This call out of Babylon completely separates the righteous from the wicked and prepares the way for the punishment of Babylon.

What is Babylon's punishment?

"God has remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you and double to her, double according to her works. In the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double." Verses 5, 6.

God recalls the crimes of Babylon in order to render just retribution. Generally he punishes according to ones works, but the degree of Babylon's punishment is to be double that which she meted out to the saints. Jeremiah declared of literal Babylon's punishment, "As she hath done, do to her." (Jeremiah 50:15.) But with spiritual Babylon it will be with double measure. One version reads, "Repay her double, mix a double draft in her cup."

"How much she hath glorified herself and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her." Verse 7.

"As she glorified herself and played the wanton." RSV.

"Mete out grief and torment to match her voluptuous pomp." NEB.

"For she said in her heart, I sit a queen and am no widow and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death mourning and famine." Verse 8.

In response to Babylon's secret boast, God makes her a widow, "death, mourning and famine".

Death probably denotes the loss of husband. Babylon's husband comprises the political rulers of the earth. Finally these will turn on her - thus, instead of "shall see no sorrow", Babylon mourns, because of the loss of her supporters.

"And famine."

As a result of the loss of those who have provided "or her, she suffers great want. This corresponds with Revelation 17:16.

"The ten horns and the beast these shall hate the whore and shall make her desolate and naked and shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire." (8)

Verse 8 declares:

It she shall be utterly burned with fire for strong is the Lord God who judges [or punishes] her".

How is Babylon burned with fire? This refers to the whore of Babylon, the religious element of Babylon, because a woman represents a church. The whore represents the religious leaders, the clergy. The burning is not the burning of the Vatican. The Vatican, in Revelation is represented by the "seat" or the "throne of the beast." Revelation 16:10.1 Babylon consists of three main parts. "Babylon was divided into three parts" (Revelation 16:19). These three parts are "the dragon, beast and the false prophet."

(Revelation 16:13.) The dragon represents "kings, rulers and governors under the brand of Anti-Christ." (9) The beast represents the Papacy. The false prophet represents the apostate Protestants allied with the civil power. On top of these three is the Euphrates (Revelation 16:12) which represents the multitudes who support Babylon around the world. They also form a part of Babylon. The portion of Babylon that is burned is the whore or the woman, for she says, "I sit a queen." This indicates that this is the religious element, the ecclesiastical section. The burning is a spiritual burning, not a literal burning. Babylon's punishment is in the plagues. There is no literal fire as such, in the plagues. How, then, do the religious leaders come to their end? They will be destroyed by their own followers. (10) This is the same as the drying up of the Euphrates, and in this chapter it is represented as spiritual fire.

"Therefore shall her plagues come in one day".

Some question the application of the year/day principle here, because verses 10, 17 and 19 speak of Babylon's punishment as coming "in one hour", not in a day or a year. We suggest that the "one hour" could apply to a particular aspect of punishment in the plagues. Notice the three statements.

"In one hour is thy judgment come." Verse 10.

"In one hour so great riches is come to naught." Verse 17.

"In one hour is she made desolate." Verse 19.

We believe that this will be fulfilled in the sixth and seventh plagues. The seven plagues altogether are poured upon the Babylonian world. This involves the whole world except the saints. In this manner we suggest, the plagues are not universal but worldwide. Nevertheless, the punishment of those comprising Babylon proper, is in the seventh plague.

"And the great city [Babylon] was divided into three parts. And great Babylon came into remembrance before God, to give to her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath."

It is in the period of the sixth and seventh plagues that the punishment of Babylon's leaders is meted out and when the riches of Babylon come to naught, and she is made desolate. (11) It appears that the seventh plague lasts a few days. If so, it could not be a literal hour nor a literal day. When one studies the purpose

of the plagues, it is quite clear that more time is required than one literal day. On this ground we hold that a symbolic day, or a literal year, is completely justified in this verse. (12)

THE CENTRAL TRIO OF SONGS

The central section of chapter 18 contains three songs or dirges. These are earthly songs sung by Babylon's three main supporters. The kings, or political rulers, the merchants, and the maritime world.

First Song

The first song is sung by the kings, or political rulers,

“And the kings of the earth who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her shall bewail her and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, standing afar off, for fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city, for in one hour is thy judgment come.” Revelation 18:9, 10.

The kings lament the suddenness of Babylon's doom. This is a symbolic picture. It is borrowed from Jeremiah's description of ancient Babylon's destruction and also Ezekiel's description of the destruction of ancient Tyre. (12) It is a symbolic picture denoting the sudden and total destruction of Spiritual Babylon.

