

**Chinese Martyrs Catholic Church**  
**Bible Sharing Program 2024-25**  
**Session #16: The Judgment of Babylon (Rev 18:1-24)**

BSP04 = 2004-05 BSP notes SN = Special notes  
 CCSS = Cath Commentary on Sacred Scriptures  
 CSB = Ignatius Catholic Study Bible  
 CSSN = Catholic Scripture Study notes  
 LS = Dr. Hahn's Lamb's Supper  
 NAB = New American Bible

A	<p><b><u>Overview</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The destruction of Babylon has already been previously foretold 3 times (14:8, 16:19, 17:16). This chapter offers the details of Babylon's demise.</li> <li>• The description of Babylon's fall prophesied in this chapter echoes motifs from OT prophecies of judgment against pagan nations (Edom, Tyre, Nineveh). Those judgments serve as types of what will happen to this Babylon. According to Revelation, the OT prophecies (esp. Isaiah and Jeremiah), the prediction of Babylon's complete and perpetual destruction will ultimately be fulfilled at the end of history.</li> <li>• The history of Babylon, including Edom, Tyre, Nineveh, Babylon itself, Jerusalem or Rome, foretells what's to come; representing God's judgement of humanity's greed, materialism, desire for fame and wealth, and hedonism. Those who refuse to repent will ultimately face judgement and painful punishment. At that time, while "the kings of the earth", merchants, and seafarers have grown rich from her, the holy ones will "rejoice over her ... For God has judged your case against her".</li> </ul>	<p>CCSS p 287          CSB p 513-5          SN1</p> <p>18:9-19          18:20</p>	<p>Is 13-14, Jer 5-51;          is 34; Ezk 26-28</p>
B	<p><b><u>Proclamation of the Destruction of Babylon</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great ... has become ... a cage for every unclean spirit, ... [a cage for every unclean] and disgusting [beast]" - an imagery drawn from OT prophecies of judgement on Babylon and Edom, detailing the destruction to come on those places, anticipating the fall of Babylon on the last day.</li> <li>• Similar to OT, Rev. equates fornication with idolatry. When the destruction of Babylon is proclaimed, Rev. also echoes the judgement against the merchants of Tyre. This signifies that Babylon is a representation of all kinds of fornication and inappropriate materialism.</li> </ul>	<p>18:1-8</p> <p>18:1-3          CCSS</p> <p>2:20-22          CCSS</p>	<p>Is 13:21, 34:11,14</p> <p>Hos 2:4-15          Is 23:16-17          Ezk 26-28</p>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The people should “depart from her .. so as not to take part in her sins and receive a share in her plagues, for her sins are piled up to the sky”. Depart from Babylon = distance from secularism, sins, fornication, egotism, and arrogance.</li> <li>“Therefore, her plagues will come in one day, pestilence, grief, and famine; she will be consumed by fire” - similar to the destruction of Jerusalem.</li> <li>Reflection: What is wrong with luxury? (Small Group Discussion)</li> </ul>	18:4, Rm 24:16  CCSS p 294  CCSS p 292	Is 52:11, Ezk 9, Jer 51:9
<b>C</b>	<b><u>Lamentation of Kings, Merchants, and Seafarers</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kings, merchants, seafarers (essential to the shipping industry; e.g. Tyre), who have profited from “Babylon” by taking advantage mutually, lament her destruction.</li> <li>The Interpretation of “Babylon” in Christian tradition.</li> <li>From this point, the eschatological view of history and temporality revealed in Revelation gradually take shape.</li> </ul>	18:9-19  SN2 SN3	Ezk 27
<b>D</b>	<b><u>Babylon’s Destruction is Absolute and Irreversible</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“A mighty angel picked up a stone like a huge millstone and threw it into the sea” is a prophetic gesture that represents the absolute and irreversible destruction of Babylon. Her ultimate fate confirms what Jesus has foretold: a millstone recalls Jesus’ words about the penalty due to those who lead others into sin.</li> <li>Babylon is neither here nor there. She is the embodiment of whatever cultures and socioeconomic systems that draw people away from worshipping God and toward sin and the worship of idols. She manifests herself in contemporary Western culture with its self-centeredness, materialism and immortality. Babylon can only be completely destroyed on judgement day and will be irreversible.</li> </ul>	18:20-24  18:21 CCSS; Mt 18:6  CCSS p 303	Jer 51:63-64

