

Day 256, Revelation 18

by David Servant

David Servant explores the symbolism of Babylon in Revelation, highlighting its immorality and the implications for believers during the end times.

Scripture: Revelation 17

Topics: "End Times", "Separation From Sin"

Description

David Servant delves into the connection between the great harlot and Babylon, both described as great cities responsible for the martyrdom of believers, emphasizing their impending destruction. The sermon explores the potential identification of Babylon as a wealthy center for global commerce, possibly symbolizing New York City or Rome, known for making martyrs throughout history. The coastal nature of Babylon is highlighted, with references to the smoke of its destruction being visible to sailors, while believers are urged to separate themselves from Babylon's sins to avoid its plagues.

Transcript

Today we read a further indication that the great harlot of chapter 17, on whose forehead is written, "Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth" (17:5), is one and the same as the "Babylon" of which we read today. Concerning the great harlot, an angel describes her as "the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed acts of immorality, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality" (17:1-2). In our reading today, an angel describes Babylon by declaring, "For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed acts of immorality with her" (18:3). Sounds the same, doesn't it? And as I mentioned in our previous study, both the harlot and Babylon are called great cities, and both will be destroyed. Both are also said to be responsible for the martyrdom of multitudes of believers (17:6; 18:24).

It is also clear that Babylon will be a very wealthy center for global commerce, and for this reason, some suspect that Babylon represents New York City, which is also a place where world leaders often gather (at the United Nations), qualifying it to be a place where "the kings of the earth have committed immorality" (18:3) literally and more figuratively. It can hardly be said, however, at least at the current time, that New York City is full of "the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who have been slain on the earth" (18:24). The destruction of Babylon will be due, at least in part, to God's vengeance on behalf of His "saints and apostles and prophets" (18:20; 19:2).

Unlike New York City, Rome, of course, has a reputation for making martyrs, including apostolic martyrs such as Peter and Paul. Millions of Christians were martyred by Roman decree in the first three centuries. Papal decrees from Rome resulted in martyrdom of millions more through the centuries.

Babylon must represent a coastal city, as we are told that the smoke of its destruction will be seen by "every shipmaster and every passenger and sailor" (18:17) as they lament its demise. New York City meets that qualification. In John's day, the city of Rome was the center of the world's commerce. Although it was not a coastal city, it was (and is) not far from the Mediterranean Sea, connected to it by the Tiber River.

Addressing the never-ending question of whether or not there will be believers on the earth during earth's future tribulation, we note that at this point in the chronology of Revelation, God calls His people to come out of Babylon that they may not "participate in her sins and receive of her plagues" (18:4). It would seem odd for God to call His people to come out from Babylon if all of them were in heaven.

In any case, the righteous will rejoice when God finally brings an end to what will apparently be the capital of the world's wickedness during the antichrist's time. In fact, the saints are told to rejoice over its judgment (18:20). In the next chapter, the rejoicing really starts!

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