

**Revelation**  
**A Wednesday Night Bible Study**

Lesson #55  
9/19/2007

**The Explanatory Interlude of Chapter Eighteen: Commercial Babylon  
Part 4**

**“How much she hath glorified herself,”** sets before us the actions or activities which produce the listed results, i.e., **“torment and sorrow,”** and **“plagues”** and **“mourning, and famine”** and being **“utterly burned with fire.”** We have before us a statement, that, when understood, is literally astounding, indicating a very serious and perverted condition.

**First,** in analyzing this statement, we see that **“she,”** **Babylon, consciously and deliberately does something that produces the kinds of results which are of the nature that no sane person would knowingly seek.** Any acquaintance with such would surely cause a sane person to discover the actions that could result in such pain and take all necessary steps to avoid such actions. However, we have just read an example of **masochism**, which is a condition of **“enjoying, lusting for, or seeing pleasure in being abused or made to suffer.”** This mentally ill condition of self-destruction will be a defining characteristic of **“Babylon”** in the last days and understanding it helps us to better comprehend how and why **“Babylon”** made herself the object of God’s awful wrath. Understanding the cause of this condition should be important to us because, unfortunately, **masochism** is not uncommon in our sin-sickened society today.

**Second,** we have to ask why the individuals who constitute **“Babylon,”** or any other person, would be this way and do the things that would produce such pain for oneself. At least for **“Babylon,”** God gives us the answer we need in the expression, **“she hath glorified herself.”**

**“Glorified”** is a verbal form of a word most often used in the Bible to refer to God. It is from the Greek word, **doxa**, (1392), and its basic meaning is **“to have an opinion, to think.”** We most often think of **doxa** as describing that holiness and magnificence which is observed by man when God expresses Himself, or makes Himself known. Therefore, we use the expression **“the glory of God”** to indicate **what we think of God when we see how He acts and expresses Himself.** When God says, **“...she hath glorified herself,”** He is telling us that **“Babylon”** has shown us what she is like in contrast to Him showing us what He is like by outwardly expressing His inner reality which is beyond our ability to know or comprehend (John 1:18).

God has done this to a limited degree through His creation (Rom. 1:19-20). Though only a very limited expression of Himself can be made known through His creation, it is sufficient for any man to see something of His amazing nature and work and thereby know that He exists, giving that man the opportunity of believing in Him.

**7 How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her:**

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*“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse” (Romans 1:18-20).*

Having presented a partial expression of His glory, God thus gives every person the ability to respond to what He has shown man of Himself. A person, who is one of the Creator’s very specially endowed creations and created with more ability than any other creation, is therefore confronted with a simple choice. The creature will either choose to recognize that he is an amazing creature brought into existence through the wisdom and power of the Creator, and desire to humble himself before his Creator and worship Him, or refuse to do so. God then explains what happens to all men when they reject Him:

*“Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things” (Romans 1:21-23).*

Rejecting the reality of the glorified Creator is much more than an intellectual decision. It is a masochistic act, an act of self-destruction. God, having created us and knowing us even better than we know ourselves, tells us that when we choose not to glorify Him as God and are not thankful for what He has done for us, we destroy ourselves. If we reject God as the object of our worship and replace Him with ourselves, an act which is an expression of **narcissism**, we commit a **masochistic** act. That is, when we glorify ourselves instead of our Creator, when we make ourselves the center of our universe, we destroy ourselves and our ability to function normally as our Creator intended. God tells us that:

*“... profession themselves to be wise, they became fools ... and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man and ... changed the truth of God into a lie and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator” (Rom. 1:22,23, 25).*

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In **“Babylon,”** **masochism** and **narcissism** reach their zenith, the culmination of the degradation of depraved and self-centered man. Babylon is a picture of what happens when **narcissism** matures and is like some rotten, unpicked fruit, which is barely hanging on to the tree until it falls to the ground and completes its putrefaction. The self-deceived mind of **“Babylon”** expects the very opposite from what it gets which is death and sorrow: **“I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.”** This is the destiny which God long ago determined for **“Babylon.”** In Isaiah 47:8, many years ago, God told us the self-deceit that would flow from **“Babylon’s”** mouth and also the cause of her destiny:

***“Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children: But these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments. For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness: thou hast said, None seeth me. Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; and thou hast said in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me. Therefore shall evil come upon thee; thou shalt not know from whence it riseth: and mischief shall fall upon thee; thou shalt not be able to put it off: and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou shalt not know”*** (Isaiah 47:8-11).

