

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

"Lamentation Over Babylon"

Revelation 18:9-24

Introduction

1. Two chapters are linked--Revelation 17 and 18. The former concerns the final religious system (ecumenicalism) which is brought to the ground through the mediate work of the Antichrist (17:16). The next chapter (18) is the final political power of the world in the last days of the Tribulation. It tumbles under the mighty hand of God immediately (18:9).

2. It is believed that the city of Babylon will be rebuilt and become the commercial center of the last days (Isa. 13, 14; Jer. 50, 51; Zech. 5:5-11). Phrases in these chapters which locate the scene in the future seem too strong to reject a rebuilt Babylon (cf. Isa. 13:6, 9; Jer. 50:18-20). Hence, it is expected that middle east pressure will build for this climactic event.

3. That God intervenes and lays low the world powers is patent (Zech. 14:3, 9). Great consternation by the entire world will ensue. That is the record of this study. Look and see what the Bible says:

1. LAMENTATION vv. 9-19.

a. By governmental leaders vv. 9, 10.

Here are the kings of the earth in sorrow over Babylon. Two words are used to indicate their weeping. The word "lament" actually means to beat the breast. The two verbs here are again used in concert (Luke 8:52). The city goes up in smoke and burning. This is the worst kind of plague. So horrendous is the scene that the kings stand afar off and watch. The vivid perfect tense is used to show their inability to withdraw from the scene. The judgment of the city is completed in one hour!

b. By commercial interests vv. 11-19.

1) Merchants vv. 11-16. These also weep and mourn. The verb "mourn" is the same as "sorrow" (v. 7) and is present tense. 29 items are mentioned over which sorrow is expressed. There had been luxury upon luxury in Babylon and now it is all gone. The word "merchandise" summarizes the whole matter. It means "cargo" and refers to what fills a ship (Acts 21:3). Included are "slaves" (v. 13). The term is "bodies" which suggests that the people were treated as animals or implements like chariots and horses! The

connective "and" with "souls of men" may be concessive to show that what was mere "body" to the merchants was in fact a living "soul" before God! Today's economy is dangerously near that point of departure. Again the riches of the city are mentioned as departing in one hour. The loss is so great that these also stand afar off and weep, but fear the judgment of God (vv. 15-17a).

2) Helmsmen vv. 17b-19. Two dirges have already been given: kings and merchants. This is the third by sea folk. No city compared with this one for shipping. These ship masters cast dust on their heads in sorrow over the loss of their business (v. 19). In one hour their whole economic empire crumbled!

NOTE: There is no way by which the present socio-economic system will survive. God will bring it all down. True children of God are allowed to preview the whole judgment in advance as provided by revelation in this book.

2. VISITATION vv. 20-24.

a. Vengeance v. 20.

The present middle imperative advises rejoicing on the part of heaven, apostles, and prophets. All created beings in fellowship with the Lord have conquered. God has brought final sweeping judgment once and for all.

b. Violence vv. 21-23.

The modernists, the postmillennialists, and the deniers of the pretribulationism of the Bible all find it hard here. The Bible predicts a growing sorer situation in the world. Christ's kingdom will come to earth cataclysmically. No other way. Here it is described as by a millstone (v. 21). This is the kind turned by an animal, not a woman. The city is thrown down with violence! Lights go out, mirth goes away, and all business perishes. Sorcery brought it all about. The whole scheme of things today is called chicanery and charlatanry.

c. Vindication v. 24.

The city of Babylon had slain prophets, saints, and others. Now God had vindicated His cause and overthrown the city. Hence, those who rejected God's message and messengers have now been dealt their just judgment.

Conclusion The seventh seal says that Babylon will fall (Rev. 16:19). The full impact of that has now come. The Old Testament prophecies concerning the final overthrow of Babylon are now fulfilled as well (Isa. 13, 14; Jer. 50, 51). Praise to God that this is all done is yet to come (19:1-10).