

# THE FALL OF BABYLON

## Summary and Historical Background

Chapters 17-18 explain the reason why God poured out His wrath on Babylon. These chapters will focus on the spiritual, commercial and political corruption of Babylon. The Bible describes Babylon as the birthplace of idolatrous worship and the crown of Gentile power. It had its origin under the rebellious influence of Nimrod (Gen. 10:9-10). Its religious aspect began with the building the tower of Babel, which was energized by idolatry (Gen. 11:1-9). This idolatrous rebellion against God has taken on different forms in various religions of many countries until the present day. Political Babylon reached its greatest political glory in the days of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 1-4). God gave him a dream of an image symbolizing world empires and he was the head of gold (Dan 2). He was regarded by the late Saddam Hussein of Iraq (Babylon) as the model for his leadership.

Chapter 17 reveals the religion of Babylon and its hostility toward Israel, God's chosen people. It is depicted as the Mother of Harlots, and Abominations of the Earth. It is called a harlot because it is unfaithful to God and promotes the worship of demons by means of idols. It is the source of many, if not all, false religions. One of the angels that poured out a bowl of wrath on Antichrist's kingdom went to John to reveal the harlot's influence on Antichrist's government as it rose to great power in the first half of the Tribulation. The angel also revealed the harlot's sudden fall from power around the middle of the Tribulation. The political landscape of Antichrist will change in the middle of the Tribulation and she will have outlived her usefulness to him. He will have her killed so all worship is directed to him and to Satan (17:16-17; cf. 13:4-5, 12, 15). No other religion will be tolerated.

Chapter 18 reveals the political and the commercial impact of Babylon on the world when Antichrist is the only god for them to worship. Antichrist will make the city of Babylon his capital as the center for the political and commercial control of the world. This will happen at the middle of the Tribulation after he is raised from the dead and Satan has given him his authority to govern the world for him. Antichrist will make Jerusalem the center for worship of him where an idol of him will be made bearing his image and set up in the court of God's temple where all people will be commanded to worship him. This will be done in God's temple to mock God. Those who worship him will be given a mark on their head or hand which will allow them to buy and sell products of all kinds. Those who do not worship him at his image will be killed. This will allow him to control the economy of the world. It will affect kings, merchants, ship owners and sailors. All those who worship Antichrist will find it very profitable during the last half of the Tribulation until Christ comes from Heaven. Then Christ will destroy Babylon and completely wipe it off of the face of the earth so nothing of it will remain. Antichrist and the False will be cast into the Lake of Fire. Then Christ will establish His Kingdom on the earth for 1000 years.

Scholars once believed Babylon was a code name for Rome, but many have begun to believe that this Babylon is the literal ancient city on the Euphrates River, which is in the country now called Iraq. The city of Babylon will need to be rebuilt to be the capital of Antichrist, but that could begin before he becomes the world dictator.

The fall of Babylon is mentioned twice in these two chapters. The fall of Babylon as an ecumenical religious harlot comes first (Rev 17:16-18), and then the fall of Babylon as the capital of the world 3½ years later (cf 13:3-17; 18:2, 8). It is significant to notice that both aspects of Babylon have the same things said of them. Both are called Babylon the great (17:5; 18:2); both are called a great city (17:18; 18:10, 16, 18, 19, 21); both are charged with fornication (17:2, 4; 18:3); both wear the ostentatious clothing of luxurious living (17:4; 18:16); both are guilty of shedding the blood of God's people (17:6; 18:24); both will suffer total destruction (17:16; 18:17, 19); and both will be burned by fire (17:16; 18:8, 9,

18). The differences are the times of their destruction (middle of Tribulation vs. end of Tribulation) and their religious community (many religions vs. one religion). These two chapters should be studied in connection with Old Testament prophecies of this city and country, both of which have the same name (cf Isa. 13:19-20; 21:9; Jer. 50-51).

