

UNDERSTANDING THAT WEIRD BOOK OF REVELATION - Part twenty-threeSunday, May 13th, 2018 - 6:00 p.m. - Teaching #2047

Pastor Don Horban, Cedarview Community Church, Newmarket, ON

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT GOD'S COMING JUDGMENT (part b)

Revelation 18:1-24 - "After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was made bright with his glory. [2] And he called out with a mighty voice, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast. [3] For all nations have drunk the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her luxurious living." [4] Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues; [5] for her sins are heaped high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. [6] Pay her back as she herself has paid back others, and repay her double for her deeds; mix a double portion for her in the cup she mixed. [7] As she glorified herself and lived in luxury, so give her a like measure of torment and mourning, since in her heart she says, 'I sit as a queen, I am no widow, and mourning I shall never see.' [8] For this reason her plagues will come in a single day, death and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for mighty is the Lord God who has judged her." [9] And the kings of the earth, who committed sexual immorality and lived in luxury with her, will weep and wail over her when they see the smoke of her burning. [10] They will stand far off, in fear of her torment, and say, "Alas! Alas! You great city, you mighty city, Babylon! For in a single hour your judgment has come. [11] And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn for her, since no one buys their cargo anymore, [12] cargo of gold, silver, jewels, pearls, fine linen, purple cloth, silk, scarlet cloth, all kinds of scented wood, all kinds of articles of ivory, all kinds of articles of costly wood, bronze, iron and marble, [13] cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, oil, fine flour, wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and slaves, that is, human souls. [14] "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!" [15] The merchants of these wares, who gained wealth from her, will stand far off, in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning aloud, [16] "Alas, alas, for the great city that was clothed in fine linen, in purple and scarlet, adorned with gold, with jewels, and with pearls!" [17] For in a single hour all this wealth has been laid waste." And all shipmasters and seafaring men, sailors and all whose trade is on the sea, stood far off [18] and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning, "What city was like the great city? [19] 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. [20] Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, for God has given judgment for you against her!" [21] Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "So will Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence, and will be found no more; [22] and the sound of harpists and musicians, of flute players and trumpeters, will be heard in you no more, and a craftsman of any craft will be found in you no more, and the sound of the mill will be heard in you no more, [23] and the light of a lamp will shine in you no more, and the voice of bridegroom and bride will be heard in you no more, for your merchants were the great ones of the earth, and all nations were deceived by your sorcery. [24] And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slain on earth."

Last week we studied the first three points of this section. Today we'll study three more. So we begin with point number 4:

4) **THE LAMENT OF THE PEOPLE OF THE EARTH FOR BABYLON**

Revelation 18:9-19 - "And the kings of the earth, who committed sexual immorality and lived in luxury with her, will weep and wail over her when they see the smoke of her burning. [10] They will stand far off, in fear of her torment, and say, "Alas! Alas! You great city, you mighty city, Babylon! For in a single hour your judgment has come." [11] And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn for her, since no one buys their cargo anymore, [12] cargo of gold, silver, jewels, pearls, fine linen, purple cloth, silk, scarlet cloth, all kinds of scented wood, all kinds of articles of ivory, all kinds of articles of costly wood, bronze, iron and marble, [13] cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, oil, fine flour, wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and slaves, that is, human souls. [14] "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! [15] The merchants of these wares, who gained wealth from her, will stand far off, in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning aloud, [16] "Alas, alas, for the great city that was clothed in fine linen, in purple and scarlet, adorned with gold, with jewels, and with pearls!" [17] For in a single hour all this wealth has been laid waste. And all shipmasters and seafaring men, sailors and all whose trade is on the sea, stood far off [18] and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning, "What city was like the great city?" [19] 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."

John sees the mourning of two distinct groups of people: "**The kings of the earth**" (9) and the "**merchants of the earth**" (11) are the ones who grieve at the fall of Babylon. This is **not** because they feel any love for Babylon herself. Rather, they grieve a **selfish** grief. They have become rich and fat from their unholy alliance with Babylon.

Remember, it is particularly the **political and economic leaders** who establish and promote the financial structure set up under the antichrist. Babylon represents all that will flourish under this corrupt system. When it falls, the world's movers and shakers - "**...the kings and merchants of the earth...**" - will feel the heat first, just as when Christians - those who **abstained** from the mark of the beast and his fallen economic system - were the first to feel the pain of it's persecution:

Revelation 13:15-17 - "And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast might even speak and might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain. [16] Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, [17] so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name."

