

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 202

THE DESTRUCTION OF BABYLON

(continued)

“Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her. And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall *bewail her*, and *lament for her*, when they shall see the smoke of her burning. Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, *Alas, alas*, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come. And the merchants of the earth shall *weep* and *mourn over her*; because no man buyeth their merchandise any more...and every ship-master...and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, and *cried* when they saw the smoke of her burning...and they cast dust on their heads, and *cried, weeping* and *wailing*, saying, *Alas, alas* that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness (wealth, all the *money* involved)! for in one hour is she made desolate” (Rev. 18:8-11, 17-19).

The lamentation that begins here is the first of three listed in chapter eighteen. The first is a lamentation by the *kings* of the earth-realm, or the lords and rulers of the carnal church systems of man (verses 9-10). The second is by the *merchants* of the earth-realm, that is, all those who have “*made merchandize*” of the gospel and the Lord’s people in those carnal systems (verses 11-17). The third (verses 17-19) is by all the *ship owners*, all the *sailors*, all who make their living by the sea trade. Ships in Bible days were vessels of wood, signifying humanity, the carnal nature, the Adamic life. The ship owners and sailors were involved in merchandising, moving goods, transporting the delicacies of the Babylonian kingdom. In religious Babylon these are the deacon boards, committees — finance committees, building committees, etc., money raisers, program directors, music directors, campaign directors, concert organizers, advertisers, all the “movers” by

which the desires and ambitions of the leaders of the church systems are planned, financed, produced, and fulfilled.

In John's vision he saw that all of the people mentioned above who witnessed the fall of Babylon were terrified and filled with horror. They had trusted in it. Now it was suddenly being destroyed! It is significant to note that *none* made any attempt to come to the aid of the great city Babylon. Fear of its torment, fear that they too might suffer its fate, has already caused them to move far off where they are standing, observing the destruction of the city. The lament of the kings, the merchants, and the ship-masters and sailors is dramatic: "Alas, alas, that **great city Babylon**, that **mighty city!** For in one hour is thy judgment come!" The cry is one of displeasure, even horror. The Greek may be translated either "Woe!" or "Alas!" However, the cry is very emphatic and is like a hopeless wail. "Mighty" is the same word that is translated "strong" in verse eight wherein we read, "...for *strong* is the Lord who judgeth her." It suggests that Babylon claimed for itself the very power of God! But Babylon was not strong "in the Lord, and in the power of His might," and therefore could not stand before Him. It was all a flimsy facade and it fell quickly when the breath of the Almighty blew upon it — and great was the fall thereof!

It is for Babylon's incredible *wealth* that the mourners mourn over her. The "merchandise" of Babylon is itemized as an inventory in verses twelve through thirteen. These passages clearly indicate that Babylon is no *literal city* — and *literal wares* could not be meant, since no single city in the world could be the sole emporium of the whole earth, as it is presented here. All this merchandise is not to be understood literally, but as representing the traffic in things both carnal and spiritual and showing the fabulous luxury of the church systems of man. That's the *merchandising spirit* — you can make money in Babylon! Religious Babylon has become a merchandising business and has abounded in all that wealth. The world empire of Babylonish religion, after millenniums of accumulating untold billions — probably trillions — of dollars in real estate, bank accounts, and vast holdings of various kinds, is doubtless one of the richest institutions, if not actually *the richest* organization, on earth today. Self-seeking businesses of all kinds have found it financially rewarding to patronize the materialistic world empire of Babylonish religion. And day and night you can see them crying on TV, pleading for finances for this and that project, offering CD's, DVD's, and trinkets of all kinds. There is no shortage of men and women seeking gold and glory. The land is overflowing with them, those seeking their own gain and each staking his own claim.