## **I. Destruction of Religious Babylon – 17:1-18**

### **A. Her Defilement Described – 17:1-7**

#### **1. Invitation to John – 17:1-2**

17:1 – After John saw in a vision the fall of Babylon under the seven bowls of wrath, one of the angels that poured out the bowls of wrath on Antichrist's kingdom comes to him and offers to show him the judgment of the great harlot. The angel offers to give John a better perspective for this horrific judgment on Babylon. The angel first speaks about the religious aspect of Babylon and refers to it as a great harlot. She is called great because she demonstrates great power over the ten European kings before and during the first half of the Tribulation when she unites them under the leadership of Antichrist. She is depicted as Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots, and Abominations of the Earth. This dates her origin to the time of Nimrod (Gen 10-11), when he built the tower of Babylon to worship the sun, moon and stars of the heavens. The great harlot of Antichrist's time is the same harlot as the one in Nimrod's time. The word, "Abominations of the Earth" refers to demon worship and indicates Babylon the Great and her daughter harlots are idolaters and worship demons. They are called harlots because they reject the worship of their Creator for the worship of His creation. This is done most often through idols. The angel will show John the affiliation of the great harlot with Antichrist, who is called the beast.

Chapter 17 reveals the judgment of the harlot. It is not unusual in Scripture to find a corrupt woman symbolizing a false religion. Gomer, Hosea's unfaithful wife, symbolized Israel's unfaithfulness to God. Jezebel, Ahab's wife, symbolized the idol worship of a false teacher in the church at Thyatira (Rev. 2:20). Zechariah was given a vision of a wicked woman that symbolized a religion to be established in Shinar (Zech 5:5-11). On the other hand, a chaste virgin symbolizes the Church of Jesus Christ (Rev. 21:9; 19:7-8; 2 Cor. 11:2). A woman symbolized Israel when she brought Jesus Christ into the world and when she will flee into the wilderness to be protected by God from Satan (Rev 12:1-6, 13-17). In this chapter the harlot represents the ecumenical idolaters in a religious system that supports Antichrist during the first half of the Tribulation. The Greek word translated, "whore" or "harlot," is derived from the same Greek word, *pornas*, that is found in pornography. God will judge this harlot for her unfaithfulness to Him.

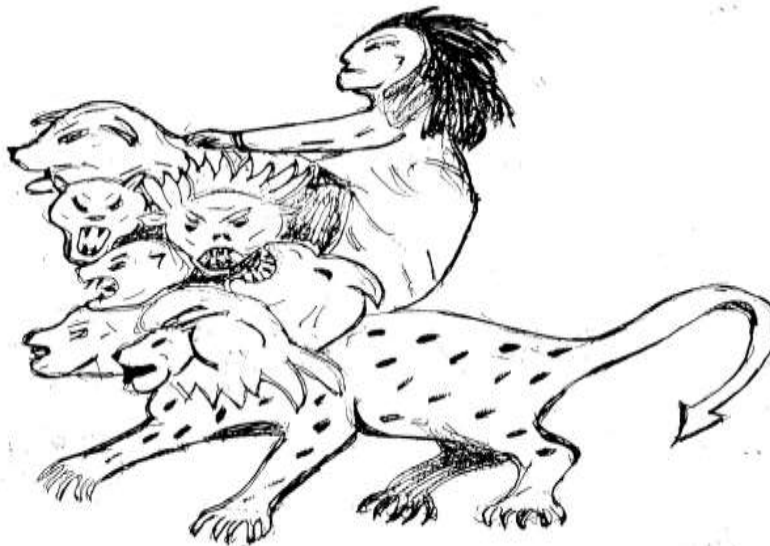
This harlot sits upon, or beside, many waters, which refers to many peoples and nations over which she will have a powerful influence (17:1, 15). Antichrist will be strongly influenced by the power of this harlot (idolatrous religion) that is able to unite the diverse elements of the ten European kings that he will control. This diversity among the kings is seen in the feet of the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, which was made of "clay and iron" (cf. Dan 2:41-43). This ecumenical religious body will allow Antichrist to bring these diverse nations together into a political force that will enable him to conquer many nations during the first 3½ years of the Tribulation.

