

25. The destruction of Babylon

12/26/2004

In a book entitled 'Down to Earth', John Lawrence tells the story of a city that dared God to show Himself and paid a terrible price. It seems that the city of Messina, Sicily, was home to many wicked and atheistic people.

On December 25, 1908, a newspaper published in Messina printed a parody against God, daring Him to make Himself known by sending an earthquake.

Three days later, on December 28, the city and its surrounding district was devastated by a terrible quake, Richter scale 7.5 that killed 84,000 people.

Like those people in Messina, Sicily, the people on the earth during the time of Tribulation will face horrible consequences and judgements of God for their sins.

Babylon was not only an ancient city and a powerful empire, but also the symbol of mankind's rebellion against God. In Revelation 18, Babylon represents the world system of "the beast," particularly in its economic and political aspects.

A. THE FALL OF BABYLON

Revelation 18:1-3 After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. 2 And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! 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."

It was no ordinary angel that made this announcement, because he had great power and a glory that radiated throughout the whole earth. Despite Satan's devices and the opposition of evil men, the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord.

Why do we see Babylon again in chapter 18 after seeing her destroyed in chapter 17? Because chapter 17 deals with religious Babylon. Chapter 18 deals with political and economic Babylon. This brings forth a study we must do: There are definite similarities between Babylon as described in Revelation 17 and Revelation 18.

Both are under the rule of Antichrist, and have ruling queens. Both are filled with blasphemy. Both hate the saints, and shed their blood. Both are associates with kings in fornication. And both are under judgment and destroyed.

However, there are also some significant differences:

Religious Babylon (Rev. 17)

1. Mystery Babylon
2. Symbol: a harlot woman
3. Identified with Rome (inland)
4. Woman, harlot and mother
5. Guilty: religious abominations
6. Destroyed by a political power that previously supported her

Commercial Babylon (Rev. 18)

1. Great Babylon or Babylon the Great
2. Symbol: a great city
3. Identified with a port city
4. Habitation, great city, market place
5. Guilty: greed, self-indulgence
6. Destroyed by a sudden act of God

7. Was destroyed at the middle of the Tribulation.

7. Was destroyed at the end of the Tribulation

Is Babylon of Revelation 18 a literal or symbolic city? Some have thought it to be a future rebuilt Babylon on the Euphrates River in the Middle East. This is now a desolate desert in modern day Iraq. Saddam Hussein has been outspoken in his desire to resurrect the ruined city of Babylon in all of its glory. He tried to do this, and it is conceivable that a rebuilt Babylon could be a world economic center, especially with the wealth of Mideast oil. But I don't think that he is going to accomplish that from a solitary confinement in an American Military prison.

This judgment has come because the Babylonian "system" has polluted the whole world. As in the judgment of "the harlot," the sin is that of "fornication" or idolatry. The system intoxicated the people of the world with all the riches and pleasures it had to offer. It catered to those who were lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.

B. A CALL TO SEPARATE THEMSELVES FROM THE WORLD

Revelation 18:4-5 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. 5 For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.

In all ages, God's true people have had to separate themselves from that which is worldly and anti-God. When God called Abraham, He ordered him to get out of his country. God separated the Jewish nation from Egypt and warned the Israelites not to go back. The church today is commanded to separate itself from that which is ungodly. If we are not careful, the influence of the world will creep into our lives.

Jesus prayed to the Father in heaven on behalf of us about this very thing:

John 17:15 I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.

True unity of the Spirit exists among believers. So we must not compromise by joining forces with that which is opposed to Christ. That is why I believe that interfaith movement is nothing more than well packaged compromised garbage satan throws at those who don't have any idea about the truth of the Word of God.

2Co 6:14 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?

The call to depart from Babylon and the worldliness is the process of our Christian lives. If we live like the rest of the world, why do we bother to claim as Christians? It is sanctification through the Lord Jesus Christ. So ask yourself today, if you are different than your coworkers at your work place or your neighborhood. If the non-believers around you feel that you act no different than them, you must ask yourself if you are truly walking with God. If you enjoy their dirty jokes, go to see R-rated filthy movies, cuss like them, use the Lord's name in vain and drink and smoke like them, where is the fruit of your salvation? We all need examine our hearts today.

The sins of commercial Babylon have piled up to heaven like a tower of Babel. It is no wonder God dealt with them severely.

Revelation 18:6-8 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. 7 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.' 8 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.

The ancient Greek word for 'render' "apodidomi" means literally "to pay a debt" or "to give back that which is due." God will give to commercial Babylon exactly what she deserves.

C. LAMENT FOR BABYLON

Revelation 18:9-10 "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, 10 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.'

The utter destruction of a city like Babylon taking place in one hour would most likely be the result of a nuclear exchange – the fallout of which would help explain why the kings of the earth "stand afar off."

Revelation 18:11 *And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore:*

No one is saying, "Oh, those poor people in Babylon." No, they're saying, "Oh no, the world economy is wiped out." And as the results of the destruction of Babylon are described, it feels as if we're on a floor-by-floor tour of a huge department store like Saks 5th Avenue or Bloomingdale's.

