

38. The Sorrow at the Fall of Commercial Babylon

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain that Babylon and the worldwide commerce that is related to it will be completely destroyed very suddenly. In this topic, we are going to see how the fall of Babylon will bring worldwide sorrow to those who have benefitted by the riches and commerce of that city. That sorrow will be the focus of this topic.

We see that there will be great sorrow when Babylon is destroyed. This will be sorrow by all who will be a part of the commercial Babylon and benefit from the business and commerce of Babylon. Revelation 18:9-10 says, “The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning, standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, ‘Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.’” We see that most of the kings and rulers of the world experience great personal benefits from the wealth and business that is carried on around the world. Throughout history, many kings and rulers have been involved with false religion and many more have become wealthy through the business that is carried on worldwide. This will certainly continue to be true in the tribulation.

In the tribulation, these kings and rulers will have great sorrow when they see that Babylon, and its whole related system, have been completely destroyed. In fact, we read that they will weep and lament. The word translated “weep” means *to mourn* as those who mourn for the dead with great pain and grief. We see that they will observe from a distance because of their own fear. We see that they will describe Babylon as a great and mighty city. The word translated “great” speaks both of size and influence. The word translated “strong” means *mighty or strong*. At the same time, they will also speak of the suddenness of the judgment of this city. In fact, all three groups mentioned in these and the following verses will mention the fact that this judgment has come in one hour.

We go on to read about the sorrow of the businessmen. Revelation 18:11-17a says, “And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore: merchandise of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, fine linen and purple, silk and scarlet, every kind of citron wood, every kind of object of ivory, every kind of object of most precious wood, bronze, iron, and marble; and cinnamon and incense, fragrant oil and frankincense, wine and oil, fine flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and bodies and souls of men. The fruit that your soul longed for has gone from you, and all the things which are rich and splendid have gone from you, and you shall find them no more at all. The merchants of these things, who became rich by her, will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, and saying, ‘Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls! For in one hour such great riches came to nothing.’”

We see why the businessmen will weep and mourn because of the destruction of Babylon. Their sorrow will be due to the fact that this has affected their own businesses. No one will be buying their products any more. Here, we see that their sorrow is based on their own greed. This will

involve businessmen throughout the world who sell a wide variety of products. Those who have merchandise of gold and silver will be those involved in the types of businesses that handle precious metals, like banks and dealers who buy and sell precious metals. Others will be businessmen who sell jewelry, expensive clothing, expensive perfumes, various forms of wine, and other related products. Furniture makers and sellers will also be affected. This will also include those who raise and sell various types of food and transportation.

Then, we see that even the businessmen who buy and sell the bodies and souls of men are included. Slave trade has been banned in many countries, but in recent years, this has become more and more common as people are bought and sold in the sex trade or other similar businesses that place no value on human life. Paul wrote, in 1 Corinthians 6:18-19, “Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?” Followers of the Lord are to flee sexual immorality, because their body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. In contrast, the priestesses in the temple of Aphrodite in Corinth were temple prostitutes. Those who controlled these women placed no value on their lives. We see that, in the tribulation, there will also be businessmen who place no value on the lives of people, but buy and sell them for their own profit.

These businessmen have longed for the riches that come from buying and selling. Those who have made a profit by buying and selling with Babylon will mourn when Babylon is destroyed because the things that made them rich are gone from them. There is no longer anyone to buy from them. These businessmen who became rich by selling their products to Babylon will also stand and watch from a distance because of their fear. They will weep and mourn, just as the kings of the earth will mourn, because they can no longer make a profit by selling their goods to Babylon. This is a reminder that their sorrow is due to their own greed, not their sorrow for the people whose lives have been destroyed by the destruction of Babylon.

They will be filled with sorrow because of the riches of that great city. They will see that, in one hour, the riches of Babylon will be gone. We see that the businessmen of the tribulation will be like the rich fool Christ described. Luke 12:18-21 says, “So he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, *and* be merry.’ But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’ So *is* he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.” God shows that the attitudes of the people of the tribulation who gain riches, but leave God out of their thinking, are fools. The same is also true today.

Revelation 17b-19 says, “Every shipmaster, all who travel by ship, sailors, and as many as trade on the sea, stood at a distance and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, ‘What *is* like this great city?’ They threw dust on their heads and cried out, weeping and wailing, and saying, ‘Alas, alas, that great city, in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth! For in one hour she is made desolate.’” These verses show us how the destruction of Babylon will affect those who have ships that carry the goods of the businessmen to Babylon. This attitude will

also be the attitude of the sailors and all others who are involved with the movement of goods to Babylon in any way, including those who travel by ship.

We see that all those involved, in any way, will also watch from a distance as they see the smoke that is seen as a result of this destruction of Babylon. The shipping business makes its profits by moving goods and people from one part of the earth to another. The larger the city, the more business those in the shipping business receive from that city. As a result, we see, here, that all ship owners, all who travel by ships, all who work on those ships, as well as everyone who has any kind of trade on the seas and oceans will cry out in great sorrow as they see the sudden destruction of Babylon. God created the oceans to show His works as well as to provide a way to move products and people from place to place. Psalm 107 23-24 says, “Those who go down to the sea in ships, who do business on great waters, they see the works of the LORD, and His wonders in the deep.” Instead of seeing the works and wonders of the Lord, at this time, those whose work is related to shipping will only see the loss of their business and income.

These people will even throw dust on their heads as they cry out in their weeping and wailing. People in Bible times placed dust on their heads to show their sorrow and grief. Joshua 7:6 says, “Then Joshua tore his clothes, and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the LORD until evening, he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads.” The elders showed their sorrow for the loss in battle. Then, in Job 2:12, we read, “And when they raised their eyes from afar, and did not recognize him, they lifted their voices and wept; and each one tore his robe and sprinkled dust on his head toward heaven.” In this verse, the friends of Job showed their sorrow as they saw his physical condition so affected Job, that they did not even recognize him. However, the sorrow of those in the shipping trade will be their grief because the destruction of Babylon means the loss of their business and profits.

Those in the shipping trade will be filled with sorrow. However, their sorrow is not for the people of the city. Instead, their sorrow will be because they have become rich by the wealth that they receive by trading with Babylon. This same attitude will be shown by all of the groups that mourn the destruction of Babylon. Sinful people will have no concern for the spiritual life or eternal judgment that will come upon the inhabitants of Babylon as they are all destroyed by this destruction. Genesis 6:5 says, “Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every intent of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually.” The people will show their wicked hearts during the tribulation because of their concern for their own wealth, and have no concern for their own spiritual needs or the needs of others. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain that hearts that are controlled by evil are totally lacking in concern for their own spiritual needs or the spiritual needs of others. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain these things.