17:2 – The ten European kings will embrace the harlot's religion with her powers to solve problems that divide them. Her powers come from demons and not from God. God considers it spiritual fornication when these nations reject Him and His Word and accept the harlot and her word. At first the political savvy of the harlot to bring these nations together and her deceptive message about God will charm the leaders with her ability to get things accomplished. She will recognize the traditions of all false religions. She will speak about God in a broad sense that offends no one. She will deceive the people with pious words and they will think all is well.

## 2. Vision of the Woman – 17:3-7

### a. Her Power – 17:3

17:3 – John is carried away by this angel to the wilderness in a prophetic vision to see a woman sitting on a scarlet beast with seven heads and ten horns, which refers to the beast at the beginning of the Tribulation. The seventh head and the ten horns refer to the revived Roman Empire led by Antichrist and his ten kings (17:12-13). The woman's seat on the beast shows her powerful position in the affairs of the beast. The beast is full of blasphemous names, which indicates his total opposition to God and his utmost confidence in the woman. The seven heads refer to the seven empires that have one thing in common; all of them at one time despised Israel and wanted to destroy her. Antichrist will be the most aggressive in his attempt to destroy Israel. The woman sitting on the beast appears to have a double influence on Antichrist. First, her demonic powers will hold the ten-nation confederacy together. This will enable Antichrist to use its unified strength to conquer many nations. Second, her political power in Antichrist's government is like that of a church over the state.



### b. Her Attire – 17:4

17:4 – The costly attire of this religious body is prominent. Materialism takes the place of spiritual truth. She displays the wealth gained by her prostitution with the nations. “Purple” symbolizes her royal position in the government. “Scarlet” symbolizes her attractiveness to the world. The “golden cup” in her hand is a chalice used for a religious sacrament, but it is full of wickedness. It does not represent the blessed shed blood of Christ (1 Cor 11:12ff), but rather the filth of her fornication with ungodly nations and idols. It is an abomination. At the end of the Tribulation, political Babylon will be given the cup of the fierceness of God's wrath (16:19).

### c. Her Name – 17:5

17:5 – “Mystery” is a description of the woman, not her name. In the Bible “mystery” signifies a spiritual truth previously unknown but now divinely revealed. The true Church is a “mystery,” because she was unknown in Old Testament times, but was divinely revealed in the New Testament (Eph. 5:32). The religion represented by this woman was a “mystery,” because her ungodly character had been hidden, but now it is divinely revealed. She is a spiritual harlot.

The harlot is called “Babylon,” because her idolatrous system of religion originated in the city of Babylon

(Gen 10-11). She is called Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth. Babel actually means confusion (Gen. 11:19). The confusion of tongues happened there, but confusion about God's nature also happened there. God was depicted as an idol, but God is spirit and cannot be depicted by an idol. An idol is a lie about God. When idolatry was introduced at the tower of Babel, it caused great confusion about God and it still does.

Religious literature reveals that Semiramis (the queen of heaven and the wife of Nimrod) began a number of secret religious rituals. To cover up her fornication, ancient literature claims that she had a miraculous conception and bore Tammuz, who was to be the savior of his people. From this sensual beginning one of the centerpieces of this religion was temple prostitution and was known as a fertility cult. If a man wanted his god to make his flocks, herds and crops to be fertile, he had to stimulate his god into action by committing an act of fornication with a temple priestess. This would bring the fertility that he desired. The Old Testament exposes the wickedness of this religion (Ezek. 8:14; Jer. 7:18; 44:17-19, 25; Zech. 5:5-11). These religions were a menace to Israel and eventually sent her into captivity in Babylon during the days of Jeremiah, Daniel and Ezekiel. God demands separation from all such religious corruption. Separation from uncleanness and idolatry is necessary for God's blessing (cf. 2 Cor. 7:1).