Some years ago, CBS's *Sixty Minutes* did a profile on mega-pastor Joel Osteen and his "prosperity theology." His sermons focus on how faith in God and worship of God bring material blessing. That is a positive message, and I certainly prefer a positive gospel to a negative one! But it can easily spill over into ungodly superstition, and it explains the great conundrum of modern religion: that many people's faith is not necessarily making them into better people, not establishing righteousness in their lives, not investing them with the mind of Christ or conforming them into the image of the Son. How could it, seeing that religion is no longer about righteousness, but rather about success, health, and wealth; no longer about God's will and plan, but about *us*; no longer about compassion, love, and a laid-down life, but our own physical and material needs? To inversely paraphrase John F. Kennedy, what so many religious leaders today are essentially saying

is, “Ask not what you can do for God; ask what God can do for you!” I too want to be blessed! I too am thankful to my heavenly Father when my needs are abundantly met! But in turning God into a furry rabbit’s foot to ward off evil spirits and help us win the lottery, what chance is there that we will ever find transcendence in life or anything uniquely divine, heavenly, and spiritual? More so, what chance is there that we will ever be liberated from the incarceration of the ego — the carnal mind? If the one thing that can free us from the prison of the Self — the Christ-life — is changed into yet another shackle of the self-life, then we are damned to self-absorption forever!

Within recent decades, several of the most famous international television pulpитеers have been exposed and their vast financial holdings have been publicized. They have millions of dollars invested in their personal homes and property both here and abroad, while they fly around the world in their private jets, at the same time begging and pleading for money from the widows, the poor, and struggling families. They live sumptuously the lifestyles of the rich and famous while those who support their grandiose programs are living as virtual paupers. Where are those who are true harvesters of souls rather than those who gather (harvest) money? Where are those who are building God’s kingdom rather than their own? Where are those who truly feed the sheep? Where are those who are not lifted up with pride? Where are those who are not puffed up with their own importance? Where are those who do not promote and exalt themselves? Where is the preacher who doesn’t seek to ingratiate himself to the one with expensive clothes, luxury automobiles, fine homes, and all the marks of success and wealth? Where is the weeping before the altar? Where are those who refrain from using the world’s methods to conduct God’s business? Where are those who do not charge for the gospel? Where are those who do not have a ministry for sale? Where are those who have not taken unto themselves the gold and the glory? Where are those who are not displaying their flesh in their man-made promotions?

Where are those of a broken and contrite spirit? Where are those with the meekness and purity of the Lamb? Where are those who have not brought the spirit of this world into their midst? Where are those who do not put their picture on every page of their magazine and their name on everything they do? Where is the simple message of the kingdom of God without the Hollywood extravaganza and showmanship? Where is the worship in the beauty of holiness, in spirit and in truth, rather than musical entertainment? Where are those who approach God with reverence and godly fear and do not treat the sacred things as though they were part of a carnival? Where are those who have laid hold of God? Where are the humble? Where are the pure in heart? Where are those that are conformed unto the image of the Son of God? Where are the prayer warriors and the intercessors? Where are those who proclaim the gospel of the kingdom of God without the slightest motive of financial reward for themselves? **WHERE ARE GOD’S TRUE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE HOUR?** Of this you may be certain — these will not be found within the halls of Babylon’s religion! They will only be found among God’s faithful remnant who have received the call to come out of Babylon and, forsaking all, have gone unto HIM, without the camp, bearing His reproach, separated unto HIM ALONE.

Yet — all that is but child’s play when compared with the “merchandising spirit” of Babylon’s “Christian holidays.” Hear it! “*And the **merchants** of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; **for no man buyeth their merchandise anymore***” (Rev. 18:11). Let me quote that again.

“And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man celebrates Christmas and Easter anymore...” Oops...I made a mistake and quoted that wrong. *“...no man buyeth their merchandise anymore.”* Did you know that most of the merchants, stores, and malls in the United States of America depend upon *Christmas alone* for a full 50% of their annual gross sales? The fact is, without Christmas most of them would go bankrupt and the entire American economy would utterly *collapse!* Add to that the other religious holidays — Easter, St. Patrick’s Day, Thanksgiving, and a host of others. The fact is — the stores rearrange their merchandise and restock their shelves at various times throughout the year based primarily on *religious holidays!* No sooner are all the products from one holiday cleared from the shelves, than they are filled full with merchandise for the next holiday! Then add all the religious bookstores, religious cards, Christian concerts, religious broadcasting, music sales, religious trinkets, etc., and you are talking about far more than 50% of the economies of most so-called “Christian” nations! Tell me that the gospel isn’t big business — the collapse of which would cause the merchants of the earth *literally* to cry, and weep, and mourn!

