

"The Fall of Political Babylon"

Revelation 18:1-8

Introduction

1. The final wrap-up of events with this world system is brought to the fore in chapters 17 and 18. The former takes up the religious side of things and the latter the political. Ecumenicalism, which includes apostate Protestantism, Romanism, the religions of the world, and the sects and isms--all will be brought to the ground providentially by God. That is the full impact of Revelation 17.

2. The present chapter relates to the massive political system which started in Genesis and reaches its apex during the Tribulation Period, after the Rapture, under the Antichrist. Ten countries will give their strength to the Antichrist and form a confederation which will dominate the world scene. It is this confederation and union which is dealt a death-blow in this chapter. God is letting us in on the future political demise of Gentile world power! While God used means to destroy the religious conglomerate, He personally intervenes in the destruction of the Antichrist and his forces.

3. The words "after these things" (18:1) support the view that the political system tumbles after the religious (chap. 17). It is all an eschatological arrangement and viewpoint. It is the 70th Week of Daniel (9:24-27). It is a prediction of events which follows the removal of the church to be with the Lord (1 Thess. 4:13-18).

SPECIAL NOTE: The city of Babylon is mentioned and given prominence (vv. 10, 16, 18, 19, 21). The question is often raised: what Babylon? It appears that there will be a literal rebuilt Babylon on the Euphrates. The Old Testament predictions of its destruction have never been adequately fulfilled in history (see Isa. 13, 14; Jer. 50, 51, Note particularly Isa. 13:20; Jer. 51:26, 43). The time that this destruction is predicted is yet future (Isa. 13:9 cf., Luke 21:25-27). It will be by fire (Rev. 18:8, 9, 18). That is the way it was predicted in the Old Testament (Isa. 13:19; Jer. 50:40). Zechariah similarly prophesied that evil would be transported to that area in the last days (5:5-11). The reservoir of oil and wealth in that part of the world is staggering. It fits the picture which is provided.

4. What then are the details of the judgment upon Babylon? Look at the record of the Word:

1. DESOLATION vv. 1, 2.

It is noted by an angel. That there are orders of angels is patent (Jude 9; Eph. 1:21). This one is viewed as coming down from heaven itself. He has enormous authority. The earth is lightened by reason of (Greek: out of) his glory with which he is lightened by the very presence of God. He has one big message: Babylon is fallen. The aorist makes the matter historically done. Now the city becomes a place for occultism. Demons, foul spirits, and unclean birds are mentioned as involved. The word "cage" means "hold" or "watchtower." Hence, the leading coming city of the world will end up in satanic horror! God said it; it will be done.

2. FORNICATION v. 3.

Three major groups are involved here: nations, kings, and merchants. It is this which has contributed to the fall (v. 2). Having been the center of commercialism and the place of extreme luxury, the city became the base from which evil is perpetrated through commercial means. It is all a wanton matter (cf. vv. 7, 9). The dangers of commercial activity are advanced here. Their end is total destruction from the Lord. What an appeal for honesty in business! Babylon is no advertisement for that.

3. SEPARATION v. 4.

Surely, this is a general word of call to all who join hands with religious or political Babylon. Specifically, it is a word to the Jews (mainly in view of Isa. 52:11; Jer. 50:8; 51:6, 9, 45, 50) who will be living in the days of the Antichrist. The aorist imperative shows urgency of action. Two reasons are given: so that they will not be partakers of Babylonian sins (word only used here, Phil. 4:14; Eph. 5:11) nor recipients of her plagues. This has nothing to do with the doctrine of eternal security, as some would like to make out.

4. RETRIBUTION vv. 5, 6.

The aorist imperative followed by the indicative show that Babylon is to be rewarded or rendered double measure for all that she has done. The cup which she mingled will

now be mingled double! Satanic defiance reached all the way to heaven. The mass was so great it just cleaved one to the other and made a column to God! God did not forget. That is an enormous word. "God remembers" may be a comforting word for the child of God, but for the sinner and the Babylonian system--terrible! Sinfulness never goes unpunished.

5. EXALTATION v. 7.

Babylon claims three self-centered benefits: I am a queen, I am no widow, and I shall not see sorrow. This confident boast of security is interesting in the light of the destruction which God promises. The negative "no" with sorrow is double in Greek and affirms "never." The opposite is true. Indeed, God predicts that the sorrow and torment of the system will be in proportion to the luxury and wealth gained! Since this is applicable to a political arrangement, how much its message should come to the individuals who make it up.

6. TERMINATION v. 8.

Three major kinds of judgment are mentioned: death, mourning, and famine. God is the direct source of it all. It will not be prolonged, for it comes within "one hour." The perfective use of the verb "fire" shows that it is burned up utterly. The reason given for it all is that the Lord is strong in might. What amazing structures man builds. God brings them all down to ashes!

Conclusion The future of the world powers is given right here with firmness. All the rockets come tumbling out of the sky. What a truth it is: man proposes, but God disposes. So be it.