#### **d. Her Condemnation – 17:6-7**

17:6 – John saw the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints and of the martyrs of Jesus. The absolute wickedness and savagery of this religious system during the Tribulation is seen in her unrestrained slaughter of true believers. Nothing is more cruel and vicious against true religion than an apostate religion. This atrocity caused John to wonder with amazement (literally, to “be astonished”).

17:7 – The angel recognized John's astonishment and indicated he would explain the mystery of the woman and the beast with seven heads and ten horns.

### **B. Her Destroyers Defined – 17:8-18**

**1. Their identity – 17:8-13** – The angel is going to reveal the mystery of the beast and the ten horns first and then the woman.

17:8 – The beast is the mastermind behind the destruction of the harlot. He is called a beast because he has a brutal nature like that of a beast, ready to kill (cf. 6:8). This is Antichrist. John is told that he was, is not and shall ascend from the abyss. He was alive, but was killed with the sword near the middle of the Tribulation (13:14), after which he will rise from the abyss to be alive for the next 3½ years (cf. 17:11; 11:7; 13:3, 12). Those who dwell on the earth (unsaved people) will be amazed to see Antichrist brought back to life and once more ruling on the earth!! However, he will not rule for long. He will go into perdition (cf v 11). Christ will cast him alive into the Lake of Fire at the end of the Tribulation.

17:9-10 – Only those who are spiritually sensitive to the Spirit of God and know His Word will be able to understand the symbolism of this chapter (cf 1 Cor. 2:10-14). The seven heads are seven mountains. Mountains often are symbolic of kingdoms in the Bible and often include prominent kings in their kingdom as it does here. John is speaking of seven successive imperial governments, which are the heads of the scarlet colored beast on which the harlot is riding. These are Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome (of John's day), and the future phase of Rome (in Antichrist's day). When John was writing, five had fallen (Egypt through Greece), one still was (Rome) and the other had not yet come (the final phase of Rome; Antichrist's kingdom). The final phase of the Roman Empire will last only a short time before it comes to its end. These seven kingdoms have attacked Israel at one time or another, and on a couple of occasions, they almost annihilated Israel.

17:11 – Antichrist's kingdom is the seventh head on the scarlet beast during the first half of the

Tribulation; this is when he was. Then he was killed about the middle of the Tribulation; this is when he is not. When he rises from the abyss, Satan gives him his power, his throne and great authority (13:2); this is when he is. At this time he becomes the eighth kingdom, but is of the seven. As the eighth kingdom, he becomes the ruler of the world. He will be possessed by the dragon and have his power. He will break his seven-year covenant with Israel and will seek to destroy her (12:17). He will rule the world for the final 42 months of the Tribulation and then he will be taken by Christ in the Battle of Armageddon and cast into the Lake of Fire.

17:12 – The ten horns that John saw on the seventh head of the dragon are ten kings (cf. Dan. 7:23-24). These ten kings will rule simultaneously under the authority of Antichrist during the end of the Tribulation. Before the Tribulation begins, Antichrist will subdue three of these kings (horns) in his rise to power and then all ten will become allies with him (Dan 7:7-8, 20, 24).

17:13 – The ten kings will give their spiritual allegiance to the beast (Antichrist) at the middle of the Tribulation when they worship him at his image and receive him as their god. They will be permitted by God to rule for one hour with Antichrist, that is, for a short season.

## **2. Their purpose – 17:14-18**

### **a. To make war with the Lamb – 17:14**

17:14 – The ten kings and Antichrist will make war against Christ (the Lamb). They also will seek to destroy Jerusalem during the Battle of Armageddon. This appears to be the final battle of the Tribulation. It will be fought in the Valley of Jehoshaphat outside the walls of Jerusalem (Joel 3:11ff; Rev. 19:17ff). Christ is victorious in that battle; He is the Lord of lords and the King of kings. Church believers that come with Christ will fight with Him in this battle (cf 2:26-27). They are the called, chosen and faithful.

