

**THE FALL OF BABYLON
&
REJOICING OF THE
SAINTS**

REVELATION 18

This chapter is probably the most graphic and explicit reference to God's wrath and judgment in all of Scripture. The point is very clear: God will answer the cry of His saints and will punish the wicked. God's judgment is just as real and severe as is His grace and mercy. Our Lord does nothing halfway.

The emphasis in this chapter is on the fall of Babylon (Satan's kingdom: himself, his demons, the two beasts, and all unbelievers). It's a loud call to repentance! Heed His warning now...soon it will be too late! Much of the material in Ch. 18 is patterned after the prophets (cf. Is. 23-24; Jer. 51; Ezek. 26-27), where similar censures and calling to repentance are seen.

INTRODUCTION

+ *“Another angel, having great authority”* –

This angel we have seen before in Ch. 10. Some commentators believe that this is a description of Christ, though, as stated, the description of this Angel is very similar to that in Ch. 10. A complete description of Christ will be seen upon His Second Advent, and the differences will then be discussed.

+ The descriptive language here (“every” and “all”) shows how widespread and successful the deceptions and temptations of “Babylon the Great” have been in the world.

18:1-3

+ *“of demons and...of every unclean spirit...and hated beast”* – This language takes us back to ancient Babylon, once it was glorious, but in a day it was overthrown and became as Sodom and Gomorrah.

+ So widespread will be her destruction that all that is left within her are the ghost-like memories of all those who once inhabited this house of opulent wealth and sensual desire.

18:1-3

+ *“Come out from her, O My people...”* – This isn’t the angel of verses 1-3 speaking; rather it’s God, since a created angel would not say this. More specifically, this is Jesus speaking and He does use “my” (cf. 2:13)! Our Lord calls us to remain strong and refrain from the temptations of the harlot of Babylon. We must not make the mistake of believing that we are fulfilling our Lord’s plea by simply refraining from indulging in the crass immorality of the harlot. Truth be told, her immorality is often not crass and not clearly visible. She is moved by the “father of lies,” Satan, who puts before us versions of Christianity that look appealing! They seem pious and good, yet are not. Our Lord’s plea is to remain steadfast in His Word and to avoid falling prey to Satan’s deceptions which will lead one in a perverted version of Christianity, which is not Christianity!!!

18:4-8

Our Lord's appeal is not a call for physical separation from a literal city. He calls us to shun the temptations and enticements of man-made religions! At the heart of all man-made religions is self-righteousness and self-reliance!

Our Lutheran Confessions call the innate tendency of man's sinful nature to depend upon one's own efforts and good works the '*opinio legis*' (opinion of the law). The Confessions warn that this universal human inclination seeks to compromise and undermine the teaching of God's grace, in Christ, at every occasion (*Apol. IV, 146*).

CHRISTIANITY???

Since the beginning, the fundamental temptation has been to spurn the gracious love of God in favor of human effort so that we might, ourselves, be gods.

[Remember Satan's temptation of Eve (and Adam)]!

This is the essence of the anti-Christian religion embodied by Babylon the Great. Beneath the deceiving façade of Christian piety, it glories in human wisdom, in human wealth, human luxury, and human power!

CHRISTIANITY???

+ *“God has remembered her crimes”* – While God does not remember the sins of those who repent and believe in Christ (cf. Jer. 31:34 et. al.). He does, and will, remember the sins of the impenitent and unbelieving.

Why? The word “crimes” is the key word. In Greek the word is *ἀδικήματα*! Literally, crimes against God that are deserving of Divine retribution! It’s also an accusative noun, which means God is the One who will bring charges against them for the crimes that they committed against Him!!!

+ *“God has remembered her crimes”* – In the same way, believers in Christ receive a never-ending flow of grace (“grace upon grace”, i.e. “double grace”), while unbelievers who belong to the kingdom of Babylon will receive “double for her deeds.”