The Second Dirge of the Central Trio

“And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buys their merchandise any more: The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and odors, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.”

“And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee...and thou shall find them no more at all. The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For in one hour so great riches is come to naught.” Verses 11-17.

The merchants of the earth wail, because by the destruction of Spiritual Babylon, their lucrative trade, by which they were enriched, is no more. This description is drawn from Ezekiel's prediction of the destruction of ancient Tyre. (13) The merchants supporting Babylon trade in thirty commodities - the same commodities as ancient Tyre. Thirty is a multiple of six (6x5) which is Babylon's number. (14)

The thirty commodities commence with gold and conclude with “the souls [persons] of men”. (Verses 12, 13.)

“This reveals how Babylon and those who are influenced by her doctrines, evaluate human beings. Their estimation is exactly the opposite to that of Heaven.

“What shall a man give in exchange for his soul? What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?” Matthew 16:26.

The Third Dirge of the Central Trio

“And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! For in one hour is she made desolate.” Verses 17-19.

This is the maritime world. This section of mankind has also been enriched by its support of spiritual Babylon. Here they are pictured bewailing the destruction of their trade. This description again is borrowed from Ezekiel's description of the destruction of ancient Tyre. (15) It is another symbolic picture denoting the complete destruction of spiritual Babylon.

Each of these three groups declare that Babylon's doom has come "in one hour." (Verses 10, 17, 19.) In Revelation 17, Babylon's supporters unite with her against the lamb and the saints, "for one hour" (Verse 12.) God's response to Babylon's attack upon the saints is, "in one hour" her punishment and desolation comes. The three uses of the term could indicate divine completeness, in God's dealing with Babylon.

THE THIRD GROUP OF SONGS - A DUO

Revelation 18:20-24; 19:1-6. These two songs declare the finality and justice of Babylon's punishment. These songs are of heavenly origin.

The First Song of the Last Duo

"Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her. And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. The voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth." Verses 20-24.

In this dramatic description, the Revelator draws from the Old Testament descriptions of four different cities. These were all destroyed for their persistent rebellion against Heaven.

1. Verses 20, 21, 24.	Babylon.	Jeremiah 51:28; Isaiah 44:23; Jeremiah 51:63,64,49.
2. Verses 22.	Jerusalem	Jeremiah 25:10.
3. Verses 22, 23.	Tyre	Ezekiel 26:13; Isaiah 23:8.
4, Verses 23.	Nineveh	Nahum 3:4, 7.

This is another symbolic picture of Babylon's eternal doom.

"Rejoice over her thou heaven for God hath avenged you on her." Verse 20.

How may saints and angels rejoice over death and destruction? "The fall of Babylon is the removal of one vast hindrance to holiness:

"Thus do all holy men, whether on earth or in heaven, joy when any giant evil is swept away." Ellicott.

"And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all." Verse 21.

The doom pronounced in this verse coincides with the doom Jesus threatened upon anyone who would cause His children to fall.

"Whoso shall offend [hurt] one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea." Matthew 18:6.

The expression "no more at all", in verses 21-23, is employed six times. Six is Babylon's number. "Like a funeral knell this expression is repeated over the departed greatness of Babylon."

Six items will never be found in Babylon anymore.

“And the voice of harpers and musicians and of pipers and trumpeters shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsmen of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee.” Verse 22

REPEATED EMPHASIS UPON BABYLON’S DESTRUCTION?

Two chapters of forty-two verses are used to describe the doleful destruction. We suggest two reasons.

A. The Babylonian system of religion is Satan’s masterpiece of deception. It has had numerous revivals throughout the four thousand years of its existence. It has frequently been overthrown but has always risen again. There appears to have been six main revivals of Babylonian Sun worship. It originated in ancient Babylon under Nimrod and Semiramis, his wife. There it finally was overthrown by Shem and the Shemites.

1. It revived and was established in Egypt under the Pharaohs.
2. It revived in Babylonia under the Assyrians and Chaldeans. After being overthrown by the Medes and Persians it was.
3. Revived in a different form by the Persians under the name of Zoroastrianism and Mithraism,
4. It was revived in Greece - expressing itself in the form of Greek philosophy, etc.
5. It revived in Imperial Rome in the form of Mithraism.
6. It revived in the Papacy under the guise of Christianity - claiming to be the true Christian church.

In Babylon’s final overthrow, six times it declares “it shall be no more at all”, indicating that Babylon and all it stands for will never revive or rise again.

THE SECRET OF BABYLON’S SUCCESS

“For by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.” Verse 23.