Who can deny that Christmas is indeed a *commercial* season, sponsored and kept alive by the heaviest retail advertising campaigns of the year. You see a masqueraded “Santa Claus” in the stores. Ads keep us deluded and deceived about the “beautiful Christmas spirit.” The newspapers, magazines, catalogs, television networks, and radio stations who sell these ads, print flowery editorials and publish advertising slogans exalting and eulogizing the pagan season and its “SPIRIT.” A gullible people has become so inoculated, many take offense when told the TRUTH! Think about it. The “Christmas spirit” is actually *created* each year, not by some unique moving of the Spirit of Christ, not even to honor Christ, but to SELL MERCHANDISE! Like all of Satan’s delusions, it appears as an “angel of *light.*” Materialism and commercialism so dominate this “season to be jolly” that there can surely be no soul so blind as not to see it. Although it is the season of giving — and everyone is propagandized to feel evil if they are not involved in the giving — the overtones, from the candy store on the corner to the department store that has everything and the mail-order catalog business and the internet, obviously put the stress on getting them more business during this time of the year than any other comparable season. In fact, many commercial ventures rely on this season of the year for their *survival.* Whenever a question is asked after the 25th of December is past, it is generally, “What did *you* GET for Christmas?” Each vies with the other, determined to express the idea that he *got* more. But God is revealing to His elect sons in this hour *the difference between the precious and the vile — the difference between that which is born of God and that which is born of the harlot Babylon.* God by His Spirit is bringing forth a people OUT OF EVERY VESTIGE OF BABYLON!

Historical records in encyclopedias, which are available in any city library, and are noted for their authenticity and reliability, give us these facts that Christmas is of heathen origin. It is traced back to sun worshippers and observed among the pagan nations. All these pagan festivals originated in heathendom. The word “Christmas” means “Mass of Christ,” or, as it later became shortened, “Christ-Mass,” and finally just “Christmas.” It came to us as a Roman Catholic Mass. But where did they get it? Certainly not from Christ or the Bible, for neither Christ or the Bible make any mention of it or even suggest that we should in any way celebrate the birthday of Jesus. Since it has come to us through the Roman Church, and has no authority but that of the Roman

Catholic Church, let us examine the Catholic Encyclopedia, published by that denomination. Under the caption "Christmas" you will find: "Christmas was *not* among the earliest festivals of the Church...the first evidence of the feast *is from Egypt.*" "*Pagan customs* centering around the January calendar gravitated to Christmas."

The Encyclopedia Americana, 1969 edition, says: "CHRISTMAS. The name derives from the Old English *Chrites Maesse*, or Christ's Mass, and the present spelling probably came into use about the sixteenth century. All Christian churches except the Armenian church observe the birth of Christ on December 25. This date was not set in the West until about the middle of the fourth century and in the East until about a century later. The reason for establishing December 25 as Christmas is somewhat obscure, but it is usually held that the day was chosen to correspond to *pagan festivals* that took place around the time of the winter solstice, when the days began to lengthen, to celebrate the 'rebirth of the sun.' Northern European tribes celebrated their chief festival of Yule at the winter solstice to celebrate the rebirth of the sun (god) as a giver of light and warmth. The Roman Saturnalia (a festival dedicated to *Saturn*, the *god of agriculture*, and to the renewed power of the sun) also took place at this time, and some Christian customs are thought to be rooted in this ancient *pagan* celebration. It is held by some scholars that the birth of Christ as 'Light of the World' was made analogous to the rebirth of the sun in order to make Christianity more meaningful to pagan converts. Many early Christians decried the gaiety and festive spirit introduced into the Christmas celebration as a pagan survival, particularly of the Roman Saturnalia." In our little booklet *Five Reasons Why the Sons of God Should Not Celebrate Christmas* (available free upon request) we cite many more historical proofs of the pagan origin of Christmas.

