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A Study of Revelation 18

Questions on Chapter 18,

Revelation for Christians Today, by Lonnie Woodruff--page 335... [Answers by DRL]

DRL Note: In the introductory comments preceding chapter 18 brother Woodruff points out that his interpretation of these two chapters (17 & 18) differs from the majority interpretation given by our brethren. By them, the GREAT HARLOT and BABYLON represent *the actual city of Rome*, also by them many of the events which take place in this chapter are applied to the destruction of Rome in A.D. 476. He lists reasons, which seem perfectly sound to me, as to why he takes a differing view...

1. *This does not apply the meaning of the GREAT HARLOT and BABYLON as they are used in the Bible.* This figure applies to ALL those who commit spiritual fornication, not just the ones who happened to live in Rome between the time of Christ and A.D. 476.
2. *Applying it specifically to Rome takes away any meaning it might have for Christians who live today.*
3. *To interpret this chapter as being the destruction of Rome forces the interpretation of chapter 17 also to deal specifically with Rome.* This will result in forcing LITERAL interpretations of symbols there. Thus, if we have KINGS as the actual emperors of Rome, we have to accept the Nero-resurrection myth.
4. *The things which undergo destruction in chapter 18 are DESTROYED FOREVER.* They will never exist again! Obviously, after Rome was destroyed, it did once again exist and still remains today. It arose once again to become an important city as a center of government and trade. On the other hand, when the destruction described in chapter 18 takes place, it will be **COMPLETE AND EVERLASTING.**

01. What information is given about “Babylon the great” in 17:5, 18?

It is the name written on the forehead of the great harlot. Babylon was a great enemy of God's people during the OT times. It is used symbolically here to describe this great harlot as a great spiritual enemy of God's people. Shortly after apostolic times, the church began drifting away from the teaching of the Bible. It became the apostate church, or the church which had fallen away. Eventually, the religious power of the Roman Catholic Church arose out of this apostate church. It became a religious power which was committing spiritual fornication.

02. What is the symbolic meaning of “Babylon the great”?

The great harlot, who has this phrase written on her forehead, is the woman who reigns over the kings of the earth. This makes it easy to see that all of these symbols are used to describe the same thing: the apostate church which commits spiritual fornication against God. The symbol of a CITY is used in many cases to indicate a group of people who have a common purpose. A good example of this is Hebrews 12:22 where the church is referred to as THE CITY OF THE LIVING GOD. This city of God represents all those who have one thing in coming—THEY ARE CHRISTIANS. This “great city” is used symbolically in the same manner except it is further defined as being A HARLOT. This would mean the great city represents all those who commit spiritual fornication. The great city REIGNS OVER THE KINGS OF THE EARTH. This ties the meaning of this verse to verse 17 which says that they agree to GIVE THEIR KINGDOM UNTO THE BEAST. In the sense that these kingdoms give their power and authority unto the harlot, she is ruling over them. Her wishes and desires are granted by the kings of the earth.

03. What is going to happen to this great city of false religion? (18:2)

It will fall. IS FALLEN, is actually used here, but this should cause us no problems. Even if this were describing the fall of the city of Rome, that would have been about 400 years future to the time John was writing. If the Bible can reveal events 400 years in the future to John, it certainly can reveal events which are still in the future to us today.

04. Why will Babylon fall? (18:3)

The GREAT HARLOT will receive the judgment of God because she has led many to commit spiritual fornication. This same thought is present in 17:2, which states that the kings of the earth, and its inhabitants also, have committed fornication with the great harlot. As people follow the false religious teachings of the great harlot, they become a part of the great city of Babylon which will eventually receive the destruction described in this chapter.

05. What will be Babylon's reward? (18:6)

The GREAT HARLOT may be responsible for the persecution of many saints during the Christian Age, but Christians can take comfort in the fact that the punishment this great harlot will receive will be far greater than any persecutions she has inflicted. Her cup will BE DOUBLED. No physical persecution can possibly match the eternal torment which those who are disobedient to God will suffer.

