***Rejoice at the Destruction of Babylon

RV225-01***

Our subject is "Political Babylon." This is segment number 15 in Revelation 18:1-24.

The destruction of Babylon in the tribulation will bring worldwide turmoil to the world's financial markets. Tribulation society is under the maximum domination of the world government of the antichrist. The powers of the antichrist will bring great wealth to the business communities, and people by that time will be extremely dependent upon the government for their needs in a worldwide socialist economy. When Babylon the control center falls, the world's commercial interests go down as well.

So, for tribulation society, the fall of Babylon is a great tragedy, and so it is greatly mourned. The lesson for the Christian today, as we have stressed, is not to make the mistake of the people of the tribulation where they have no mastery of the details of life. Materialism was all that there was in life for them. When that came to an end, there was nothing to live for. The lesson for us is to learn in our souls that our lives do not revolve around these material things, but around the Word of God.

Jesus put it this way in Luke 12:15: "And He said to them, 'Beware, and be on guard against every form of greed, for not even when one has an abundance does his life consists of his possessions. That principle is straightforward; very simple; and, so easy to violate. What we have is not our lives. It is the doctrine that we have. That is our life.

**Rejoice**

So, please turn to Revelation 18 as we pick up our study at verse 20. There we have rather an amazing word right off the bat: "Rejoice over her, O heaven." The word "rejoice" here simply means to get happy or to enjoy something. In the Greek grammar, we observe that this is to be the constant attitude of these people who are being addressed – to be happy. They are to do this personally, and it is a command. God is not inviting these people be happy. He is commanding that they be happy. The command probably comes from the same voice to John that he heard in Revelation 18:4, a very authoritative voice.

What is there to be happy over? "Be happy over her." That refers to the city of Babylon and to her destruction: O heaven." This refers to the third heaven. This command then to be happy is addressed to the saints who are now residing in the third heaven with God. Heaven is basically a place of great joy. That is the single greatest characteristic of heaven. The Lord indicated on one occasion that one of the things that causes great joy in heaven is that when a lost sinner is saved, people really get euphoric and happy. Undoubtedly, the reason for that is that they know what a great place heaven is to be in. They're there. Furthermore, they know the contrast of not being there – to be in the lake of fire. So, naturally, people are extremely happy when they find that somebody has been born again.

In Luke 15:10, Jesus says, "In the same way, I tell you that there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents. Of course, if that one sinner happens to be someone that you're related to, that joy is even greater and even more compounded.

However, there is also rejoicing not only when people escape the lake of fire and are able to go to heaven. We also find that there is rejoicing when the vile sinner is brought to justice, and consigned to the lake of fire. Proverbs 11:10 gives us an insight on this: "When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices; and, when the wicked perish, there is glad shouting." Here's a principle of wisdom. When the righteous are blessed, everybody is happy; and, when the wicked perish, they get what's coming to them, and there is rejoicing.

This is an interesting principle then. Here we're having a voice from heaven that is telling the saints who are in heaven to get happy over the enormous, horrible destruction of the city of Babylon that God has imposed upon her. God takes no pleasure Himself in executing his justice against unbelievers, but it does preserve His integrity. His justice is satisfied. That is cause for rejoicing.

The prophet Ezekiel pointed out to us in Ezekiel 33:11, "Say to them, 'As I live,' declares the Lord God, 'I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked,' but rather the wicked turn from His way and live. Turn back. Turn back from your evil ways. Why will you die, O house of Israel? So, God takes no pleasure in the fact that His justice requires putting to eternal death those who go out into eternity without Christ. But there is joy in heaven over those who are saved, and there is joy in heaven over those who get what's coming to them for having rejected the truth of God.

While tribulation humanity then on earth is weeping and mourning the demise of Babylon, the saints in heaven are cheering. As Babylon goes up in smoke, there is no lamenting in heaven because the holiness of God is vindicated thereby. Please remember that what God does is always, first of all, for Himself, which is proper and right. Why are you and I saved? So that we can escape the lake of fire? That is not the primary reason. The primary reason we are saved is to vindicate the holiness of God. God's justice sends those who reject His provision to the lake of fire, and He takes those to heaven who accept and believe. The first primary reason, the Bible indicates, why God provided salvation was to demonstrate His justice and righteousness, and to vindicate himself in the fact that He provided on credit salvation until His Son came. That's why Christ died – to vindicate (to verify) that God was telling the truth in providing salvation.