"But," you say, "isn't exchanging gifts scriptural?" The answer is NO! From the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Volume 12, pages 153-155, we quote: "The interchanging of presents among friends is a like characteristic of Christmas and the Saturnalia, and *must have been adopted by Christians from the pagans*, as the admonition of Tertullian plainly shows." The fact is, this custom fastened upon the people of exchanging gifts with friends and neighbors and relatives at the Christmas season has not a single trace of Christianity in it! This does *not* celebrate Christ's birthday or honor it or Him. The partiality which is even exercised in the giving of gifts is another sign of failing to harmonize with scriptural principles. We do not object to the spirit of giving gifts, God forbid! But why wait until the traditional month of December when often times other seasons of the year would be more practical. A dear relative who insisted on continuing to send gifts to our house each Christmas long after we had ceased to reciprocate, when the subject came up one day, said, "Can't I continue to give to you just because I love you?" "Certainly," I replied, "but why do you love me only on December 25?" Furthermore, generally the method of giving fails to reveal the true spirit of charity. The major method of giving is to give to those from whom we expect to receive again in return. Even if we only *suspect* that a person may give something to us we then feel obligated to get something for him or her! That is *not* the true spirit of "giving"! It is certainly apart from the Spirit of God and all who give in that way already *have* their reward!

Consider this: Billions of dollars are spent for gifts every year because of *one false doctrine*. That false teaching is this: "The wise men gave gifts to Jesus, therefore we should give

gifts.” But do we give our gifts to Jesus? To His work? Even to the poor and needy? No. NO. NO! We give gifts worth billions of dollars *to each other*. The *truth* is just this: The wise men gave their gifts directly to Jesus, not to one another. And their gifts were not birthday gifts! The Bible evidence shows that it was two years after His birth when the wise men visited the *young child* (not a baby) in a *house* (not a stable) in *Nazareth* (not in Bethlehem). When a visitor came into the presence of a king he was supposed to bring a gift. That was a common custom in the far East. The wise men did not give any *birthday gifts* to Jesus at all! They inquired for the KING OF THE JEWS and they gave Him royal gifts because He always was, is, and forever will be a KING!

Some credit the activities of Christmas to a nebulous “spirit” which they call the “Christmas spirit,” and many praise the workings of such a “spirit.” But, do people suddenly change their beliefs and character? Do they suddenly all act like Christians and then cease to act as such after December 25? But that isn’t right either, is it? The so-called “spirit” of Christmas has absolutely no power to transform men! For most of their actions under the influence of this “spirit” have nothing what ever to do with Christ! In fact, the “Christmas spirit” seems to cause almost all to behave in a manner that is totally out of harmony with the spirit of Jesus! Stores raise many prices (except in bad economic times), often pushing cheap and flimsy merchandise for “gifts,” men exchange bottles or cases of whiskey, employers give “Christmas parties” with free liquor, often with consequences of drunkenness, and sometimes with more tragic consequences of auto accidents, or illicit sex liaisons. Tens of thousands of families, caught up in the “Christmas spirit,” overspend, go into debt, max out their credit cards, and lay an additional burden upon themselves for months afterward. Is this “spirit” that inspires them the *Holy Spirit*? Of course not!

