

# LESSON 7

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## BABYLON IS FALLEN

### THE ANGEL'S ANNOUNCEMENT (18:1–3)

The message in chapter 18 is modeled after the doom announcements of the Old Testament, such as those concerning Nineveh (Zeph. 2), Edom (Is. 34), and Israel (Amos 5). The passage especially reminds us of the dirges proclaiming the fall of Babylon and Tyre (Is. 13; 14; 21; Jer. 50; 51; Ezek. 26; 27). The use of Old Testament terminology set the tone for the chapter; more importantly, however, it reminded first-century readers of Old Testament predictions that had come to pass exactly as God had promised. Thus they were reassured that if God said Babylon (that is, Rome) would fall, she *would* fall.

1. Why would it have been hard for first-century Christians to believe that Rome would fall?
2. Why in verse 2 did the angel speak as if the event had already occurred?
3. What does the phrase translated “the wealth of her sensuality” in verse 3 mean?

### HER SINS HAVE PILED UP (18:4–8)

John “heard another voice from heaven.” The voice spoke for God, which is evident because of the phrase “my people.” The voice had two messages.

4. What were the two messages of the voice?
5. What does the challenge to “come out” involve (18:4)?
6. Why was it so important that John’s readers “come out” of Babylon?
7. To whom was the plea to “come out” primarily addressed?

8. What does “piled up” mean, and of what from the New Testament is its use in verse 5 reminiscent?
9. How is the appropriateness of Rome’s punishment seen?
10. What does verse 7 mean when it says that Rome “lived sensuously”?
11. What does the phrase “in one day” signify in verse 8?

#### **THE KINGS WEEP (18:9, 10)**

In verse 8 the voice stated that Babylon (Rome) would “be burned up with fire” (see 17:16). In the following verses, various groups of people are pictured standing back from the smoke and fire, mourning the destruction of the city.

12. What was the nature of the kings’ grief in 18:9?

#### **THE MERCHANTS WEEP (18:11–20)**

Next pictured are the merchants, who “became rich from her” (v. 15). They “weep and mourn over her, because no one buys their cargoes any more.”

13. To what Old Testament prophecy could the scene in verse 11 be compared?
14. What seven categories could the items in 18:12, 13 be divided into?
15. What does the phrase translated “slaves and human lives” in verse 13 mean?
16. What was the third group who mourned over Rome’s fall concerned about losing?
17. Whom did the three groups of mourners represent?

### **THE ANGEL'S PREDICTION (18:21–24)**

God's judgment against Rome was dramatized in a symbolic act: "Then a strong angel took up a stone like a great millstone." The scene is a powerful one. The reader can almost see the angel pick up the stone, his great muscles rippling, and watch the stone hurtle through the air, falling into the sea with a violent splash.

18. What significance might lie in the fact that the phrase "not . . . any longer" appears six times in this section?
19. What was sinful about the accusations against Rome at the end of verse 23?
20. How did the city of Rome literally fall?