

## Revelation A Wednesday Night Bible Study

Lesson #53  
9/05/2007

### The Explanatory Interlude of Chapter Eighteen: Commercial Babylon Part 2

It is helpful to have an overview of how the events described in Chapters Sixteen, Seventeen and Eighteen relate to each other.

**Chapter Sixteen** tells us about the “**Bowl Judgments**,” the last series of God’s judgments upon this wicked, Christ-rejecting world. These Bowl Judgments chronologically bring us to the end of the Tribulation Period without any time lapse before Chapter Nineteen which presents the victorious return of our Lord.

**Chapter Seventeen** is about God’s judgment of “**the great whore**,” sometimes called the “apostate church.” Chronologically, **Chapter Seventeen fits into God’s schedule at the mid-point of the Tribulation Period and is related to the events described in Revelation 13:11-15.**

**Chapter Eighteen** tells us about God’s judgment of “commercial Babylon,” as it is commonly known and has a special relationship with **the seventh Bowl Judgment**. **The seventh Bowl Judgment** is the “**great earthquake**” accompanied by the “**great hail**.” **The result of the seventh Bowl Judgment** is that the earth is almost totally rearranged with every island and mountain disappearing (16:20). In addition to that, every city, with the exception of Jerusalem, is destroyed and left in shambles. The devastating effect of this “**great earthquake**” and “**great hail**,” would, in addition to punishing the wicked of this world, also be preparation of this earth for the Millennial Kingdom. In the description of that seventh Bowl Judgment we learned that “**great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath**” (16:19). In essence, in the **Eighteenth Chapter**, God tells us what He means by His statement we read in 16:19. **The timing of this would be just prior to our Lord’s return.**

In our previous lesson we noted that verses one and two tell us of the last aspect of God’s final judgment upon this wicked world. This announcement was previously presented in Rev. 14:8 by another angel: “**And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.**” In Chapter Eighteen we read that God sent a special angel who was energized with “**great power**,” great authority, much more power and authority than the angel in Chapter Fourteen had possessed. The angel, also having a glorious brilliance which illuminates the entire earth, makes the final declaration of judgment upon Babylon: “**Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and she hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.**”

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The remainder of Chapter Eighteen elaborates on the meaning of this declaration of finality. The repetition of the words, **“fallen is fallen,”** presented in the unusual prophetic aorist tense, tells us that it is something in the future which happens at a precise moment. They are repeated like a solemn dirge of the damned, as if describing a funeral.

Having only considered the first part of this ominous declaration last week, we examine the rest of it as presented in verse two.

**“Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.”**

God’s Word describes an awesome and degrading picture of **“Babylon the great,”** the city which becomes the focal point of the entire earth, the city of indescribable luxury and power from which Satan rules this wicked world through his representative and personal embodiment, the **Anti-Christ**. In a sense, Babylon becomes like a hell on earth because this description sets before us creatures which belong in hell more than they belong on the earth. No matter how evil and vicious Babylon is prior to this declaration, she becomes something far worse, so bad that she can only be described as a residence for the most vile and evil of created beings — she **“is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.”**

**“Great Babylon,”** great in the eyes of men during the reign of **Anti-Christ**, becomes the temporary home for vile creatures. As such, God sees to it that the residents match the loathsome nature of the destiny of this once proud and powerful city.

**“Habitation,”** katoiketrion (2732), is a temporary dwelling place. It is temporary because the permanent dwelling place of these **“devils,”** diamonion (1140), or more correctly **“demons,”** little devils, is in the **“lake of fire and brimstone,”** which we know as hell.

**“The hold, cage”** phulake (5438), is a prison or strong holding cell. God plans to use **“great Babylon”** as a prison cell to hold demons and all types of detestable birds, a most repulsive place. The “demons” are the servants of Satan for they are the angels which followed him in his rebellion against God (12:4) and were cast out of heaven. Being rebels against God, they have a “hellish” nature. The **“hateful birds”** have a key role to play in God’s time of judgment. In Revelation 19:17 we read that God summons them to “the supper of the great God” Who feeds them the carcasses of His slain enemies. This will be their second such feast. The first feast is described in Ezekiel 39:17-18.

