

What follows represents the unedited lecture notes of Pastor Merritt's teaching of The Book of The Revelation. Please feel free to reproduce all or part for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Last week I taught Revelation Chapter Seventeen.
2. Before continuing our study, I want to provide "1Jo 1:9 time" as may be necessary.
3. Let's first take a look at a map of the Babylonian Empire with particular emphasis on the city of Babylon on the Shinar Plain.



4. I want to review some of that learned and then begin new material on page three.

Introduction

1. Tim LaHaye has written on page 260 of his book entitled *Revelation Unveiled*:

"Archaeologists tell us that Babylon is the cradle of civilization on the shores of the Euphrates River, the ruins of this city have some of the most ancient documents of past generations. This city established by Nimrod, who was a rebel before the Lord, authored some of the greatest evils ever to fall on humankind. Two of these evils will be destroyed during the Tribulation period, according to Revelation chapters 17 and 18 ..."

2. The two great evils are world religion and world political authority. These great evils, which have damned the souls of millions by substituting counterfeit solutions to natural human problems that would ordinarily lead a person to God, will all be destroyed at the end of the Tribulation period when Christ returns.

3. In analyzing Chapters 17 and 18 the student must keep in mind Rome as a world religion is destroyed near the middle of the Tribulation. It is then the Antichrist moves his headquarters to the Shinar plain and ancient Babylon where he demands he be worshipped as a political dictator and god.

4. Neither chapter seventeen nor eighteen advance the narrative; these chapters are simply detailed descriptions of the demise of Babylon: first in its ecclesiastical form, then in its political form.

5. Chapters 17 and 18 of the Apocalypse are simply detailed descriptions of the destruction of Babylon on the Shinar plain. The destruction takes place just before the seven cups of wrath are poured out on the planet.

6. It is evident from these chapters that the events described, especially those in chapter 17, precede by some considerable period the events represented in the seven cups. A summary of the events taking place in the middle of the Tribulation are:

Two Witnesses Killed

Harlot Church of Rome Overthrown

Revived Roman Empire Destroyed

Treaty With Israel Destroyed

Antichrist Revived From Headwound

Babylon Is Destroyed

Intense Persecution Takes Place

Satan Is Cast Out of Heaven

7. Though the specific timing of the events described in chapter 17 are somewhat problematic, we can conclude the destruction takes place before the pouring of the cups of wrath.

8. It must be remembered from John's point of view all of the events of the book of the Revelation are future, and it pleased God to reveal various aspects of future events in other than a chronological order.

9. In general, however, it is helpful to consider chapter 17 as dealing with Babylon as an ecclesiastical or spiritual evil and chapter 18 as dealing with Babylon as a political/commercial evil.

10. Last week we completed an expanded translation of chapter seventeen and when time expired we had just reviewed 15 summary points derived from chapter seventeen.

11. Now we are ready for an exegesis of Revelation chapter 18.

Introduction

1. Chapters seventeen and eighteen both emphasize a geographical definiteness - Babylon. The headquarters of the Antichrist was moved from Rome to Babylon sometime during the first 42 months of the Tribulation.

2. Lindsey introduces chapter 18:

“Do you remember how chapter sixteen of the Book of the Revelation closed? The cities of the world were destroyed, and the Battle of Armageddon was about to trigger the personal appearance of Jesus Christ.” (Rev 16:19-21)

Rev 16:19 The great city split into three parts, and the cities of the nations collapsed. God remembered Babylon the Great and gave her the cup filled with the wine of the fury of his wrath.

Rev 16:20 Every island fled away and the mountains could not be found.

Rev 16:21 From the sky huge hailstones of about a hundred pounds each fell upon men. And they cursed God on account of the plague of hail, because the plague was so terrible.

2.1 This important event is the second coming of Jesus Christ.” It is described in detail in Chapter 19 as we will soon see.

2.2 Between Revelation 16 and 19 we are given a parenthetical description of a city called Babylon. It is said to house two evils: One is a religious system and the other is a world economic system.

2.3 As we saw in Revelation seventeen, Babylon was not only a “metropolis” in the sense that it had specific geographical boundaries; but it also described its religious influence which had attached itself to many cities during its long and blasphemous history. The infamous influence began in ancient Babylon.

2.4 The point that John makes in Revelation 17 is that a world-wide religious system will headquarter itself in a city called Babylon on the Shinar Plain.

2.5 For approximately three and one-half years "Babylon," the religious system will be synonymous with the kingdom of the Antichrist, until the Antichrist finally rises up and throws off its control.

2.6 The question that logically comes to mind is, "When the Antichrist destroys the World Global Church in the middle of the Tribulation, does he destroy some geographical location from which she ruled?"

2.7 Lindsey, Walvoord, Jenkins, LaHaye, Pentecost, Thieme and other Premillenarians like myself don't think so.

2.8 That would mean destroying his own kingdom-Rome, where the Antichrist's kingdom in partnership with the harlot had dominated.

2.9 For example, if someone today wanted to break the power of the Roman Catholic Church, he wouldn't have to blow up Vatican City or the city of Rome.

2.10 Assassinations of the Pope and the cardinals and bishops of the church, plus a destruction of some of the major seminaries and church buildings, and a confiscation of church property and wealth might finish the organization; however, even that is problematic.

2.11 The same is true of the Mormon Church. You wouldn't need to demolish Salt Lake City to do away with Mormonism!

2.12 It is quite possible something like this will happen when the Antichrist destroys the false ecclesiastical system that so greatly influenced him.

2.13 More than likely however, he will purge its leaders and confiscate all its wealth. Then he will establish himself as the religious leader of the world and consolidate all worship in himself. With Satan at his side he will no doubt perform great miracles.

2.14 At the same time the False Prophet will be modifying the worship practices of the Jewish church in Jerusalem.

2.15 Jerusalem is not destroyed but rather the image of the Antichrist is constructed and he is ceremonially consecrated in the Temple itself.

2.16 When we speak of the Antichrist getting rid of the Global Church and religious Israel should we not also open our thinking to at least the question: what of the other religions of the world?

2.17 The Babylon of Revelation chapter 18 is indeed a specific location. Babylon will be a center of world commerce where everyone will be required to worship their nefarious Emperor.

2.18 In fact, the Babylon of the Tribulation will be the center of fantastic commerce, trade, and industry. Its destruction will take place several years after the destruction of "the world church formerly headquartered in Rome."

2.19 I suspect there has never been a city in history that can rival the wealth, luxury, whirl of society, and moral decadence of the Babylon to come!

2.20 It will be so vital to the economic and cultural life of the whole world that when it is destroyed in "one hour's time" the whole world will be plunged into mourning!

2.21 The question of paramount interest at this point is, "Where will this great commercial Babylon be located?"

2.22 Is it some now existing city which will be catapulted into world prominence, or will the ancient City of Babylon on the Plains of Shinar be rebuilt?"

2.23 No question has tantalized Bible students more or given rise to more fanciful speculations among serious expositors of the Word.

2.24 There are many reputable Bible scholars who firmly believe that this Babylon is going to be an actual rebuilt city at the site of ancient Babylon on the Euphrates River.

2.25 That position certainly finds support in a prophecy of Isaiah where he predicts the ultimate destruction of Babylon.

2.25.1 Isaiah said it would be destroyed by the Lord Almighty when the day of the Lord was near.

Isa 13:1 An oracle concerning Babylon that Isaiah son of Amoz saw:

Isa 13:2 Raise a banner on a bare hilltop, shout to them; beckon to them to enter the gates of the nobles.

Isa 13:3 I have commanded my holy ones; I have summoned my warriors to carry out my wrath-- those who rejoice in my triumph.

Isa 13:4 Listen, a noise on the mountains, like that of a great multitude! Listen, an uproar among the kingdoms, like nations massing together! The LORD Almighty is mustering an army for war.

