

The Two Babylons

Revelation 17-18

By: Pastor David F. Reagan

- I. THE IDENTITY OF THIS BABYLON
 - A. The Questions
 1. Are the Babylon's of Revelation 17 and 18 the same Babylon?
 2. What is the connection of this Babylon to the historical Babylon?
 - B. The Similarities
 1. They are both called Babylon the Great (17:5; 18:2)
 2. They have both committed [spiritual] fornication with the kings of the earth (17:2; 18:3)
 3. They both have a full cup (17:4; 18:6)
 4. They are both burned with fire (17:16; 18:8)
 5. They are both destroyed because of the judgment of God (17:17; 18:8)
 6. They are both called "that great city" (17:18; 18:10, 16, 19, 21)
 7. They are both responsible for the blood of the saints (17:6; 18:24)
 - C. The Contrasts
 1. Their destruction is announced by two different angels (17:1; 18:1)
 2. The revelation of the second angel is given at a later time than the revelation of the first angel – "after these things" (18:1)
 3. The first Babylon is a religious center (17:4-5) while the second Babylon is an economic power (18:3, 11, 15-19)
 4. The first Babylon is destroyed by the ten kings (horns) who follow the beast (17:16) while the second Babylon seems to be destroyed by God Himself (18:8)
 5. The ten kings destroy the first Babylon (17:12, 16) but the kings of the earth lament the destruction of the second Babylon (18:9)
 - D. The Conclusion
 1. The two Babylon's are definitely connected with the first Babylon being the religious power and the second Babylon being the economic power. They are certainly both part of the same one-world government.
 2. However, their differences are enough to indicate different physical locations.
 - a. The first Babylon definitely points to Rome (17:9, 18)
 - b. The second Babylon is probably located at the historical site of Babylon
 3. The second Babylon probably fits many of the prophecies of the Old Testament
 - a. Never to be inhabited after its destruction (Isaiah 13:19-22; Jeremiah 50:13, 39-40; Revelation 18:21-23); NOTE: people have returned to inhabit Babylon after all historical destructions of the city (1Peter 5:13) and there are people living on the site even today.

- b. Its destruction seems to lead to the whole earth being at rest (Isaiah 14:4-7); this also fits the preceding events of Revelation.
 - c. Even the phrase “Babylon is fallen, is fallen” is first found in Isaiah 21:9.
 - d. Babylon is God’s cup whereby He makes the nations drunk (Jeremiah 51:7)
4. Either way, whether united in one location or found in two separate locations, the two Babylon’s are two aspects of the same one-world government.

II. THE DESTRUCTION OF BABYLON (18:1-8)

A. Another Angel From Heaven (18:1-3)

1. The appearance of the angel (v.1)
 - a. Appeared “after these things” – occurs after the events of chapter 17
 - b. Called “another angel” – not the angel that gave the message of chapter 17
 - c. Came down from heaven – meaning this is a heavenly message
 - d. Having great power
 - (1) In the Bible, God is usually the one who has great power (Exodus 32:11; Psalm 147:5; Jeremiah 32:17; Mark 13:26; Revelation 11:17)
 - (2) That does not mean that the angel is God, but only that He speaks with the authority of God
 - e. The earth was lightened with his glory – this also indicates the presence of God in this angel (Ezekiel 43:2; Luke 17:24; 2Thessalonians 2:8; Revelation 21:23)
2. The fall of Babylon (v.2)
 - a. Cried mightily with a strong voice
 - (1) It seems that the angels are always crying out with a loud voice (Revelation 5:2; 10:3; 14:15)
 - (2) The Lord is also know to speak with loud voice (Revelation 1:15; 1:15; Jeremiah 25:30; Joel 3:16)
 - (3) Isaiah was told, “Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet (Isaiah 58:1)
 - b. Told of the destruction of Babylon
 - (1) Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen
 - a) Called Babylon the great (Revelation 17:5)
 - b) Phrase “is fallen” used two times (Isaiah 21:9; Revelation 14:8)
 - i) This connects this Babylon with the one in Isaiah 21:9
 - ii) This emphasizes the suddenness and the violence of the fall
 - (2) Babylon has become:
 - a) The habitation of devils (Mark 5:2-3; Isaiah 65:4)
 - i) There are places that are given to the abode of evils spirits
 - ii) Believers should have nothing to do with these places (Ephesians 5:11-12) except on occasion to rescue someone from there (Ephesians 6:12)
 - b) The hold of every foul spirit (Mark 9:25)
 - i) A hold can be either a prison or a fortified place as in a stronghold
 - ii) God helps the believer to the pulling down of strong holds (2Corinthians 10:4)
 - c) A cage of every unclean and hateful bird (Isaiah 34:11-15; Jeremiah 50:39)

