COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE

Revelation 18:1-8

Key Verse: 18:4

“Then I heard another voice from heaven say: ‘Come out of her, my people, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues.’”

We return to our study of Revelation, now to chapter 18. As we learned, chapters 17 and 18 are not written chronologically after chapter 16, which is about the last judgment of seven bowls with the destruction of Babylon the Great and the mention of the Armageddon battle. Chapters 17 and 18 are an insertion, which reiterates the destruction of Babylon in detail. Chapter 17 focuses on the religious side of Babylon the great and its destruction, and chapter 18, the political and commercial side of the kingdom and its destruction. We can say that Chapter 17 describes the final form of world religion, and chapter 18, the final form of world government. In chapter 17 we saw the end of the world religious system personified as a great prostitute by the beast and its subkings. Today we will study chapter 18:1-8, with the title, “Come out of her, my people.” In the last lesson, we will study the rest of chapter 18, the total destruction of political and economic kingdom of Babylon the great, the satanic kingdom of the world.

**First, judgment pronounced (1-4).** Verse 1 says, “After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven. He has great authority, and the earth was illuminated by his splendour.” According to 15:10, at the fifth bowl judgment which was poured on the throne of the beast, his kingdom was plunged into darkness. We can imagine that the earth had been made dark by the judgment of God. Now into the darkness comes a bright light, and all the world will look at that bright light, and they will realize that it is an angel with great authority.

In that illumination of that bright light on the earth, the angel shouted with a mighty voice: “Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great! She has become a home for demons and a haunt for every evil spirit, a haunt for every unclean and detestable bird.” In 14:8 God gave a warning message through angel, “Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great, which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries.” Now the warning became a reality: “Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great.” It is written two times in Revelation and had been prophesied in Isaiah 21:9, “…Babylon has fallen, has fallen!..” All these assure the destruction of the kingdom. This was written in 16:19 at the seventh bowl judgment, “…God remembered Babylon the Great and gave her the cup filled with the wine of the fury of his wrath.”

It says, “She has become a home for demons and a haunt for every evil spirit, a haunt for every unclean and detestable bird.” Certain birds were considered unclean according to the Mosaic Law (Lev. 11:13-19). In Scripture, birds—and especially unclean birds—often denote evil (Isa. 13:21: Zec. 5:9; Mt. 13:4, 19). So here we see the triple emphasis of Babylon becoming a Satanic kingdom, a kingdom of demons and every evil spirit. In this we can conjecture the condition of Babylon. The people are under the power of demons, destructive and deceptive, turning away from God. The evil spirits’ work is rampant.

Then verse 3 says, “For all the nations have drunk the maddening wine of her adulteries. The kings of the earth committed adultery with her, and the merchants of the earth grew rich from her excessive luxuries.” Here, adultery is precisely fornication. And this is a spiritual adultery or fornication. The kings of the earth are unbelieving denying the only true God. They rule and overrule people as if there is no God. There is no fear of God in their hearts. As the merchants of the earth grew rich, materialism is spread. People have become the love of money (2 Tim. 3:1-2).

The whole world is in a materialistic drunken stupor. The whole world is drunk with riches, drunk with lust, drunk with luxury, drunk with its merchandising, its materialism. All the merchants who realize if they want to be successful, they’ve got to globally market their products. Everybody gets involved; everybody is prostituted to this satanic Antichrist world system. We will think more of it in the next lesson, one-world global economy, built on lust for luxury, materialism and its destruction.

In this part, we should not forget one clear message of Revelation, “Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great.”

**Second, judgment avoided (5-6).** Now verse 4 says, “Then I heard another voice from heaven say: ‘Come out of her, my people, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues.’” Surely, this is the voice of God. What an appeal! This is like a voice of a father or mother to call his or her child to come out of deathly flames of fires. Babylon was on the verge of a complete destruction in the terrible plagues described in Revelation. Seven seal judgments, seven trumpet judgments and seven bowl judgments were all plagues. Particularly, the seven bowl judgments were last plagues, most severe. As we studied, when the first bowl was poured out, ugly and painful sores broke out of the people. At the four bowl, the sun was given power to scorch people with fire. They were seared by the intense heat. God did not want his people to suffer in such a way and finally to be plunged into eternal punishment.

In the Old Testament, God’s people of Israel were in the bondage of Pharaoh in the land of slavery of Egypt. God’s constant message to Pharaoh was “Let my people go so that they may worship me.” God indeed freed his people from the bondage of Pharaoh with his mighty power. When Jesus was conceived in Mary through the Holy Spirit, the message of an angel of the Lord to Joseph was “…he will save his people from their sins.” Then Jesus died on the cross, shedding his blood for the forgiveness of the sins of his people, and his rose again, confirming his atoning death different from all other deaths of men sinners. This gospel of salvation has been preached throughout two millennia. God called and raised his servants to save his people in each generation. Even in the tribulation time, God raised 144,000, faithful and dedicated servants from the twelve tribes of Israel, and sent two powerful witnesses whose death and resurrection the whole world watched. God then let an angel flying in midair proclaim the eternal gospel, saying in a loud voice, “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water” (14:6-7). Then a second angel followed and said, “Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great, which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries” (14:8) A third angel followed them and said in a loud voice: “If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, he, too, will drink of the wine of God’s fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment rises forever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, for anyone who receives the mark of his name” (14:9-11).

Now just before the complete destruction of Babylon, God appeals to his people, “Come out of her, my people.” Any believers, any who have been saved during this time out of Israel or out of the Gentile nations, any of those people who are still a part of this world system, anybody who’s associated with this system – “Come out that you may not participate in her sins and that you may not receive of her plagues.”

By the way, the prophets of old had said the same thing to the people leaving Babylon before the judgment fell. [Isaiah said in 48:20](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Isa%2048.20) says, “Leave Babylon! Flee from the Babylonians!...” Jeremiah said in 50:8, “Flee out of Babylon; leave the land of the Babylonians…”, in 51:6, “Flee from Babylon! Run for your lives!...” and 51:45, “Come out of her, my people! Run for your lives!...” (Jer. 51:45). I believe this looks historically at the destruction of Babylon, but looks prophetically at the end as well.

Here a voice from heave said, “Come out of her, my people, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues.” The voice continues, “for her sins are piled up to heaven, and God has remembered her crimes.” The word “piled” means literally “glued together,” or “welded together.” Her sins have collected themselves and they have piled themselves up to heaven. The ancient Tower of Babel didn’t reach the heaven, but the sins of Babylon will. And God has remembered her crimes, which means horrible punishment would follow.

God’s people are not to be seduced by the world. They should not be seduced by its sin in any age and in every age, and particularly in the last age. Wherever there is idolatry, prostitution, pride, complacency, reliance on wealth, indulgence and pleasure, violence, there is Babylon. And God will judge. God wants his people to avoid his judgment.

“Come out of her, my people.” Let’s think more about its meaning to us. We should know in what time we are living and where the world is going. This week I listened to the briefing of Albert Mohler (president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary). Two articles were really shocking to me. One is titled “U.S. House of Representatives Adopts Rule Banning Gender-Specific Language.” According to Albert Mohler what is found in the House Resolution is this: "In clause 8(c)(3) of rule XXIII, strike, 'father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, first cousin, nephew, niece, husband, wife, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, step-father, step-mother, step-son, step-daughter, step-brother, step-sister, half-brother, half sister, grandson or granddaughter,' and insert 'parent, child, sibling, parent's sibling, first cousin, sibling's child, spouse, parent-in-law, child-in-law, sibling-in-law, step-parent, step-child, step-sibling, half-sibling or grandchild.'" It is now the rule of the United States House of Representatives.

One more thing is that the New England Journal of Medicine, one of the most respected medical journals in all of modern medicine, dropped an article titled "Failed Assignments, Rethinking Sex Designations on Birth Certificates." Three doctors conspired to write the article: Vadim Shteyler, Jessica Clarke and Eli Adashi. Their argument is that birth certificates should no longer, in the information that would be publicly available, indicate whether or not the baby is male or female, a boy or a girl.

