

Revelation 18: The Judgment of Babylon, Part III

Scripture: Revelation 18

Introduction:

Having gained a bit of an understanding of who the "Scarlet whore of Babylon" is, and especially her relationship to the Scarlet beast of the sea, chapter 18 now brings us to the prophetic scene of her demise. It is here that we will find a description of her utter downfall, along with the way in which her downfall affects the whole world.

Now brethren, as we work through the apocalyptic language here, it is very important for us to recognize that we will view it in language that is most relevant for the people of John's day. It is a lot easier for us to translate these concepts into concepts that are more familiar to us here in the 21st century, than it would be for the people of John's day to do the reverse. And because the idolatrous world system encapsulated in the Roman Empire was most familiar to the people of John's day, we should expect this revelation to be given to us, with the use of concepts and ideas that were predominant in the Roman culture, which in fact, represents the manifestation of the whore of Babylon during the time of John. Remember, the whore of Babylon and the beasts are pictured in Revelation in their timeless forms (expanding throughout every world system and ungodly empirical rule that exists throughout the entirety of the church age, from John's day to the end, when Christ returns). And so, the descriptions given here, which would serve to benefit all ages, are geared toward describing the whore, as she is seen in all of the luxuries of the Roman Empire, in John's day.

For example, this chapter would be utterly useless for the original audience (and for audiences who have had to read the Book of Revelation for the first 1900+ years since it was written, for that matter) if it described Babylon according to the luxuries that will surround her at her final manifestation. Can you imagine how confused the people of John's day would have been if words like "internet, Ipod, Hollywood, bling, MTV, cell phones, texting...etc," were here used? It would have had no benefit for them. There would be nothing to encourage them to remain faithful or to warn them against compromise, because none of these things existed in their

day. But those things which did exist, can be used to benefit all following generations. We have no problem looking back and relating to those luxurious things, which were predominant in John's day. And so, as we see the whore, as one having an excess of all kinds of riches and material possessions, we must assume our own excesses to be pictured by these first century excesses, in order to see the relevance for us. Babylon of the OT helped describe Rome of the first century, and Rome of the first century helps describe every materialistic, lust driven empire that follows. That said, let us now work through the chapter.

I. Babylon is Fallen (vs. 1-8)

Another angel comes down from heaven, having great authority, and illuminating the earth with his glory. The authority of this angel assures us that his proclamation is absolutely certain, and to this end, he speaks in the prophetic present tense, assuring us that Babylon, the materialistic world system that governs and drives life as we know it, must and will fall. And his illuminating glory assures us that he comes from the presence of the Lord Himself, again, another clear indication that his proclamation is certain and guaranteed (Consider when Moses face was shining when he came down from Mt. Sinai, having met with God).

And so, this angel cries aloud 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" (vs. 2). [Comment on the poetic combination of "threes" in these verses- vs. 2, 3, 6, 7b, 8].

What then is the implication of verse 2? It is that the world system has been vacated; it has collapsed; that which once teemed with life is now barren, a dwelling place for demons, every foul spirit and every unclean and hated bird. What once thrived and energized life as we know it, has collapsed and become desolate and empty of everything but demons and defiled things. All that remains is the residue of her filthy, harlotrous ways.

And one of the reasons for this fall of Babylon is that she has infected the world with her idolatrous, seductress ways. She has pulled the attention of the world away from God and toward herself. "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" (vs. 3). Again, we find this description first very applicable to Rome of John's day, which became the life source of every form of idolatry and wicked way that pervaded the then known world.

Rome and every other manifestation of the whore would ultimately collapse, and so, the seven churches of Asia (and the people of God from all ages) are again warned to come away from the whore, and to recognize that her allurements are temporary, and she will soon be thrown down, along with all who trust in her [Read verses 4-8].

She is getting away with nothing. Her sins have mounted up to heaven, and it is only a matter of time before she is completely leveled and destroyed. God has an accounting of all of her sins, and she will be paid back for every God-dishonoring act she has committed. All that she has done to oppose God; to oppose the church and the Kingdom of God; every last distraction will be recompensed accordingly, upon her own head. In the same measure that she has lived comfortably and luxuriously in her sin, she will be recompensed with torment and sorrow. She thinks that she is an untouchable queen; she thinks that because she has enjoyed such uninhibited prosperity, that she will continue on forever, without retribution. But little does she know that she is only being fattened for the kill. In but a short time; in but a day, without warning, all of her glory will be taken away from her. She will be stripped down and burned with fire. "For strong is the Lord who judges her" (vs. 8b). [Isa. 47:7-9].

Brethren, who is the most to be feared, and greatest opposition that will come upon the mighty USA? Is it Alqaeda or some of the Muslim countries? Is it China or Russia or North Korea or anyone else? No! When we look at the utter corruption and defilement of our country; when we see how far we have regressed away from the Lord, we ought to see that our greatest enemy is the living God, Himself. And what will our bombs and our weapons and our satellite capabilities and our massive defense system do to keep us from His expressed wrath? The economy is small potatoes! The international problems we have are but a mustard seed! Our greatest problem right now is that God's wrath is upon us (Romans 1); we are piling up a weight of iniquity and when that pile reaches a certain height, it is all over for us, brethren. If this Book is true; if everything that we can gage about who God is and how He deals with nations that are like ours, is true, then we are in a heap of trouble. And so, we of all people; Christians must

come out of Sodom with Lot, without looking back, lest we be destroyed with Sodom. And we must remember Lot's wife [a picture of the church-going hypocrite, whose heart is in the world]. [See also 2 Cor. 6:14-18].