The wicked will be judged completely and fully for their deeds, (remember, God does **NOTHING** half-way!), paying for their sins for all of eternity in Hell.

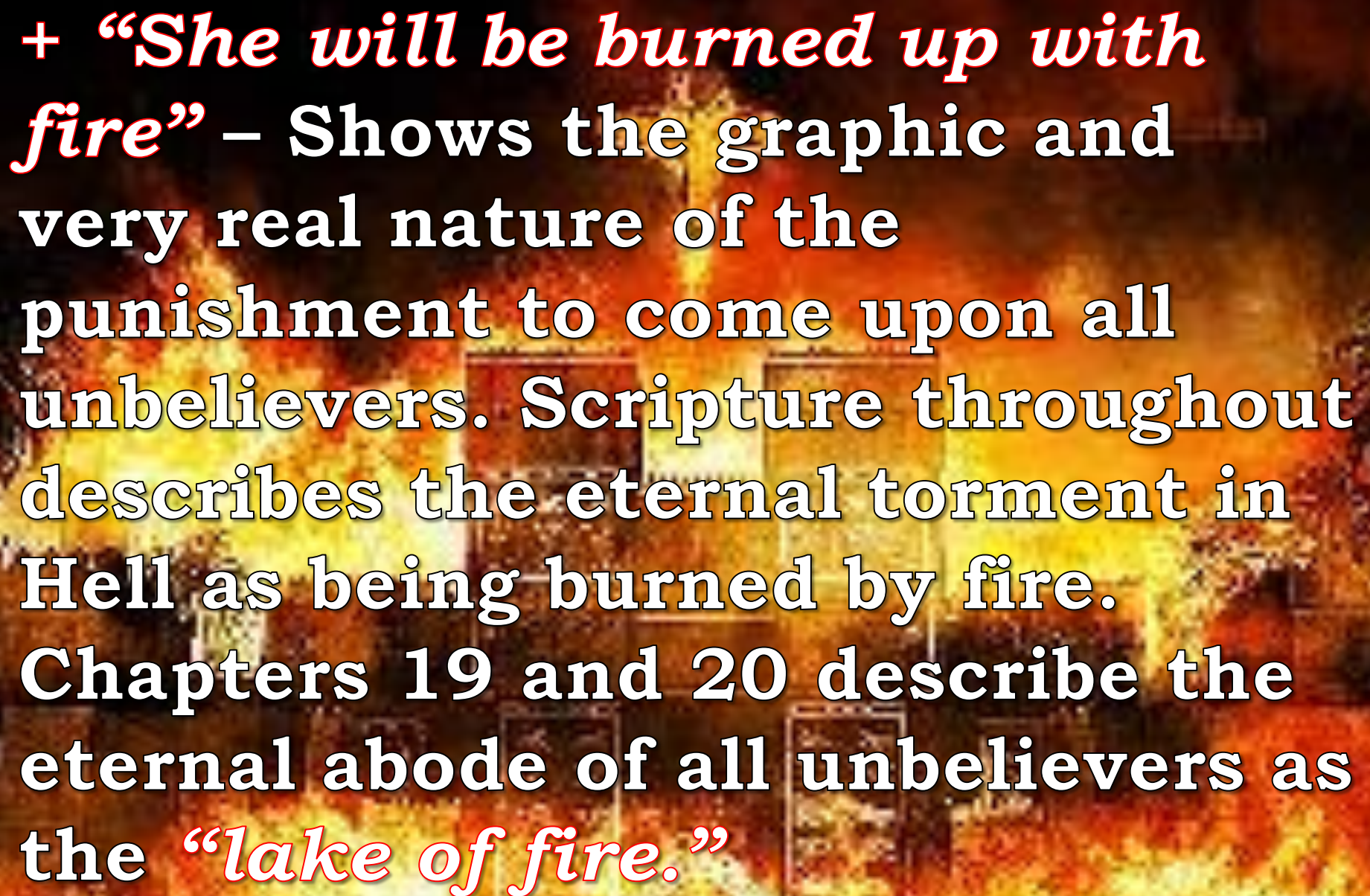
Vv.5-8

+ *“Her plagues will come
in a single day”* –

Judgment Day;
the Day when
Christ returns
in great glory
to judge all
people.