Isa 13:5 They come from faraway lands, from the ends of the heavens-- the LORD and the weapons of his wrath-- to destroy the whole country.

Isa 13:6 Wail, for the day of the LORD is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty.

Isa 13:7 Because of this, all hands will go limp, every man's heart will melt.

Isa 13:8 Terror will seize them, pain and anguish will grip them; they will writhe like a woman in labor. They will look aghast at each other, their faces aflame.

Isa 13:9 See, the day of the LORD is coming-- a cruel day, with wrath and fierce anger-- to make the land desolate and destroy the sinners within it.

2.26 "The day of the Lord" refers to the period which immediately surrounds the coming of Christ.

2.26.1 As we earlier learned from a categorical study of "The Day of the Lord," it is a term used to describe the events of the Tribulation and the Second Coming of Christ.

2.27 Since the city of Babylon has not existed historically since the days of Alexander the Great, it would have to be rebuilt in order for God to destroy it in "the day of the Lord."

2.28 In the Los Angeles Times a very interesting article pointed out: "The tower of Babel, Biblical source of the world's languages, soon may rise again over the dusty plain once known as Mesopotamia. The Iraqi government was reported to be considering a plan to construct part of the ruins of ancient Babylon, including a two hundred and ninety-five-foot tower described in the book of Genesis."

2.29 Lindsey conjectures: "As the Arab world finds itself with oil wealth on its hands and nothing to spend it on, it well may be that their thoughts will turn to rebuilding this city of ancient glory." Such a reconstruction would provide tourism dollars not only to Iraq but most of the Middle East." Such dollars would only be forthcoming if the Arabs could control their desires to stop murdering one another.

2.30 We are told construction efforts designed to rebuild the city were underway at the time of Saddam Hussein's "untimely demise." The ancient ruins of the city have been located just south of Bagdad although, much of the ancient city is now under water. A major excavation effort first took place in 1811, 1817 and 1827.

2.31 Is the rebuilding of Babylon a sign? Many would like you to believe such is the case. We know there are no signs given the immanency of the rapture.

2.32 Since there are so many foolish enough to believe in signs even in the light of overwhelming Scriptural teaching to the contrary, let's at least address the question.

2.33 Keep in mind, at the time of the writing of the Scripture both John and James said the rapture is imminent. You may recall we studied the Rapture noting "there are no signs signaling the Rapture."

2.33.1 Clearly then Babylon, if it is the Babylon of the Shinar plain, must be rebuilt after the translation of the church.

2.34 Under normal conditions it seems highly unlikely such a city could be rebuilt so quickly; but in the Tribulation where a Satan indwelt Antichrist rules the world "abnormal conditions" are the order of the day.

2.35 Lindsey in his book *There's A New World Coming* has asked quite seriously "Think of how long it took cities like New York, Paris, London, etc., to grow to prominence."

2.36 He then counters "Brasilia was built as the capitol of Brazil in an uninhabited jungle area in ten years." This under normal conditions. Brazil had no direct help from Satan. But after the Rapture his powers will multiply greatly.

2.37 We are going to study more of this later but for now let me just give you four points:

The Global Church in Rome is destroyed in the middle of the Tribulation.

The Antichrist will then move his capitol to a rebuilt city, Babylon; its construction starting just after the rapture under the personal tutelage and direction of a Satan indwelt Antichrist.

It will become the economic center of the world in three Satanically facilitated years.

It is this rebuilt Babylon which will be destroyed by the Lord Jesus Christ at the Second Advent.

3. Let me give you an expanded translation of Revelation Chapter eighteen.

Expanded Translation:

Rev 18:1 It wasn't long before I saw a second angel coming down from heaven. From his appearance and general demeanor, he obviously had been given special authority; in fact, the entire horizon was illumined by his splendor.

Rev 18:2 He cried out in a very loud voice: "Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great! The rebuilt city of Babylon on the Euphrates is gone; it has become a home for demons and a place for every kind of evil spirit, it is home for every kind of unclean and detestable bird.

