

# REVELATION—UNVEILING THE END, ACT 3 THE FINAL CURTAIN

## STUDY SEVEN

### From Earthly Horrors to Celestial Hallelujahs

*Selections from Revelation 18; 19:1–10*

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*Our God reigns. Remember that. Remember that when a little bit of the hope of your life has faded . . . when the deal didn't turn out as you thought it would, or the answer didn't come back as you had anticipated, or the romance didn't blossom as you had hoped. Our God is in supreme control.*

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

ON June 12, 1987, United States President Ronald Reagan stood at the Brandenburg Gate of the Berlin Wall in Germany's capital delivering a speech largely directed at Mikhail Gorbachev, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. At the climax of his speech, President Reagan spoke some of the most memorable words of the 20th century . . .

“Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!”

For more than twenty-five years, the Berlin Wall had separated Germany right down the middle—east under Soviet control and west under US, British, and French control—and the barrier represented more broadly the Iron Curtain that divided Europe during the decades of the Cold War. The conflict had ravaged the continent, and President Reagan represented many world leaders who called for the hostility to end.

Then, on November 9, 1989, the wall did indeed come down as a result of peaceful protesting, and those once divided could now dwell among one another as citizens of a united Germany. This decisive historical moment helped bring the Cold War to its end weeks later. Though President Reagan had delivered his iconic speech a little more than two years earlier, his words served as a call to action that looked ahead to a brighter future for Germany and all of Europe.

The book of Revelation contains a similarly iconic line that signals hope for the people of God—one that looks to the future when Jesus finally defeats Satan, sin, and death . . .

***Babylon is fallen!***



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## PREPARE YOUR HEART

Though Revelation assures us of Babylon's future defeat, this evil city's power fills our world today. We've all felt the sting of its wickedness, and in those painful moments, it can be easy to forget that Jesus has already conquered sin and death. If you're feeling that hopelessness today, bring your concerns to God and ask Him to reassure you of His ultimate victory over Babylon.



## TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

*Revelation 17:1–19:10* contains one extended, vivid depiction of Jesus' defeat of evil. This section begins with a vision of a opulent queen who was “drunk with the blood of God's holy people” (*Revelation 17:6*). And in *17:5*, John offered an interpretation of this woman's identity: “Babylon the Great, Mother of All Prostitutes and Obscenities in the World.”

In his vision, John looked back to Israel's past—to its exile in a pagan land where the people worshiped idols and where the kings considered themselves divine. “Babylon” in Revelation, therefore, represents any worldly system of evil that stands opposed to God. For John's original readers, Babylon was Rome. In the last days, the church will suffer under the strong grip of a new Babylon. Even today, we feel the pain caused by Babylon's pervasive presence.

Yet Babylon—in all its manifestations—will fall, and in *Revelation 18:1–19:10*, we see how.



## Observation: “Babylon Is Fallen!”

Take a few moments to read about the declaration of Babylon's defeat recorded in *Revelation 18:1–19:10*. This section of Scripture is lengthy, but it is rich in truth. So read it slowly and carefully with an eye for detail in order to come to a clear understanding of what John wanted to say to us. This is the goal of *observation*.<sup>1</sup>

## Farewell to Babylon—Revelation 18

The first major section of this passage begins with an angel giving a great proclamation with a mighty voice: “Babylon is fallen—that great city is fallen” (*Revelation 18:2*)! This announcement rises from the page like a song of worship because Babylon's demise represents the defeat of God's enemies.

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According to *Revelation 18:3–9*, what specific kinds of evil did Babylon represent? See also *18:24*.

What phrase is repeated in *18:10, 16–17, and 19–20*? Based on the context of these verses, how is this “terrible” thing actually good news?

According to *18:21–23*, how did John’s vision depict the ultimate defeat of Babylon?

### **Praise to Jehovah—Revelation 19:1–10**

The key word in *Revelation 19:1–10* is *Hallelujah* (*Revelation 19:1, 3, 4, 6* NASB)! This term comes from two Hebrew terms: *hallel* meaning “to praise” and *jah*, referring to Yahweh, the name God gave Himself before His chosen people Israel. In other words, this section of Revelation is filled with shouts saying, “Praise the LORD!”

Read the following verses and, in the space provided, write down the reasons the heavenly chorus offered for praising God.

