

## REVELATION: HELP FOR LIVING, HOPE FOR LEAVING

### Sermon no. 20

### THE FALL OF BABYLON

Revelation chapters 17-18

The recent elections and its results have put the spotlight again on kingdoms, kings, and kingmakers. Our passage today is therefore timely because it puts all of these in the right perspective. Mankind is irreversibly heading towards using religion to unite rather than divide, as the solution to its ills and wars (it's not). It is headed toward uniting global economies under a unified leadership to end global poverty and hunger (it won't).

Why not? Because any solution that excludes the need for a personal relationship with Christ is destined not only for failure, but to divine judgment. This is what we see in Revelation chapters 17-18. In chapter 17 Babylon is seen as a religious system that operates independently of and in opposition to the true God, but in chapter 18 it is a political-economic system that does the same.

Our passage brings together these two major lines of truth about Babylon and describes God's final judgment upon it:

#### **1. SPIRITUAL BABYLON IS DESTROYED BY THE ANTICHRIST (CHAP. 17).**

In the first half of the Tribulation, spiritual Babylon will be an ecumenical, worldwide body that will stand above government, and will be aggressively hostile to true believers in God. But in the middle of the Tribulation, Antichrist will terminate it and demand universal worship of himself.

#### **a) The Description of Religious Babylon (17:1-7a)**

The Christian's responsibility to government:

Supplication (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

Submission (Romans 13:1-7).

#### **b) The Destiny of the Beast (17:7b-14)**

#### **c) The Destruction of the Harlot (17:15-18)**

## **2. POLITICAL BABYLON IS DESTROYED BY GOD (CHAP. 18).**

What is pictured is a large prosperous place, the center of political and economic life. The judgment of God makes it a home for demons and a haunt for every evil spirit, a haunt for every unclean and detestable bird. While it brought riches to merchants, it is scheduled for destruction by God.

### **a) The Announcement of Judgment (18:1-8)**

What geographical entity is referred to here? The two strongest suspects are Rome, and a rebuilt Babylon in Iraq. However, Dr. Thomas L. Constable opines: "The United States of America is never mentioned in the Bible, but, some people have asked, might it be a nation in the "revived Roman Empire"? As the old Roman Empire had a controlling effect on its world, so does the United States ... culturally, linguistically, politically, economically, and in other ways ... If the United States does not turn out to be the revived Roman Empire, or part of it, another similar future global power might be."

### **b) The Anguish of Kings and kingmakers (18:9-19)**

How would you feel if the luxuries in your life which you have come to consider necessities suddenly went up in smoke? Would it break your heart if you saw the things of this world go? Or is your heart in heaven, fixed on Christ?

### **c) The Acclaim of Heaven Over the Fall of Babylon (18:20-24)**

### **Final Thoughts:**

As Christians, we need to make sure that we are not citizens of this Babylon, by laying up treasure on earth, but truly citizens of heaven, by laying up treasure there (Mat. 6:19-21). These verses should challenge us to evaluate our financial goals and to repudiate selfish, arrogant living. Give to Cesar what is Cesar's, and to God what is God's.

Now that the dust has settled from the very divisive elections, let those who name the name of Christ lead the way by word, example and prayer to healing our divided nation and moving it forward. Our human leaders are too frail to be the source of our hope. Even as we trust in God, we must realize that the change we want to see in this country, starts with us.