Then what is this festival which is called CHRISTMAS? The answer, which should be suspected by all true Christians as they watch both the secular and the religious world “celebrate,” is that this festival called “Christmas” is NOT a Christian holiday at all, but is exactly what it appears to be, a pagan debauchery whose origins are not, and cannot be, in the Holy One of Israel, the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus, in His sermon on the mount, taught that “a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit” (Mat. 7:17-18). The aged apostle John wrote with the pen of inspiration and wisdom, “Beloved, believe not *every spirit*, but try the *spirits* whether they are of God” (I Jn. 4:1). This simply means that the Lord’s people are *not* to be influenced or moved by everything that seems to have a “spirit” behind it. As the “spirit of Christmas” comes wafting out of the necks of millions of bottles, as millions of people tiredly shuffle through the required routine, spending money they often can’t afford, braving the jostling crowds looking for various gifts, attending neighborhood parties, eating and drinking in excess, sneaking kisses under the mistletoe, the nation inexorably heads toward that all-too-brief evening called “Christmas eve,” followed by the nostalgia of “Christmas day” with cuddly scenes of little children in their pajamas gleefully giggling over what they find under their pagan “Christmas tree.” It’s a time of nostalgia; of childhood memories, of family gatherings, massive air travel, Christmas dinners, and football games — an orgy of spending, gift-giving, burning the midnight oil, eating too much and drinking too much, resulting in headaches and stomach disorders and other ailments that go along with drunkenness and gluttony, followed by the inevitable letdown. All this is outright heathendom and an insult to the Master, for it is done in *His name*, yet it has absolutely

no connection with the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Some contend that the *Christmas spirit* and the giving of gifts is a good thing. Instead it is a CRUEL PAGAN CUSTOM. Should you still think Christmas is a holy time, consider this: Christmas is a time of high carnality and low spirituality. We know that the *unregenerate* do not worship or serve Jesus. But they SURELY DO ENJOY CHRISTMAS! Why? Because of the decorations, the lights, feasts, gifts, parties, etc., all of which appeal to the **natural man**. THIS IS THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT in which the whole world is caught up! Is it the Lord's Spirit? Verily No! No one can dispute that — yet those who pay no attention to Christ, or His Spirit, or His Word all the rest of the year, those who fit the description of “the world,” enter into the activities and rituals of “Christmas” with a frenzy that borders on a passion! How can this be? How can the unbelievers be so stirred by this “spirit” at *this one time of the year* to venerate a day proclaimed as the “very birthday” of Jesus Christ, when they ignore Him or blaspheme His holy name the rest of the year! Oh, my beloved, that alone should tell you something! It is *high time* for all who treasure the beautiful hope of sonship to God to forsake the polluted house of the Harlot!

If with one sweep of the hand all the so-called holy days, all the commercialism of Christian products and services could be erased out of our land, the economy of the entire nation — and perhaps the world — WOULD COLLAPSE! Think about it! Can we not understand by this the heart-wrenching scene in John's remarkable vision: “And the *merchants* of the earth shall *weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: the merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all kinds of scented wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and odors, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves...the merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing...for in one hour so great riches is come to nought*” (Rev. 18:11-17). Check that list carefully, my friend, and consider just how many of the items enumerated there have been purchased by the untold billions of dollars from the merchants of the earth *just at Christmas time!*

That is the great word-picture of the merchandising empire of religious Babylon! The luxuriance of the language must not blind our eyes to the fact that though it involves the *kings* of the earth, the *merchants* of the earth, and the *ship-masters* and *sailors*, it is really just one great lamentation, and one too of unequalled pathos; for the saddest sight imaginable is not the judgment of a World but the crashing to destruction of a professing Christian Church — the vision of a church first faithless, then fallen, and finally destroyed, consumed by the fire of God's judgment! So great a space is devoted in the Revelation to the lamentations over her — one entire chapter — because so momentous, surprising, complete, and far-reaching is her destruction! The age and the land in which we live are full of the merchandising of Mystery Babylon. On every side we see the church and the world on the best of terms, and in such close alliance the one with the other that in reality they can only *fall together!* Thus, while Babylon burns, the world stands by and wrings its hands, casts dust on its head, and in stark fear weeps and mourns!

