The Fall of **Babylon** the Great

Rev. 18

Introduction:

1. "I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illumined with his glory. And he cried out with a mighty voice, 'Fallen, fallen is Babylon the Great.'"
2. So begins Revelation 18.
3. Already the image of Babylon has been introduced into the text of Revelation.

 a. In 14:8 an angel said, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the Great, she who has made all the

 nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality."

 b. In 16:19 she was remembered as God poured out His wrath upon the earth.

 c. In 17:5 she is identified as Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of

 the earth, drunk with the blood of the saints and the witnesses of Jesus.

4. 18:2b-3 says ....

5. Often we think of immorality and sensuality in sexual terms and although that may certainly be a consideration here, spiritual adultery is most likely the consideration. James (4) reminded his readers that friendship with the world was adultery against God. Revelation 18 specifically mentions merchants who have become rich "by the wealth of her sensuality."

6. Babylon represents the world and is epitomized by the city of Rome and the Roman Empire of the first century.

Discussion:

1. Babylon, as representative of the world and its opposition to God, is seen throughout the Bible.

 A. The Gen 11 account of the Tower of Babel is the earliest indication of this.

 1. We might not recognize the connection immediately, but Babel and Babylon are

 simply different translations of the same Hebrew word.

 2. It is the word "balal" meaning "confuse."

 3. The people focused on "making a name for themselves."

 B. The ancient city of Babylon was known for its self gratifying perspective.

 1. Isa. 47:8-13.

 2. Rev. 18:3 indicates that the kings of the earth have joined her and merchants have

 become rich by the wealth of her sensuality.

 C. She is characterized by pride.

 1. Her king ... Isa. 14:13-14.

 2. Babylon herself ... Isa. 47:7-10.

 3. King Nebuchadnezzar had demanded worship of his gods and the golden image he

 set up from Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego (Dan. 3).

 4. He praised himself (Dan.4:30). God humbled him. He ate grass like the cattle.

 5. King Belshazzar praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze, iron, wood and stone.

 God wrote on the wall of the demise of his kingdom (Dan. 5).

 D. Characterized by idolatry and the persecution of God's people Babylon epitomizes the

 very opposite of God's kingdom.

 1. King exalts himself in pride contra. King humbles himself.

 2. Focused on wealth and sensual pleasure contra. laying up treasure in heaven.

 3. Persecuting people of God contra those persecuted--theirs is the kingdom of God

 (Matt.5:10).

 4. Elevated in spirit contra. Poor in spirit--theirs is the kingdom of God (Matt. 5:3).

 E. She is arrogant. She is idolatrous. She is self seeking. She persecuted God's people.

 She lives a life of wanton pleasure. The Lord brought her low.

1. The language of Jer. 50-51, a prophecy of God's judgment against Babylon, is used in Rev. 17-18. (Acknowledgement to Tommy Peeler, "The Tower of Babel")

 A. Sits on many waters (Rev. 17:1; Jer. 51:13).

 B. Cup of the wine of her immorality (17:2-4;18:3; Jer. 51:7).

 C. Drunk with the blood of the saints (17:6; 18:24; Jer. 50:33-34).

 D. War with the Lamb (17:14); conflict with Lord (Jer. 50:24).

 E. Kings against her (17:16-17; Jer. 51:11).

 F. Fallen, fallen is Babylon the Great (18:2; Jer.51:8).

 G. Sins have reached heaven (18:5; Jer.51:9).

 H. Pay her back as she has paid (18:6; Jer.50:15, 29).

 I. Burned with fire (18:8; Jer. 51:58).

 J. Rejoice over her fall 18:20; Jer.51:48).

 K. As a stone thrown in the sea (18:21; Jer. 51:63-64).

 L. Just as Babylon fell so will Rome and any other principality or power that opposes the

 kingdom of God.

1. God's people are therefore called to come out of Babylon (Rev. 18:4ff; Isa. 48:20; 52:11; note 2 Cor. 6:14-18;cf. Ex. 29:45; Jer. 50:8; 51:6, 45; Zechariah. 2:6-7).

 A. Rev. 18:4 calls God's people to come out of her.

 B. Not a new concept.

 1. Lot was called out of Sodom. He had gone there blinded my materialistic pursuits.

 2. God's people were called to come out of Egypt (Ex. 29:45). Some wanted to go back

 as they remembered the leeks and onions they had there. Cf. Matt 6:25ff.

 3. Israel was called out of Babylon (Isa. 52:11).

 4. Paul called the Corinthians to come out (2 Cor. 6:14-18). Note he quotes from Ex.

 29:45 (Egypt) and Is. 52:11(Babylon).

 C. We are "the called out" (ekklesia). Called through the gospel (2 Thess. 2:14), rescued

 from the kingdom of darkness and transferred to the kingdom of His beloved Son (Col.

 1:13).

 D. Babylon falls and heaven, the saints and the apostles and prophets rejoice because

 God's righteous judgement has come against her. (More on this in the next lesson.)

Conclusion:

1. Are you drunk on the wine of this world's attractions? It's sensuality, wealth and pleasure?
2. Or have you come out of her?
3. Do you need to come out and be separate?
4. Save yourself from this crooked and perverse generation. Don't look back like Lot's wife. Don't look back like some in Israel looked back at Egypt.
5. Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness.