

Babylon may be a rebuilt city at this point, but it also clearly represents the satanic world system, described in Ephesians chapter two as a world ruled by Satan and consumed by a spirit of disobedience.

In other words, Babylon represents a world obsessed with sin, misusing God's good gifts in sinful ways.

These are powerful words, dwelling for demons.

I believe the further a person gets away from what God intended for their life, the more demonic activity concentrates around them.

Sometimes when I am working with someone in disobedience to God, I feel like I can see the demons dancing around them.

**Sin will take you further than you want to go,
Keep you longer than you want to stay,
And cost you more than you were willing to pay!** **-Josh McDowell**

As these verses go on, this disobedience is seen in two key words in verse three: immorality and excessive.

Satan always convinces people they need more than what God wills for them to have.

Satan convinced Adam & Eve that the one rule they were to follow was one rule too many, that they also deserved to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Oh, what a costly bite of MORE knowing evil has been for mankind!

Sin, Death, Hell, all because they had to have MORE!

Today Satan still convinces men and women they need more than what their life can give them; more than their circumstances can give them; more than their spouse can give them.

He convinces the average American not to be content with the abundance they already have but to want MORE, MORE, MORE.

And so rejecting the God appointed boundaries of our lives, in disobedience we go beyond the boundaries God has set for us, and disobedience allows demonic activity to concentrate around us.

2. God Calls His People Out From the Disobedient 18:4-8

Verse four says if your God's people you better come out of Babylon, because Babylon is going to be judged.

The Greek word for church, ecclesia, comes from two greek words, ek and kaleo. Kaleo means to call and Ek means out of. Believers are the ones who are called out of Babylon. Even here, late in the tribulation, God is calling people to confess their sins and repent, to turn from the ways of disobedience to following Jesus!

From these verses we learn that Unconfessed Sin IS held against people. A person can't be forgiven of sin they haven't repented of!

Look at verse 5: Her sins are piled up to Heaven; God remembers her crimes

She will reap as much torment & grief as her disobedience has sown.
In fact, verse 6 says because of exploitation her judgment is doubled!

DANNY: Go over self defeating nature of sin: built in consequences...

In Contrast: God chooses not to hold confessed sin against us when we repent!
"If we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." -I John 1:9

3. The Party of the disobedient will end 18:9-19, 21-24

The lust of the eyes; the lust of the flesh; the Pride of life
It all will come to not!

Verses 12-13 mention over 30 different expensive status symbol commodities the world celebrated, gold, jewels, expensive clothes, perfumes.

Now the Bible extols workmen who have honest jobs that meet people's basic needs. That's not what it's talking about here.

This all must be understood in terms of the words "excessive."

We're talking about the kind of sinful excess seen on Paris fashion walks.

We're talking about money wasted on status symbols that make us look good but go far beyond what we really need.

Let me ask you a question: How many pairs of shoes do you need, when poor people on the other side of the world are still going barefoot?

Have you spent more money supporting missions than on jewelry?

Fellows, have you spent more money on being a fisher of bass, or on being a fisher of men?

Well, now I've got you thinking of these things the right way!

Look at verse 13 – all the trafficking in human bodies and souls will also end!

What a great promise that is!! The exploitation of people will stop!!

No more selling of people! No more slavery! No more prostitution!
What I saw in Thailand!

Look at verse 14 – It all ends – the party will be over!

When Babylon is destroyed the kings, the merchants, the sailors all mourn because the party is over.

Look at verse 23 – your merchants were the nobility of the earth

Earth under Satan has had its own golden rule: he who has the gold, rules!

In Contrast: Revelation has taught us as believers we can't take it with us, but we can send it ahead!

“Don't collect for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. But collect for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves don't break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” -Matthew 6:19-21

When the party is over, those who have made themselves citizens of Babylon will mourn because all their treasure will be lost also.

But those who have stored up treasure in Heaven will not lose anything they have committed there.

“But I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to guard my deposit until that day.” -2 Tim. 1:12

4. The Resources of the Disobedient Can't Stop the Prayers of the Saints 18:20

Do you catch what it says in that verse?

Despite all the resources Babylon had, despite years of mocking, persecuting and sometimes killing God's people, the prayers God's people have prayed for justice have never been forgotten!

God has not forgotten the prayers of saints for justice throughout the ages, whether New Testament apostles or Old Testament prophets!

We have already seen in Revelation that there are bowls filled in Heaven with the prayers of the saints!

He heard The Psalmist who cried out...How long, O God, will the wicked Prosper?