What is going on in our time? It’s truly horrible and unthinkable. The intellectual and powerful speak and write such things. These are directly against God and his creation truth. Truly the mind of sinful man is death. The whole world is going astray by a deceiver of the entire world as Revelation 12:9 says. In this global deception, the world seems to be going farther and farther to the left. God’s creation truth is that he made male and female (Ge. 1:27) and Jesus confirmed this truth of God’s creation (Mt. 19:4). As for us, God’s creation, Christ’s Jesus’ death and resurrection and his coming again are the truth. Truly in this world a fierce battle is going on between God and Satan. This battle is between the truth and the lie. It is so from the Garden of Eden, and through all generations, and it will be most fierce as the end of this world is coming closer.

God’s message is “Come out of her, my people.” Certainly, it does not mean to us now, “Leave this world.” To some there may be a time for people to leave physically, as Jesus said, “Let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house. Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak.” Yet, we need such an attitude with a sense of urgency. Jesus said in his high priestly prayer, “My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it” (Jn. 17:15-16). As Jesus prayed, we are not to get out of the world, yet we should know that we are not of the world. Though we should stay in the world, where we stand and sit is significant. Psalm 1:1 says, “Blesses is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers.” Furthermore, how should we live in this world actively? We should not sink in Babylonian culture. We should remember that Christ Jesus gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present age (Gal. 1:4). God rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves (Col. 1:13). Paul said in Romans 12:2, “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” He also said in Ephesians 5:15-16, “Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise, but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.” And Paul said 2 Timothy 4:7, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” We should keep the life of faith to the end, however the world changes.

**Third, judgment defined (6-8).** Verse 6 says, “Give back to her as she has given; pay her back double for what she has done. Mix her a double portion from her own cup.” In the Bible “double” means “full”, “complete.” For example, Isaiah 40:1-2 says, “Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD’s hand double for all her sins.” And [Jeremiah 16:18](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Jer%2016.18) says, “I will repay them double for their wickedness and their sin, because they have defiled my land with the lifeless forms of their vile images and have filled my inheritance with their detestable idols.” There will be no compromise for God’s judgment. His judgment will be full and complete, triply stressed.

Verse 7 says, “Give her as much torture and grief as the glory and luxury she gave herself.” In other translation, “To the extent that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, to the same extent give her…” (NASB). For self-glory and self-gratification, give them what they deserve. To that same degree of her sin of self-glory and self-gratification, give her torture and grief.

Verse 7 continues, “In her heart she boasts, ‘I sit as queen; I am not a widow, and I will never mourn.” Besides her self-glorification and self-gratification is her self-sufficiency, an over-estimation of her power. By the way, this boast is taken directly out of Isaiah chapter 47: in verse 7, “You said, ‘I will continue forever—the eternal queen!” and in verse 8, “…saying to yourself, ‘I am, and there is none besides me. I will never be a widow…” Self-sufficiency or self-exaltation is characterized by pride of saying, “I am invincible.” God hates pride. He will not tolerate it.

Verse 8 says, “Therefore in one day her plagues will overtake her; death, mourning and famine. She will be consumed by fire...” “In one day”, this is not progressive. It will be instant. It doesn’t necessarily limit to a 24-hour day, but in one great moment of eschatological history, in one final explosion, rapid-fire judgment will fall. Daniel 5 says that Babylon of old fell literally in one day. We remember a sudden handwriting on the wall, “MENE, MENE, TEKEL, PARSIN”, “Mene” meaning, “God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end”, “Tekel”, “You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting, and “Peres”, “Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.” Then it says in verses 30 and 31, “That very night Belshazzar, king of the Babylonians, was slain, and Darius the Mede took over the kingdom…” In the same way, sudden destruction will come upon Babylon the Great.

Verse 8 continues, “for mighty is the Lord God who judges her.” The system of the Antichrist may be strong; the Lord is stronger. No matter how powerful the Antichrist is, no matter how well-conceived and defended his worldwide system is, no matter how the forces of hell and earth, demons and men have armed themselves, they are no match for the power of God. He is strong, and He comes as judge.

May we listen to his word, “Come out of her, my people.”