Now, at the judgement and collapse of this system, the kings and merchants of the earth sing their funeral dirge. They know they have united so closely with Babylon ("**...who committed sexual immorality and lived in luxury with her....(vs. 9)**") that they can't help but receive of her judgment. No wonder they now begin to wail. Just listen to their collective cry of woe and disbelief:

Revelation 18:11,14-19 - "And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn for her, since no one buys their cargo anymore....14-19....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!"[15] The merchants of these wares, who gained wealth from her, will stand far off, in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning aloud, [16] "Alas, alas, for the great city that was clothed in fine linen, in purple and scarlet, adorned with gold, with jewels, and with pearls![17] For in a single hour all this wealth has been laid waste." And all shipmasters and seafaring men, sailors and all whose trade is on the sea, stood far off [18] and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning, "What city was like the great city?"[19] 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."

5) THE OUTBURST OF PRAISE FROM THE RIGHTEOUS AT THE FALL OF BABYLON

Revelation 18:19-20 - "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. [20] Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, for God has given judgment for you against her!"

Could a stronger contrast be painted in two verses? There is no remorse for Babylon among the righteous. Does that seem strange to you? Does it seem strange that the righteous would not at least feel **sorry** for Babylon. Are we not all called, even now, to **love** our enemies? Why is there this unrestrained rejoicing over the destruction of the wicked in Babylon?

The key to understanding this is found in remembering that **now** there is still a chance for the wicked to repent. Our unforgiving hearts can be a real obstacle for the wicked coming to repentance. Our genuine love for them can lead them to see Jesus and His grace:

Romans 12:19-20 - "Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." [20] To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head."

The lost, even those who wrong me personally, can be reached through my prayers and my love. But such is not the case at the final judgment. There will be no softening of hearts before God. This is the time of the **final** vengeance of the Lord. And it is given as a final vindication of the justice of God against sins that never were retaliated against by God's people while they lived during the course of this age.

How much do you value and esteem the justice of God? How much do you love seeing His Name vindicated? These are real tests of holiness in a corrupt world. True, vengeance is not *mine*, but it certainly does properly belong to the **Lord**.

6) **ANOTHER PICTURE OF THE DESTRUCTION OF BABYLON**

Revelation 18:21-24 - "Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "So will Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence, and will be found no more; [22] and the sound of harpists and musicians, of flute players and trumpeters, will be heard in you no more, and a craftsman of any craft will be found in you no more, and the sound of the mill will be heard in you no more, [23] and the light of a lamp will shine in you no more, and the voice of bridegroom and bride will be heard in you no more, for your merchants were the great ones of the earth, and all nations were deceived by your sorcery. [24] And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slain on earth."

Once again, notice how John frames this final picture of Babylon's judgment in the exact terms of Babylon's fall in the Old Testament:

Jeremiah 51:60-64 - "Jeremiah wrote in a book all the disaster that should come upon Babylon, all these words that are written concerning Babylon. [61] And Jeremiah said to Seraiah: "When you come to Babylon, see that you read all these words, [62] and say, 'O Lord, you have said concerning this place that you will cut it off, so that nothing shall dwell in it, neither man nor beast, and it shall be desolate forever.' [63] When you finish reading this book, tie a stone to it and cast it into the midst of the Euphrates, [64] and say, 'Thus shall Babylon sink, to rise no more, because of the disaster that I am bringing upon her, and they shall become exhausted.' "Thus far are the words of Jeremiah."

Millennia later we see the *final* fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy of doom. He was describing Old Testament Babylon, but also much more. His words took him far beyond his own time and understanding. This *final* Babylon - the corrupt world system bowing before the will of antichrist - this empire too will meet the same destruction under the almighty hand of God.

All of the *activities* of mighty Babylon - the things that marked its might and glory - would be suddenly brought to an end in a way no one could ever believe until it actually happens - **18:22** - "....and the sound of harpists and musicians, of flute players and trumpeters, will be heard in you no more, and a craftsman of any craft will be found in you no more, and the sound of the mill will be heard in you no more...."

Once again we see the call of the Holy Spirit not to mistake the *temporal* for the *eternal*. All these earthly things will totally cease to be. One is called again back to John's words in his epistle along the same lines:

1 John 2:15-18 - "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. [16] For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world. [17] And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. [18] Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour."