

Dr. David Mathewson, Revelation, Session 24, Revelation 18-19, Lament/Joy over Babylon's Fall Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Study Guide, 4) Briefing Document, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Mathewson, Revelation, Session 24, Revelation 18-19, Lament/Joy over Babylon's Fall, [Biblicalelearning.org](https://www.biblicalelearning.org), BeL

This lecture excerpt from Dr. Dave Mathewson's Revelation course analyzes Revelation 18:9-19:10, focusing on the reactions to the fall of Babylon (Rome). **Three groups**, kings, merchants, and ship owners, lament their loss of wealth derived from Rome's economic system. **In contrast**, saints rejoice, celebrating God's judgment and their own vindication. The lecture draws heavily on Old Testament parallels, particularly from Jeremiah and Ezekiel, to interpret the events and their significance. Finally, the passage culminates in a hymn of praise celebrating God's sovereignty and the wedding of the Lamb, further emphasizing the triumph of good over evil.

2. 13 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Mathewson, Revelation, Session 24 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the [Biblicalelearning.org](https://www.biblicalelearning.org) [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → Revelation).



**Mathewson_Revela
tion_Session24.mp3**

3. Briefing Document

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided lecture on Revelation 18:9-19:10 by Dr. Dave Mathewson:

Briefing Document: Revelation 18:9-19:10 - The Lament and Joy Over Babylon's Fall

Introduction

This lecture focuses on Revelation 18:9-19:10, examining the contrasting responses to the fall of "Babylon," which Dr. Mathewson identifies as the city of Rome. The passage divides into two main sections: the lament of those who profited from Rome (18:9-19) and the rejoicing of the saints (18:20-19:10). The lecture emphasizes the economic critique of Rome, its exploitation of others, and the ultimate triumph of God's justice.

Key Themes and Ideas

1. The Threefold Lament (Revelation 18:9-19)

- **Structure:** The lament over Rome's fall is presented through three distinct groups, mirroring Ezekiel 27's lament over Tyre:
- **Kings of the Earth (18:9-10):** These are rulers who gained wealth and power through their association with Rome. They mourned not for their sin, but because their source of wealth had been cut off.
- **Merchants (18:11-17):** This group is especially influenced by the depiction in Ezekiel 27. They lament the loss of their lucrative trade, emphasizing the vast array of luxury goods imported into Rome.
- **Ship Owners (18:17-19):** This group, like those in Ezekiel, demonstrates the devastating effect of Babylon's fall on maritime commerce. They express their sorrow through dramatic mourning customs, like throwing dust on their heads.
- **Shared Characteristics of Lament:** All three groups mourn the loss of their wealth and the suddenness of Rome's destruction, and they stand far off, fearful of God's judgment.
- **Economic Critique:** Mathewson stresses that the mourning is not for moral or spiritual reasons, but purely for self-serving, economic ones. This highlights Revelation's economic critique of Rome's exploitative and luxury-driven system.
- **Quote:** "So they don't mourn because of their sin but because of the downfall of Rome and how that affects them."

- **"Adultery" with Babylon:** The lecture defines "adultery" with Rome as participating in its idolatrous and wealth-driven economic system, not literal physical adultery.
- Quote: "This is probably not physical adultery...but instead were to understand this in terms of participating in her wealth and in her idolatry."
- **Slavery:** The inclusion of "bodies and souls of men" in the list of cargo reveals the importance of the slave trade to Rome's economy. This highlights how Rome treated humans as commodities for profit.
- Quote: "It's interesting that they are included within the group of sheep and cattle as if human bodies...are now treated as commodities to be traded for luxury and for financial benefit."
- **Rome's Self-Serving System:** Mathewson argues that Rome's economy was designed to serve itself, often at the expense of other nations and its provinces.
- Quote: "Rome existed as we've seen to serve itself and even to the extent of exploiting and harming other nations even within their own provinces."