- i) The Bible uses birds as a picture of devils (Luke 8:5, 12)
 - ii) “hateful bird” – strange description of a bird (compare Titus 3:3)
 - 3. The influence of Babylon (v.3)
 - a. The nations
 - (1) Have drunk the wine of the wrath of her fornication
 - (2) That is, they have participated with her in her sins and have also participated in her judgment
 - b. The kings have committed fornication with her
 - c. The merchants
 - (1) Have made rich through her abundance
 - (2) Have enjoyed her delicacies – only specific mention of this word (but see Luke 7:25)
- B. Another Voice From Heaven (18:4-8)
- 1. A warning to the people of God (v.4)
 - a. Come out of her (Jeremiah 51:6, 45)
 - (1) The warning given to Lot (Genesis 19:12-13)
 - (2) The warning given to the congregation at the time of Korah (Numbers 16:26-27)
 - (3) The warning given to the Jews in the tribulation (Matthew 24:15-22)
 - (4) The warning given to believers today (Romans 12:1-2; 2Corinthians 6:14-18; 7:1; 1Thessalonians 4:7; Titus 2:11-12; James 4:4; 1Peter 2:11; 1John 2:15-16)
 - b. Lest you be partaker of her sins (Proverbs 13:20; 1Timothy 5:22; Ephesians 5:6-11)
 - c. Lest you be partaker of her plagues
 - (1) Proverbs 6:28 - Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?
 - (2) We reap what we sow in the flesh (Galatians 6:7-8)
 - (3) Judgment comes on those who sin (Romans 2:1-3)
 - 2. A review of her sins by God (v.5-6)
 - a. The reach of her sins – unto heaven (v.5)
 - (1) The wickedness of Noah’s day (Genesis 6:11-13)
 - (2) The cry of Sodom (Genesis 18:20-21; 19:13; Isaiah 3:9)
 - b. The remembrance of her sins – by God (v.5; Jeremiah 14:10)
 - c. The reward of her sins – double (v.6; Jeremiah 16:18)
 - 3. A rebuke of her pride before God (v.7)
 - a. She glorified herself (Daniel 5:22-23)
 - b. She lived deliciously (Amos 6:1-7)
 - c. She spoke with herself: “saith in her heart” (Luke 12:16-20)
 - 4. A reaping of judgment from God (v.8)
 - a. Quick judgment – “in one day”
 - b. Multiplied judgment
 - (1) Death
 - (2) Mourning
 - (3) Famine
 - c. Complete judgment – “utterly burned”
 - d. Powerful judgment – “strong is the Lord God who judgeth her” (Psalm 62:11; Joel 2:11; Isaiah 26:4)

III. THE MOURNING OVER BABYLON (18:9-19)

A. The Mourning of the Kings (18:9-10)

1. Their past actions (v.9)
 - a. They committed fornication with her
 - b. They lived deliciously with her (the “pleasures of sin” – Hebrews 11:25)
2. Their present reaction (v.9-10)
 - a. They see the smoke of her burning (v.9)
 - b. They lament for her (v.9)
 - c. They wail for her (v.9)
 - d. They stand afar off for fear (v.10; compare Numbers 16:34)
 - e. They cry out in anguish (v.10)
 - (1) Because of the destruction of such a mighty city
 - (2) Because of the quickness of the destruction – “in one hour” (v.17, 19); compare with “one day” (v.8)

B. The Merchandise of the Kings (18:11-14)

1. The loss of their merchandise (v.11)
2. The listing of their merchandise (v.12-13)
 - a. Gold
 - b. Silver
 - c. Precious stones
 - d. Pearls
 - e. Fine linen
 - f. Purple
 - g. Silk
 - h. Scarlet
 - i. Thyine wood
 - j. Vessels of ivory
 - k. Vessels of precious wood
 - l. Vessels of brass
 - m. Iron
 - n. Marble
 - o. Cinnamon
 - p. Odours [perfumes]
 - q. Ointments
 - r. Frankincense
 - s. Wine
 - t. Oil
 - u. Fine flour
 - v. Wheat
 - w. Beasts
 - x. Sheep
 - y. Horses
 - z. Chariots
 - aa. Slaves
 - bb. Souls of men (Matthew 23:15; 2Peter 2:3)
3. The desirability of their merchandise (v.14)
 - a. The fruits after which their soul lusted (1Corinthians 10:6)
 - b. The things that were dainty (Psalm 141:4; Proverbs 23:3, 6)
 - c. The things that were goodly (Deuteronomy 8:12-14)

- C. The Mourning of the Merchants (18:15-19)
 - 1. Their fear of receiving the same torment (v.15)
 - 2. Their shock at the swiftness of judgment (v.16-17)
 - 3. Their sorrow at the loss of the great city (v.18-19)

- IV. THE REJOICING OVER BABYLON (18:20-24)
 - A. From the Inhabitants of Heaven (18:20)
 - 1. Rejoice over her (Revelation 19:1-2)
 - 2. God has avenged you (Psalm 58:10; 94:1; Luke 18:7-8)

 - B. As a Stone Cast Into the Sea (18:21; Jeremiah 51:63-64)

 - C. Her Sounds to be Heard No More (18:22)
 - 1. No musicians
 - 2. No craftsmen
 - 3. No grinders (Ecclesiastes 12:3)

 - D. Her Light to be Seen No More (18:23a)
 - 1. No more light of the candle
 - 2. No more voice of the bridegroom or bride

 - E. Her Merchants to Cease (18:23b)
 - 1. They were the great men of the earth
 - 2. They deceived the nations by their sorceries
 - a. Sorcery is to have magical or supernatural power over others; often accomplished by casting spells or enchantments and with the aid of evil spirits
 - b. The first sorcerers in the Bible are the magicians of Egypt (Exodus 7:11)
 - c. Sorceries are connected to enchantments [spells] (Isaiah 47:9, 12; Acts 8:11)
 - d. The last days are characterized by sorceries and sorcerers (Revelation 9:21)
 - e. Sorcerers will be cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 21:8; 22:15)

 - F. Her Persecutions to be Felt No More (18:24)
 - 1. Guilty of the blood of prophets and saints
 - 2. Guilty of all the slain upon the earth