06. What does it mean to sit as a queen and see no sorrow?

*The last part of verse 7 helps identify the great harlot (Babylon). She claims to sit as a queen. A queen is one who is married to the king. This great spiritual harlot claims to be married to the King of kings who is Christ. She claims to be the true church which is married to Jesus Christ (Romans 7:4), but is actually a spiritual harlot committing adultery with many gods. She claims that she is NO WIDOW. This again points to the marriage relationship between Christ and the church. Just as the true church of Christ believes that her husband has risen from the grave and sits on His throne in glory today, this great harlot claims the same thing about herself. She claims to be the true church. Therefore, she professes not to be a widow. She also believes that she will SEE NO SORROW. She believes that one day she will be in heaven with God. This is a **fearful statement** because many people today mistakenly believe they are serving God, but, in actuality, they are a part of this great harlot.*

07. When Babylon falls, will anyone come to her aid? (18:9-10)

The kings of the earth who have committed spiritual fornication with this great harlot and have been made rich by this association will mourn for her when they see her destruction. They will stand afar off, viewing the destruction of the great city of Babylon. They stand afar off because they are afraid to come near, or be associated with this great harlot any longer for fear of being destroyed themselves.

08. What will happen to the fine goods and costly items which Babylon has lusted after? (18:14)

*They will depart from her. These are the things which she has lusted after from her beginning. When her destruction comes, she will no longer control these items of great wealth. NOR MOARE AT ALL is an emphatic statement she will not have them. This will be the END of this spiritual harlot on earth. She will not rise again at some later date to reclaim her wealth. She will be gone forever. **This once again emphasizes that this city of Babylon cannot be referring specifically to the literal city of Rome. Rome did rise again to become a prominent city, but verse 14 states that this will not happen to spiritual Babylon.***

09. Will they ever be found again in this city? (18:14)

NO

10. What will be the reaction of the merchants of the earth who have lived deliciously with her? (18:11-19)

They stand afar as they observe her burning. Her destruction will be so great that not even those who were made rich by her will be willing to come to her aid. They will not attempt to help her in any way for fear of their own destruction.

11. How could the bodies and souls of men be considered merchandise to be bought and sold in the great city of Babylon? (18:13)

*The last phrase of verse 13 is interesting. It includes slaves and souls of men in this listing of merchandise purchased and controlled by the harlot. An alternate translation of this is, BODIES AND SOULS OF MEN. The great harlot not only controls great material wealth, she also controls the bodies and souls of men. A cross reference which should be studied in connection with these verses is 13:11-17, which describes a beast with two horns coming up out of the earth. This beast is the same as the great harlot, or the city of Babylon. The difference is that chapter 13 describes the governmental powers which this great harlot possesses. The two visions are giving different information about the same great religious harlot, or beast. In 13:15, the TWO-HORNED BEAST had the power to “cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.” This IS control of the souls of men. Revelation 13:17 shows that “no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.” This IS control of the actions or bodies of men. Therefore, the great harlot not only controls the great wealth of the world, she also controls the bodies and souls of men. **Remember:** the GREAT HARLOT still exists today. It has simply changed forms and now exists under MANY NAMES instead of only one.*

12. How sudden will this destruction be? (18:17)

IN ONE HOUR.

13. Once Babylon is destroyed, will it ever exist again? (18:21)

SHALL BE FOUND NO MORE AT ALL

14. List some of the items which will never again exist in Babylon. (18:22-23)

1. *The voice of harpers and musicians, pipers, and trumpeters*
2. *Craftsmen*
3. *The sound of a millstone*
4. *The light of a candle*
5. *The voice of the bridegroom and the bride*

15. What is the meaning of the voice of the bridegroom and the bride being heard no more in this city? (18:23)

The bridegroom is used symbolically to represent Christ (John 3:29), and the bride represents the church (Revelation 21:9). Therefore, the VOICE OF THE BRIDEGROOM AND BRIDE is the Word of God, or the teachings of the Bible. Teachings concerning the bridegroom and the bride can be heard today in false religious organizations. They are made up of those who profess to know God and claim to be a part of His church; yet they commit spiritual fornication by disobeying His commands. When the great city is destroyed, the teachings of the Bible, the voice of the bridegroom and bride, will no longer be heard. It will become a hold of every foul spirit (v. 2).

16. Do we know when this destruction will take place?

No

17. Does this great city of false religion exist today?

Yes. BABYLON THE GREAT is a figurative city which includes all those who commit spiritual fornication against God. The great city has deceived the people of this world since its beginning, and it will continue to do so until the time of its destruction.

18. Who are residents of this great city?

Those people who are part of this great harlot are morally good people. They may not be worshiping according to God's plan, but they do believe in God and are spiritually-minded. According to verse 2, when this great city is destroyed, it will become a habitation for devils. The spirituality of this great city will be lost and the people in it will no longer believe in God.