Vv.5-8



+ *“She will be burned up with fire”* – Shows the graphic and very real nature of the punishment to come upon all unbelievers. Scripture throughout describes the eternal torment in Hell as being burned by fire. Chapters 19 and 20 describe the eternal abode of all unbelievers as the *“lake of fire.”*

While we could take hours to comment on all of the descriptive language in verse 9-19, it's enough to point out that what is repeatedly described throughout is that the judgment of the wicked (Satan, demons, and all unbelievers) will be severe (painful and eternal). In this life, the wicked had no desire for the Truth. They indulged their sinful cravings and aligned themselves with the religion of the harlot. They will be repaid for their sins in full. And this will result in great rejoicing among the heavenly hosts (v. 20 and 19:1-10), since Christ will avenge the innocent blood of His Bride!

The Lament - vv. 9-19

As mentioned, this chapter serves as a great warning to all people, including believers. God does not condone sin and does not tolerate false religion. Believers are to be diligent and cling to God's Truth, no matter how politically incorrect or unpopular. We live at a time when true Christianity is very rare, indeed! Satan has infiltrated Christendom with a plethora of false teachers and teachings. What's worse, most people who call themselves Christian believe that the differences in doctrine and practice from one Christian denomination (or, non-denomination) to another is unimportant. This is a direct result of Satan's influence through the harlot of Babylon.

The Lament - vv. 9-19

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Believers, no matter how long you have lived a Christian life, indeed, a multitude of worse beliefs can come from the denomination as a direct result of Satan's influence through the harlot of Babylon.

"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves... you will recognize them by their fruits."

Matthew 7:15, 20

The Lament - vv. 9-19

Truth, dear. We see, with a Christian practice

is a

The point of this chapter and, indeed, of all of Revelation, is to make it vividly clear to us that we must “endure to the End” if we are to receive the “crown of glory.” This means that we align ourselves with the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church established by our Lord Jesus, the Christ, which displays the marks of rightly dividing the Word of Truth (2 Tim 3:15b); having the Gospel proclaimed in its purity and the Sacraments administered according to Christ’s institution.

+ *“Rejoice in celebration over her, O heaven and you saints and apostles and prophets...”* – This rejoicing in celebration not only means to “be happy” but “be joyful by having a celebration.” This call prepares for the wedding feast of the Lamb (19:6-9). At the feast all who have been persecuted, reviled, hated, and killed by the harlot and the beast will celebrate, forever, over their fallen enemies (cf. 7:11-12)!

This is in contrast to the mourning dirge of the kings and merchants and mariners at the loss of the harlot and beast.

Call to Celebrate - V.20

+ *“...mighty angel lifted up a stone like a large millstone...with violence shall Babylon, the great city, be thrown down...will surely never again to be found.”* - Now the evil

enemy of the Church will sink into oblivion, never to be seen or heard from for eternity (cf. Ex. 15:4-5; Jer. 51:63-64)!



Now the once frolicking sound of a city with all its pleasures; will be eerily silent, forever (vv. 22-24)!

The Mighty Angel - Vv.21-24

+ Thus, enduring to the End means that we live lives of repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, relying on Him alone, and never on ourselves, for forgiveness, life, and salvation. All those, whether they call themselves Christian or not, who add to, or take away from, the completed work of Jesus Christ **in any way**, are sons and daughters of Babylon. In short, to be Christian means to be in the world, but not of the world, and this chapter shows in graphic detail what will happen to all who follow the principles of the world over and against the principles of God's kingdom.

The Mighty Angel - Vv.21-24