So, when Babylon goes up in smoke, this is to vindicate the justice of God. God is doing what His own character demands. For that which is evil, there is a punishment. That is the first divine institution of the human race. The younger you are, the sooner you ought to learn this; that is, you bear the consequences of your choices. You have your volition. You can do for good or for evil. You can do right, or you can do wrong, but you will bear the blessing, or you will bear the curse. You bear the results of your choices.

We live in a society today that says, "Oh, no, you're not responsible for those terrible choices you made. Something in your background caused you to do that. It's how your parents treated you. It's how your parents reared you. One of the things that we're told constantly is that we have so much crime, and so much evil, and so much immorality because people are so poor. People are denied so much that they would like to have. But we only have to go back a few decades in American history to a thing called the Great Depression, when some of us grew up knowing what it was to have a meal of soup, and feel that we had done pretty well. And Sunday was an outstanding day because Sunday was chicken day. In the days of my growing up, nobody would think about eating chicken except on Sundays. Chicken was treat day, and Sunday was treat day. In the Depression Day, that was a real treat.

Interestingly enough, there was no big crime wave in depression years. There was no great violence. People were not afraid to walk down the street. The elderly were not were nailing up the doors of their house in fear of what intruder might come? It puts the lie to the fact – just because you're poor does not make you violent. Just because you are denied something, or you are born into some disadvantaged situation, isn't what makes you evil. It's the old sin nature, and it's your own deliberate choice.

It is pathetic, as I saw on TV the other day, a survey of American young people: what do you think about sexuality? And one maggot-headed teenager stood up, and he had a condom in his hand, and he said, "This is life." And then motioning toward his open hand, he said, "This is death." That's the kind of maggot-heads that we would have to take in the military service to defend this country? He had it backwards. The condom is death, because it implies a violation of the moral code of God. The empty hand that obeys the moral code of God, relative to sex within marriage – that's what is life. But where did he get that? That's how he's trained. This is the wisdom from the highest echelons of American society.

Don't hesitate when people like that get their just desserts, and when evil is brought down in our country. In the circle that you move in, clap your hands and dance a jig. Be happy because this is God's way – that we rejoice, not over the consequences that these people suffer, but over the fact that God's justice and character is vindicated.

Heaven is filled with people who for centuries have been persecuted, ridiculed, and martyred by Babylon's religions and by the governmental tyrannies that she has spawned. The prophets of the Old and New Testament have waited for centuries in heaven to see their words fulfilled and themselves vindicated as the spokesman of God. Now, at the end of the tribulation, it all comes together, and they rejoice over the destruction of Babylon. Finally, what we all know, is true. We will someday find out who's right and who's wrong in spiritual matters. Now these spokesman of God, who were telling us the Word of God, have been proven true.

**Saints**

So, unrestrained jubilation breaks out in heaven as the people of God are vindicated and retribution is meted out to the city which persecuted in martyrdom. Here are the ones who rejoice: "Rejoice over her, you in heaven." Who are they? First of all, "You saints." This is the Greek word "hagios." The word "hagios" in the Greek language really means "the set apart one." The holy one refers to believers who have been set apart by God to eternal life in heaven. So, we can call you "a holy one." In the Greek language, the same word that is used for "holy" is the word also that is used for "saint." A saint is a holy one. A holy one is a saint. A saint is a person set apart by God to the destiny of heaven. Every born-again believer, therefore, is a saint. That's why we have a lot of fun calling Mr. Rouch "saint," and then saying his first name, which happens to be Bernard. So, you have Saint Bernards in heaven.

That's where the thesis comes from, from some people. I read recently where some little girl wrote and said, "Will my dog be in heaven?" And the person (one of these counselors – one of these psycho-babblers) said, "Why, of course he will." But that's not true unless he's a Saint Bernard. So, every born-again believer is a saint, and you may quite properly address yourselves, and one another, as saints.