What is sorcery? It is from the Greek, “pharmakeia” from which we derive our word pharmacy or pharmaceutical. According to Dr. Young it means, “Enchantment with drugs”. This probably refers to the use of drugs by the pagan priests to prepare their minds for communication with the powers of the occult. There is evidence that the use of drugs in many instances is involved with the occult today. (16) By paralyzing the mental faculties, people are being manipulated by -he invisible powers of evil. Sorcery is the occult. It =s the practice of consulting and using Satanic powers. This has been the diabolical secret of Babylon’s phenomenal success through history. It is a repetition of the prediction of Revelation 16:13, 14.

“I saw three unclean spirits, like frogs, come out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet [the three sections of modern Babylon]. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather [unite] them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.” (17)

Babylon’s Guilt is Measured by Blood

“And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who were slain upon the earth.” Verse 24.

In what way will this be so? In a symbolic sense, not literally. It is the same principle enunciated by Jesus in the gospels.

“That upon you Jewish leaders may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zacharias”. Matthew 23:35.

Jerusalem did not shed all the blood spilt from Abel onwards. But Jerusalem possessed the same hateful spirit against the saints. So it is with Babylon.

3. The second reason, we suggest, for the emphasis on Babylon's destruction, is to try and convince the saints of the unseen dangers regarding Babylon. Babylon is the sworn enemy of God and His people, a continual menace to the cause of God. But it is a masterpiece of deception, therefore it is a continual threat to the church of God. While the Christian is to love all men, there are some things he must learn to watch and hate. The main one is Babylon and the wine of her doctrine. Babylon's inspirer and king is Lucifer, therefore any support of, or compromise with Babylon, is support of Lucifer and is therefore disloyalty to Christ. The general tendency through the centuries has been for God's people to compromise with Babylon. The call "to come out of Babylon" is a call that needs to be continually sounded and obeyed, especially in the end time.

THE SECOND SONG OF THE FINAL DUO

This is of heavenly origin. (Revelation 19:1-6.) The song is arranged in the form of an antiphony, i.e. responsive with two anthems and two responses.

Verses 1-3. An anthem celebrating Babylon's destruction.

"Alleluia, Salvation and glory and honor and power to the Lord our God; For true and righteous are his judgments; for he has judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and has avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up forever."

Verse 4. The response of the twenty four elders and the four cherubim.

"And the four and beasts elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia."

Verse 5. A voice calling for universal praise of God.

"And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great."

Verse 6. The response from the entire universe.

"And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters and as the voice of mighty thundering, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigns."

"After these things." Verse 1

After the destruction of Babylon, i.e. after the Second Advent. It is then that Babylon is completely destroyed with all who support her. As St. Paul declared:

"The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power." 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9.

"I heard a great voice of much people in heaven."

According to Revelation 8:1 during the events of the Second Advent there is silence in heaven". (18)
This is because all the heavenly hosts escort Christ at his return to this world and witness the final destruction of Babylon. But after the Second Advent, the heavenly hosts with the translated saints return to

heaven. The saints are the guests at the marriage supper of the Lamb (Verse 9), and this is the fulfillment of Jesus' promise.

"In my father's house are many mansions, I go and prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also." John 14:1-3.

A Three-fold Plan of Praise

"Saying Alleluia; Salvation and glory and power unto the Lord our God."

In the original the word "honor" is missing. A similar plan of praise sounded in heaven at Calvary.

"Now is come salvation and strength and power." Revelation 12:10.

At Calvary the fearful price for salvation from sin was paid. At the Second Advent salvation is concluded. The great plan to save the race has been completed.

"Christ was once offered to bear the sin of many and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Hebrews 9:28.

The Reason for the Heavenly Praise After the Second Advent?

"For true and righteous are his judgments, [punishments] for he hath judged [punished] the great whore which did corrupt the earth." Verse 2.

In what way is it righteous for God to punish? If God allowed the guilty to remain unpunished, He would be unjust. Thus the destruction of Babylon is an exhibition of God's justice.

The Reason for Babylon's Punishment

"Which did corrupt the earth with her fornication."

That is, her illicit union with the degenerate world including political powers. Here is Heaven's estimate of Babylon's influence. No matter what her appearance - she corrupts. No matter what her claims - she corrupts. No matter what she teaches - she corrupts. No matter what she performs - she corrupts. No matter what people are within her - she corrupts. This is why God calls his people out of Babylon, and destroys her.

"And hath avenged the blood of his servants."

