

Sent: Wednesday, April 6, 2022 12:42 PM
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Study on Revelation 18

"And he (the angel that illuminated the earth with his glory) cried out with a mighty voice, saying, 'Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great. She has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird!'" (Revelation 18:2)

Remember last week's lesson on Revelation 17 where "one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls" invited John to see God's judgment on "the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed acts of immorality, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality"? John wrote that he was "carried away in the Spirit into the wilderness" where he saw "a woman clothed in scarlet and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, with a gold cup full of abominations in her hand...with the name 'Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots...' written on her forehead...drunk with the blood of the saints, and the witness of Jesus...sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns"! Whew! That's a mouthful! And we're confused by the metaphoric language and wonder what's going on! But do does John! And so, the angel tells him (and us) the "mystery of the woman and the beast that carries her, the beast with the seven heads and seven horns"!

The woman (or harlot), we learned, represents Babylon, which in Scripture is not only a city (going back to Genesis 11, and Babel, where "idolatry" first began), but also a symbol of a "world system apart from God"! A personification of spiritual fornication and idolatry (as it's often portrayed in Old Testament discourse)! And the "many waters she's sitting on" (Revelation 17:15 says), represents "people and multitudes and nations and tongues"! And so John wrote about how the Babylon system, culture, and religion would influence and dominate the unredeemed people of the world during the 7-year Tribulation Period, specifically in following the "beast" who is introduced to us (in Revelation 13) as the "Antichrist" who will arise and be given power and authority by "the dragon" (Satan) and, after suffering a mortal wound (supposedly!) and being "resurrected" (supposedly, like Christ!) will draw the attention of all the people of the world and become the undisputed world leader! (Revelation 17 refers to him as "the one who was, and is not, and is to come"! He will be assisted, we learned in our past studies, by the "False Prophet" who will perform great signs and wonders (even "making fire come down from heaven"), deceiving the world and persuading the people to join together in a kind of ecclesiastical, one-world religious sect, later requiring them to "make an image and worship the beast" (Antichrist), and receive the "mark of the beast" for the right to buy and sell! But then, at some point, the Antichrist will take advantage of his newly gained power and desecrate the temple in Jerusalem, commit "the Abomination of Desolation," discard the "religious sect," and set himself up as God and the supreme ruler the world (for a moment), with the city of Babylon becoming the political and economic arm and center of the world! Ah, the "mystery" of the woman and the beast!

And that set the scene for last night's lesson on Revelation 18!

John writes that, "after these things he saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illumined by his glory. And he cried out with a mighty voice,

saying, 'Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! He has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hated bird. For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed acts of immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich by the wealth of her sensuality!' (Wow! We can only imagine the impact on the world resulting from all believers being raptured before the start of the tribulation period, and the removal of the Holy Spirit; and from the infestation of all the demons and unclean spirits that have been released "from the bottomless pit" (as part of the fifth trumpet judgment, in Revelation 9); and from when Satan and his angels were "cast out of heaven" for the last time, in Revelation 12, all now hovering like birds of prey! Think vultures!)

Then John heard "another voice from heaven, saying, 'Come out of her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive of her plagues, for her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities!' For the new "Christians" living during the Tribulation! Get out of Dodge! We're reminded of the story of Sodom and Gomorrah (in Genesis 19) and how two angels were sent by God to Sodom to rescue Lot and his family when He was about to rain down fire and brimstone, after hearing "the outcry"! And of the Satan-instigated "piling up" of bricks at the Tower of Babel to "reach heaven" (in Genesis 11)! And God "remembered"!

The Apostle Paul wrote, in 2 Corinthians 6:17, to "Come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (KJV)! Christian, get out of Dodge!

John describes (in Revelation 18:9-19) the response of the people:

- The kings of the earth who "lived sensuously" will weep and lament over Babylon when they "see the smoke of her burning, standing at a distance because of the fear of her torment;"
- The merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, "because no one buys their cargoes anymore"! And they "became rich from her" and also will "stand at a distance because of the fear of her torment"! (You have to read verses 12-14 to learn about all the "luxurious and splendid cargo"!)
- And "every shipmaster and every passenger and sailor, and as many as made their living by the sea, stood at a distance and were crying out as they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What city is like the great city?' And they all threw dust on their heads and were crying out and weeping and mourning, saying, 'Woe, woe, the great city, in which all who had ships at sea became rich by her wealth, for in one hour she has been laid waste!' Boohoo!

Interestingly, with all the sadness and mourning, there's no thought apparently of the judgment to come to them personally or any evidence of turning their hearts to the Savior and the redemption that has been being broadly proclaimed by the 144,000 evangelists (of Revelation 7 and 14), or by the "two witnesses" (of Revelation 11), or by the angel who "flew through the midheaven, preaching the eternal gospel to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people" (in Revelation 14:6)!

Then, in Revelation 18:21, John likened the suddenness and finality of the fall of Babylon (which is to come!) to an angel "taking up a stone like a great millstone and throwing it into the sea"! And (in verses 22-23) he gets almost poetic in describing the loss!

- The city "will not be found anymore!"
- The sound of the harpists and musicians and flute players and trumpeters will not be heard in you any longer!
- And no craftsman of any craft will be found in you any longer;
- And the sound of the mill will not be heard in you any longer;
- And the light of the lamp will not shine in you any longer;
- And the voice of the bridegroom and the bride will not be heard in you any longer!"

Or to use John Neal's words: Heaven said, "No more"!

John concludes Revelation 18 with "a strong angel's" charge that "all the nations were deceived by Babylon's sorcery...and that in her was found the blood of the prophets and of saints and of all who have been slain on the earth!" And (earlier, in verse 6-7) this same (or another) angel called for "double payback," as retribution!

And he (John) spoke directly to these issues in his other writing (in 1 John 2:15-17): "Love not the world, neither the things of the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. And the world passes away, and the lust thereof; but he who does the will of God lives forever"!

Jesus said it this way to His disciples (in Mark 8:36): "For what shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world but lose his own soul?"

What more need be said? No more!

So where are we in our study of Revelation? Walvoord notes that "with the graphic description of Babylon's fall, seen by John in a vision and recorded in Revelation 17 and 18, the way is cleared for the presentation of the major theme of the book of Revelation: The Second Coming of Christ and the establishment of His glorious kingdom!"

Have a great week, men!

Lowell