

The Revelation of Jesus Christ – Message #22

Revelation 18 – The Doom of Political Babylon (1/31/2010 PM)

After 7th Bowl Judgment is poured out Jesus Christ will return in His glor*+ious second coming to the earth seen in Chapter 19. Chapters 17 & 18 add more detail to the doom of the final world system of the Antichrist. The destruction of Babylon that was foretold in Revelation 14:8 is now described. Babylon is the name for the kingdom of Antichrist. Chapter 17 revealed the fall of the religious aspect of his kingdom. Chapter 18 deals with the commercial aspects of it.

As we saw last week the name Babylon is symbolic of the kingdom of the Antichrist. There is debate as to whether there is an actual city called Babylon in the last days. It is possible that it represents a real city which will serve as the capital of Antichrist's kingdom. Six times in chapter 18 Babylon is referred to as a "city" (10, 16, 18, 19, 21). We saw last week that religious Babylon was also referred to as a city. (18) "And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth." In chapter 16 Babylon is mentioned in comparison to the literal city of Jerusalem and the literal cities of the world. (16:19) "Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God..." Prophecies concerning Babylon have not been completely fulfilled such as Isaiah 13:19-22; 14:22-23 & Jeremiah 50:13, 39; 51:37.

It Seems Best to View Babylon as a Literal City

1. The Angelic Pronouncements (1-8)

Two of Three Angelic Messages

The phrase "After these things" is used by John to introduce a new vision. He saw a glorious mighty angel descending from heaven to earth. (1) "After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory."

The word "another" means of the same kind. This is not Christ, who will appear in the next chapter. The 5th Bowl Judgment will have plunged the world into darkness. This angel will reflect the glory of God and be seen by the entire world.

• **The first angel's cry of condemnation** (1-3)

(2) "And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, 'Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen...'"

One wonders if this is the angel who had previously announced Babylon's fall (14:8). He will cry out announcing the final complete destruction of the kingdom of the Antichrist. The repetition of "is fallen, is fallen" may indicate the two stages of Babylon's fall. Chapter 17 recorded the fall of Religious Babylon. That aspect of Babylon was destroyed by the Antichrist. We said that will most likely occur in the middle of the Tribulation Period. Now the coming of Christ (chapter 19) will bring the complete fall of Antichrist's kingdom which is really Satan's kingdom.

(2) "...and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!"

It seems that God will gather the demon hordes released upon the earth to this city. Jesus used the imagery of birds to represent Satan in Matthew 13:19 in the Parable of the Sower. The imagery is that of great carrion birds hovering over the destroyed city. God will destroy Babylon because she will seduce the entire world. The Antichrist's demonic influence will lead the world into a religious and materialistic type of drunken stupor.

(3) “For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury.”

This city will be the worldwide center of godless commercialism. It will be linked to the worship of the Antichrist and facilitated through the Mark of the Beast. The word “mark” means to engrave. It was used to describe tattoos or brands given to slaves in the Roman Empire. Members of cults in the first century would often mark themselves. The mark will be necessary in order to function during the reign of the Antichrist. (13:16-17) “no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number...”

- **The second angel’s call to separation (4-5)**

Another voice like the first voice calls to believers from heaven.

(4) “And I heard another voice from heaven saying, ‘Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.’”

God is commanding His people to disentangle themselves from the Antichrist’s world system. Believers who survive the tribulation will face powerful temptations to conform. They are commanded to not “share in her sins”. God’s call to believers of every age is to flee temptation and to live separately from the world system. God wants His people to not “receive of her plagues”. These are most likely referring to the judgments upon this capital city as the Bowl Judgments will be worldwide.

(5) “For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.”

Believers must flee for the time of grace is over and only judgment remains. The word “reached” can also mean piled. There seems to be an illusion to the original Tower of Babel here. God has promised those who trust Him to not remember their sins against them.

- **Babylon will experience divine retribution (6-8)**

(6) “Render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her.”

The angel calls for God’s vengeance upon the kingdom of Antichrist for all of her sins. The particular sin in this verse is her persecution of the saints “to you”. The cup of Babylon’s sin is full now she will drink the cup of God’s wrath. Genesis 15:16, “for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.”

The Bible teaches that God matches the punishment to the crime.

(7-8) “In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, ‘I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.’ Therefore her plagues will come in one day — death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her.”

Ancient Babylon made the same boast.

Isaiah 47:8-9, “Therefore hear this now, you who are given to pleasures, who dwell securely, who say in your heart, ‘I am, and there is no one else besides me; I shall not sit as a widow, nor shall I know the loss of children’; but these two things shall come to you in a moment, in one day: the loss of children, and widowhood. They shall come upon you in their fullness because of the multitude of your sorceries, for the great abundance of your enchantments.”

This happened to historical Babylon as recorded in Daniel 5. **God will Bring a Similar Judgment on Prophetic Babylon**

2. **The Human Mourning (9-19)**

They Will Not Be Mourning for Their Sins

The earth dwellers will be devastated as they witness their capital city suddenly and completely destroyed. Two specific groups of people are indicated.

- **The political leaders of the world**

(9-10) “The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning, standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come'”

These will certainly include representatives of the original ten kingdoms who are still alive. They prospered for a time because of their allegiance to the Antichrist. They will witness the sudden destruction of the crown jewel of Antichrist’s kingdom. This symbolizes the collapse of the confederation of nations built by the Antichrist. The phrase “in one hour” is repeated three times (10, 17, 19). This highlights the suddenness of God’s judgment. What they saw as “that mighty city” God swept away in a moment.

- **The business leaders of the world**

(11) “And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore...”

The city’s destruction symbolizes and results in the total collapse of the world’s economic system (12-19).

It is no wonder that the merchants of the earth will wail and mourn. Sadly they will not mourn for their sins but for their material losses.

Antichrist Will Bring to End the False Religious System and Christ Will Bring to End the Political and Commercial Systems

3. **The Heavenly Rejoicing (20-24)**

Note the Contrast

Nothing of the devastation on earth has any negative upon heaven. The earth dwellers are mourning while heaven is rejoicing.

(20) “Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!”

- **Heaven does not rejoice for sinners’ damnation but for the saints’ vindication**

Jesus said that heaven rejoices “for one sinner that repents”, Luke 15:7. Ezekiel 33:11, “As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.”

This is the answer to the prayer of the martyred dead.

(6:9-10) “How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”

- **The great angel and the great stone**

(21) “Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, ‘Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore.’”

There appears to be a reference to the great stone of Daniel 2. The judgment of historical Babylon was pictured by a stone, Jeremiah 51:63-64. The phrase “shall not be found anymore” is essentially repeated seven times in verses 21-23. This depicts the complete destruction of the city. Many believe the city is Rome because of verse 24. Rome historically killed apostles and prophets.

The Religious, Political, and Economical Power of Antichrist’s Kingdom Has Been Destroyed, Christ Will Return to Destroy His Military Might