The verses that follow Revelation 18:7 describe the results that naturally flow from this **narcissistic** and **masochistic** behavior. Self-destruction will happen suddenly: **“Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine”** (18:8). She has brought this destruction upon herself, but it is God Who exercises the judgment.

As a result of the earthquake described in 17:18-20, fires break out, consuming the earthquake-produced debris. Such a massive and severe earthquake ruptures the vast oil and gas carrying pipelines and causes the multiple oil wells to erupt like volcanoes, producing fires unlike any previously seen on this earth. Though previous wars in this region have produced almost uncontrollable fires, the smoke of which could be seen around most of the world, the burning of **“Babylon”** is more like hell than anything else seen prior to this time.

When God acts His actions are sudden and unmistakable and the effects of His judgment of **“Babylon”** reach around the world.

**7. ... for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.**

**8 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.**

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**“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 ... 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”**

One moment the kings and the financial power brokers of the earth, intoxicated by their **narcissistic** natures and taking for granted that their current state will continue, enjoy almost indescribable luxury. The next moment it is all gone. All of it! That is the nature of material possessions, always, without exception! Here — gone!

While **narcissistic** man, thinking that he is the center of the universe, in control of his own life and destiny, goes about his business as if he is god, he is so self-deceived that he is totally unprepared for the reality God has waiting for him. God’s control is absolute and final. Four times in this Chapter God states what He makes to happen, in verse 8, 10, 17, and 19, God uses either the phrase **“in one day”** or **“in one hour”** to emphasize the ultimate destiny of man’s possessions. Only a foolish, illogical man can miss God’s warning. But, long ago, such men lose the ability to think logically and recognize reality.

The relevance of the main points of this Chapter are important to us today. All true followers of Jesus Christ are **“raptured away from this earth”** seven years before the events described in Revelation Eighteen and will not experience the terrible things presented herein. However, God is the only One Who really knows who belongs to Him. After naming two men, Hymenaeus and Philetus, who had been members in the church who pretended to be Christians, the Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy that **“...the Lord knoweth them that are His”** (2 Tim. 2:17).

It was not uncommon in that day, and certainly is not today, that people will participate in a church, claiming to be followers of Christ, but, in reality, do not belong to Jesus, but rather belong to themselves. People, who call themselves Christians today, would do well to pay attention to what God tells us in His Word. Consider God’s warnings in the following passages:

***“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron”*** (1 Timothy 4:1-2).

**9 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,**

**10 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.**

**11 And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more:**

**12 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,**

**13 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.**

**14 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.**

**15 The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing,**

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*“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Timothy 3:1-7).*

*“For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God; and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?” (1 Peter 4:17).*

The identifying characteristic is often discerned in determining who is in control of one’s life. To become a follower of Christ, a person must die to self. As Paul wrote in Galatians 2:20: *“I am crucified with Christ ...”* Paul’s ego had been crucified. It had died. He was not in control of his life. He had been converted, i.e., died to self and become a new person. As he said in Philippians 1:20: *“Christ liveth in me.”* When he called Jesus *“Lord,”* he really meant that his opinions and desires and the effort to control his life had been crucified, had died, and that he only lived so that Jesus could live His life through him.

Some people today seem to think that they have become Christians and will be raptured before the Tribulation Period because they believe what God says about Jesus in the Bible. However, God tells us that the *“devils believe”* (James 2:19). We know they don’t belong to Jesus nor serve Him as Lord and Master.

It is not enough to just believe the right things, nor even to do the right things. **Narcissism** has to be overcome by the death of self. Yielding up the ownership, control and mastery of one’s life is always involved in becoming a follower of Jesus. Any person who retains the control of his life has not died to self nor yielded up the control of his life to Jesus. Therefore, such a person belongs to self, serves himself, is the center of his own life, and is his own god. Such a person needs to be converted and give the ownership of his life to Jesus, totally!

16 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!

17 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,

18 And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city!

19 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.