**Revelation 18:1-2**

**1 And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.**

**2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.**

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Having described the sordid conditions that will exist in “great Babylon” following God’s judgment upon her, God then summarizes Babylon’s wickedness:

**“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.”**

False religion focuses on pleasing the perverted appetites of man, giving him what his depraved nature desires. As such, the more that a church or a false religion offers to the self-centered ego, the more that ego becomes distorted and perverted. Such an ego soon seems to think that the world revolves around it and exists to satisfy its wishes. What actually happens is that the ego becomes intoxicated with itself as it feeds itself at the altar of self-gratification which is presented by all false religion. Such an ego has kicked God off of His throne and seated itself there. Satan, and his representatives, the two beasts from the sea and the earth (Rev. 13), are experts at giving wicked man what he thinks he wants, at least for three and one half years (2 Thessa. 2:3-12).

Without exception, the wicked of all nations have found that it is extremely profitable to merge false religion with their commercial interests. While it may appear for a while that each, false religion and commercial interests, is enhanced. The truth is that each pollutes, perverts and denigrates the other when mixed together. Such is true because depraved man is possessed by his desires to be important, wealthy and powerful. His prostitution of religion into something in which everything revolves around him and is designed to satisfy his appetite feeds his desire to be important, but at the same time infects him with a fatal disease of self-destruction. For a while, God seems to give man what he wants, but what such a man wants ends up destroying him and denies him God’s love, forgiveness and salvation (2 Thess. 2:11-12).

Merging false religion with his drives to be wealthy and powerful, the wicked appear to be successful. However, God uses the analogy of intoxication and drunkenness to describe the result. Like a person intoxicated by fermented wine, the “drunk” is unable to enjoy any benefits from what he has been driven to acquire. In his drunken stupor he is a helpless, incoherent, dysfunctional, self-destroying individual. Neither the **“abundance of delicacies,”** nor anything else he has striven for, is of any benefit. He may think he has succeeded in his pursuits in life, but all that he has succeeded in doing is destroying himself. God finishes what the wicked has begun — the destruction of the self-damned man.

**3 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.**

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**4 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.**

John hears another voice. Some say it is another angel, but the voice says **“my people.”** It is the voice of God Himself which makes this a very special statement, a very special appeal and warning.

The second issue to be dealt with in this verse is the identification of **“my people.”** Some commentators see this as referring to 144,000 Israelites who were saved and set aside in Chapter Seven. However, this seems very unlikely since the warning to them is to **“be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not her plagues.”** We are told that these 144,000 indicated that they were **“sealed by God”** (7:3) which meant that they were under God’s divine protection and implies that they are to be His special servants as witnesses and evangelists to the unsaved during the Tribulation Period.

Since the **Tribulation Period** has a uniquely Jewish flavor to it as God uses this time to discipline His people, it is more likely that **“my people”** should be identified as Israelites. This is in harmony with God’s warnings to His chosen people. In Deuteronomy 4:30-31 God told the Israelites: ***“When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the LORD thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice; (For the LORD thy God is a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them.”*** In Jeremiah 51:5-8 God told His chosen people: ***“For Israel hath not been forsaken, nor Judah of his God, of the LORD of hosts; though their land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel. Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the LORD’S vengeance; he will render unto her a recompence. Babylon hath been a golden cup in the LORD’S hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad. Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed ...”***

In the Old Testament we find God commanding His people to separate themselves from the pagans. They were often disobedient and paid a severe price for their disobedience. The same truths apply today to us in this age. In 2 Cor. 6:17 we are told; ***“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.”*** Other like admonitions can be found in 1 John 2:15, ***“... love not the world, neither the things that are in the world...”*** and 1 Cor. 11:31, ***“For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.”***

**4 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.**