There is, of course, a spiritual dimension to the wealth and merchandising of Babylon. Our friend, Connie Asbill, expressed it so well when she wrote: “Like Israel who was *rich* in covenants and promises, this woman (Babylon) is rich with the word that has been brought to her, not only by the scriptures, but by those men who have been raised up out of the midst of her to speak truth under the anointings of God. In Revelation 17:4 she is seen ‘arrayed in purple and scarlet color, decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand...’ Babylon is, indeed, a RICH WOMAN! That she is rich by the hand of God, and is not merely pretending to be rich, is seen in Hosea 2:8 where the Lord Himself affirms that He is the source of her wealth. Babylon is not, however, aware in the depths of her being that He is her supply, and therein lies her ultimate undoing, for the Lord said, ‘She did not know that **I** gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold...therefore will I return and **take away my corn in the time thereof and my wine in the season thereof and will take away my wool and my flax given to cover her nakedness, and now will I discover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers and none shall deliver her out of my hand.**’

“Babylon is a rich woman — but it is with these very riches from the hand of God that she has prepared her own idols, having held the truth in unrighteousness and changed these riches and truths of God into a lie. That is what the Lord says in this passage: ‘She did not know that I gave her corn and wine and oil...which THEY PREPARED FOR BAAL.’ Deceived by the very riches that were given to bring her to God, Babylon exalts herself because of that which she possesses, saying within herself, ‘I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow’ (Rev. 18:7). All that the church possesses was given to her out of the anointing of God, imparted to her through anointed men, and these men of bygone generations she admires. Nothing has changed, however, since the days of Jesus when He said to the religious leaders, ‘You garnish the sepulchers of the dead prophets — but kill the living ones.’ The anointed word has been set in concrete in the church system, and like the *rephaim* — the physicians of no value who *embalmed* Israel — so has the church system so **embalmed the Christ** — fixed Him in a **static position** so that He can move no further. Holding the very *form of truth*, the church system denies the essence and life of that truth...and boasts in her wealth! Yet, the Lord says, ‘Because thou sayest, **I am rich and increased with goods** (doctrines and forms and rituals and eschatology charts) and have need of nothing (not even the anointing) and **knowest not** that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked...’ because of all this, ‘I WILL SPEW YOU OUT OF MY MOUTH!’” — end quote.

With this *higher spiritual dimension* firmly in mind let us reverently and prayerfully consider together once more all the things that are merchandised in Babylon. “*And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: the merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all scented wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, and cinnamon, and odors, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.*”

It is doubtful that in all of scripture there are words more specific, pungent, and precise than these! The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones — to list only the first three. Gold bespeaks the *divine nature*. And I do not hesitate to tell you that the ministers of Babylon will offer to sell you even the *divine nature* for a price! Oh, yes — if you are *committed* to the church, if you are *faithful* in attendance, if you *pay* your tithes and offerings, if you *sell your soul* to their programs and agenda — then you are promised that you will thereby grow spiritually and become a strong, mature Christian, Godlike in character — that is, full of *divine nature!* These ministers of Babylon will also *sell* you their seven-step book on ***Overcoming Made Easy***. They will *sell* you their CD's and DVD's on ***Prosperity and Healing***. And if you want to really understand how to grow and mature in Christ, if you need faith and understanding on how to receive and move in the gifts of the Spirit, if you covet to prophesy, if you need healing, if you seek to have your marriage strengthened, if you want to be a better husband or wife, if you need wisdom to nurture and raise your children, if you hunger and thirst after righteousness and yearn to appropriate the riches and glory of the promises and covenants of God — just register and PAY THE ADMISSION PRICE of \$30.00, or \$100.00, or \$300.00 to attend their Seminar or Retreat! In Babylon you must ***pay*** for all of this! Babylon does not freely minister the deep spiritual truth, blessing, life, and reality of the Lord — they neatly package it, then put a price on it, thus *making merchandise* of the holy things of God! **For a fee** you are able to access the gold of *divine nature*, the silver of *redemption*, the precious stones of *divine strength and godly character*, the pearls of *death to self*, the fine linen of *righteousness*, the purple of a *kingly, royal life*, the scented wood of *His fragrance*, the precious wood of a *redeemed humanity*, the odors of *His attributes*, the ointments of *His healing power*, the wine of *His joy*, the oil of *anointing*, the fine flour and wheat of *His word*, the sheep of *His humility and sacrifice*, the chariots of *the movings of His power*, and many more besides. How wonderful are all these things! Are they not indeed of great value? Yet — one can easily discern the difference between the great city Babylon and the holy city New Jerusalem — in the “great city” of Babylon all these things are ***merchandised!*** In the “holy city” of New Jerusalem they are ***freely given!*** “*And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there...and the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him TAKE THE WATER OF LIFE FREELY!*” (Rev. 21:25; 22:17). Great is the mystery!

REJOICE OVER HER!

“*Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her*” (Rev. 18:20).

If ever there was a facet of the pleasure of the Lord that we desire to see in manifestation, and to joyfully participate in, it is this — that He do His pleasure on Babylon. In the natural it would appear cynical to rejoice over a city that is burning and merchants who are lamenting, weeping, and mourning. Yet what a day of rejoicing and singing when HE delivers, yes, when HE breaks asunder the prison bars, removes the blindfolds from the faces of the inmates, when HE REDEEMS man from all of the religious systems of our day, and finally men are freed to truly know God and “worship the Father *in spirit and in truth*.” Even now His remnant have been drawn out and cut off from the world of man's religion, and from the contention of creeds, to partake of

HIS LIFE in a very personal and powerful way.

But the hour draws nigh when the Son, and those who follow the Lamb, shall execute the will of the Father, and the command shall be given, “*Repay to her what she herself has paid to others and double her doom in accordance with what she has done. Mix a double portion for her in the cup she mixed for others. To the degree that she glorified herself and reveled in her wantonness, to that measure impose on her torment and anguish and tears and mourning...so shall her plagues come thick upon her in a single day, pestilence and anguish and sorrow and famine; and she shall be utterly consumed with fire, FOR MIGHTY IS THE LORD GOD WHO JUDGES HER*” (Rev. 18:6-8, Amplified).

We find so many today, even among God’s elect, who bemoan the awful conditions of the church and the world. Shame on them! God reminds you and me now, when we see Babylon made desolate, “REJOICE OVER HER, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.” This is the day of reckoning, the day of judgment on this ungodly system. It will be followed by peace and righteousness and glory and rejoicing! It is indeed wonderful! Only faintly can our hearts contemplate the wonder of such a day when the Babylon religious system exists no more, *replaced* with the *manifestation of the sons of God and a universal outpouring of the Spirit of the Lord!* And while false prophets and calamity-howlers of every brand and hue are prophesying the darkest days of earth’s history soon to fall as a shroud upon the whole world, yet the word of the Lord tells a far different story. To all the people in Babylon the Lord says, “Come out of her, *my people!*” Make no mistake about it, precious friend of mine, every single person in Babylon *is the Lord’s people*. And now we find, “*Thy people shall be delivered, EVERY ONE that shall be found written in the book*” (Dan. 12:4). This is the day of victory, not of defeat. It is the day when God is “bringing again Zion” (Isa. 52:8), that is, bringing all His people out of Babylon and establishing Zion as the city of God in the earth. This deliverance is for “every one” that belongs to Christ, whose name is written in the book. THEREFORE, “Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets!”

The whole system shall come to nought, and we shall see the establishment of HIS KINGDOM in righteousness throughout the earth. Believe it, my beloved, He taught us to pray it, “”*THY KINGDOM COME, Thy will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven.*” And this pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand! “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever” (Rev. 11:15). Truly, *redemption* means a “loosing away” from all of Babylon’s corruption. And most especially is this essential from all of its religious tyranny and corruption. And what a day of rejoicing that brings!

We stand in the glory that Jesus has given,
The moon as the day-spring doth shine;
The light of the sun is now equal to seven,
So bright is the glory divine!

Now filled with the Spirit and clad in the armor
Of light and omnipotent truth,
We'll testify ever and Jesus we'll honor,
And stand from Babylon aloof!

The prophet's keen vision transpiercing the ages,
Beheld us to Zion return;
We'll sing of our freedom, though Babylon rages,
We'll shout as her city doth burn!