Rev 18:3 For the nations of the world have participated with her in all sorts of pernicious and despicable commercial practices. The leaders of planet earth have entered into great schemes designed to take advantage of those less fortunate, and the industrial captains have devised devious methods for acquiring great wealth beyond description."

Rev 18:4 And then I John heard another voice coming from heaven: "My people come out of Babylon so that you do not participate in her sins; also I do not want to see you hurt by the plagues which I will send;

Rev 18:5 for you see her sins have piled up even reaching to heaven itself, from her very beginning she has participated in all which is evil and God has remembered her many sins and idolatrous religion which spread throughout the world.

Rev 18:6 Babylon must be paid back said the Voice; in fact she will be paid back double for what she has done. Mix her a drink of devastation and give her a double portion from her own cup.

Rev 18:7 Distribute to her as much torture and grief as the glory and luxury she bestowed upon herself. Throughout the ages she has boasted, 'I sit as queen; I am not a widow, and I will never mourn.'

Rev 18:8 Accordingly in one day plagues will overtake her: death, mourning and famine will be the order of her day. The city of Babylon will be consumed by fire, for mighty, inherently powerful and sovereign is the Lord God who has judged her."

Rev 18:9 The various rulers of the nations who had gained great wealth from the evil practices of commercial Babylon were astounded and full of great sorrow when they saw the smoke of the burning city, they cried uncontrollably, they could not believe their eyes.

Rev 18:10 Terrified at what they saw, they refused to go to her aid but rather they stood afar off and cried: "'Woe! Woe, O great city, O Babylon, city of power! In such a short time you have been destroyed!'

Rev 18:11 The world's great men of commerce could be seen for several days thereafter weeping and mourning because no one bought their products;

Rev 18:12 their expensive trinkets made of gold, silver, precious stones and pearls sat alone and cold in their jewelry cases; their fine linen, purple, silk and scarlet cloth simply took up space on their shelves; items made of citron wood, and articles of every kind made of ivory, costly mahogany, bronze, iron and marble were no longer purchased;

Rev 18:13 there was no market for their cinnamon and spice, their incense, myrrh and frankincense, their wine and olive oil, fine flour and wheat were stacked in warehouses taking up space; cattle and sheep, horses and carriages, and their slaves could not be traded.

Rev 18:14 They will grieve for Babylon for she is no longer the great economic power who paid generously for the world's gross domestic product. The world's riches and splendor soon vanished, never to be recovered.

Rev 18:15 The merchants who gained their wealth from selling products to Babylon will stand off in the distance and watch terrified as Babylon and her citizens cry out in pain; even the inveterate industrial giants, these normally unflappable men of commerce will also weep, wail,

Rev 18:16 and cry out: "Woe! Woe, O great city, you who once was dressed in fine linen, purple and scarlet; you who once glittered with gold, precious stones and pearls - you are now nothing but a city to be pitied.

Rev 18:17 Your great wealth was washed away in a sea of fire and it all happened so quickly; all that about which you formerly boasted is now in ruin! Every sea captain, and all who travel by ship, the sailors, and all who earn their living from the sea, will stand afar off wondering where to take their cargo.

Rev 18:18 When they see the smoke of her burning, they will cry out, Was there ever a city like Babylon?

Rev 18:19 The great sea captains and their crews who once enjoyed their shore visits will weep and mourn and exclaim: "Woe! Woe, O great city; the owners of the giant vessels who had become rich through trading with her! They will say to one another "but it all happened so fast, great Babylon is no longer, will she ever stop burning!"

Rev 18:20 A voice from heaven orders those in heaven to rejoice; those ordered to rejoice are: ordinary believers, prophets and apostles. The pain and suffering caused by Babylon representing all of Satan's demons and the gentile empires over which they indirectly ruled are now poured out on the city of Babylon.

Rev 18:21 Then a powerful angel picked up a boulder the size of a large millstone and threw it into the sea, and said: "With such violence the great city of Babylon will be thrown down, never to be seen again.

