

REVELATION 18

I. BKGRD.

In ch. 17 we saw religious Babylon, the end-times counterfeit church of Satan and his European Antichrist, fall as it is judged by God. In ch. 18 we see commercial Babylon, the end-times global economic center of the last World Empire, come under judgment.

While religious Babylon appears to be centered in Rome, perhaps relocating from Brussels, Belgium, where the E.U. is presently headquartered, the exact location of the economic Babylon is less certain. Whatever city it is, it can be identified as a large, commercial seaport.

"Babylon," mentioned in Rev. 14:8; 17:5 could be identified with:

1) The ancient Iraqi city of Babylon. Saddam Hussein spent over \$1 billion rebuilding it since 1971. Zec. 5:5ff vision: *ephah* the standard volumetric measure for commerce in that day (about 7 bushels); the *talent* was the standard measure of weight. The woman there seems to be the same as commercial Babylon and the harlot of Rev. 17.

Problem #1: it's nowhere near the sea; it is not a commercial center, but more of a tourist trap, and has no significant population. This is a far cry from the economic center of the European Antichrist's empire mentioned in Rev. 18. A more reasonable conjecture would be a European seaport. Shanghai, China has since 2005 eclipsed both Rotterdam, Netherlands and Singapore as the world's busiest seaport.

Problem #2: The LORD spoke through Jeremiah and said Babylon would fall and never rise again; she would "*never again be inhabited or lived in from generation to generation....so no one will live there; no man will dwell in it*" (Jer. 50:39-40), thus "Babylon" in Rev. 17 and 18 MUST be a SYMBOLIC name ; the actual city of Babylon will NOT be rebuilt as the final world empire!

Interestingly enough, Dubai is positioning itself to become the world's single largest shipping center in the world. They currently have the world's largest man-made structure, the Dubai Burj, towering 160 floors (Sears Tower and World Trade Center were 110 floors) and 2,684' tall! And they have under construction a seaport and airport complex that will be the largest in the world by far! It is called the Dubai World Central, "where the world's largest seaport meets the world's largest airport." The DWC will cover 54 sq. miles – twice the size of the island of Hong Kong! When its airport is completed, it will be larger than London's Heathrow Airport and Chicago's O'Hare Int'l. PUT TOGETHER! The entire DWC became fully operational in 1st QTR of 2009! The Dubai International Airport is called "DIA" (Denver's airport code was switched from DIA to DEN to accommodate Dubai) and anticipates 68 mill. passengers/year by 2010; they are currently increasing at 20% a year (our DEN had 51.2 mill. passengers in 2008). Could this be our commercial "Babylon"?

2) Some feel that the politico-religious system of the end-times dictator is what is symbolized here. Prob: why then the repeated description of her being a seaport town; sounds quite literal to me.

In Rev. 18:11 we see this city as a world-class commercial seaport; cf. v. 17b "*sea captains*" and v. 19 "*ships on the sea*").

II. TEXT

vv. 1-10 The destruction of commercial Babylon will be swift. In just "one hour" it will be utterly burned. Since the onlookers will be "*standing afar off for the fear of her torment*," perhaps there will be radioactive contamination secondary to thermonuclear destruction.

v. 1 "After this" – lit. *meta tauta*; "after these things," the destruction of religious Babylon – Dr. Chuck Missler accepts both Babylons as the same! Probably not inasmuch as the original city of Babylon is land-locked for 1,000 miles! The "Babylon" of Revelation 18 is a SEAPORT!

v. 2 "Fallen, fallen..." aorist tense; aorist emphasis is on it being a point-in-time event! (her fall was first prophesied in Rev. 14:8; cf. 17:5). That's consistent w/ nuclear annihilation. As far as God is concerned, her destruction is already a done deal!

The power, magnetism and draw of this system is demonic ("home for demons"). "**Adultery and fornication**" used here as in 17:2,4. The Antichrist will "burn her with fire" (17:16), fulfilled in 18:8b,9,18.

v. 3a Materialism, greed and power – addictive and intoxicating – constitute spiritual adultery; they take men's hearts away from God.

v. 3b And LOTS of people chase after it, the promise and hope of riches and wealth; avoid excess!

v. 4 "My people" – Tribulation saints, Jewish and non-Jewish alike.

"**Come out of her**" - in 2 Cor. 6 Paul had warned, "*Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness . . . What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?*" (vv. 14-15) and Ezekiel 20:34, 41: "*Therefore, come out of them and be separate*", says the Lord. *'Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you'*" (2 Cor. 6:17).

"*Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*" (1 John 2:15-16). What our eyes delight to look upon is indicative of our spiritual condition. A worldly person will look upon that which pleases his flesh. Follow the eyes of a person and you can discern his thoughts and desires. We must guard ourselves against self-deception that can lead to the rationalization of a worldly lifestyle.

The call to come out of the world before judgement first found as the angels remove Lot from Sodom: Gen. 19. Read Gen. 18 for the dialogue between Abraham and the Angel of the Lord!

This call "to come out of her" occurs SEVEN times in Scripture! Isa. 48:20; 52:11; Jer. 50:8,9; 51:6-8; Zec. 2:6-7; 2 Cor. 6:17-18; Rev. 18:4.

vv. 6-8 "Double" repayment required by Law (Ex. 22:4,7,9) for theft, damage or loss. Lamentations 1:1 Jerusalem is called a "widow." Isa. 47:8 "*Now then, listen, you wanton creature, lounging in your security and saying to yourself, 'I am, and there is none besides me. I will never be a widow or suffer the loss of children.'*"

v. 7a Notice the pursuit of glory and luxury is ultimately self-defeating.

v. 7b Unaware of her true spiritual condition or her imminent downfall.

v. 8 It all comes to an end in "**one day**" (nuclear?). Cf. the promise to "*burn her with fire*" (Rev. 17:16b).

v. 9 "Adultery" – mentioned the **THIRD** time in this chapter! "**Smoke of her burning**" best taken literally!

v. 10 "Terrified . . . they will stand far off . . ." mentioned 3 x's (vv. 10, 15, 17) at her swift destruction as they see the smoke of her burning rise -- "**destroyed in ONE HOUR . . .**" Possibly radioactive fallout subsequent to a thermonuclear detonation?!? It would meet both criteria (standing far off and being utterly destroyed in one hour).

v. 11 Notice who weeps: “**merchants**”, “**kings of the earth**” (v. 9), and “**seamen**” (v. 17) – NOT the common man! The wealthy who profited most: the Wall Street executives, if you will; the Detroit auto executives; the wealthy Arab oil traders, the Exxon-Mobils of the world.

vv. 12-13 Luxuries, not necessities! The list represented the most extravagant, the most unnecessary, the most over-the-top decadent excesses known in the 1st c. “**Bodies and souls of men**” sold in exchange for worldly luxuries. We have made ourselves victims to extravagance . . .

- Jesus said, “*a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions*” (Lk. 12:15).
- The apostle Paul said, “*If we have food and clothing we will be content with that.*” “*Godliness with contentment is great gain*” (1 Tim. 6:8, 6).

“**The bodies and souls of men**” (v. 13c) – 1/3 of the population of Rome were slaves; 10,000 traded per day in the empire; over 50 million were traded over the history of Rome! Economic slaves today through taxes, often two and three times on the same product (e.g., cars: taxes on purchase, gas, tags, insurance, tax on repairs, etc.).

Don't be a “slave” to fashion, name brands, or anything else in the world! Jesus came to set the captives free; we are bond-servants now of Christ alone!

v. 17 Possibly a seaport city.

v. 18 A singular “**city**” is in view (the Greek is singular).

v. 19 Three groups of people bewail the fall of Babylon: kings, merchants and those that trade by sea. Suggests the foundation of the empire is WORLD TRADE! The foundation of Dubai is its geographical shipping entity serving East and West, making tremendous amounts of money as a “middle-man,” much like Solomon did in his day (1 Kings 9:26-28; 10:14-15; 2 Chron. 9:10, 13-14).

v. 20 **In Heaven there is a very different picture!** While the earth wails, there is rejoicing in heaven! What do you rejoice in?

v. 21 Literal, “**Babylon**”? Prob. not...

v. 23 “**Sorceries**” -- the word used in this passage is *pharmakeia* and means sorcery, magic and often implies the use of drugs to control others and/or contact occultic powers. The American Heritage Dictionary defines it as “the use of supernatural power over others through the assistance of evil spirits.” Webster's Dictionary defines it as “the use of power gained from the assistance or control of evil spirits.”

v. 24 One of the world's great capitols.

III. SUMMARY / APPLICATION

A. The call to the Church is “come out of her” (v. 4), lit., “have no fellowship with her”, this materialistic world of greed under Satan's control. Break with sin and stand with God. The command to separate from the world was given to Abraham, Lot, and Moses.

B. Rom. 12:1-3 says the Christian is “*not to be conformed to the world, but be transformed FROM the world.*” The most common NT term for Christians is *hagios*, “holy ones” or “saints”. The root word is “separated.” Are you? Is your heart on the things of God . . . or of this world?

1 John 2:15 “*Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*” Commercialism has a stranglehold on people today...

C. Jesus is coming back soon to take the Church out of this world; in the meantime, He wants to take the world out of us!

World's Largest Seaports? Hint: no American port is found on the list till #17 . . . Starts with Shanghai (China), Singapore, Hong Kong (People's Republic of China), Shenzhen (China), Busan (S. Korea), Ningbo (China), Guangzhou (China), Qingdao (China), #9-**Dubai (UAE)**; which has doubled in size since 2004!), Rotterdam (Netherlands), Tianjin (China), etc. Six of the world's top 8 seaports are in Red China!!!

World's greatest countries by GDP? USA at \$14.5 trill . . . Behind the USA is China, Japan, Germany, France and England. BUT . . . the E.U. total economy is greater at **\$16.2 trill.**

Dubai: Islam is the official religion of the UAE, and Arabic is the official language. UAE oil reserves are ranked as the world's sixth-largest and it possesses one of the most developed economies in West Asia. It has a nominal per capita GDP of USD \$47,407 as per the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Qatar is #1 per capita income in the world (\$88,222); America's is just below UAE at 6th in the world (\$46,860); top-to-bottom, the list is Qatar, Luxembourg, Singapore, Norway, Brunei (Indonesia), UAE, then the USA. People's Republic of China is \$7,544/yr (\$3.63 hr.); it explains a lot...

Kipp Report, Aug. 2008. "*Dubai already accounts for more than 60 per cent of the entire Middle East's imports transiting its borders. With a logistics market growing in excess of 20 per cent annually, Dubai is now driving further growth through the creation of the most comprehensive facility of its kind, anywhere in the world, the Dubai Logistics City.*"

- **DWC** describes itself as, "Where the world's largest airport meets the world's largest seaport..." "At the heart of Dubai World Central is \$82 billion Al Maktoum International Airport (opened June 2010) – which will be the world's largest passenger and cargo hub and capable of handling all new generation aircraft, including the Airbus A380 superjumbo jet. *The Al Maktoum International Airport has been designed to receive between 120 to 150 million passengers a year and 12 million tons of cargo annually by 2020. It will be the world's largest airport, bigger than London's Heathrow and Chicago's O'Hare combined, almost twice the size of the entire island of Hong Kong*, will have six parallel runways and as many concourses with a 30-story tall control tower that will be an aviation landmark and tallest freestanding ATC tower in the Middle East."
- **DP World** is a major operator of marine ports with 65 terminals in operation and a further 9 under development across 6 continents! In 2010, DP World handled nearly 50 million TEU (twenty-foot equivalent container units) across its portfolio from the Americas to Asia. With a pipeline of expansion and development projects in key growth markets, including India, China and the Middle East, capacity is expected to rise to around 92 million TEU by 2020, in line with market demand. A majority of the company is owned by Dubai World. The company was founded in 2005 by merging Dubai Ports Authority and Dubai Ports International. It then purchased Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company (P&O) of the United Kingdom in 2006 for \$7 billion, which was at the time the world's 4th largest ports operator. The company does not currently operate in the United States where its purchase of six US ports led to high level controversy.
- **Burj al-Arab Hotel:** world's largest 5-star hotel (Dubai claims the world's only 7-star hotel!) -- \$150 just to get in the gate to see the place! Suites start at just \$1,800 per night! Opened Dec. 1999 at a cost of \$650 million USD.
- **Burj Khalifa:** world's tallest building, completed Jan. 2010 at a cost of \$4.1 billion USD.
- **Ski Dubai:** opened Sept. 2005 at a cost of \$400 million USD. Cost to ski? Only \$40-50 for 2 hours!