THE MILLSTONE CAST INTO THE SEA

“And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great *millstone*, and cast it into the sea, saying, ***Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all***” (Rev. 18:21).

Here an angel appears. Observe that it is a *strong* and *powerful* angel. What he is about to do requires great strength. All alone — we read *one* strong angel — he picks up an enormous millstone. Not any ordinary stone from a handmill but a *great* millstone, that is, one from a mill turned by strong oxen. What does the angel do with this great millstone? Does he roll it upon the land? No, he thrusts it into the *sea* where it disappears into the depths. Does he merely permit it to fall? No, he lifts it up and then *hurls* it into the sea — quickly the waters close over the stone so that it may be buried deeply in the ocean floor. Violence, suddenness, and permanence combine in the overthrown of Babylon. So thoroughgoing and complete will be Babylon's destruction! Never will the millstone be retrieved! The “angel” prophesied that in the same way, that is, with the same sort of power and violence, the great city Babylon would be thrown down and disappear forever. The prophecy is emphatic — Babylon will never, ever, be found any more at all! Thus, this wicked system, as center of seduction, will perish forever. Its devastation will be final, total, and irreversible. By this we are assured that God is bringing in an order in which apostasy cannot and will not *ever* raise its ugly head anywhere, or at any time, ever again! Oh, saints of God — it's REJOICING TIME!

The prophet Daniel beheld a stone cut out without hands which became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. The stone of Babylon, on the other hand, is removed from the earth and cast into the sea! The beast of Revelation 13:1 came out of the sea; Babylon is, as it were, engulfed in the sea, never again to raise its proud head to deceive the nations with its sorceries. The imagery of the scenes is very precise. We have seen again and again that the *sea* represents symbolically the unconverted state of mankind, the wicked which are tossed about like the troubled sea, the

raging, surging, restless masses of humanity foaming out their shame in the old Adamic mind and nature. As the Father graciously unfolds this mystery to our wondering hearts, can we not see that the destruction of Babylon as a millstone cast into the sea signifies that she will sink to such a low level of degradation until she comes to a devastating collapse. She will become completely absorbed by the world and simply disappear into the sea of humanity as a viable system in the world of religion.

Verses twenty-one through twenty three of chapter eighteen are like waves sealing Babylon in the deathly silence, stillness, and darkness of a watery grave — from which there is no return or recall. The recurring words “no more at all” are used six times in these three verses. “No more at all” has about it the doleful sound of a dirge and of the somber tolling of a death knell. *No more* music (praise and worship), *no more* craftsmen (true ministries), *no more* sound of a millstone (preparation of the word of God), *no more* light of a candle (even the little truth she had), *no more* the voice of the bridegroom (the voice of Christ the Head), *no more* the voice of the bride (God’s remnant) — all spiritual progress, all spiritual action, all spiritual life, all spiritual reality, and all spiritual people **CAN BE FOUND NO MORE AT ALL IN HER!**

I now close this message with the sober and urgent admonition of brother George Hawtin from one of his issues of *The Page*. “Thus with violence endeth great Mystery Babylon, which for centuries has ruled the nations...binding the professing church with the chains of tradition and bringing into slavish subjection all who are unaware of her whoredoms. Times without number I have sought to show God’s dear people the cunning mystery of ecclesiastical Babylon, warning continually of the danger of remaining in her fold. Oh that God’s people would awaken and obey the Father’s call, ‘Come out of her, my people,’ that God may be their Father and they may be His sons and daughters. I solemnly warn and admonish the people of God that *it is not possible to attain to sonship or a life that is controlled by the Spirit as long as their lives are under the influence of this satanic system, which is doomed to such utter and complete destruction*. Not only are the kingdoms of the world doomed to desolation, but the whole church system, identified as it is with the world system, is also doomed to irreparable dissolution and ruin. If you obey God and come out of it, you will be spared her woes; but, if you remain in it, you will be condemned with it. For what other reason does the Lord call to His people, saying, ‘Come out of her, my people, *that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues?*’” — end quote.

To be continued...

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