

Commercial Babylon Destroyed

Introduction

Babylon is located on the shores of the Euphrates River. According to archaeologists, the ruins of this city reveal that Babylon is the cradle of civilization. This city was founded by Nimrod who authored some of the greatest evils of mankind. Two of these, religious Babylon, and the commercial and political city of Babylon.

In ancient times, satan seemed to make Babylon the capital of his evil operation. From this city was started false religion, man's attempt for self-government in defiance of the will of God that the Lord Jesus Christ should rule all over the world, and city dwellings for commercial and social purposes contrary to the commandment of God to "be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth." (Genesis 9:7) These counterfeit solutions to man's problems but contrary to the will of God will be destroyed at the end of the Tribulation Period. Chapter 17 of the Book of Revelation describes the coming judgment of the Lord Jesus on the religious system which "changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever." (Romans 1:25)

After the destruction of religious Babylon in the middle of the Tribulation Period, the destruction of the commercial and political Babylon will follow at the end of the Tribulation Period. So verse 1 of Revelation 18 starts with the phrase "After these things" indicating that the events in chapter 18 would not happen until the completion of events in Chapter 17 has been completed.

When at the end of man's effort to put up his kingdom, when the last kingdom of men (represented by iron and clay) has reached its end, "in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure." (Daniel 2:44-45)

We are in those appointed days when the last kingdom of men shall then be established but destroyed in pieces by that stone cut out of the mountain without hands because the God of heaven "hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained, and of this He has given assurance to all by raising Him from the dead." (Acts 17:31-32) Nowhere in the Scripture is there a more detailed description of the coming judgment than in the Book of Revelation chapters 6-18.

The other week, we have studied in Chapter 17 the pending destruction of religious Babylon, the last kingdom put up by man. This weekend, we study the pending destruction of commercial Babylon. With the destruction of this last and greatest human kingdom, the stage is set for the triumphant return of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Chapters 19-20)

Though some view it as a symbol for the Antichrist's godless system, many end-time scholars and preachers (John f. Walvoord, Tim Lahaye, Harold Wilmington, J. Dwight Pentecost, John MacArthur) view the Babylon described here is most likely an actual city (Revelation chapters 10, 16, 18, 19, 21). It is a common principle in interpreting the Bible is that "if the literal sense makes sense, don't look for any other sense or you might arrive at nonsense." Since the text plainly describes Babylon as a city, it is safest

to view it as a real city. Although it is just one city, its influence will be worldwide. As this capital city of the Antichrist is judged and destroyed by the seven bowl judgments in chapter 16, the Antichrist will also be killed.

Sermon

Judgment Pronounced. (Revelation 18:1-3)

1. "After these things" indicate a beginning of a new vision after that of Revelation 17 (a vision of religious Babylon, the false religion, the final world religion, depicted as a harlot). John saw "another" angel different from that of 17:1. This angel has great authority, the earth was illumined with his glory when he arrived, he had 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. This judgment takes place when the 7th bowl is poured out when the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. There was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so might. (cf. Rev 16:18-20)
2. Causes for Babylon's destruction:
 - a. She has become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. In Revelation 9:13-16, 200 million formerly bound demons were released at the sounding of the 6th trumpet, together with the demons released from the abyss at the sounding of the 5th trumpet. It has become a center of demon power and false doctrines. (18:2)
 - b. 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. Both rulers and merchants have worshipped at her shrine of silver (18:3)
 - c. Her sins had reached into heaven (18:5)
 - d. Babylon's devilish pride. (18:7). 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. She had lived in sinful pleasure and luxury.
 - e. Her gross materialism (18:12-13). Babylon will import and export 28 items of merchandise beginning with gold and ending with the bodies of men.
 - f. Her drug (pharmakeia) activities wherein all nations were deceived (18:23)
 - g. In her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth (18:24)
3. Judgment Avoided (18:4-5)
 - a. The Lord's call for God's people to "Come out of her" is the last evangelistic call to come to faith in Jesus Christ and be delivered from the judgment on satan's kingdom. (Colossians 1:13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.)
 - b. Why should they abandon the commercially prosperous but morally bankrupt system?
 - 1) Believers are to flee Babylon so that they "will not participate in her sins."
 - 2) God's people must flee so they do not "receive of her plagues."
 - 3) Flee Babylon because her sins have reached up high heavens and God hath remembered her iniquities."
4. Judgment Defined (18:6-8)

- a. Enough grace has been extended on Babylon and has heard enough warnings. It is time for the vengeance of the Lord as asked by the tribulation saints who were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held. Did they cry with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? (Revelation 6:9-10)
- b. The request of the angel for God to
 - 1) pay her back as she herself has paid back others, and repay her double for her deeds;
 - 2) mix a double portion for her in the cup she mixed
 - 3) give her a like measure of torment and mourning as she glorified herself and lived in luxury.