The Roman Catholics have a concept that saints are a category of superior Christians. That is not a biblical idea, and there is no such thing as superior Christians. "Saint" here is a general term referring to all believers in Jesus Christ who are residing in heaven. They are the children of God, and all those people you once knew here on earth who were believers; who have died; and, who have gone into the Lord's presence – they are part of the group that are being addressed here. They are the saints who are in heaven that are called upon to rejoice over against the demise of Babylon. "Saint" is a general term. God's saints, by their godly lives alone, condemn the vileness of the unbelievers, and these unbelievers therefore resent the Christians.

There's always a conflict between the human viewpoint religious wisdom of unbelievers and the divine viewpoint revelation of God's spiritual truth revealed in Scripture. Therefore, the saints move through our society as unwelcomed elements. They are a friction (an irritation) because their viewpoint is diametrically opposed to the viewpoint of Satan's world system. Between these two viewpoints, the saints and those who are not saints, there is an inherent, irreconcilable, eternal antagonism.

This has been pointed out to us in John 15:18-20. Jesus said, "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. But because you are not of the world, but I choose you out of the world, therefore, the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you: a slave is not greater than his master. If they persecuted Me they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also."

Why is the world so enamored with people who are trivial; who are vile; who are despicable; who are degrading; and, who are corroding of everything good in you? Because they're part of the world system, and the world thinks that's attractive. I saw a cartoon with Michael Jackson with his curly hair and everything, saying, "I'm bad. I'm bad. I'm bad. You know I'm bad." (It was something like that.) And here's a little boy looking at him, and he says, "The word is *weird*." But most kids wouldn't say, "The word is *weird*." They would be impressed to want to imitate.

I heard of a public school recently that put out a new regulation: "No more wearing your baseball caps backwards," because it's a sign of the gangs and the hoods. Gangs and hoods do that. In summer camps, at Berean Youth Clubs, there'll be no wearing of baseball caps backwards this summer. We're putting you on notice. The sun is not behind your head. It's up in front, and that's what you need to build the bill to shade your eyes. So, if you are one of the maggot-heads who comes to summer camp, who is enamored by the world system, we are going to try to detoxify you. But this is very sad that here we are, the people of God. We're the saints. We're the right ones. We want to imitate (and our children so often want to imitate) that which is totally incompatible with everything we stand for, and everything that our Lord stands for.

The natural unsaved man is always confident of human progress through his own genius and through his imagined inherent goodness. That's why they look down upon the Christian with contempt. These people need no savior to cover their sins, and they need no doctrine from Scripture to guide them in their values and their goals.

Finally, when the world's system turns to ashes on them, these people of the world, who have contempt for the saints of God find that these believers are vindicated, and when we are vindicated, our joy is going to be complete.

All that characterizes the spirit-filled biblical Christian is always that perpetual variance with all that characterizes the world system of Satan. For that reason, you should be very uncomfortable if you find that it's easy for you to be a friend of the people of this world, and of the world system. You'll be associated with them, but the closeness and your friendship and your camaraderie will not be with them. James 4:4 says, "You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God."

These two are diametrically opposed. So, if you are a saint of God, which you are as a born-again believer, you should recognize that your place in this world is one under great antagonism and under great rejection, and that you are an alien in Satan's world. Therefore, you are not going to be warmly received by this world. In Hebrews 11:13, the writer says, "All these died in faith (these heroes of faith that he lists here) without receiving the promise. But having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on this earth." All these marvelous people in Hebrews 11, the heroes of faith – not a one of them escaped the conviction that they understood they were aliens and they were exiles. Their citizenship was in heaven.

So, quit acting like the world is your buddy, and quit walking through this world system, as if these people who have nothing but contempt for God and for the Word of God and for the principles of truth, that they somehow have an affinity for you, because they do not.

So, believers are simply to be ready to be examples of godliness in a society which hates them for doing good. Don't forget that that hatred against you is so great that even your doing good will not prevent you from being the victim of the world system. You would think that you would not be the victim of crime. You would think that this campus, and all the good that it does for humanity, and all the problems that it saves for the law enforcement people, that we would be protected and respected as a work of God.

There was a time when that was true. Anything having to do with God was sacred, whether you agreed with it or not. You would not desecrate a church. You would not treat with crime something that was used in the work of God. But now we are as exposed to the criminal as anybody else, because we're in a society who has learned to hate the Christians, because the Christian is the one who opposes everything that all the opinion makers of our society hold forth as that which is the way of life, and that which people should live in order to have maximum freedom. What they do is find themselves with maximum enslavement.