### **b. To destroy the harlot – 17:15-18**

17:15 – Now the angel will reveal the mystery of the woman that sits on the waters (17:1). The waters are interpreted as peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues (cf. Isa 8:7; Jer 47:2).

17:16 – The ten kings and Antichrist shall hate the harlot (ecumenical “church”) and they will take away her wealth, remove her dignity, strip away her power and annihilate her. Antichrist will not need the help of the harlot “church” any longer. He has the power of Satan. The people will worship him directly and will no longer need a “church.” The False Prophet will make an image of Antichrist and instruct all the people of the world to worship him as god (Dan. 11:36-39; Rev 13:11-17). Satan will be worshipped with Antichrist because he is the power that supports Antichrist (13:4ff). Now Satan will get the desire of his heart, since he will have the worship of men from most of the world (Isa. 14:12-14; Rev. 13:4). The worship of Satan and Antichrist will continue for forty-two months during the last half of the Tribulation (see notes 13:3-5). However, this is the same time that Christ breaks the seventh seal so the trumpet and bowl judgments devastate Antichrist’s kingdom.

17:17 – Seeing that these ten kings have freely determined to worship and serve Antichrist, God puts it in their hearts to do the things that will fulfill his purposes. They do not know it, but their work with Antichrist will actually accomplish God’s program so that His words are fulfilled.

17:18 – The woman that John saw represents that great city that reigned over the kings of the earth. She is the harlot that demonically influenced the kings of the earth to oppose God. She is the religious Babylon that Antichrist relied on to unite the ten kings into a powerful force to subdue other nations. She is the harlot that is now stripped of all power, discarded like a filthy rag and burned since she is no longer useful. This woman is identified with the city of Babylon due to her political powers, but she is replaced by satanic powers that will govern Babylon.



## **II. Destruction of Political Babylon – 18:1-24**

### **A. Her Destruction Deserved – 18:1-8**

#### **1. Announcement of Judgment – 18:1-3**

18:1 – After the ten kings destroyed the harlot, depicting religious Babylon (17:16), John sees another angel with great authority and glorious appearance coming down from Heaven. This angel is similar in authority and glory to the angel in chapter 10. From the context of chapter 18, he comes near the end of the Tribulation, more than three years after the ten kings destroyed the harlot at mid-Tribulation. He apparently is coming to announce a subsequent message about Babylon.

The political aspect of Babylon and her economy is discussed in this chapter, but it will have a powerful religious aspect to it that was revealed in 13:11-17. The ability to do business will depend on a person's worship of Antichrist before his image in Jerusalem. Antichrist makes Jerusalem the place for the worship of his image in the temple court of God to show his contempt for the worship of God in Jerusalem. Everyone must worship Antichrist's image before they can do business anywhere in the world.

This chapter is about Babylon during the final 3½ years of the Tribulation. The antitype to his end-time kingdom is Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom during the life of Daniel (Dan. 1-4). He had absolute power as Babylon's king and had abundant riches from his conquest of several nations. Like Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon, Antichrist's Babylon will be the political and economical capital of the world.

18:2 – The angel cries out with a loud voice and repeats his announcement twice that Babylon is fallen. This is not the fall of Babylon, represented by the great harlot. That aspect of Babylon's fall was done earlier by the ten kings. This fall of Babylon refers to the fall of Antichrist's capital, the political and economical center of the world. It is accomplished by God when He orders the seven bowls of wrath to be poured out on Babylon (16:1-21; cf 14:8). The double announcement of her fall shows that it is certain and it is complete (18:10, 16, 18, 21). This fall of Babylon will fulfill the prophecy made by Isaiah (Isa 13-14). Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon was not suddenly destroyed as Isaiah prophesied; it took centuries for that city to fall into decay and be covered over by the drifting sands. But Antichrist's Babylon will be reduced to rubble in one day at the end of the Tribulation. Isaiah describes the residents of Babylon after it is destroyed: demons, unclean spirits and every unclean and hateful bird will live there (Isa. 34:11-15). Evidently it will become a penitentiary for some demons during the Kingdom of Jesus Christ to show the people of the Millennium that such spiritual beings do exist.