Rev 18:22 “The music of harpists, flute players and trumpeters, will never be heard in you again. The sound of a millstone will never be heard in you again.

Rev 18:23 The light of a lamp will never shine in you again. The voice of the bridegroom and the bride will never be heard in you again. Your merchants were the world's great men. By your magic spell all the nations were led astray.

Rev 18:24 In you were found the blood of prophets, the blood of saints, and of all those who have been killed on planet earth.”

Principles

1. Chapter eighteen begins in the KJV: "And after these things," a conjunction followed by the preposition **Meta** and the demonstrative **Houtos** declined as an accusative thus making the meaning of **Meta Houtos** properly "after these things, i.e., after that which we have just studied in chapter seventeen."
2. We do not have the time specified but from other studies the verse itself and the context of Revelation chapter eighteen, we know there is an interval.
3. Walvoord in his book *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* has written:
"THE OPENING PHRASE of chapter eighteen, "after these things," marks a later revelation than that given in chapter 17."
4. John declares, "I saw another angel come down from heaven." The phrase "another angel" makes clear that the angel of Rev 18:1 is a different angel from that of Rev 17:1, but given the use of **Allos** it is the same kind but another one.
5. Though the angel is described as "having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory," it is evident from the role assigned that this is a literal angel and not a Christophany.
6. As noted the term "another" (Greek **Allos** over against **Heteros**) makes clear that this angel is the same in kind as the angel of Rev 17:1.
7. And the fact that the angel has great power and that the earth is lighted with the glory of the angel lead to the conclusion that the angel is delegated to do a great work on behalf of God.
8. The announcement by the angel given in verses 2 and 3 declares that Babylon the great is fallen.
9. The repetition of the verb **Pipto, Pipto** "is fallen," found in the aorist tense, indicates a sudden completed event has just happened. Clearly from John's perspective it is future. Rev 18:1-4

KJV

Rev 18:1 And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

Rev 18:2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

Rev 18:3 For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

Rev 18:4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

9.1 Seiss in his book, *Apocalypse* takes exception: "... the repetition of the phrase "is fallen" is intended to describe two separate parts or stages of the fall, answering to the two aspects in which Babylon is contemplated, referring first to Babylon in mystery, as a system or spirit of false worship, and second to Babylon as a city, in which this system or spirit is finally embodied."

10. The fact that the announcement of chapter 18 comes so closely after the destruction of the harlot in chapter 17 has, to some, raised the question "are the two one and the same event?"

11. There are a number of reasons for believing that chapter 18 is a subsequent event, though described in similar terms.

12. The woman who is destroyed in chapter 17 is made desolate, naked, and burned with fire by the beast with the ten horns.

13. From this it may be concluded that the destruction of the harlot in Revelation 17 is the fall of Babylon in its ecclesiastical or religious sense and that this probably occurs when the Antichrist assumes the role of god.

14. In Revelation chapter 17 we saw the destruction of organized religion, the Global Church formerly headquartered in Rome but destroyed after its removal to Babylon.

15. In Revelation chapter 18, however, we see an entirely different emphasis. This Babylon is indeed a specific location but the destruction of the Antichrist's economic locomotive is highlighted. Hopefully I made this clear in the expanded translation of Revelation chapter eighteen. (*supra pages: 7, 8 and 9*)

16. It would certainly seem that the destruction of the world's commerce and trade takes place several years after the destruction of "the harlot's world church."

17. The phrase “in one hours-time” is an idiom of suddenness. Such a sudden destruction to the economic and cultural life of the whole world plunges planet earth into mourning!

18. Interestingly there is no record of mourning when the Antichrist destroys the Global Church. Perhaps there is great joy in just getting to stay home on Sunday without any feelings of guilt.

19. The destruction of Babylon in chapter 18 should be compared with the preceding announcement in Rev 16:19 where the great city is divided and the cities of the Gentiles fall. Babylon is one of the great cities of the Gentiles, if not the greatest.