19. Compare and contrast the great city and the holy city.

*The symbol of a CITY is used in many cases to indicate a group of people who have a common purpose. A good example of this is Hebrews 12:22, where the church is referred to as THE CITY OF THE LIVING GOD. This city of God represents all those who have one thing in common—they are **Christians**. This "great city" (17:18), is used symbolically in the same manner except it is further defined as being a harlot. This would mean the great city represents all those who commit spiritual fornication. When the great city of false religion is destroyed, the light of a candle will no longer shine in it (18:23). Even though the religious teachings of the great city are false, the Bible is still read and used as a guide for moral values. The people of the great city claim to believe and follow the teachings of the Bible, even though they do not practice everything it teaches. This is especially true concerning the plan of salvation, which enables one to enter the HOLY CITY of God, the true church (3:12). From this standpoint, the Bible, or God's Word, shines as a light in this great city. When the great city of false religion is destroyed, this light will cease to shine. Remember, it will become the habitation of devils as stated in verse 2.*

20. Has God already judged the great harlot? (19:2)

*God states that He HAS JUDGED the great harlot and has avenged the blood of the saints at her hand. In this vision, we are still at some period of time, possibly far off in the future, looking back at what has happened on earth. Chapter 18 describes the judgment which God will direct against the great harlot in order to avenge the blood of saints. It is important to remember that this great harlot has ALREADY BEEN "JUDGED." God has told us exactly what will happen to her. The **only thing remaining is the fulfillment of that judgment.***

21. What will be the end of the great harlot? (19:3)

The smoke of this great harlot, rising up forever and ever, indicates the eternal nature of her destruction. This was pointed out in 18:21-23. Not only will this great harlot be completely destroyed from this earth, she will also be cast into eternal punishment where she will remain forever (19:20).

22. Because of God's judgment against the great harlot, what did the twenty-four elders and the four beasts do? (19:4)

They fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne. The lesson of verse 4 is that all spiritual worship and all physical worship should be directed to the one and only true and living God. There is no other being to whom we should direct our spiritual worship; neither should we give our physical means or abilities to any other god. God is worthy of all of man's worship, both spiritual and physical. Therefore, these 24 elders show that we must praise God because He has judged the great harlot which has persecuted the saints.

Questions Based on Answers to LW's End of Chapter 18 Questions

True/False

01. ____ Brethren who say BABYLON=ROME have a problem with verses like 18:21.
02. ____ The great harlot makes a TRUE claim when she says in her heart: "I sit a queen."
03. ____ Eternal punishment will be the judgment against the great harlot.
04. ____ Residents of the great city do believe in God and are spiritually-minded.
05. ____ The time factor mentioned in this chapter for the destruction of the great city is 3 ½ days.

Fill in the Blanks

06. No physical persecution can possibly match the _____ which those who are disobedient to God will suffer.
07. The symbol of a CITY is used in many cases to indicate a group of _____ who have a _____.
08. The great harlot has _____ judged; the only thing remaining is the _____ of that _____ (19:2).
09. The great harlot not only controls the _____ of the world, she also controls the _____ and _____ of men (18:13).
10. The great city has deceived the people of this world _____ its _____, and it will _____ to do so until the time of its _____.

Place the symbol in the space next to its description:

11. _____ the Word of God.
12. _____ meaning that no physical persecution can match the eternal torment.
13. _____ morally good people, but not faithful Christians.
14. _____ its residents are Christians (Hebrews 12:22).
15. _____ shows ALL worship should be directed to the One True God.

Answers to Revelation 17 Questions: [01 False, 26; 02 False 28; 03 False, 7; 04 True, 11; 05 True, 20; 06 governmental, powers, fall, 29; 07 group, people, common, 35; 08 many, waters, 3; 09 Roman, Empire, 16; 10 Jeremiah 51:24-25, 21; 11 Receive Power One Hour, 30; 12 Many Waters, 4; 13 Babylon, 12; 14 Seven Heads, 20; 15 Great Harlot Riding the Beast, 9].

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| SAYING | SOUL | STAND | STONE | THINGS |
| TORMENT | VOICE | WEEP | | |

Revelation 18 (KJV)	
Across	Down
01 Became rich by association with the great city. 04 Matched up with weeping. 05 The great city was clothed in it. 07 Babylon lived this way. 08 In Babylon was found this of the prophets and saints. 13 All nations were deceived by them. 14 It would not shine any more in Babylon.	02 The millstone made it. 03 Used to describe stones and wood. 06 An angel did this to the earth. 09 One of the two descriptions of a bird. 10 Describes wood; means scented or citron. 11 Babylon is made desolate in one of these. 12 ____ of her torment.