

Mystery Babylon: Hell on Earth

Revelation Chapters 17-18

Scripture Reading: Revelation 17:1-14; 18:1-5

Politics and Religion: two topics that many people avoid. Others insist that they must remain separate – that the two should operate oblivious to the other. This, of course is impossible. Politics and religion are at the core of how humanity exists. Between these two entities, there is nothing more influential and demanding of us. Even an “atheist” government has a religious philosophy within it. So, our subject today is about the world that God hates and plans to destroy.

- John 3:16-17 is about a world of humanity that God loves and to whom He has sent salvation.
- I John 2:15-17 is about a world of political and religious systems that God hates and of which He warns us to flee and abstain (note John 3:18-21; Galatians 1:3-4; Revelation 18:4).

Revelation chapters 17-18 describe these two ungodly systems, brought together by the Antichrist. Their condemnation is described and their doom foretold. Though we should understand this as a future prophecy, it also serves as a warning against worldly systems and forces that exist today – systems which have been around since the days of Cain and Abel (Genesis chapters 4 & 6; I John 3:1-13; 4:1-6; Romans 1:18-32; II Corinthians 10:3-5; Ephesians 6:10-18).

If you ever wonder why some Christians seem so militant and opposed to things, it is because they know that they are in a war that uses ideas and words as weapons. Deception, bondage and oppression lead to the suffering and damnation of men. Satan has used politics and religion to seduce and coerce people for millennia.

Revelation chapters 17 & 18 show this seduction and coercion brought to a climax and destroyed. These chapters encourage us to use discernment and diligence to shine our light and overcome evil with good (Matthew 5:13-16; Romans 12:9-21; Ephesians 5:1-21). These Scriptures also encourage us that, even though the forces of evil seem to be unstoppable, God is with us. He gives us victories now, but we can live in the hope of definite, ultimate triumph over Satan and this world (John 16:33; II Peter 3:10-14; Revelation 17:14).

Religious Babylon: A Harlot Made Desolate – Revelation 17

A unified worldly religious system is described as an unfaithful harlot who gives birth to other harlots (Revelation 17:1, 5, 15 cp. Christ’s true church is described as a pure virgin – Revelation 19:1-9; II Corinthians 11:2). The harlot is entangled with the Antichrist’s political system and is wealthy (Revelation 17:2-4). She is guilty of persecuting and martyring the true believers (Revelation 17:6).

After her purposes are fulfilled she will be destroyed by the government of the Antichrist (Revelation 17:16-17). She is associated with a city – the headquarters of Antichrist’s government (Revelation 17:18).

Political Babylon: An Empire Destroyed – Revelation 18

God describes and foretells the doom of Satan’s great political-economic system. The term “Babylon” takes our minds back to Genesis 11 and the tower of Babel, when the entire world was united under Nimrod. The name “Babel” means “confusion.” Our thoughts are also directed to the city and nation of Babylon in the days of Nebuchadnezzar and the prophet Daniel. That world empire had conquered many nations, including Israel. As it swallowed up countries and cultures, Babylon blended them and attempted to create its own super culture.

- God hates this system and will destroy it.
(Revelation 18:1-8, 20-24 ~ note that God calls us to distance ourselves from it in vs. 4)
- The world loves this system and is sorry to see its destruction.
(Revelation 18:9-19 ~ note vs. 9-10,11-17a, 17b-19)

It is to be observed that this worldly government is not morally objective, only concerning itself with economic endeavors. It is not neutral towards religion. Babylon the Great is out to control the very thoughts of men and make their souls captive to Satan’s will (Revelation 18:13, 24 cp. II Timothy 2:24-26). Consider Psalm 9:16-20.