

"America's Future in Light of Bible Prophecy"(part 3)

ADVENT AND CHRIST'S RETURN

Today marks the second Sunday of Advent. Advent is a time of preparation for the celebration of Christ' birth but it is also a time to prepare our hearts for the Lord's return. It is why a good portion of the readings appointed for Advent deal with repentance and Christ's return.

The first reading that was appointed for today, however, was from the book of Baruch. The problem is that Baruch is from the Apocrypha. The old Episcopal lectionary includes a few passages from the Apocrypha every year. The Apocrypha is not the inspired Word of God and my feeling is that there are better passages to read from God's Word than to have to take up space and time with the Apocrypha. So I have replaced the Apocryphal reading with **Rev. 18:1-10**; a passage of the vision John sees given by our Lord. It is a vision of the fall of Babylon. We know this Babylon is significant as the whole world grieves. Why? St. John tells us:

THE FALL OF BABYLON THE GREAT

¹After these things I saw another ^(A)angel ^(B)coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was ^(C)illuminated with his glory. ²And he cried out with a mighty voice, saying, "^(D)Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She ^(E)has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every ^(F)unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird. ³"For all the nations ^(G)have drunk of the ^(H)wine of the passion of her immorality, and ^(I)the kings of the earth have committed acts of immorality with her, and the ^(J)merchants of the earth have become rich by the wealth of her ^(K)sensuality." ⁴I heard another voice from heaven, saying, "^(L)Come out of her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive of her plagues; ⁵for her sins have ^(M)piled up as high as heaven, and God has ^(N)remembered her iniquities. ⁶"Pay her back even as she has paid, and give back to her double according to her deeds; in the ^(O)cup which she has mixed, mix twice as much for her. ⁷"To the degree that she glorified herself and ^(P)lived sensuously, to the same degree give her torment and mourning; for she says in her heart, "^(Q)I SIT as A QUEEN AND I AM NOT A WIDOW, and will never see mourning." ⁸"For this reason ^(R)in one day her plagues will come, pestilence and mourning and famine, and she will be ^(S)burned up with fire; for the Lord God who judges her ^(T)is strong.

⁹"And ^(V)the kings of the earth, who committed acts of immorality and ^(W)lived sensuously with her, will ^(X)weep and lament over her when they ^(Y)see the smoke of her burning, ¹⁰standing at a distance because of the fear of her torment, saying, "^(Z)Woe, woe, ^(AA)the great city, Babylon, the strong city! For in ^(AB)one hour your judgment has come." ¹¹"And the ^(AC)merchants of the earth ^(AD)weep and mourn over her, because no one buys their cargoes any more-- ¹²cargoes of ^(AE)gold and silver and precious stones and pearls and fine linen and purple and silk and scarlet, and every kind of citron wood and every article of ivory and every article made from very costly wood and bronze and iron and marble, ¹³and cinnamon and spice and incense and perfume and frankincense and wine and olive oil and fine flour and wheat and cattle and sheep, and cargoes of horses and chariots and slaves and ^(AF)human lives. ¹⁴"The fruit you long for has gone from you, and all things that were luxurious and splendid have passed away from you and men will no longer find them. ¹⁵"The ^(AG)merchants of ^(AH)these things, who became rich from her, will ^(AI)stand at a distance because of the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning, ¹⁶saying, "^(AJ)Woe, woe, ^(AK)the great city, she who ^(AL)was clothed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls; ¹⁷for in ^(AM)one hour such great wealth has been laid ^(AN)waste!" And ^(AO)every shipmaster and every passenger and sailor, and as many as make their living by the sea, ¹⁸stood at a distance, ¹⁹and were ^(AP)crying out as they ^(AQ)saw the smoke of her burning, saying, "^(AR)What city is like ^(AS)the great city?" ²⁰"And they threw ^(AT)dust on their heads and were crying out, weeping and mourning, saying, "^(AU)Woe, woe, the great city, in which all who had ships at sea ^(AV)became rich by her wealth, for in ^(AW)one hour she has been laid ^(AX)waste!" ²¹"Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and ^(BB)apostles and prophets, because ^(BC)God has pronounced judgment for you against her." ²²Then a ^(BD)strong angel

^(BE)took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "So will Babylon, ^(BF)the great city, be thrown down with violence, and ^(BG)will not be found any longer.

²²"And ^(BH)the sound of harpists and musicians and flute-players and trumpeters will not be heard in you any longer; and no craftsman of any craft will be found in you any longer; and the ^(BI)sound of a mill will not be heard in you any longer; ²³and the light of a lamp will not shine in you any longer; and the ^(BJ)voice of the bridegroom and bride will not be heard in you any longer; for your ^(BK)merchants were the great men of the earth, because all the nations were deceived ^(BL)by your sorcery. ²⁴"And in her was found the ^(BM)blood of prophets and of saints and of ^(BN)all who have been slain on the earth."