That is, his servants who suffered under Babylon's oppression in the end-time. This is not the fulfillment of Revelation 6:9-11 because those who shed the blood of the martyrs of the Dark Ages are dead and will not rise to receive punishment until the final judgment at the end of the one thousand years of Revelation 20.

Undoubtedly, this statement alludes to "the many martyrs" before the Close of Probation, and of the saints after the Close of Probation, who will be under the threat of death, but who will be delivered. (19)

It is God who avenges, not man. This is an important principle. The believer is never to seek revenge. Why? Revenge is the expression of the sinful nature. It is satanic in its origin. Jesus' instruction was to:

"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." Matthew 5:44.

This is an utter impossibility for the unconverted person, but the Christ-centered person can do it. When he reaches this state of mind he is not far from the kingdom of God. Vengeance belongs to God alone.

"Vengeance belongs to me, I will recompense." Hebrews 10:30.

If it is satanic for man to seek revenge, how may God take vengeance? One answer to that question is that only God knows all the facts. Only He can read the heart and motives of the perpetrator, therefore only he can justly administer punishment.

“And her smoke rose up forever and ever.” Verse 3.

This expression is similar to Revelation 14:11. “The smoke of their torment rose up forever.”

It is a symbolic expression drawn from Isaiah’s description of the destruction of Edom.

“It shall not be quenched night nor day, the smoke thereof shall go up forever.” Isaiah 34:10.

It denotes everlasting destruction.

This final song of Revelation 19:1-6 is full of threes

a. There are three groups -

1. Much people Verse 1
2. Four and twenty elders Verse 4
3. “All his servants and you that fear him, small and great”

b. Three voices – Verses 5, 6

- c. The third voice of verse 6 expresses itself in three ways -
1. Great multitude
 2. Many waters
 3. Mighty thundering

d. Three items of praise in verse 1

1. Salvation
2. Glory
3. Power [Honor: not in original]

Three represents Divine Completion. Thus this final song speaks of:

1. The completion of the reign of evil.
2. The restoration of the saints.
3. The destruction of the Mystery of Iniquity.
4. The conclusion of the Plan of Salvation

“Alleluia, for the Lord God reigns.” Verse 6.

THE SEVEN SONGS CONCERNING BABYLON’S DESIRIJCIZON

Heaven Inspired Verses 1-3; Verses 4-8.

Reason for Babylon’s Destruction.

Source of Babylon’s Destruction.

Morally and spiritually corrupt. Demon possessed. Enormous guilt.

Earth Inspired Verses 9-10; 11-17; 17-19

Manner of Babylon’s Destruction.

Totality of Babylon’s Destruction.

Three groups lament “in one hour” denoting the suddenness of destruction.

Heaven Inspired Verses 20-24; 19:1-6.

Duration of Babylon's Destruction.

Justice of Babylon's Destruction.

Six times "no more at all". Babylon will never revive.

Universal celebration of God's justice in destroying Babylon

APPENDIX 1

How The Imagery Of The Old Testament Is Used In Revelation 18.

1.

Revelation 18:1 "The earth was lightened with his glory."

Ezekiel 43:2 "The earth shined with his glory."

2.

Revelation 18:2 "Babylon is fallen, is fallen."

Isaiah 21:9 "Babylon is fallen is fallen."

3.

Revelation 18:2 "Is became the habitation of devils, the hold of every foul spirit and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird."

Isaiah 13:21 "Wild beasts shall lie there-and satyrs [demons] shall dance there."

Isaiah 34:15 "There shall the vulture also be gathered with his mate."

Jeremiah 51:37 "Babylon shall become heaps, a dwelling place for dragons."

4.

Revelation 18:3 "For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."

Jeremiah 51:7 "The nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad."

5.

Revelation 18:3 "The merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies."

Ezekiel 27:33 "Then thy wares went forth out of the seas, thou filled many people; thou didst enrich the kings of the earth with the multitude of thy riches and of thy merchandise."

6.

Revelation 18:4 "I heard another voice from heaven saying, Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins and that ye receive not of her plagues."

Isaiah 48:20 "Go ye forth out of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans."

Jeremiah 50:8 "Remove out of the midst of Babylon"

Jeremiah 51:6 "Flee out of the midst of Babylon and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the Lord's vengeance, he will render to her a reward."

7.

Revelation 18:4 "Her plagues."

Jeremiah 51:45 "my people go ye out of the midst of her and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the Lord."

Jeremiah 50:13 "Everyone that goes by Babylon shall hiss at her plagues."

8.

Revelation 18:5 "For her sins have reached unto heaven and God hath remembered her iniquities."

Jeremiah 51:9 "For her judgment reaches unto heaven, and is lifted up, even to the skies."

