

THE APOCALYPSE – A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

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The Demise of Man-made Empires

(Rev 18:1 - 24)

The Fall of the Great Whore – 18:1-8

Revelation 18:1-3, *“And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and she holds of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.*”

Another angel of the same kind came down from heaven. He has great power (i.e. authority and jurisdiction as opposed to *dunamis* which refers to the powerful force.) The earth was illuminated by his presence. This is a very emphatic appearance as the world would have been plunged into global darkness after the fifth vial judgement. This is a manifestation of the brilliance of a glorious heavenly being.

He cried mightily with a strong voice signifying that it will be heard by many. He will not be ignored. His bodily brilliance and loudness of voice would make him extremely authoritative. His message was the fall of man’s final capital city which represents the final and total fall of the empire of mankind.

“Babylon is fallen is fallen” – The city has fallen. This was written in the 2 Aorist tense (--a past tense with emphasis on the action) which means that as far as God is concerned is that this event might be in the distant future but the certainty of the fall is definite. In God’s omniscient eyes, Babylon has already fallen.. The repetition of the verb highlights this great certainty.

The first and foremost reason given for her destruction is that she has become the dwelling place of demons and for her being a fortified city of every foul spirit and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. This would be birds of prey like the vultures which lives on the carcasses of dead animals. The city of Babylon is the stronghold of all the demonic activities and fallen men would embrace them as if they were gods. The final deeds of sinful men are portrayed here for men to see. The heinous nature sin is magnified blatantly by God so that even the blind will be able to see! This capital city had become the dwelling place or home of myriads of demons. The demonic activities would be magnified exponentially. In this nation of demons, they run freely and openly. They need not hide or behave like angels of light. They can be themselves for that is what a person does in his home . . . his façade is gone and his evil but true nature is glaringly obvious for all to see.

This is also a city for the protection of every foul or unclean spirit. This would include men definitely as the demons are already mentioned previously. This uncleanness would include idolatry, all sorts of sexual sins and deviant behaviour. Not only do sinners commit and condone such sins they will be given protection. From the top to the bottom of society evil and wickedness would prevail. Sinful human beings with the mark of the beast on them will be living side by side with demons. There is no fear of God in any of them. The vials judgements from God and the testimony of the two witnesses will fall upon them like water off the duck's back.

Babylon will also become a cage of every unclean and hateful birds. These birds would be scavengers seeking the carcasses of men, women and children for food. These would include the vultures, ravens, crow, etc. Such birds exist in desolate and unclean areas. This implies that there will be many killings and deaths. Babylon would become a city of the dead!

All nations with the exception of the 144,000 Israelites supernaturally protected by God in the wilderness and other saints will be made drunk by Babylon, drunk in their sin and shame. Evil will become good. Murder becomes an acceptable lifestyle. They will delight in the demonic activities, sins and killings and evil of the worst kind. There would be all sorts of unimaginable sexual orgies and immoral acts. The debaucherous lifestyle will be worldwide in those days. There will no restraint at all. The beastlike behaviour of mankind will be matched only by the demons flying overhead seeking for believers to devour.

These followers and worshippers of Satan will be rewarded handsomely with material wealth untold. Luxury and fornication go hand in hand. It is true today and it will be true in the last days. Beware of the deceitfulness of a heart that loves money. It will destroy you in the end. **1 Timothy 6:10-12**, *"For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."*

Revelation 18:4-8, *"And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow."*

Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her."

"Another voice from heaven" (vv. 4-8) – This is the voice of God as God's people are called "my people." They were commanded to come out (2 Aorist imperative) of her in order that they will not partake of her sins. Biblical separation is the most neglected, misunderstood and hated doctrine today. But it is the most needful doctrine too. For this is the doctrinal insulation that God has given to all His faithful children to observe for their own protection and well being. If the believer or the church would jettison this most blessed doctrine of biblical separation he begins to fall into sin and doctrinal compromise. The beginning of the end has commenced. Paper separation without practice is mockery to God and it deceives the congregation of the gullible. There are some B-P churches that have very strong statements in their church Constitution on biblical separation but they do not practice them at all. For example these churches encourage their members to join the Campus Crusade for Christ or the Varsity Christian fellowship or even the Navigators. These parachurch organizations are part of the World Council of Churches which is the seed of the end time church/government of the Antichrist i.e. the city of Babylon!