*Revelation 19:1–2*

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Revelation 19:3–5

Revelation 19:6–9

*In this case, judgment has been fully carried out against evil. The reign of Satan will soon come to an end. False religions and false systems of philosophy are winding up their last hurrah and, as we'll see, the Lord Jesus is to return as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll*



## **Interpretation: Hallelujah!**

*Revelation 18:1–19:10* is a passage of *praise*. Consequently, it reveals several reasons why we can worship God today. As you reflect on the following reasons, feel free to consult your Bible-study tools to help you deepen your understanding of heaven's worship of God. Check out Pastor Chuck Swindoll's commentary, *Insights on Revelation*, or *Constable's Notes* at [netbible.org](http://netbible.org).<sup>2</sup>

*We praise God because He has conquered evil.* This passage begins with John's vision of a fallen Babylon (*18:2*). What kinds of worldly evils does Babylon represent? In your answer, point to specific details from *Revelation 18*. By contrast, how does Babylon's example demonstrate how a follower of Jesus should *not* act?

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*We praise God because He reigns.* Though Revelation often depicts future events, John presented the fall of Babylon as having already happened. Notice, the angel didn't say, "Babylon will fall." Instead, he said, "Babylon is fallen" (*Revelation 18:2*, emphasis added). What does this choice of wording reveal about God's power and sovereignty, especially considering how today's world is so like Babylon?

*We praise God because of our marriage with the Lamb.* What is the significance of this marriage metaphor in *19:7–9*? What does this metaphor reveal about the relationship between Christ and His church? As you answer these questions, consider the analogy of the various parts of the marriage process in your answer: engagement, wedding, and reception.

*We have come to a bridge. As we step onto the bridge to go toward the beginning of the kingdom that the Lord will establish, the angels and the people of heaven shout together in a single voice, "Praise be to the Lord! He has conquered evil!"*  
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



### **Correlation: Prophecy Fulfilled**

In *Isaiah 47*, the prophet spoke about the coming fall of Babylon. Though the nation fell to the Persian Empire, the words of this prophecy resonate with the message of *Revelation 18:1–19:10*.

Summarize the message God gave Babylon in *Isaiah 47:1–5*. What fate awaited this mighty—yet wicked—nation? See also *47:11–15*.

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According to *Isaiah 47:6*, how did God use Babylon, despite its wickedness, for His redemptive purpose? What does this phenomenon reveal about how God might use Babylon-like institutions today?

Even though God used Babylon, He couldn't allow its wickedness to continue to pollute His good creation. According to *47:7–10*, what specific wicked deed led to Babylon's downfall?

Babylon was a city of great evil—proud, greedy, promiscuous, and violent to the core. So God extended great judgment against it. And He will do the same to *any* human institution that defies Him and His majesty.



### **Application: Lessons of Babylon's Fall**

*Revelation 18:1–19:10* has shown us that Babylon's future demise is so sure that we can live as if it has already fallen in the present. It's easy for us to forget this, but we must never forget that God has already claimed the victory over Satan, sin, and death. Specifically, we should remember that . . .

- *Our God reigns . . . so stop worrying.*
- *Only the Lamb is worthy . . . so worship Him alone.*
- *Supper is being served . . . so get cleaned up.*

As you look at the world around you, you can see the presence of Babylon almost everywhere—in your family, in the media, in schools, and maybe even in our churches. Babylon may be strong . . . but God is stronger. What does it look like for you to lean on His kingly strength as you navigate life as an exile in Babylon? How can you transform your worry into worship?

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The time to celebrate Christ's union with His church is soon coming, and *you* are personally invited to the party! In what ways can you clean yourself up to prepare for the celebration? What does it look like to celebrate this union in the present?

*Babylon is fallen!* This is no battle cry. In fact, the war has already been won. When Jesus died, He defeated sin. When He came back to life, He defeated death. As He reigns from heaven, He is crushing Satan's head with His mighty heel. And when He returns, the once stalwart walls of Satan's wicked city *will* crumble, and the people of God will sing an eternal song of praise to the One who claimed the victory.



## A FINAL PRAYER

*Father, thank You for defeating Babylon . . . for conquering Satan, sin, and death . . . for giving me new life and everlasting hope. All I can do is raise a loud, "Hallelujah!" In Jesus' name, amen.*

## ENDNOTES

1. To learn more about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, go to the article, "[How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?](#)"
2. Charles R. Swindoll, *Insights on Revelation*, Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2014).

For the 2024 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Brad Smith, writer and content strategist, *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages. Copyright © 2004, 2024 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

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