18:3 – Babylon will be judged for causing nations to commit spiritual fornication. The mark of Antichrist will be required for kings, merchants, sailors and consumers before they will be able to carry out any commercial activity. This mark involves the sinful worship of Antichrist; the main place to worship him will be at his image in Jerusalem. Those who worship Antichrist will receive his mark. Unsaved kings will readily choose to worship Antichrist for financial advantage and for a short time it will appear that they made the right decision based on the success of their business. But their worship of Antichrist is spiritual fornication and for this God will judge them in the Lake of Fire (14:9-11).

It should be noted that these men are willing to receive the mark of Antichrist because they are attracted to the things of the earth. They are kings of the earth and merchants of the earth. They dwell on the earth and live for the pleasures and wealth of the earth. They do not understand the spiritual concept of laying up treasures in Heaven (Mt 6:19-21; Heb 11:24-27). They have no interest in the treasures of Heaven, because they are earthly minded.

#### **2. Call to Separation – 18:4**

18:4 – John hears another voice from Heaven. It is God telling His people to come out of Babylon so that

they do not participate in her sins. Babylon's sins will be punished and He does not want His people to receive the plagues along with them. God wants His people to be separate from the world for His name's sake, but also for their welfare. They are to be a holy people, because He is holy (cf 1 Pet 1:14-16). The plagues refer to the bowl judgments, which are aimed at Antichrist and his followers. God is concerned for the welfare of the righteous as seen by His care for Noah (Gen. 8:1), for Lot (Gen. 19:15-22) and for Jews in ancient Babylon (Jer. 50:8; 51:45).

### **3. Vindication of Judgment – 18:5-8**

18:5 – The reason for God's judgment of Babylon is the height of her sins, which reach to Heaven. Their sins are likened to bricks that are piled up in building a wall. God is longsuffering, but woe to the people when His patience is exhausted.

18:6 – The judgment requested of God is to make Babylon pay double for her trespass against the rights of others, which is in accordance with the Mosaic Law (Ex. 22:4, 7, 9). She has mixed a cup of persecution for God's people, so the request is for God to give her a double portion of His cup of wrath.

18:7 – The appeal for judgment against Babylon is made because she glorifies herself with a luxurious lifestyle. She claims she is a queen and will never see sorrow. Babylon's pride under the leadership of Antichrist is like that of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4). As God punished Nebuchadnezzar for his pride, so He will judge Babylon for her pride. He will reward her haughtiness with torment and sorrow to the same degree that she lived in shameless luxury.

18:8 – Babylon's arrogant attitude will result in sudden and intense judgment from God. He will send His plagues on Babylon in one day: death for her haughty pride, mourning for her sensual pleasures and famine for her lavish prosperity. Antichrist's political capital will be completely destroyed by fire in one day.

### **B. Her Destruction Deplored – 18:9-19**

#### **1. By the kings – 18:9-10**

18:9 – There will be great mourning by the kings of the earth when Babylon is destroyed, because they have lived for the things of this earth, which are suddenly gone (cf 18:3, 8). These men worshipped at Antichrist's image and received his mark in order to profit from their relationship with him. As a result they lived in luxury while his kingdom prospered, but when his capital is destroyed by fire, the source for their lavish living is gone. Their wealth will literally go up in smoke. They will weep aloud and beat their breasts in lamentation when they see the fiery destruction of Babylon, the great city located on the Euphrates River. The destruction of Babylon will bring closure to the wickedness of this city that was first built by Nimrod in rebellion against God (Gen 10:8-10; 11:1-9).

18:10 – These kings, who mourn the destruction of Babylon, are careful to distance themselves from Babylon lest they also receive its judgment. Nevertheless, they will not escape the judgment of Christ. The mark of the beast is on them and they will be cast into the Lake of Fire (14:9-11).