Believers, in spite of that, are to be godly examples, knowing that you're going to draw fire for doing that. 1 Peter 2:11-17 give us a very strong admonition that we should use as our beacon to guide us: "Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers (people who don't belong in this world system of Satan) to abstain from fleshly lusts (the lust patterns of the sin nature) which wage war against the soul. Keep your behavior excellent among the gentiles (the unbelievers), so that in the thing in which they slander you as evil doers, they may, on account of your good deeds as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation." This expression, "the day of visitation has to do with the day when God may come and bring them to salvation – when He visits them with eternal life. Peter says, "Live such a godly life that these people who slander you, and abuse you, and cause you all kinds of grief will see how your response is a godly response such that, when they come to their senses, and God saves them, they're going to praise and glorify God that you did not act the way they acted, and that you did not retaliate with a vengeance to them. But you responded in Christian grace that they did not deserve.

Treat people in the way that you would like them to treat you. Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and the praise of those who do right. Government is God's institution. It is to be respected, and it is to be obeyed except when it wants us to do what violates the Word of God.

"For such is the will of God, that by doing right, you may silence the ignorant, foolish men. Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God. Honor all men; love the brotherhood; fear God; and, honor the king." If you honor all men as you apply the moral code, which is summarized in the Ten Commandments, you will honor every person. It is when those are broken that you dishonor a human being. Love the brotherhood. This is a special attachment (devotion) to fellow believers. Fear God by respecting the rules and the demands that He places upon us as believers. And then honor the civil government.

It is the world about us that views biblical, fundamentalist Christians as being naive, puritanical, and dumb, for not joining them in the fun of their evil ways. Is evil fun? Yes, it is fun to do evil. But Peter's advice again on this account, in 1 Peter 4:3-5, is where Peter says, "For the time already passed is sufficient for you to have carried out the desires of the gentiles" (the evils). Peter says, "You've had enough of your life devoted to evil. Having pursued a course of sensuality: lusts; drunkenness; carousals; drinking parties; and, abominable idolatries. And in all this, they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excess of dissipation, and they malign you. But they shall give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead."

Have you ever had some smart-alec find that you don't drink; you don't smoke; you don't chew; and, you seldom spit? And they say, "Well, what do you do in life for fun?" This is what Peter is saying. These people can't believe that you would not find it a lot of fun to pursue a course of sensuality; lusts; drunkenness; carousals; drinking parties; and, abominable idolatries." And they laugh at you as being naive and being a puritanical character who restrains yourself from really having any fun in life. How little they know.

Believers who are true to God, of course, are always in the minority in a society. They're the people who are not respected. They're not listen to. The world finds such Christians a hindrance to their human progress. They consider them pessimistic spoilers of fun. Unbelievers simply find biblical Christians to be intolerable because these Christians condemn by Scripture their evil leaders and their wicked lies. One day, evil men will have to answer to a holy God for their abuse of believers. That's what Peter said. Someday, after they've had all their fun, the ultimate thing they will face is that holy God. That, again, will be the time when the records are set straight. And when they face that God, and receive the justice of God for what they have chosen to do, how shall we react? We will rejoice. When God's judgment falls upon wickedness: "O ye in heaven rejoice." It's a divine command, because God's character is vindicated. That's the important thing.

Christians who are genuinely doing God's work, sadly enough, find themselves struggling to find the means to carry on the work of the Lord, while the work of Satan is well-financed. Does that mean that they're right, and we're wrong? No. Just because we are short-changed, and have to struggle to get the money to do the work does not mean that we are wrong. In the providence of God, He gives, and he restrains, but truth is truth.

**Apostles**

Then, here in Revelation 18, after speaking to this general category of saints who should rejoice, he zeros down to communicators of the Word of God, who have become the particular objects of Babylon's religious oppression over the centuries. He says, "And apostles." The apostles were the New Testament spiritual leaders. They had the gift of apostle. There is no such thing as an apostle today. These denominations like Roman Catholicism and Methodism and Episcopalianism, that talk about apostolic succession, claim that they have the gift of apostle to pass on to all those who come into their ministry. They don't have that power. Only God the Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts. This is one of the spiritual gifts that was phased out at the end of the first century with the death of the apostle John. These are men who founded and led New Testament churches. Every one of them died a martyr's death except one. Only John died at home in bed. The rest of them had a horrible death of one kind or another.

