Babylon is Fallen

Revelation 18:1-8 10/21/07

Intro

We now come to an interesting and in some ways difficult part of Revelation. We are nearing the end of the Tribulation period, that seven year period of time in which God pours out His wrath to a world that has rejected Him even though God has reached out to them.

Here we read that Babylon is fallen. There is so much interest in what this could possibly mean and what impact this might have on world events leading into the last days.

Much prophecy has to do with Babylon and we would be wise to understand as much as we can about it and to consider what impact such things might have on us.

There have been many books written on these chapters and many theories as to what this city represents. What we must do is to look at all the clues and prayerfully consider how to interpret and understand as well as to apply these verses.

I. Babylon is a Mystery

- First, it must be stressed that the bible refers to Babylon in Revelation as a mystery.
- In Rev 17:5 John specifically says that there is a name written upon the forehead of a great harlot, which is also a symbol here, saying, "a mystery: Babylon the great, the mother of harlots…"
- Let's begin by considering some basic facts about this famous city.

A. Historically; a city

- Babylon has been a great city. Its history is important to know.
- It was an ancient city of Mesopotamia. It was a center of religion. The name in Greek means "Gateway of the gods," but in Hebrew its name comes from Babel meaning "confusion."
- It was the center of power of the ancient Babylonian Empire that destroyed Jerusalem and took the people captive there for 70 years. The "Hanging Gardens of Babylon" were once considered one of the Seven Wonders of the World.
- Babylon was overtaken by the Medes and Persians when the Euphrates River was diverted and the enemies entered under the water defenses while city was in a drunken celebration. (Note: It was not the Babylonian king, but the Persian king who released the Jews from captivity)
- It was later destroyed several times. Alexander the Great tried to rebuild the city but died there suddenly.
- God saw to it that the city received its due return for what they did to Israel.

Jeremiah 25:12, Then it will be when seventy years are completed I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation,' declares the LORD, 'for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans; and I will make it an everlasting desolation.

B. Prophetically; a symbol

- First it's a symbol for the city where the Antichrist will use as headquarters for his position of world power.

Note: Some have suggested that it is New York City, since it is the headquarters for the United Nations, and that the events of September 11, 2001 fulfill verse 18 which describes the smoke of her burning in one hour. This is doubtful.

- Many have thought it could be Rome since Rome was the capital of the ancient Roman Empire and the scripture suggests that the Antichrist will rule over the nations of a revived Roman Empire.

Note: Various forms for Caesar rule have remained even until recently. The German Kaiser and Russian Czar were both overthrown in 1917. Kaiser and Czar are variations of the spelling of Caesar.

Note: Constantinople was called the second Rome when there was a division in the church. Later when the Ottoman Turks, who were Muslim, conquered it, many leaders in the church there moved to what is now Moscow, which they called the third Rome.

- **Symbol – spiritual idolatry.** God uses marriage fidelity as picture of spiritual faithfulness. Therefore Babylon is a symbol of false religion. In the last days, a false prophet will arise and cause many to worship the beast.

Revelation 13:11-14 The false prophet has Satanic power

- **Symbol – the party manifesto.** The Lord considers anything in our lives which takes the place that should have in our lives as an idol or spiritual unfaithfulness. There is certainly a mentality in the world which is basically, "eat drink, and be merry!!" "Party on" or "Party hearty!" (Rev 18:3)

- **Symbol – economic idolatry.** The kingdoms of earth are made rich by Babylon the whore. The system of materialism will also be destroyed by the wrath of God in the Tribulation.

- The lesson immediately for us is that we should hold the things of the world loosely.

Luke 16:14-15, Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things and were scoffing at Him. And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God."

II. Don't Buy into Babylon

- There is a practical application from these verses that we should seriously consider.
- Though the church will be removed from the earth in the rapture, there are several things we must apply to our lives now.

A. <u>God is against it</u>

- If God is against it, then we must be careful to not be for it.

- We know that God is against it because we see the rejoicing of heaven at its downfall.

Revelation 19:1-4 Four hallelujahs from heaven.

- It is also a place of demons (verses 2). The power behind the immoralities is the Serpent of Old, Satan himself.

- It is important that we be agreement with God rather than in agreement with the devil.

Illus – We know that the devil is called "the accuser of the brethren (Rev 12:10). We must be careful not to find ourselves doing the same ourselves – in our marriages, in our families, in the church.

Are you critical of people? Are you critical of your spouse? But God says we should edify and build up one another in Christ.

B. Don't be part of the party

- If Babylon is a symbol for the world's party, we must decide that the party is not where we belong.

- Verse 3 – the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality. Passion is a powerful word.

App – We will become what we are passionate about. This is actually from A.W. Tozer who wrote that "we are becoming what we love, because love is a transforming power. Therefore what we love is prophetic of our future."

Some people are very passionate about having a great party.

Illus - Woodstock was a great example of loving the wrong things. Max Yasgur's farm in 1969 became the

expression of a new counter culture; "flower power" was born as 450,000 gathered to "be free."

As Jimi Hendrix once said, "Music is my religion. All I'm going to do is go on and do what I feel."

But within 14 months both Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin were dead.

- What we love becomes prophetic of our future.

Vs 4 – "Come out of her, My people," says the Lord…that you may not participate in her sins, and receive of her plagues.

- We see something similar in Paul's letter to the church at Corinth.

II Corinthians 6:14-16, for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God;

Notice what Christ said to the church at Ephesus…

Revelation 2:3-4, 7, "and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary. But I have this against you, that you have left your first love... He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God."

C. <u>"Turn your heart toward home"</u>

- This is a quote from James Dobson, but I thought it was very appropriate here. The question is, 'where is home?'

- God has taken us from the darkness and given us a relationship with the creator of heaven and earth.

Ephesians 2:1-7 We were dead, but now seated with Christ.

- The Tribulation events will bring the world to a great battle in the valley of Armageddon where the nations will come together to attack Israel in one final battle.

- In the book of the prophet Joel, this is called the valley of Jehoshaphat, or the Valley of Decision.

Illus – Joshua brought Israel together just before his death for one final challenge. It was there he declared powerfully, " as for me and my house, we serve the Lord."

- We conclude with a quote from Joel who prophesied of many of the events of the last days.

Joel 2:12-13, "Yet even now," declares the Lord, "Return to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, weeping and mourning; and rend your heart and not your garments. Now return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and compassionate,"