2. The Saints' Rejoicing (Revelation 18:20-19:10)

- **Contrast:** A clear contrast is drawn between the mourning of the exploitative groups and the rejoicing of the saints.
- Quote: "there is a clear break that should take place in chapter 18 at verse 20, or some kind of break should take place because now you have a clear contrast between the woes and laments of the three groups that got rich off of Rome that now lament over its destruction and judgment. In verse 20, you are now introduced to a group of saints who by contrast, in verse 20, rejoice over the fall of Rome."
- **Shift in Address:** The text shifts from third-person descriptions to second-person address to heaven, saints, apostles, and prophets, who are commanded to rejoice.
- Quote: "Interestingly too, chapter 18 basically describes in third person the different groups... Now, in verse 20, it shifts to a second person, where heaven, saints, apostles, and prophets are addressed directly..."

- **Jeremiah 51 Connection:** The call to rejoice echoes Jeremiah 51:48, where heaven and earth rejoice over Babylon's fall. This connection emphasizes that God is fulfilling his promises and avenging his people.
- Quote: "That appears to lie behind verse 20, where heaven and all the saints and prophets are now rejoicing and are called upon to rejoice over the destruction of Babylon."
- **Vindication of the Saints:** God's judgment of Rome is seen as a vindication of the saints and an avenging of their blood. This is related to the martyrs' cry in chapter 6.
- Quote: "So, the saints' response to Babylon's judgment was to avenge their blood and call for rejoicing."
- **Prophetic Act and Millstone:** The angel's symbolic act of throwing a millstone into the sea represents the complete and utter destruction of Babylon, reminiscent of a similar act in Jeremiah 51.
- Quote: "a mighty angel...picks up a millstone and throws it into the sea. And then, much like you found in Jeremiah 51, the angel interprets that and says, with such violence, the great city will also be thrown down and never be found again."
- **Reasons for Babylon's Fall (18:22-24):Self-Glorification:** Rome sets itself up as God, taking glory and worship that belong to God alone.
- **Excessive Wealth and Exploitation:** Rome lusts for wealth, exploiting other nations, and seducing them into an idolatrous economic system.
- **Violence and Persecution:** Rome is guilty of the blood of the prophets, saints, and all people on earth killed through its violence.
- Quote: "In her was found the blood of the prophets and the saints and all who have been killed on the earth."
- **The Hallelujah Chorus (19:1-6):** This section consists of a powerful hymn celebrating God's righteous judgments and the fall of the "great prostitute" Babylon.
- Quote: "After this...I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting, hallelujah, salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for true and just are his judgments."

- **The Wedding of the Lamb (19:7-8):** The imagery shifts to the wedding of the Lamb (Jesus) and his bride (the church), symbolizing the intimate relationship and communion between God and his people. The bride's white linen represents the righteous acts of the saints.
- Quote: "The wedding of the Lamb has come and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear. Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints."
- **God's Reign:** The proclamation that "the Lord God Almighty reigns" emphasizes that God's sovereignty and kingdom have now fully encompassed the earth.
- Quote: "This almost repeats verbatim what we found in the seventh seal, or seventh trumpet in chapter 11, verse 17, which brought us to the very end, which was sort of an anticipation of, or snapshot of the final day of the Lord, where the kingdom of the world would now become the kingdom of God. Now we see that theme reiterated in verse 6, the Lord God Almighty reigns."
- **Angel's Refusal of Worship (19:10):** The angel's refusal of worship reinforces the strict monotheism of Revelation, demonstrating that only God is worthy of worship. This also implicitly supports the divinity of Jesus Christ as the Lamb is also worshiped.
- Quote: "Don't worship me; I'm just a servant, so worship God."

3. Interpretation of Babylon and Rome

- **Historical Context:** Mathewson argues that John is targeting the city of Rome, the empire, and its emperors.
- **Archetypal Symbol:** While the text applies to first-century Rome, it also uses the image of Babylon as an archetypal symbol representing larger world systems and powers in opposition to God.
- Quote: "John is clearly aiming his guns at the city of Rome, the empire of his day, and the emperors...But we've seen this before...it becomes apparent that John has placed the judgment of Rome, the first-century city of Rome, against the backdrop of God's judgment on the larger world."
- **Fulfillment:** He suggests that Revelation 17-18 was fulfilled in the downfall of Rome in John's time, while also recognizing the prophetic scope of the symbolism.