**Prophets**

The other category zeroed in on among the saints is the prophets. The prophets were men who had a special gift of being able to predict future events, and at the same time to deliver God's current message. There is no such thing as a prophet today. The Mormons love to tell you that down the street from the temple there in Temple Square in Salt Lake City, in their huge administration building, sits their doddering old prophet and seer revelator, who is the head of the church, and that he gets direct communications from God to guide them in their daily operation. They say that he is their property, and that is a lie. If he gets any communication, it does not come from the God in heaven, but it comes from the god of hell, Satan.

So, profits are a group of men who form the basis of the information that we have in the Bible. They came under an enormous abuse. With the completion of the New Testament Scriptures, the gift of prophecy also ceased. The apostles and prophets in heaven will experience special joy then over the fall of Babylon. They have suffered at the hands of the Babylon system for the fact that they spoke God's truth. They bore the brunt of the persecutions; the ridicule; the privations; the rejections; the abandonment; and, the contempt from the followers of Babylon's religion and Babylon's governments. Now the apostles and the prophets enjoy being vindicated before all the universe. They were right because God is right. And that's whose message they gave. And Babylon is fallen because she was wrong. The prophets and the apostles in heaven are overjoyed. They have been vindicated. It is perfectly right for you and me as Christians to want to be vindicated.

There is a problem in that. You could go astray. We'll tell you about that in a moment. But there's nothing wrong with saying, "I'm going to be glad when this evil receives the justice of God, and God brings it down." All the New Testament prophets suffered great persecution finding martyrdom, except John. The New Testament prophets such as Stephen receive the same abusive treatment as the Old Testament prophets did. Apostles and prophets condemned the idolatry of Babylon and the covetous materialism of the Babylon system. That in itself made them hated by Babylon's religions. Babylon was unable to silence the apostles and the prophets, but it was not able to escape the consequences of rejecting the truth which these men spoke.

Please notice, that I said "men." There were no female apostles, and there were no female prophets to any extent in terms of writing of Scripture. There were some ladies with the prophetic gift that God used in certain capacities.

So, Babylon has seemingly been victorious over Gods Communicator's as it sent them to a martyr's death. Now the apostles and prophets in heaven rejoice at God's command in seeing Babylon receive her just deserts. It is right for God's people to rejoice over the defeat of evil, and of those who promote what God condemns.

"Rejoice over her, O you inhabitants of heaven, you saints, and especially you apostles and prophets, because," and here's the reason to rejoice: "Because God has pronounced judgment for you against her." The word "pronounced" is actually the word that means "to judge:" "krino." The word "krino" means "to judge." God Himself, at a point in time, in the tribulation, pronounces judgment against Babylon. So, we read that: "God has judged your judgment." This is a related word. It is the word "krima:" "God has judged your judgment." This refers to the decision of the saints for vengeance: "For you" refers to the heavenly company against her.

The translation more clearly would be, therefore, this: "God has judged *your* judgment of her." The judgment that you, the saints, based upon Babylon, God has executed it. There's a very important spiritual principle. You did not take your own vengeance. The vengeance that Babylon deserved, and which the people of God rightly desired, has to be carried out by God. God is destroying Babylon (carrying out the vengeance against Babylon) which is desired by the saints in Heaven. The saints of God, with their spiritual leaders (the apostles and the prophets) have passed a judgment condemning Babylon to destruction as an act of vengeance against her. But God says that He carries out the decision of vengeance against Babylon.

**Vengeance is God's**

This is a principle of doctrine. While you and I want to see justice done, and vengeance executed where it should be, it is a principle of doctrine that you cannot take your own vengeance. In Deuteronomy 32:35, we have this principle in the Old Testament: "Vengeance is Mine, and retribution. In due time, their foot will slip, for the day of their calamity is near, and the impending things are hastening upon them." Here, Moses is reminding the people of Israel that vengeance is something that belongs in the hands of God, and not in our own hands.

This principle is also in the New Testament in Romans 12:19, where God says, "Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God. For it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine. I will repay,' says The Lord." Here he is quoting the Old Testament passage.

So, while vengeance on an evil-doer may be legitimate for what he has done to you, God alone is to exercise the vengeance due to him. The reason for this is that God's vengeance is always right in its timing; in its kind; and, in its degree, so that it is an act of justice, and not an act of retaliation, and some kind of vindictiveness. A believer, on occasion, may actually be the victim of a crime, and you may not know who was the cause of it (who the perpetrator was). It is proper, upon such an occasion for you to call upon God to exercise vengeance against the person who is guilty of this criminal act (to exercise vengeance against what has been done to you). You can't do it. You don't know who the person is. In the same way, even if you know who the person is, you have to say, "This is it, God. This is what I think, and I leave justice to be executed by You. The vengeance has to be left in the hand of God.

Babylon certainly deserves God's vengeance because of the way she has treated the servants of God. When people mistreat you as a servant of God, they invite divine vengeance on themselves. We are tempted to get between God and His whip. He's going to hurt those who are attacking and opposing those who are doing God's work. You want to stay out of it. You want to back off, and let Him do the vengeance.

The tribulation is going to be a time when Satan will be permitted to reach the climax of his persecution of God's people. Then God exercises His unrelenting vengeance against this city, which has been drunk on the blood of martyrs, as we read in Revelation 17:6. The saints win in the end, and Satan; the antichrist; the false prophet; and, all who bear the mark of the beast go down to the eternal vengeance of God in the lake of fire. And please remember that that's what the lake of fire is all about. It is the eternal exercise of God's vengeance against those who have spit in His face; thumbed their nose at Him; and, treated His Son as something to walk on underfoot. The eternal vengeance of God is what is taking place in the lake of fire.

In Romans 18:21-24, we have the termination then of Babylon itself. Here is the end of the line: "And a strong angel took up a stone like a great millstone." Suddenly a strong angel rises in John's view. The word "strong" here is the word "ischuros." "Ischuros" means muscle strong. This is like Mr. Universe. This is how you describe all those rippling muscles. He is an "ischuros" type of person. That is interesting. We talking about physical power here.

Angels, who are spirit beings created by God to serve Him, by nature, have great physical power. We have that illustrated in a number of places. One place, for example, is in connection with the stone at the tomb of the Lord. In Mark 16:2-4, we read, "And very early on the first day of the week, they (the women) came to the tomb when the sun had risen." They were coming now to embalm the body of Jesus on Sunday morning: "And they were saying to one another, 'Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb' (because it was so very big)? And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away, although it was extremely large."

These stones were round; they were heavy; and, there were enormous. It took a special capacity and device and mechanical effort to roll them back uphill, because they were placed on a little downhill slot. And once the body was placed in the tomb, the chock was pulled out, and the stone was permitted to roll in place. And once it was there, there was no way anybody was going to get into that tomb. It would take an extreme bit of effort to roll that thing uphill.

In Matthew 28:2, let's match that against this. We see what happened: "And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came up and rolled away the stone and sat upon it." I like that. That's real class. This angel comes and he knocks this pebble of a stone uphill; throws the chock back in so that it's holding it in place, and he sits on it. Then he just smiles and waits for the women to come. That's being strong. These angels by nature have that kind of power.

Well, now here, in Revelation, we have such a physically strong angel who suddenly shows up, and he takes a stone which is compared to a great millstone. All of you probably have seen millstones. They are huge. They're big, and they have a hole in the center, and they are used for grinding grain in those old waterwheel mills. He picks this thing up; puts it over his head; and, heaves it into the sea: "A strong angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and he threw it into the sea." Well, when it hit the water, you know what happened. There was a huge splash. The stone sinks out of sight, and there's nothing but concentric rings expanding from where the stone hit the water.

This is an analogy, and he explains it. He says, "Thus will Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence, and will not be found any longer." This is a very effective analogy. He's telling John something about Babylon. Notice that he says once more that: "It's a great city," referring to Babylon on the Euphrates River in Iraq. The angels stresses the greatness of Babylon. What is being done here is to a powerful city of Satan's world system. This is not some little country town. This is a great and powerful city because it is the world capital. It is the world control center. It controls everything in life at this point of the tribulation for all humanity. It is going to be thrown down, which refers to physical destruction of Babylon. As its buildings collapse, the whole city comes apart and falls to the ground.