9.

Revelation 18:6 “Reward her even as she rewarded you, double to her double, according to her works in the cup which she has filled, fill to her double.”

Jeremiah 50:15 “Take vengeance upon her; as she hath done, do to her.”

Jeremiah 50:59 According to all that she hath done, do to her.”

Isaiah 51:49 “As Babylon has caused the slain of Israel to fall, so at Babylon shall fall the slain of all the earth.” [Margin: country]

10.

Revelation 18:7 “Now much she hath glorified herself.”

Ezekiel 28:2-7 “Say to the prince of Tyrus because your heart was lifted up and you have said, ‘I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man and not God, though thou set your heart as the heart of God.’”

11.

Revelation 18:7 “And lived deliciously or luxuriously.”

Isaiah 47:8 “Thou [Babylon] that art given to pleasures, that dwells carelessly.”

12.

Revelation 18:7 “For she said in her heart I sit a queen and am no widow and shall see no sorrow.”

Isaiah 47:7, 8 “I shall be a lady forever. I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children.”

13.

Revelation 18:8 “Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, mourning and famine.”

Isaiah 47:9 “These things shall come to thee in a moment, in one day. The loss of children and widow hood.”

14.

Revelation 18:8 “She shall be utterly burned with fire.”

Isaiah 47:14 “The fire shall burn them; they shall not be able to deliver themselves from the power of the flame.”

15.

Revelation 18:8 “For strong is the Lord God who judges her.”

Jeremiah 50:34 “Their Redeemer is strong and he shall disquiet [trouble] the inhabitants of Babylon.”

16.

Revelation 18:9 “The kings of the earth shall bewail her and lament for her.”

Jeremiah 50:46 “At the noise of the taking of Babylon the earth is moved and the cry is heard among the nations.”

Jeremiah 51:8 “Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed, howl for her.”

17.

Revelation 18:10 “Saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon that mighty city for in one hour is thy judgment come.”

Ezekiel 26:16, 17 “All the princes shall take up a lamentation for thee and say. How art thou destroyed the renowned city which was strong in the sea. Their kings shall be sore afraid they shall be troubled.”

18.

Revelation 18:11-21 Merchants of land and sea lament the destruction of Babylon.

Ezekiel 27:27-36 Merchants of land and sea lament the destruction of Tyre.

19.

Revelation 18:18 “What city is like unto this great city.”

Ezekiel 27:32 “What city is like Tyrus like the destroyed in the midst of the sea.”

20.

Revelation 18:13 Babylon trades in the souls of men.
Ezekiel 27:13 Tyre “they traded in the persons of men.”

21.

Revelation 18:19 “They cast dust an their heads.”
Ezekiel 27:30 “They cast dust upon their heads.”

22.

Revelation 18:19 “They cried, weeping and wailing.”
Ezekiel 27:31 “They shall weep for thee with bitterness of heart.”

23.

Revelation 18:12 Babylon’s merchants trade in 30 items, the same commodities as Tyre. (6 X 5)
Tyre trades in 36 items. (6 X 6)

24.

Revelation 18:20 “Rejoice over her, thou heaven and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God bath avenged you on her.”
Jeremiah 51:48 “The heaven and the earth and all that is therein shall sing for Babylon: for the spoilers shall come to her from the north, said the Lord”
Isaiah 44:23 “Sing O ye heavens. Shout ye earth, break forth into singing, for the Lord has redeemed Jacob.”

25.

Revelation 18:21 “A mighty angel took up a stone like a giant millstone and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down and shall be found no more at all.”
Jeremiah 51:43-64 “Thou shall bind a stone to it [the book] and cast it into the midst of Euphrates: and thou shall say, ‘Thus shall Babylon sink and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her.’”

26.

Revelation 18:22 “And the voice of harpers and musicians and of pipers and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsmen shall be found any more at all in thee and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee.”
Jeremiah 25:10 “I will take from thee [Judah and surrounding nations] the voice of mirth. The voice of the bridegroom. The bride, the sound of millstones and the light of the candle.”

27.

Revelation 18:23 “For thy merchants were the great men of the earth.”
Isaiah 23:8 “Tyre the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers [merchants] are the honorable of the earth.”

28.

Revelation 18:23 “For by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.”
Nahum 3:4 “The well-favored harlot [Nineveh, Verse 7], the mistress of witchcrafts, that sells nations through her whoredom, and families through her witchcrafts.”

29.

Revelation 18:14 “In her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.
Jeremiah 51:49 “As Babylon has caused the slain of Israel to fall the slain of all the earth.” [Or land of Babylon].

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