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Introduction: In the first half of Chapter 18, the destruction of Babylon is announced. As we have seen in our Revelation study, "Babylon" is emblematic of the world system in general, the world of Antichrist. He will rule his empire from Babylon, quite possibly a reference to the actual, literally rebuilt city (there is strong evidence in the second half of Chapter 18 - the focus of this study - for the references to Babylon to be concerning the actual ancient city rebuilt in future times). Babylon has a religion - ultimately betrayed and destroyed by Antichrist - and it has power and influence in every area of life in the world: military might, political power, economic wealth, and commercial control. Especially seen in the second half of Chapter 18 are the world's kings and merchants lamenting over the destruction of the city and the end to the commercial prosperity enjoyed.

It is noteworthy and amazing that when all this takes place, it is not the state of the soul that men are concerned with; it is the state of their wealth and economic status. When Babylon goes down, it is the god of riches that is mourned. Even in the very end, people will not fear God, they will not fear judgment, they will not fear eternal Hell; they will lament the loss of their luxury and comfort, their riches and possessions, their commerce and prosperity. Note the emphasis given to this in these verses (is there a lesson in that for us today?).

1. Verses 9-10 - The kings of the earth mourn.

- v.9a - The **kings of the earth** are likely earthly leaders in solidarity with Antichrist who help him maintain his rule. Their **fornication** is their loyal devotion to him as opposed to worshiping and serving the True Living God. Because of their connection to Antichrist, they enjoy a brief season of apparent luxury. They **weep and lament** for Babylon because their days of ease are over.

- vv.9b-10 - the fact that a **burning** city can be seen from a distance implies a literal **Babylon** (though the term is used figuratively elsewhere in Scripture, and in Revelation refers to more than just the city too). **...one hour...** The **judgment** and destruction are very sudden and fast, and the kings of the earth take note.

2. Verses 11-19 - The merchants of the earth mourn.

- v.11 - **the merchants** also **mourn**. Their businesses are at an end. Their profits are ended. And the luxurious earthly goods will no longer be available; all of the goodies and toys people fawn all over - gone, in an instant.

NOTE: Be careful about how you handle the things of this world. Owning useful things, even nice things, is fine - good things can be done, things can be shared, God can be thanked. But guard your heart against **covetousness**. It is **idolatry**. And covetousness is not just a vice for the rich - anyone of any status can covet this world's goods! Guard your heart. Be watchful and pray.

- vv.12-14 - Over two-dozen specific things are mentioned, revealing the comprehensiveness of Babylon's staggering wealth, industry, and commercial power. **chariots**: According to John MacArthur, the Greek word translated "chariots" refers to four-wheeled carts; can you envision modern-day cars there? **bodies and souls of men**: a possible reference to human trafficking and/or slavery.

- vv.15-18 - The sellers of all these things can only marvel and mourn as they watch the city burn. The specific reference to ships keeping a safe distance also implies a literal city and a city with major seaport activity.

NOTE: Some have seen the United States here. That requires a partially figurative understanding of "Babylon" obviously (the city could be a city like New York City, which is a literal city, but obviously is not literal Babylon). Some also see the United States as a major part of Antichrist's empire at least, the USA being such a world commercial power. It is not entirely implausible, and it certainly is intriguing. Still, literal interpretations should always be primarily considered (a literal Israel was thought impossible for centuries, then it seemed to emerge overnight in the 20th Century). God will fulfill His word.

3. Verse 20 - God's kingdom rejoices!

- v.20 - Amidst all the mourning and destruction, there is great rejoicing. God will avenge His servants and be victorious! The fall of Babylon is commanded to be celebrated!

4. Verses 21-24 - The suddenness, violence, totality, and finality of Babylon's fall.

- v.21 - **millstone**: huge and heavy, used to grind grain. To lift and heave one is not possible for a man. Wherever one would land, obviously anything there would be totally obliterated. FINALITY: **...not found anymore** This is the absolute end of Babylon, the city.

- vv.22-23a - TOTALITY: no more music or entertainment, no more production, no more food, no more light, no more rejoicing (like at weddings). There's simply nothing left.

- vv.23b - **sorcery**: the term for drugs, essentially. Perhaps a literal reference to a burgeoning drug trade, or perhaps a figurative reference to the way all the world was in a mesmerized, hallucinogenic state under Antichrist's spell.

- v.24 - What is left? The evidence of Babylon's treachery: the **blood** of God's servants.