

Come Out of Her, My People, So That You Will Not Share in Her Sins

18: 4-5

DIG: As compelling as the power of evil is, a voice from heaven exhorts God's people to holiness. At this point, who are His people? How can they come out of her?

REFLECT: How many times has God warned you to flee a certain sin? Has the Lord remembered your crimes? How far is the east from the west? Is it without measure?

From the middle of the Great Tribulation forward, the LORD will increase the pressure on mankind to repent. Once the antichrist is revealed (**Second Thessalonians 2:3**) and the mighty angel declares: **There will be no more delay (10:6)**, all restraint will be removed. From that point on, the world will be divided into three camps: **Isra'el**, those aiding **Isra'el** and those opposed to **Isra'el**. So when this voice from heaven says **My people**, it means **Isra'el (Romans 11:26)**, or the **sheep** Gentiles aiding **Isra'el (Matthew 25:34-41)**.

The destruction of **Babylon** will be the second stage in the Campaign of Armageddon. But before **she** is destroyed, **ADONAI** will give **five warnings**, all from the book of **Jeremiah**, to **the Jews** still living there to flee the city before it is too late. There are two types of prophecies:

First, there are **near historical** prophecies that describe something that will take place within the lifetime of the prophet. For example, the LORD sent **Jeremiah** to confront the false prophet **Hananiah** who was prophesying that **the Jews** would defeat the Babylonians. Then **Jeremiah** said to **Hananiah**, "Listen, **Hananiah!** **ADONAI** has not sent you, yet you have persuaded this nation to trust in a lie. Therefore, this is what **ADONAI** says: I am about to remove you from the face of the earth. This very year you are going to die, because you have preached rebellion against God." In the seventh month of that same year, **Hananiah** the false prophet died (**Jeremiah 28:1-17**).

Secondly, there are **far eschatological** prophecies that will happen in the last days. **All five of Jeremiah's prophecies are far eschatological prophecies.** The **first** is in **Jeremiah 50:1** and **6a**, where we read: **This is the Word which ADONAI spoke concerning Babylon, through Jeremiah the prophet: Flee out of Babylon and leave the land of the Babylonians (CJB).** The **second** warning will proclaim: **Hear the sound of the fugitives, of**

those escaping from Babylon, coming to proclaim in Zion the vengeance of ADONAI our God, vengeance over His Temple (Jeremiah 50:28 CJB). Those Jews who escape from Babylon will run away to Jerusalem. The destruction of Babylon will be the LORD's vengeance on Babylon for her abuse of His people and His Temple. As the fugitives and refugees arrive from Babylon, they announce the destruction to the Jews living there (Jeremiah 50:10 and Jeremiah 51:45). These are the **third** and **fourth** warnings. The **fifth** and last warning is Jeremiah 51:50. Thus, the Jews living in Babylon will be given plenty of warning to flee. They will make their way to Jerusalem with zeal.

God's judgment on this commercially prosperous but morally bankrupt society can be avoided, as another voice from heaven makes clear. The word for another is *allos*, meaning another of the same kind. This suggests that the speaker is another angel like the one in 18:1.³⁸⁷ So just as Lot was warned to leave Sodom, another angel warns the Jews: Come out of her, My people, quoting from Jeremiah 51:45 (also see Isaiah 52:11 and Jeremiah 50:8, 51:6). So the purpose of leaving Babylon is twofold. First, by separation from her adultery they will not share in her sins. And Secondly, they will not receive any of her plagues inflicted on them (18:4). The reference to plagues refers to the bowl judgments in Chapter 16.³⁸⁸

The angel continued to proclaim that Babylon's sins are piled up to heaven (18:5a). Nimrod led the first Babel rebels in building a great tower that would reach to the heavens (Exodus 11:4-7). That tower was a religious symbol called a *ziggurat*. It had a square base and sloping, stepped sides with a small shrine on top. They were often painted with blue enamel in order to make them blend in, in their minds, with the heavenly home of one or more of their gods. They believed that the gods would briefly live in the shrine when they came down to meet with the people. They would climb up the side of the *ziggurat* all the way to the top in the hope that the gods would condescend to meet with them. But the angel at the end of the Great Tribulation will declare that the sins of Babylon, like bricks of a *ziggurat*, are piled up, literally *glued or welded together*, to heaven. The only thing that would reach up to heaven would be the stench of their rebellion. Therefore, God had to come down to see what rebellious man was up to and punish their sin.

Later, the great king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon dreamed that he was a great tree, with its top touching the sky, visible to the whole earth (Daniel 4:20). But that great tree was cut down and proud Nebuchadnezzar had to live like an animal for seven long years. Neither the Tower in ancient Babylon, nor the great tree of later Babylon, could really reach up to heaven. Consequently, her judgment reaches to the skies, it raises as high as the clouds (Jeremiah 51:9).

As far as the believer is concerned, the Bible teaches this wonderful truth: **As high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His love for those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west (which is immeasurable), so far has He removed our transgressions from us (Psalm 103:11-12).** However, for those who reject Yeshua, **He** does not forget and **He** knows the extent of **Babylon's** wickedness. When **the Lord** comes back, all wrongs will be made right. It will have been a long time between Nimrod's rebellion at the Tower of Babel and the Beast's rebellion during the Great Tribulation, but **ADONAI** will remember **her crimes**. It will be time for **her** to drink the cup of wrath (**18:5b**).³⁸⁹ Although **He** is longsuffering, **Babylon's** ultimate punishment is inescapable.