Revelation 18:12a *merchandise of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls,*

First floor: Jewelry

Revelation 18:2b *fine linen and purple, silk and scarlet,*

Second Floor: Clothing

Revelation 18:2c *every kind of citron wood, every kind of object of ivory, every kind of object of most precious wood, bronze, iron, and marble;*

Third Floor: Home Furnishings

Revelation 18:13a *and cinnamon and incense, fragrant oil and frankincense,*

Fourth Floor: Cosmetics

Revelation 18:13b *wine and oil, fine flour and wheat,*

Fifth Floor: Food Court

Revelation 18:3c *cattle and sheep, horses and chariots,*

Sixth Floor: Automotive

Revelation 18:3d *and bodies and souls of men.*

The Basement – Slavery, most likely including sex slavery.

Please note not one of these items are for life's necessities. They're all luxuries. Babylon specializes in materialism gone mad.

Revelation 18:14-16 The fruit that your soul longed for has gone from you, and all the things which are rich and splendid have gone from you, and you shall find them no more at all. 15 The merchants of these things, who became rich by her, will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, 16 and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls!

Babylon is the city that drives world economy, so everyone who exported from or imported to her is saying, "Oh no! How will we buy and sell now?"

D. OPPOSITE RESPONSES

Revelation 18:17-20 For in one hour such great riches came to nothing.' Every shipmaster, all who travel by ship, sailors, and as many as trade on the sea, stood at a distance 18 and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What is like this great city?' 19 They threw dust on their heads and cried out, weeping and wailing, and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city, in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth! For in one hour she is made desolate.' 20 Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!"

The peoples' response to the destruction of Babylon is to weep and wail. But heaven's response is to rejoice.

Should God's people rejoice when judgment comes? Yes, but we don't rejoice in the destruction on the lives of the people in judgment. Rather, we rejoice in the righteous resolution God's judgment brings.

E. FINALITY OF BABYLON

Revelation 18:21-23a 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. 22 The sound of harpists, musicians, flutists, and trumpeters shall not be heard in you anymore. No craftsman of any craft shall be found in you anymore, and the sound of a millstone shall not be heard in you anymore. 23 The light of a lamp shall not shine in you anymore, and the voice of bridegroom and bride shall not be heard in you anymore.

The entire life of the city comes to a complete, abrupt halt in the aftermath of what is most likely a nuclear war. To John, the destruction in a single hour of the economic capital of the world would have been unimaginable. For us, we know that it is very much possible with the current nuclear weapon.

Revelation 18:23b For your merchants were the great men of the earth, You are going to tell me that I am pushing my envelope to say this: Who, where, what is this city of Babylon? The first clue is that her merchants were the great, or wealthiest, men on earth.

The U.S.A. government have been continuously support and subsidize of the tobacco industry. This is a good example of the "get rich at all costs" mentality that will do anything for all mighty dollar – even if it means hiring Joe Camel to sell cigarettes to our own children.

Revelation 18:23c for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived.

The second clue is here: The word translated “sorceries” being ‘pharmakeia’ in Greek, or “drugs.” The second clue concerning Babylon’s identity is that this city has caught the entire world in her web of drug traffic.

The United States is the largest illegal drug consuming country in the world. The illegal drug industry is worth billions dollars. From LSD, marijuana, crack, cocaine, heroin to methamphetamine, there are many illegal drugs to choose from. Tucson and Pima County area law enforcement agencies alone seize millions dollars worth illegal drugs every year. The law enforcement officers from other area tell them that much of the drugs come through Nogales, Mexico through Tucson, AZ. Guess which highway they are using? I-19.

Revelation 18:24 And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth.”

The third clue is here: The blood of the saints is on Babylon’s head.

Since 1900, an average of 250,000 born-again believers have been martyred every year. This issue is presently before our own Congress as the Christian community is saying the U.S. must take a stand – particularly as it relates to the nation of China, where the highest percentage of this type of persecution has taken place. But thanks to our former immoral and idiotic president Bill Clinton, our country refused to do this, instead granting China Most Favored Nation status in order that her 2.5 billion people can buy our cars and computers.

So far our country has been standing with Israel. But it won’t be long that the U.S.A. will cut off support to Israel and turn against her and will be the flag ship of anti-Israel movement. This Babylon city could be New York City which represents the U.S.A.

Until now, I used to think that there is no mention of America in the Book of Revelation. You have heard me saying that not very long ago. But as I study more, I am starting to doubt what I have said. This political and economical Babylon could be the United States. Am I going to make a doctrine out of it or write a book about it? You’ve got to be kidding me. No way, Jose! It is a mere opinion of mine. Probably it ain’t worth a lot.

Babylon the Great is fallen. The kings and the people who were involved with her are watching her ruin were crying and wailing for the ruin of her. They were mourning for no more opportunities to fornicate and commit sins with Babylon the enemy of God instead of repenting.

F. APPLICATION

1) Truth always offends those who want to compromise it.

People who are sinning against God often feel remorse about no more opportunities to continue the shenanigans of their sins rather than repenting and being right with God. When they are told and presented with what they are supposed to do according to the Word of God, they feel offended and think that their lives were interfered with by the people who tell them the truth of God.

If you feel that what you have heard from me is offending you, please take that as a warning from God. Now it is your choice to obey God or reject Him one more time.

When you reject Him, you are one step closer to your own self-destruction that God does not desire.