Rev 16:19 The great city split into three parts, and the cities of the nations collapsed. God remembered Babylon the Great and gave her the cup filled with the wine of the fury of his wrath.

20. This event described in chapter sixteen would seem to be a preview of what we are studying in chapter eighteen. The event in chapter sixteen, likewise comes late in the Great Tribulation, just prior to the second coming of Christ.

21. The downfall of the city of Babylon in Rev 18:2 is followed by its becoming the habitation of demons, the "hold" or "prison" of every evil spirit, and the "cage" of every unclean and hateful bird.

22. This abandonment of destroyed Babylon to demons is a divine judgment stemming from the utter wickedness of its inhabitants described in verse three.

Rev 18:3 For all the nations have drunk the maddening wine of her adulteries. The kings of the earth committed adultery with her, and the merchants of the earth grew rich from her excessive luxuries."

23. Babylon in her political character has had evil relationships with "all nations" described as "fornication." In this, they have been led by the political rulers of the earth." The resulting evil association has made the merchants of the earth rich, just as the church had grown rich in proportion to its wickedness.

24. I want to pause here and give you what I consider one of the more scholarly positions in favor of the Babylon of Revelation eighteen being the Babylon on the Euphrates River. I will in the main simply quote in part from that written by Charles Dyer in his book *The Road to Armageddon*.

"Let's look at Isaiah 13:1. Babylon is the nation that starts the list of judgments against the nations. Isaiah has just finished a pronouncement of judgment against Israel. Babylon was a second rate, minor, insignificant power in Isaiah's day. Assyria was the big kid on the block. Assyria was the nation that had threatened Judah but Assyria only makes number two on God's list. ...

“God goes on and describes the destruction against Babylon. I want to look carefully at what He says. We won't read all of it, but let's pick up in verse four: Listen, a noise on the mountains, like that of a great multitude! Listen, an uproar among the kingdoms, like nations massing together! The LORD Almighty is mustering an army for war. They come from faraway lands, from the ends of the heavens the LORD and the weapons of His wrath to destroy the whole country ...

“I am bringing nations together to destroy the nation of Babylon. I'm going to wipe out, not only the city of Babylon, but the whole country.” Now the questions we have to ask are, “What destruction is Isaiah talking about? Is this a destruction in his day? Or was it something future, but something long since passed? Or is he describing something that, from our perspective, is still future?” The answer has to be found by looking carefully at the text. I notice in verse 6 that Isaiah starts giving a time frame. “Wail, for the day of the LORD is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty.” Isaiah sets the context of Babylon's destruction in the time he calls the day of the Lord. Does Isaiah have a specific day of the Lord in mind? He picks up this theme again in verse nine ...

“See, the day of the LORD is coming a cruel day, with wrath and fierce anger to make the land desolate and destroy the sinners within it. The stars of heaven and their constellations will not show their light. The rising sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light. I will punish the world for its evil, the wicked for their sins. I will put an end to the arrogance of the haughty and will humble the pride of the ruthless. I will make humanity scarcer than pure gold, more rare than the gold of Ophir. Therefore, I will make the heavens tremble; and the earth will shake from its place at the wrath of the LORD Almighty, the day of His burning anger.

“God says, “I'm going to judge Babylon, and it's going to be on the day of the Lord.” What day of the Lord do you mean, Isaiah? Look for one where you see the sun, and the moon, and the stars darkened. Look for supernatural signs in the heavens, a time when the moon won't give its light. Look for a time when I'm punishing not just Babylon but, in verse 11, “I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their sins.” Look for a time when humanity is going to be “scarcer than pure gold,” tremendous loss of human life in this world-wide judgment. Look for a time when the heavens are going to shake and the earth itself is going to be shaken off its foundations. Now if those images sound familiar, you can find them in Joel chapter two in his description of the day of the Lord, a day that ends with the coming of Jesus Christ to rule as king over Israel.

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