WHO IS MYSTERY BABYLON?

Now we have been doing a series on "*America's Future in Light of Bible Prophecy.*" And there are a growing number of folks who believe that the Babylon of Revelation 18 might be a reference to the United States. In fact, Pastor David Wilkinson of the Times Square Church in New York City believes this with New York City being the spiritual city of Babylon.

Look at these similarities: **1)** it is a nation of immigrants (**17:15**) **2)** it is a cultural city (**18:22**) **3)** it has deep water port (**18:17 -19**) **4)** it has the wealth of the world (**Rev. 18:15-19**).

Who is this mystery Babylon? In the vision, it is a woman atop of the beast in **Rev. ch. 17**. She is called *Mystery Babylon*. Look now at **Rev. 17**. ^(A)Then one of the ^(B)seven angels who had the ^(C)seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I will show you ^(D)the judgment of the ^(E)great harlot who ^(E)sits on many waters, ²with whom ^(C)the kings of the earth committed acts of immorality, and ^(H)those who dwell on the earth were ^(L)made drunk with the wine of her immorality." ³And ^(D)he carried me away ^(K)in the Spirit ^(L)into a wilderness; and I saw a woman sitting on a ^(M)scarlet beast, full of ^(N)blasphemous names, having ^(Q)seven heads and ten horns. ⁴The woman ^(P)was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand ^(Q)a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality, ⁵and on her forehead a name was written, a ^(R)mystery, ^(S)BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF ^(T)THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."

⁶And I saw the woman drunk with ^(U)the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. When I saw her, I wondered greatly. ⁷And the angel said to me, "Why do you wonder? I will tell you the ^(V)mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the ^(W)seven heads and the ten horns. ⁸"^(X)The beast that you saw ^(Y)was, and is not, and is about to ^(Z)come up out of the ^(AA)abyss and ^(AB)go to destruction And ^(AC)those who dwell on the earth, ^(AD)whose name has not been written in the book of life ^(AE)from the foundation of the world, will ^(AF)wonder when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come.

⁹"^(AG)Here is the mind which has wisdom The ^(AH)seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits, ¹⁰and they are seven ^(AI)kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while. ¹¹"The beast which ^(AJ)was and is not, is himself also an eighth and is one of the seven, and he ^(AK)goes to destruction. ¹²"The ^(AL)ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast ^(AM)for one hour. ¹³"These have ^(AN)one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast.

¹⁴"These will wage ^(AO)war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will ^(AP)overcome them, because He is ^(AO)Lord of lords and ^(AR)King of kings, and ^(AS)those who are with Him are the ^(AT)called and chosen and faithful." ¹⁵And he said to me, "The ^(AU)waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are ^(AV)peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues. ¹⁶"And the ^(AW)ten horns which you saw, and the beast, these will hate the harlot and will make her ^(AX)desolate and ^(AY)naked, and will ^(AZ)eat her flesh and will ^(BA)burn her up with fire. ¹⁷"For ^(BB)God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose by ^(BC)having a common purpose, and by giving their kingdom to the beast, until the ^(BD)words of God will be fulfilled. ¹⁸"The woman whom you saw is ^(BE)the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth."

Now here is why I don't believe it to be solely the United States. It is because of the verses that refer to Christian martyrs, the purple and scarlet attire, and the reference to the seven hills, that many Protestants during the Reformation and even to this day, view Babylon to be the Roman Catholic Church.

In fact, there is certainly something to be said about an *apostate* Roman Catholic Church leading a pseudo-one world religion. Until recently, there were more Roman Catholics than any other religious group. Moslems supposedly have passed the number of Roman Catholics at around an estimated 1.2 Billion. The Pope is recognized by world leaders and heads of state. The Vatican is considered its own state with its own flag. No single religious leader has more political clout than the Pope. Plus, there is only one city that has been built on seven hills and that is the city of Rome (**Rev. 17:9**).

However, it is clear from reading Revelation that more is involved than just a religious system. This is an economic system in conjunction with a political one. It is a system that will be used by the Antichrist but note that the beast turns on the woman. Evil does that. Evil turns on itself. Do you know that is what cancer does? Cancer cells rob nutrients from good cells until those good cells die but when all the good cells die the cancer cells compete against each other - diabolical.

TWO MODERN GIFTS TO THE WORLD

How has the United States paved the way for a one world government can be found in two words - democracy and technology. Recall World War 1? In America in order to gain support for the war, the government called it the "Fight to Save Democracy." But democracy is no guarantor of good leadership. Remember from last sermon what President John Adams said about our constitution and republic? It was only for a religious (ie. Christian) and moral people. In fact, when Germany tried Democracy in the 1920's, it lead to the election of Adolf Hitler in 1933. Hitler was given the Chancellorship of the Reichstag because the Nazi Party earned more votes than any other party at the time.