**Special Notes:**



**1. Revelation's judgement and foretelling of Babylon's fate according to OT tradition:**

- The fall of Babylon (18:2 ) => Jer 51:8
- Nations have drunk the wine of her licentious passion (18:3) => Jer 51:7
- Depart from her (18:4) => Jer 51:45
- Her sins are piled up in the sky (18:5) => Jer 51:9
- She will be consumed by fire (18:8) => Jer 51:30
- You will rejoice over her destruction (18:20) => Jer 51:48
- A mighty angel picked up a stone like a huger millstone and threw it into the sea (18:21) => Jer 51:63-64
- In her was found the blood of prophets and holy ones and all who have been slain on the earth (18:24) => Jer 51:49

On the last day, the harlot of Babylon, those who are guilty of avarice, pride, and idolatry, will see the smoke of her pyre, "in one hour she has been ruined" (18:18-19).  
(Ref. CSB p 513)

**2. Babylon in Christian Tradition**

- City of Rome and its empire (Irenaeus 130-202); Tertullian 160-220 and some Church Fathers)
- Under the leadership of Satan, the world falls into corruption and sins (Andrew of Caesarea in Cappadocia, 6th-7th C)
- Gradually, Babylon became a symbol of the life of sin and "the world" (Bernard of Cluny, 12th C)
- The corrupt clergy in the Church seen as the harlot of Babylon (Peter Olivi, 13th C, Dante, 14th C)
- The Roman Catholic Church as the harlot of Babylon, anti-Christ (Protestant Reformation: Luther, Calvin). Revelation doesn't equate devious religions with Babylon; she is the socioeconomic systems that oppress Christians (18:23-24). In Rev., the second beast symbolizes devious religions (13:11-17).
- The harlot Babylon is Jerusalem (recent scholars \*)

Ref: CCSS pp 296-7 / \* See CSB p 514



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3. The eschatological view of history and temporality revealed in Revelation gradually take shape.

*Summarized by BSP Navigator*



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Scripture	Content	Eschatology
14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Dragon and the Two Beasts</li> <li>• 144,000, the lamb on Mount Zion, singing a new song, heavenly liturgy</li> <li>• The proclamation of Babylon's destruction, those who worship the beast will be burned in fire.</li> <li>• The time of harvesting and pressing of the grapes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chaos in the past and present</li> </ul>
15-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seven Angels and Seven Bowls</li> <li>• The heavenly tent of testimony - the Temple will be open, the seven angels holding seven bowls will come out from the Temple. The Temple filled with smoke, no one could enter.</li> <li>• The first six bowls: terrifying natural disasters.</li> <li>• The seventh bowl: A loud voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying , "It is done". This is followed by lightning flashes, rumblings and peals of thunder, and a great earthquake that there has never been one like it since the human race began on earth; every island fled and mountains disappeared.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The destruction of the world on the last day and unspeakable disasters.</li> </ul>
17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The significance of the harlot of Babylon and the beast.</li> <li>• The Lamb will defeat them since He is the Lord of lords, King of kings.</li> </ul>	(the interpretation does not involve temporality)
18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the fall of Babylon, the kings of the earth, merchants and seafarers lament while the holy ones in heaven, apostles, and prophets rejoice.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doomsday</li> </ul>
19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Victory celebration in heaven; wedding announcement of the Lamb, the day is near</li> <li>• The appearance of "The Word of God, King of kings, Lord of lords"</li> <li>• "The beast and the kings of the earth and their armies" are defeated and punished.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doomsday</li> </ul>
20*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Kingdom of a thousand years</li> <li>• After the dragon is released, it commits evil</li> <li>• Satan is thrown into the burning flames and the abyss</li> <li>• Final judgement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The fulfilment of Christ's salvation</li> <li>- The period when the Church is being tested</li> </ul>



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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Doomsday</li> <li>- Doomsday</li> </ul>
21-22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New heaven and new earth, new Jerusalem, eternal happiness.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Eternal Life</li> </ul>

*Summarized by BSP Navigator*  
*\*Ref. Explanations in CCSS p.319*