This is described as a work of violence. The Greek word here connotes a sudden, forceful fast action of some kind. It's like a whirlwind-like destruction. All of a sudden, a whirlwind comes along, and everything is torn to shreds.

**"No"**

Then it says, "Be thrown down with violence, and will not." Let me point out this expression "will not" to you, because we will be seeing it several times. In the Greek language, you have this word "ou." You also have the word "me." Both of those mean "not." That's "no." But they mean distinctively different things. You might go to this young lady; you kneel before her; and, you say, "Will you be my own? Will you be the light of my life? Will you marry me?" If she says, "Me" (no), it means "Maybe." It means, "Coax me a little more." It's not a definite "No." But if she says, "Ou," find yourself another girl. That is a definite: "I don't even want to talk to you about it." The Greek language is very strong.

Now, if you put these two together, you have the most powerful negative in the Greek language, and that's what's happening here: "Ou me." They put them both together, and it means absolutely not. You will notice, in verses 21-24, that we keep having this definitive terminal expression repeated again – this strong negative that indicates that's the end of the line. Here it says that: "As the stone sinks out of sight, never to be seen, so Babylon is going to be thrown down with a violence, and it will not be found any longer." And when it says, "It won't be found," it means that it's not going to be visible. You're not going to be able to see it. And it is done to Babylon by God.

So, the angel indicates that as there is the disappearance of the rock out of sight, which was thrown into the sea, there will be disappearance out of sight of Babylon as a world power near the end of the tribulation. This is done by an act of divine violence which throws Babylon into eternal oblivion.

Interestingly enough, this similar symbolism is to be found in Jeremiah 51, which the prophets of old, looking down the corridors of time, saw what was coming for Babylon ultimately with her production of her idolatry religion and her government tyranny systems. Jeremiah 51:61-64: "Then Jeremiah said to Seraiah, 'As soon as you come to Babylon, then see that you read all these words aloud. And say, 'You, O Lord, have promised concerning this place, to cut it off so there will be nothing dwelling in it, whether man or beast, but it will be perpetual desolation. It will come about as soon as you finish reading this scroll that you will tie a stone to it, and throw it into the middle of the Euphrates, and say, 'Just so shall Babylon sink down and not rise again because of the calamity that I'm going to bring upon her, and they will become exhausted.' Thus far are the words of Jeremiah.'"

This was an illustration to the Jewish people of how God was going to terminate Babylon's power over them. It was a preview of what we're reading about God's ultimate destruction of Babylon here. This is the same analogy (the rock in the water) here at the end of the tribulation period for Babylon the city.

**Into the Sea**

The analogy of the millstone into the sea may suggest something else to us. Since when the millstone hits the water, it goes out of sight, it may suggest that there's going to be an enormous earthquake under the city of Babylon into which the whole thing will drop. And then it will close over the city, and there'll be nothing but dust flying in the air. It will literally be gone out of sight. That could well be what is in picture here.

It may also indicate perhaps that the Mesopotamian Valley plain will suddenly drop down and be flooded by the Persian Gulf. Interestingly enough, Jeremiah, looking down the corridor of time, suggests this very thing. Jeremiah 51:41-42: "Now Sheshak (which is a codename for Babylon) has been captured, and the praise of the whole earth been seized. How Babylon has become an object of horror among the nations. The sea has come up over Babylon. She has been engulfed with this tumultuous waves." Is that what we're seeing and reading? Perhaps there's going to be a dropping of that plain, and the Persian Gulf comes in, and the city of Babylon is just put under water. In any case, Babylon the harlot was once adorned in royal garments, but she ends up with only a millstone around her neck to carry her off the world scene.

In verses 22 and 23, we have the silent city. First of all, we read, "And the sound of harpists and musicians and flute players and trumpeters will not be heard in you any longer. There will be no more musical productions as part of the proud fine arts culture of Babylon's society. There'll be no more sound of the harpists. This is a word which, if you think in terms of an orchestra, would represent a larger category of stringed instruments. There'll be no longer any stringed instruments being heard, nor any musicians. Just to show you how we get words in the English and foreign languages, the word for "musicians" is "musikos." this. That's where we get the English word "music" from. Here, it's the word for "musicians." And here it may represent vocalists (singers) – that part of the fine arts production.