#### **2. By merchants of the earth – 18:11-16**

18:11 – The unsaved merchants of the earth will yield to the worship of Antichrist. They will take his mark so they can buy and sell and become wealthy businessmen (cf 18:3). The merchants represent all the commercial officials who will be aligned with the Antichrist and do business with him (13:16-17). They will mourn greatly when the source of their income is destroyed and no one is able to buy their goods.

18:12-13 – These merchants will make their wealth by trading commodities, ranging from gold to slaves, things that Antichrist demands in order to make Babylon a great city.

18:14 – This business arrangement will give the merchants their money to buy the things that will satisfy

their lust for luxurious living. But when Babylon is destroyed their luxurious lifestyle will be destroyed with it.

18:15-17a – These merchants will stand afar off from Babylon, trying in vain to avoid her judgment. Actually they are merely postponing it, because they have the mark of the beast that cannot be removed. They will join the kings in the Lake of Fire – 14:9-11.

### **3. By every shipmaster – 18:17-19**

18:17b – Attention is now turned to those mourners who make their living by shipping cargo across the seas. The owners of ships and sailors prospered well during the rule of Antichrist, but the destruction of Babylon will destroy their business. They, too, will stand at a distance as they observe the obliteration of Babylon.

18:18 – They will cry out as they see the smoke of the city's destruction rising into the sky and exclaim that no city has been like this great city. The kings who rule and the merchants who buy and sell and the ship owners who transport goods are equally distraught at the sudden fall of Babylon. Nothing like this has happened to Babylon in the past, so this is still a future event.

18:19 – The ship owners and the sailors will cast dust on their heads to indicate the severe anguish of their souls. However their souls are tormented, not for their sins, but for the loss of their income. It is the sorrow of the world, which works death (2 Cor 7:10). One day they are rich, but the next day they are ruined.

## **C. Her Destruction Described – 18:20-24**

### **1. Rejoicing over her destruction – 18:20**

18:20 – The believers in heaven are instructed to rejoice because God's judgment has been dealt out to Babylon, the capital city of Antichrist. This judgment is a divine retribution against the government that persecuted His servants. The angels in Heaven rejoice when a lost soul is saved (Luke 15:10); likewise, there will be rejoicing in Heaven when God's enemies are judged. Judgment of Antichrist's wicked kingdom must precede the establishment of Christ's righteous Kingdom.

### **2. Representation of her destruction – 18:21-23a**

18:21 – The complete and final destruction of Antichrist's capital and kingdom is represented by a millstone being cast into the sea. As a millstone would sink rapidly into the water to surface no more, so Babylon, the great city and worldwide kingdom, will be destroyed rapidly by God to rise no more (cf. Jer. 51:61-64; Dan. 2:44-45).

18:22-23a – A poetic description of Babylon's destruction portrays how the city will be silenced forever. No longer will music be heard in Babylon. No longer will a craftsman work in Babylon. No longer will the sound of a mill be heard in Babylon. No longer will a lamp shine in Babylon. No longer will the voice of the bridegroom and bride rejoice in Babylon. The book is closed on life in Babylon.

### **3. Reasons for her destruction – 18:23b-24**

18:23b-24 – Three reasons are cited for the basis of Babylon's destruction.

First, her merchants had become great by their worship of Antichrist's image and by their dependence on him for wealth and luxurious living. They were great in the eyes of the world, but insignificant in the eyes of God.

Second, she deceived the nations by her sorceries. Sorcery could refer to her practice of magic and trickery, or it could refer to the drug traffic that she would promote. Sorcery comes from the Greek for pharmacy (drugs). Illegal drugs are a big business among the nations, but its wickedness fits the



character of Satan and Antichrist. Further, the use of illegal drugs is very deceptive. They appeal to the fleshly lusts of the unsaved, but they enslave the people that take them.

Third, she was responsible for the death of God's people (cf. 7:9-17; 11:7-10; 13:7) and of all people that are killed during the Tribulation. She is responsible for the wars and bloodshed during that time. That is why the seven bowls of God's wrath is poured down upon the capital city of Antichrist (Rev. 16:17-21).