Babylon's judgment will not be progressive. It will be instant. It will be done in one day. Three plagues will result in Babylon's complete destruction: pestilence and mourning and famine. Then Babylon will be burned with fire.

5. Judgment Lamented (18:9-19)

- a. The first mourners are the leaders, the kings of the earth who committed sexual immorality and lived in luxury with her. This group includes the ten kings who rule the kingdom of the Antichrist under his authority (17:12) as well as the rest of the world's leaders under them. As they watch Babylon burn, they cry out, "Alas! Alas! You great city, you mighty city, Babylon! For in a single hour your judgment has come."
- b. Next mourners are the merchants of the earth "weep and mourn for her, since no one buys their cargo anymore." There is a list of 28 items of merchandise. "The fruit for which your soul longed has gone from you, and all your delicacies and your splendors are lost to you, never to be found again!" They will stand far off, in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning aloud, "Alas, alas, for the great city that was clothed in fine linen, in purple and scarlet, adorned with gold, with jewels, and with pearls! For in a single hour all this wealth has been laid waste." (Rev 18:16-17)
- c. All shipmasters and seafaring men, sailors and all whose trade is on the sea, stood far off and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning, "What city was like the great city?" And they threw dust on their heads as they wept and mourned, crying out, "Alas, alas, for the great city where all who had ships at sea grew rich by her wealth! For in a single hour she has been laid waste. (Rev 18:18-19)

6. Judgment Enjoyed (18:20)

Heaven in contrast to the earthly followers of the antichrist. The angel now calls the tribulation "saints (Revelation 6:9-11) and apostles and prophets" to rejoice over the fall of Babylon because of the triumph of righteousness, the exultation of Jesus Christa, and the arrival of His kingdom on the earth.

7. Judgment Completed (18:21-23a)

- a. A millstone is typically 4-5 feet in diameter, a foot thick, very heavy is thrown violently into the sea. This is the curse put upon one who "causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea. (Matthew 18:6).
 - 1) Babylon will be so thoroughly destroyed, it will be found no more, and it will never rise again as predicted by the Old Testament (Isa 14:22 For I will rise up against them, saith the LORD of hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, and son, and

nephew, saith the LORD. Isa 14:23 I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water: and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the LORD of hosts; Jeremiah 50:13, 39; 51:37)

- 2) the sound of harpists and musicians, of flute players and trumpeters, will be heard in you no more, and
 - 3) a craftsman of any craft will be found in you no more, and
 - 4) the sound of the mill will be heard in you no more, and
 - 5) the light of a lamp will shine in you no more, and
 - 6) the voice of bridegroom and bride will be heard in you no more.
8. Judgment Justified (18:23b-24)
- a. Three final reasons for Babylon's judgment:
 - 1) Her merchants were the great men of the earth using their wealth to ascend to the position of power, prominence, and influence
 - 2) Her sorcery deceived nations. Sorcery is pharmakeia and it is used for magic and occult practice." This would include the illegal drugs proliferating nowadays in our society.
 - 3) Her murderous slaughter against God's people. In her was found the blood of prophets and saints and all that had been slain on the earth.
 - b. This is capped by a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven saying, "Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. (Rev 19:1-3)

Conclusion

1. The Lord Jesus' Merciful Call to His People. "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. (Rev 18:4-5)
2. As I have mentioned in the past weeks that the earnest desire of the Lord Jesus to save people up to the last minute by sending 144,000 evangelists, the two witnesses to preach and an angel flying in the heavens proclaiming the gospel message, the people of the world will refuse to repent (cf. 6:15-17; 9:20-21; 16:9, 11). Now in the last minute, before the destruction of the commercial Babylon, the Lord uttered His 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" (Revelation 18:4) for "the Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2Peter 3:9)
3. Who are these people referred to by the Lord as "my people".
 - a. They could be tribulation saints, people who were not Christians at the time of the Rapture but, in the tribulation period, they refuse to bow their knees to the antichrist and refuse to receive the mark of the beast and instead repented of their sins and gave their lives to Jesus; or,

- b. They could be Israelites who have not recognized Jesus as their Messiah but now has repented of their personal and national sin and receive Jesus saying, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord” (Baruch haba b’Shem Adonai, Luke 13:35).
- c. The Lord’s final call unto these people at the end of the Tribulation Period is another example of His consistent administration of grace and mercy (as in His call to Lot and his family prior to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The invitation of Jesus to come out of our sins and be not partaker of the sins of Babylon (lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life) is a call to repent that we may be forgiven of our sins and the wrath of the Lamb be removed from us.
- d. Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith, “To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:” (Heb 3:7-8)
 - “I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days:” (Deuteronomy 30:19-20)