Biblical separation must be taught and practiced by God's people or else they will die a slow death. The spiritual work of Christ in today's churches will be compromised. Biblical separation is the first line of defense given to God's people for their own protection. But once this doctrine is ignored or betrayed by God's people, the flood gates will open and sin and errors will rush in. The church or Bible College will be infected and the death of the ministry has begun. It is now only a matter of time before the destruction is complete. The mere existence of the church or seminary or College is not life. Life must be in the Spirit. To be in the Spirit means that all the truths of God must be upheld and obeyed. Anything less would be a failure in the eyes of God.

Come out so that the punishment that God dishes out onto Babylon will not fall on the believers. Her sins have reached the ears of God i.e. they are now full to the brim. Every sins committed by sinful man will be known and remembered by the all-knowing God. Unless there is Christ the mediator to stand between the sinner and God, his Judge, he will be punished die for his sins. He will be sent to Hell!

Despite all the efforts of God to turn sinful men around with the seven trumpets and seven vials judgement, and the witnesses of the saints, they refused to repent and are set in their evil ways of idolatry. They will be dealt with by God. The arrogance of Babylon will be openly trodden down. Babylon will be humiliated by God for her sins and pride. The judgement is, *"How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her."*

The plagues will come in one day, a symbol of the swiftness of her destruction. Death and mourning and famine will also be her lot in the course of her destruction. Fire will be used by God to destroy the city. The city will be utterly cast down by God Almighty. It will receive her just reward i.e. to raze her to the ground permanently.

a. *The Tears for the Great Whore* – 18:9-19

Revelation 18:9-14, *“And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come. And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.”*

Kings will bewail and mourn--When the smoke of the destruction of Babylon rises into the darkened sky, the kings of the earth will bewail (lit. “to cry loudly”) and lament (lit. *“to beat the breast in grief”*). These are the rulers of the end times who enjoyed their power given to them by Satan and the Antichrist. They mourn when they saw the end of their beloved city in smoke. They had their “fun and shame”. Now it is all over. All will be lost forever. But their tears did not cause them to lose their heads. They stood afar off for fear of being destroyed with their city. They saw her die but do not wish to die with her.

The reason for their tears was the loss of their power. Their cry reveals the kind of heart kings normally possess. *“Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come”* The formality and coldness of their cry is contrasted by the words of Christ when He cried for Jerusalem. *“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord”* (Matthew 23:37-39). *The warmth and genuine concern for Jerusalem despite Jerusalem’s waywardness and rejection of Christ, Christ wept for Jerusalem said that he would have been there for her if only she had turned to Him.*

The king who witnessed the destruction of Babylon wept tears of self-pity for their own loss rather than the loss of Babylon. They cried because they were unable to benefit from her any longer. Their golden goose has died! How quickly she has died.

Merchants will weep and mourn--They are the ones who have reaped financial and materialistic gain through her wicked deeds. They will see her burning and remain afar off for fear of her torment. They will cry uncontrollably.

Like the kings who lost their power base with the destruction of Babylon, these merchants have lost their soul of their trade. They will cry for loss of their wealth and business opportunities are gone forever. All the businesses of the world are represented in these verses. Imagine the kind of central economic power Babylon will possess in the last days. It was the heart and soul of every economy of the world! Now that Babylon is no more, the world’s economy will collapse.

Man who has put his trust in the wealth and materialism of this world will be completely devastated. Their life's savings and hopes dashed forever.