Then there are flute players. This is representing the woodwind category of the orchestra. The flutists play wind instruments. Then there are the trumpeters. This is a noun for representing the brass instruments of an orchestra. It's all there. Then there is that word again. The sound of the harpists, the musicians, the flute players, the trumpeters "will not." This is "ou me" again. Absolutely, under no condition will this occur. This is that terminal word here again that things shut down in Babylon. They will no longer be heard in the city. All of their proud cultural fine arts program will be at an end. Why? Because the city won't be there. Silence will reign over Babylon. The concert is over, and God has done this to the city. Babylon will no doubt be a great patron of the arts.

It will probably be financed by the government, much like the American unconstitutional National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) is today. No doubt, the tribulation so-called artists will express themselves with the same vulgarity, obscenity, and violence as the NEA, sponsored by the United States, does today as an expression of artistic freedom. I would not want to pollute your minds by listing for you the kind of offensive things that our government uses your tax money to sponsor under public art – something that the Constitution never authorizes the federal government to do, but, as always, the Constitution is more and more ignored, and the powerful people in Congress do what they please, and the courts look the other way. But you wouldn't believe the kinds of things that are put on display as expressions of art which insult Jesus Christ; which defile the human souls; and, which are vulgar, obscene, and crude. And these people are held up as the great artists – the people with whom we should be impressed.

However, suddenly, God comes into the picture here at Babylon. He silences the rock-n-roll musical maggots; He brings the curtain down on adult drama productions; and, He burns the trash produced by the painters. Evil men will have ridden high and arrogant as they express the depth of the vileness that they were capable of from their sin nature. But now God charges in, and He sweeps it all away as the trash that it is. And when it happens, the saints of heaven are called to rejoice.

It is very frustrating for us in our society today to be victimized the way we are – the things that our money is used for that we would never approve personally. I saw a survey. I guess Rush Limbaugh did it. People all over the city of New York were asked, "Do you think there are too many panhandlers in the subway?" There are people coming up who want money, and they can pressing you. Sometimes they catch you down in the subway. You may be alone. That's a very unnerving kind of a situation to be in there in New York. And, finally, the mayor wants to stop them. The survey asked, "Do you think they should be stopped?" And one after another, they said, "No, these people need help. We shouldn't stop them. I think that everybody has to try to do the best they can." One after another, these liberal mentalities approved the panhandlers' being there. They said that the mayor shouldn't try to shut them down.

Sometimes they handle in a little different way. You come up to a stoplight, and they come very quickly, and they spray your windshield, and then they have these squeegees, and they wipe them clean, and then they wait for you, and stand in front of your car until you pay them for cleaning your window. That is panhandling with an excuse to pay you.

They the people taking the survey were also asked, "Would you ride in a car if all the panhandlers were restricted to one car? The same people had said, "Oh, yeah, we have to let these people do that. They need our help, and they need to help themselves." Then they showed the answers, and every one of these liberals said, "No, I don't think that I would do that. No, I don't think that I would want to do that." None of them wanted to ride in the car where all the panhandlers were. They didn't mind it because they hoped that they would hit you instead of them.

This is the kind of evil that is tolerated in our society, and God is going to sweep it all away. And the very silence of the city of Babylon is a testimony of God's devastating judgment. That's just one of the things that comes to an end. All of a sudden, there is no sound in Babylon.

"People of heaven, rejoice. You who are the children of God, be glad that God has destroyed Babylon. You who have been the communicators of God's truth, you apostles and prophets, have taken the flak, and you've taken the abuse. Now is your time to rejoice over what God is doing to this city, and to all of her offspring, because God is executing your judgment of vengeance against her. As a rock sinks below the water, so Babylon, the great city, is going to be thrown down with a violent act of God, and she's not going to be found anymore."

That's a very important phrase. I don't think that you're going to be looking out the next morning at Babylon, and seeing a lot of debris pile up there. I think there's just going to be very little there. I think that probably the earthquake will have occurred, and the water will be there, and Babylon is going to be out of sight. She is going to be removed. Consequently, when that happens, all of the things of their culture that they took pride in are going to be gone. And music is one of those. All of that is going to be silent.

But there are several other things that Babylon is proud of that are also going to be removed, and then the ultimate thing for which God brings judgment upon this city. We should look at those next time.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1993

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