He heard The Tribulation Martyrs who cried out... How long, O God, until you avenge our blood...?

He heard your prayer too, dear friend, when you cried out to him about the injustices you have experienced!

Now we are to leave vengeance to God, but we are to pray for justice!

Yes, pray for people to be saved! Love your enemies! Share the gospel!

But also pray intensely that things that should not be happening on earth will stop happening! Pray that God's will be done on earth as it is in Heaven!

5. The Real Party is in Heaven! 19:1-10

I include this in with the fall of commercial and political Babylon to drive home one of the main lessons of Revelation: Heaven's perspective is very different than earth's! If you haven't caught that yet, you've missed what I've been preaching!

That thought is supposed to get in your head, your heart, until it overflows in the way you make your decisions!

We have already seen that on earth they will mourn when the party based on sin is over...

But how about you?

If the things around you that were based on sin were gone tonight, would you be mourning your loss, or rejoicing?

In contrast to the unrepentant on earth, Heaven will be rejoicing when Babylon goes down! Because now the Real Party can begin!

And so in these verses we Heaven shouting Hallelujah over and over again!

In verse two Heaven shouts Hallelujah because Babylon has finally got what's coming to her!

In verses three and four they shout hallelujah because her destruction is final, no one will be exploited on earth any longer: no more sin!

In verse six they shout Hallelujah because now the Lord Jesus can reign on earth! Everlasting righteousness can be brought in!

Now the party Jesus announced when He gave us the Lord's Supper, the one we have waited so long for, the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, will happen!

Look at verse seven!

Let your heart be glad, saint!	Your faith has been well placed!
Rejoice, saint!	Your faithfulness has mattered!
Give Him glory, church!	He is worthy of praise!

Babylon's party is over! Christ's is just beginning!

So what are we to be about while we wait for Christ's return!

Faith, Hope, and Love!

Verse 7b tells us the bride of Christ prepared herself for that day. Verse 8 says she was permitted to wear dazzling white because she had acted righteously while she waited for her true love to come!

**That's what we are to be about as we wait for Christ's return-
Faith in Christ!
Certain Hope of His Return!
Loving acts for others!**

Remember Hannah and Michael. Well, now I remember the rest of the story.

As Mr. Fine was leaving the home, the security guard at the door asked him about his visit. He told the story and said, "At least I was able to get the last name from her. His name is Michael Goldstein." "Goldstein?" repeated the guard. "There's a Mike Goldstein who lives here on the eighth floor." Fine turned around and went back inside, this time to the eighth floor, where he asked for Michael Goldstein. When directed to an elderly gentleman, he asked the man, "Have you lost your wallet?" "Oh, yes, I lost it when I was out for a walk the other day," Michael answered. Fine handed him the wallet and asked if it was his. Michael was delighted to see it again and, full of gratitude to the finder, proceeded to thank him for returning it when Fine interrupted him.

"I have something to tell you," Fine admitted. "I read the letter in your wallet." Caught off guard, Michael paused for a moment and then asked, "You read the letter?" "Yes, sir, and I have further news for you," Fine continued. "I think I know where Hannah is." Michael grew pale. "You know where she is? How is she?" "She's fine, and just as pretty as when you knew her." "Could you tell me where she is? I would love to call her. You know, when that letter came to me, my life ended. I have never gotten married. I never stopped loving her." "Come with me," said Fine. He took Michael by the elbow and led him to the elevator and down to the third floor. By this time, the director of the building had rejoined them. They came to Hannah's room.

"Hannah," the director whispered, gesturing toward Michael, "Do you know this man?" She adjusted her glasses and looked at the man as she searched her memory bank. Then with a choked voice, Michael spoke up. "Hannah, it's Michael." She stood, as he walked over to her. They embraced and held on to each other for as long as they could stay steady on their feet. They sat down, holding hands, and between their tears they filled in the story of long years that had passed. Feeling as though they had intruded on a sacred moment, Mr. Fine and the director slowly slipped away to leave the two alone to enjoy their reunion.

Three weeks later, Arnold Fine received an invitation to attend the wedding of Hannah, seventy-six years of age, and Michael, seventy-eight. From Ravi Zacharias' *The Grand Weaver*: pages 111-113

Church, it's been 2,000 years since Jesus was here! Sometimes we wonder if we will ever really ever see Him! But Jesus remains the only true first love for those of us who know Him! No one has ever matched up to Him!

Keep the faith, keep the hope, keep the love flowing as we wait for our own special marriage supper with Jesus to come! Let's Pray!