Revelation 18:15-19, *"The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! **For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! **for in one hour is she made desolate.**"*** [emphasis added]

Every Shipmaster and sailor weeping and wailing--Naval personal and owners of ships will also cry with dust on their heads and tears in their eyes as a sign of deep sadness and mourning, *"Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate."* Ship business is very big business. Billions of dollars are involved. Ships are used every day to transport goods all over the world. They are indispensable in our world of global trading. For example the Port of Authority of Singapore manages millions of containers every year and is regarded as one of the busiest ports in the world.

"PSA Singapore Terminals is a flagship terminal of PSA International Pte Ltd, a global leader in the ports and terminals business, with investments in 19 port projects in 11 countries - Singapore, Belgium, Brunei, China, India, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Portugal, South Korea and Thailand. In 2005, the Group handled 41.18 million TEUs of containers at all its ports around the world, including 22.28 million TEUs in Singapore. PSA Singapore Terminals is also the world's busiest transshipment hub, handling about one-fifth of the world's total container transshipment throughput, and 6% of global container throughput. It is also the world's largest refrigerated container (reefer) port with about 4,000 reefer points, handling over 400,000 reefers in 2005. PSA Singapore Terminals provides shippers with an excellent choice of 200 shipping lines with connections to 600 ports in 123 countries. This includes daily sailings to every major port in the world. It was voted the "Best Container Terminal Operator (Asia) for the 16th time at the 2005 Asian Freight & Supply Chain Awards, and "Best Container Terminal" at the Lloyd's List Maritime Asia Awards, for the 5th time." [<http://www.singaporepsa.com/html/corporate/index.htm>]

Till April 2006, PSA has already handled 7.43 million TEUs. This mode of transportation will be completely destroyed. All supply lines will cease forever. This life line of every modern city will be destroyed by God. Wretched sinful man who foolishly put his faith and trust in the things of this world will be loss forever. His god, materialism, will be helpless to help him. ALL WILL BE LOST PERMANENTLY AND FOREVER!

Who will destroy Babylon? The irony is that the same one whom she looked up to and supported will destroy her, the antichrist. God is the ultimate destroyer of Babylon but the immediate one would be the antichrist. The sovereignty of God is seen here. Remember the word in **Revelation 17:16-18**, *"And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth."*

All these three groups represent the wealthy evil men who took the side Satan for evil power and filthy lucre. They will weep when they realize that their source of wealth is destroyed. "They will have no more wealth and power" is the reason for their weeping and mourning.

It was a selfish reason that brought the tears to their eyes.

b. The Joy in the Destruction of the Great Whore— 18:20-24

Revelation 18:20-24, *“Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her. And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of harpers, and musicians and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.”*

Believers are called to rejoice—The contrast is deliberately stated very clearly by God. But for the believers who love the LORD and who are in heaven, there will be great rejoicing. Evil will now be removed from the earth once and for all never to return again. The evil that existed on earth all these millenniums will become a thing of the past. God has avenged them on their behalf. This is God’s just retribution upon a world drunk with sin and wickedness.

The powerful angel declared that Babylon will never rise again. No more music will be heard in the city. No more business will be made out of her. No one will live there anymore. Babylon will be deserted. No newly weds will wish to enter there and make it their home. The desolate and bankrupt nature of the once greatest empire of the Antichrist is seen by the totality of her capital city, Babylon’s destruction.

The merchants that did business in that city were the great men of the world. By her sorceries Babylon had deceived many.

Inside Babylon was found the blood of the saints and prophets and all those that were slain upon the earth for their faith. The myriads that were slain by Babylon in seven years of Great Tribulation cannot be numbered. **Revelation 7:9, 14**, *“After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; . . . Revelation 7:14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”*

OUR RESPONSE

Jesus advice to all listeners in **Matthew 6:33** is, *“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”*

On the other hand if we reject His advice and wish to go our own way then these would be the words of warning to all of us.

Luke 12:15-21, *“And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”*