Democracy has swept much of our world. We are told in **Rev. 17:13**, that that the Beast (ie. The Antichrist) will be given authority. People will be awed by his leadership abilities and vision and they will vote him into power. It also should be noted that the idea of the United Nations took root in the US. We wanted to prevent another world war so we moved to bring the nations together in a worldwide body. The UN sets the stage for an eventual one world order.

Second, the USA has been the leader in technological innovation. As a result we have computers, computer chips and cameras. All three give man the ability to track and watch every human being on the planet. Even do a Google search of your address. You can see your house from above and those are the lousy photos they are using. City governments are increasingly using cameras for surveillance and in five years Google is planning to tie all the cameras throughout much of the known world together so you could access them at anytime. At one time, many were opposed to Social Security numbers and later credit cards because they could be used to control our citizens. But now we have the actual technology to implement control.

Of course, none of the above is evil in and of itself. It only becomes evil when one who is evil gets a hold of it and uses it for their own wicked aims. The truth is all the groundwork is being laid for a powerful new world order under a world ruler. And when it is complete, it will come on us as quickly as the turn of a switch. What would precipitate people giving up their freedoms? Three things: 1) terrorist attack with nuclear and/or biological and chemical weapons 2) multiple natural disasters or 3) a worldwide economic collapse. Any one or more of the above would pave the way for the rise of a one world government.

WHAT WILL AMERICA DO?

In parts 1 and 2 of our series, we have seen the how the United States has been a supporter of Israel but also of Ishmael (the Moslems). We have seen how the current administration has an idealistic view of Islam as do many in our land and how economically we are on unsteady ground. However, because we are militarily mighty and still are the most powerful nation in the world, no one is going to come calling for our debt (e.g. the \$800 Billion we owe China) unless of

course we have a collapse. If there is a power vacuum, it will be filled. And the most likely bloc to fill the void will be Europe - a revived Roman Empire.

So what will become of our nation? It will be determined by its people. The Bible says, "**Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord.**" (Ps. 33:12). From the very beginning of our nation, in fact those who founded the first colonies - their God was the Lord Jesus Christ. From the Pilgrims and the Puritans to the Jamestown Colony in Virginia, it was founded upon God's Word and God's Son. The English sent people to the New World for building new communities. The French were interested in furs and other resources for back home, the Spanish came for gold and silver. Unlike the French and the Spanish, those sponsored by Great Britain also believed that God's Word was more important than the King's and the Pope's word. It was this kind of thinking that led to the founding of our new republic.

The truth is the United States has been a great power for good but it has also been a haven of wickedness and rebellion against God. It remains to be seen what our people will do. You see our government is not the problem - it is the people in the government. It is the responsibility of the Church to raise up men and women of integrity who will engage the culture and society for good and those things that reflect God's Kingdom, and to stand against evil. And it will be up to us to in the Church to see to it that we do all in our power to stop the tide. And the only way to do that is one person at a time; each of us doing what God has called us to do in our sphere of influence. No matter where our nation ends up, God's will be done. I just don't want to see everything go to pieces on my watch - and most likely neither do you!

So I say to all, "Gird up your loins and prepare for battle!" knowing that the fight is not against flesh and blood but against spiritual evil, and that fight begins right here in our hearts and can only be one by total reliance and trust in the Living God.

A PROMISE AND A WARNING

What is the key to seeing revival break forth in our land. It is found in **2 Chronicles 7: 11-14, 19-22**, when God appeared to Solomon after the King had completed building the Temple of the Lord. They are verses of promise and verses of warning:

¹¹^(L) Thus Solomon finished the house of the LORD and the king's palace, and successfully completed all that he had planned on doing in the house of the LORD and in his palace. ¹² Then the LORD appeared to Solomon at night and said to him, "I have heard your prayer and ^(M) have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice. ¹³^(N) If I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or if I command the locust to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among My people, ¹⁴^(O) and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land. ¹⁵^(P) Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to the prayer offered in this place.

¹⁶ For ^(Q) now I have chosen and consecrated this house that My name may be there forever, and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually. ¹⁷ As for you, if you walk before Me as your father David walked, even to do according to all that I have commanded you, and will keep My statutes and My ordinances, ¹⁸ then I will establish your royal throne as I covenanted with your father David, saying, "^(R) You shall not lack a man to be ruler in Israel." ¹⁹^(S) But if you turn away and forsake My statutes and My commandments which I have set before you, and go and serve other gods and worship them, ²⁰^(T) then I will uproot you from My land which I have given you, and this house which I have consecrated for My name I will cast out of My sight and I will make it ^(U) a proverb and a byword among all peoples.

²¹ As for this house, which was exalted, everyone who passes by it will be astonished and say, "^(V) Why has the LORD done thus to this land and to this house?" ²² And they will say, "Because ^(W) they forsook the LORD, the God of their fathers who brought them from the land of Egypt, and they adopted other gods and worshiped them and served them; therefore He has brought all this adversity on them." In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, AMEN!