- Quote: "And historically, Rome indeed was judged a century later. And at one level, Revelation 17 and 18 was indeed fulfilled in the downfall of the Rome of John's day that he was facing in his day."
- **Larger, End-Time Application:** He notes that Revelation applies the destruction of Rome against the backdrop of God's final judgement of the entire world and all God's enemies.
- Quote: "So, first-century Rome is now portrayed against the broader backdrop of God's final judgment on the entire world."

Conclusion

This lecture provides a detailed analysis of the contrasting responses to Babylon's fall, showing how it highlights the economic injustices of Rome and how God ultimately triumphs over those who oppose him. The passage contrasts the self-serving lament of those who profited from Rome and the joyful, worshipful celebration of the saints at their vindication. This lays the foundation for the final battle scene in Chapter 19, and the coming of the new heaven and earth.

This briefing should help clarify the main points and supporting ideas from Dr. Mathewson's lecture.

4. Mathewson, Revelation, Session 24, Revelation 18-19, Lament/Joy over Babylon's Fall

Revelation 18:9-19:10 Study Guide

Quiz

Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. According to the lecture, what is the primary reason the kings of the earth mourn the fall of Babylon?
2. How does the lecture connect the merchants' lament in Revelation 18 to the Old Testament book of Ezekiel?
3. What is significant about the inclusion of "bodies and souls of men" in the list of Babylon's merchandise?
4. What is the significance of the merchants and kings of the earth standing "far off" during Babylon's fall?
5. How does the lecture characterize the saints' reaction to the fall of Babylon, contrasting it with the laments of others?
6. What Old Testament text does the lecture identify as a model for the prophetic act of casting a millstone into the sea in Revelation 18?
7. What are the three reasons for Babylon's fall that are summarized in the lecture?
8. What does the lecture explain as the primary function of the hymns in Revelation 19:1-6?
9. What is the symbolic meaning of the wedding of the Lamb and his bride in Revelation 19?
10. Why does the angel rebuke John for attempting to worship him?

Answer Key

1. The kings mourn not for their sins but because their source of wealth and luxury, which came from their participation in Babylon's economic system and idolatry, has been destroyed. They lament the loss of their opulent lifestyle and access to riches provided by their relationship with Babylon.

2. The lecture connects the merchants' lament to the oracle against Tyre in Ezekiel 27, highlighting the shared theme of mourning the loss of trade and wealth due to the downfall of a major city. Ezekiel's portrayal of Tyre's downfall serves as a model for the merchants' response to the fall of Babylon.
3. The inclusion of "bodies and souls of men" reveals that Rome's economy included a brutal slave trade, where human beings were treated as commodities for profit. By noting the "souls" of these humans, John emphasizes the dehumanization and spiritual cost of Rome's economic system.
4. The distance they maintain symbolizes their fear of divine judgment; they do not want to be caught up in the destruction of Babylon. They stand apart not in repentance, but in self-preservation.
5. The lecture notes that, unlike those who mourn, the saints are commanded to rejoice over the fall of Babylon. This is because God's judgment on Babylon is seen as an act of justice that avenges the saints.
6. The lecture identifies Jeremiah 51 as a model, specifically the symbolic act of casting a scroll weighted with a stone into the Euphrates River, symbolizing the irrevocable downfall of Babylon. This serves as the model for the angel's prophetic act in Revelation 18.
7. The three reasons for Babylon's fall are: (1) Its self-glorification, claiming divine authority and worship, (2) its arrogance and excessive wealth and luxury obtained by exploiting others, and (3) its extreme violence and persecution of God's people, as well as others.
8. The primary function is to interpret the judgment of Babylon by expressing the rejoicing and praise of the saints, demonstrating God's justice and victory over evil. The hymns emphasize that Babylon's fall is an act of God's righteousness, avenging the blood of the saints.
9. The wedding of the Lamb and his bride symbolizes the consummation of God's promises to his people and the intimate relationship between Christ and the Church. It signifies the ultimate victory of God's kingdom and the reward of salvation for his people.
10. The angel rebukes John to assert that only God is worthy of worship, reinforcing the strict monotheism found in Revelation. The angel's response emphasizes that even highly exalted spiritual beings are mere servants of God.

Essay Questions

1. Analyze the use of Old Testament imagery and prophecy in Revelation 18:9-19:10, focusing on how the fall of Babylon is portrayed through the lenses of Ezekiel and Jeremiah. How do these allusions contribute to the meaning of the text and its message?
2. Discuss the economic critique of Rome (Babylon) presented in Revelation 18, and analyze how the lecture interprets the role of merchants, kings, and ship owners in this system. How does this critique reflect the broader themes of the Book of Revelation?
3. Compare and contrast the responses of different groups to the fall of Babylon as portrayed in Revelation 18. What does the lecture suggest about the reasons for these differing responses, and what do they reveal about the characters' values and priorities?
4. Explore the significance of the shift from lament to joy in Revelation 18:20-19:10. How does this shift emphasize God's justice and the vindication of the saints? Consider the role of the hymns in this transition and what they reveal about the nature of the end times.
5. Examine the use of wedding banquet imagery in Revelation 19 and explain its connection to Old Testament prophecy and the broader narrative of the book. How does the lecture interpret the symbolic meaning of the bride, and what does this imagery signify for the relationship between God and his people?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Babylon:** A symbolic representation of Rome and any oppressive, godless empire or system that opposes God and his people, characterized by its economic exploitation, luxury, idolatry, and violence.
- **Prostitute:** A metaphor for Rome, depicted as seducing nations into idolatry and economic exploitation through her seductive wealth and practices, leading them into "adultery" against God.
- **Kings of the Earth:** The rulers and leaders of nations who have benefited from Rome's wealth and have participated in its idolatrous economic system, now mourning its destruction.

- **Merchants:** Those who engaged in trade and commerce with Rome, profiting from the import and export of luxury goods, and now lamenting the loss of their wealth.
- **Ship Owners:** Those involved in maritime trade and shipping, who also benefited from Rome's economy, and now mourning its downfall as the source of their wealth is destroyed.
- **Lament:** Expressions of sorrow and mourning, specifically seen in the reactions of the kings, merchants, and ship owners to Babylon's destruction because their wealth is lost.
- **Woe:** A cry of distress and judgment, used to express the coming destruction of Babylon and is spoken by those lamenting.
- **Saints:** The faithful followers of God who have been persecuted and oppressed by Babylon, and who are now called to rejoice over its destruction and are the bride of the Lamb.
- **Vindication:** The act of being declared righteous and justified, in this context, God vindicates his saints by judging their enemies and rewarding their faithfulness.
- **Millstone:** A symbol of the complete and utter destruction of Babylon, depicted as a prophetic act where the angel casts a large millstone into the sea.
- **Hallelujah:** A Hebrew expression meaning "Praise the Lord," expressing adoration and worship of God, and often used in the hymns of Revelation.
- **Wedding of the Lamb:** A symbol of the final union between Christ and his Church, the consummation of God's promises to his people, and the establishment of his eternal kingdom.

5. FAQs on Mathewson, Revelation, Session 24, Revelation 18-19, Lament/Joy over Babylon's Fall, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ: Revelation 18:9-19:10 - The Fall of Babylon and the Wedding of the Lamb

- **Question 1: Who mourns the fall of Babylon (Rome), and why?**
- **Answer:** Three groups mourn the fall of Babylon (Rome): the kings of the earth, the merchants, and the ship owners. They lament not because of any remorse for their sins, but because the source of their wealth and luxury has been destroyed. These groups had become excessively wealthy through their participation in Rome's economic system and its trade of luxurious goods, including even the slave trade. Their lament is a self-serving sorrow over lost profits and status, not genuine repentance. They fear the judgment, and thus stand far off in their mourning.
- **Question 2: What does the extensive list of cargo in Revelation 18:12-13 signify?**
- **Answer:** The list of luxury goods, including gold, silver, precious stones, fine linen, and even human "bodies and souls," represents the excessive wealth and consumerism that characterized Rome. This list mirrors the type of merchandise that would have been imported into the city, highlighting Rome's role as a center for trade and luxury, but also shows how this luxury was achieved through exploitation. The inclusion of "bodies and souls" points to Rome's involvement in the slave trade, treating humans as commodities for profit and illustrating the dehumanizing nature of its economic system.
- **Question 3: How does Revelation use the imagery of the prostitute in relation to Babylon?**
- **Answer:** The image of the prostitute, adorned in purple and gold, which is first described in chapter 17 and is also referred to in chapter 18, symbolizes Rome's seductive and corrupting nature. Rome, like a prostitute, entices nations into "adultery" by drawing them into its idolatrous economic system, promising wealth and luxury. This metaphor shows how Rome's pursuit of wealth and power led to the exploitation and moral corruption of other nations, rather than simply referring to physical adultery.

- **Question 4: How does the response of the saints differ from that of the mourners in Revelation 18?**
- **Answer:** Unlike the mourners who lament over their lost wealth, the saints, apostles, and prophets are commanded to rejoice over the fall of Babylon. They rejoice because God has judged Babylon for its injustices, including its persecution of God's people. This contrasting response emphasizes that the fall of Babylon is a victory for God's justice and a vindication of His faithful followers, shifting from self-serving grief to godly rejoicing over God's judgement.
- **Question 5: What is the symbolic significance of the millstone thrown into the sea in Revelation 18:21?**
- **Answer:** The symbolic act of a mighty angel casting a millstone into the sea represents the final and complete destruction of Babylon. This act, drawing upon Jeremiah 51, visually emphasizes the irreversible nature of Babylon's fall. The utter destruction of the city and the end of its commercial and cultural life (symbolized by the absence of music, lamps, and trade) is designed to portray the completeness of this judgment.
- **Question 6: What are the reasons given for Babylon's judgment and fall in Revelation 18?**
- **Answer:** Three primary reasons are given for Babylon's judgment. First, Rome glorified itself and asserted divine authority. Second, Rome was excessively wealthy and luxurious, achieving this at the expense of other nations and even their own provinces. It also seduced nations into joining its exploitative economic system. Third, Rome was guilty of extreme violence and persecuted God's people, even being described as being drunk with their blood. This violence extends beyond God's people to all people whom they killed in their expansion and maintenance of power.

- **Question 7: What is the significance of the “wedding of the Lamb” in Revelation 19?**
- **Answer:** The wedding of the Lamb represents the consummation of God's promises to his people and their ultimate union with Christ. This event is not limited to ethnic Israel but includes all who follow Christ. The bride, adorned in fine linen (symbolizing the righteous deeds of the saints), represents the redeemed, purified, and victorious believers. This imagery is meant to portray a deep, intimate communion and union between God and His people. The wedding banquet metaphor emphasizes the joy and fulfillment of their salvation.
- **Question 8: What is the overall message about the nature of the judgment in Revelation 18-19?**
- **Answer:** The judgment of Babylon in Revelation is portrayed as a righteous act of God, responding to the city's idolatry, injustice, and persecution of God's people. The contrast between the mourning of those who benefited from the city's wealth and the rejoicing of the saints demonstrates the different perspectives of the worldly and the godly. The use of Old Testament prophetic texts, particularly the destruction of ancient Babylon and Tyre, emphasizes the divine judgment of all idolatrous empires and nations. The fall of Babylon is not an end point but rather the beginning of the final rule of God over all of creation, which is reflected in the wedding feast and the beginning of Christ's reign. The judgement of the enemies of God is in service of a greater reward for God's people.