

LESSON 22

Seven judgements

Destruction of Babylon the Great and wedding of the Lamb

Objective: To learn that the evil systems of this world will come to an end and the Lord will establish His righteous kingdom and hence to live a holy life separated from the evils of this world.

Bible References: Rev. chapters 17,18 & 19

Memory verses: (NKJV) Rev. 18:4

And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.

Introduction:

Modern world and its systems are decaying. As we read in the scriptures, people have become lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, unforgiving.... having a form of godliness but denying its power (2 Tim. 3:1-5). Hence today's religious, commercial and political systems and their originators have to be brought to justice. The judgements and resulting happenings are described in Rev. 17 to 20. Ways to escape these judgements and the blessed experiences of the people of God are also given in these passages. Judgements of God are pronounced on Babylon the harlot, city of Babylon, Antichrist, false prophet, followers of Antichrist, Gog & Magog, Satan and evil men. Judgements of the first four groups are pronounced during the period of the Great Tribulation - between the rapture and the glorious appearance of Christ. We shall study in this lesson, the first two judgements and also the wedding of the Lamb that takes place later.

1. The harlot Babylon or the church of Babylon:

When Israel worshipped other gods and idols, she was called the harlot in the Old Testament (Ezek. 16:25,35,36). Similarly, Babylon the Great who is being called a harlot woman represents a church that has fallen away from the love for Jesus Christ, the Bridegroom. Even the Apostles have prophesied the emergence of such a condition of the Church after their time (2 Cor. 11:2-3, Acts 20:29-30, 1 Tim. 4:1-3, 2 Pet. 2:1-3). So, it is not difficult to conclude the identity of "Babylon the Great, the mother of prostitutes and of the abominations of the earth" mentioned in Rev. 17. Let us consider some of her attributes:

1. Remember the Church history that you learned in Class 8: Which was the organization that had unwanted relationship with kings of the world from the time of Emperor Constantine and made people drunk with the wine of false teachings and idolatry?
2. **She is sitting on many waters:** Waters are peoples, nations, multitudes and languages (Rev. 17:1,15). The church in the city of Rome expanded to many nations and languages with government help after the conversion of Emperor Constantine and became a great multitude. Even other nominal Christian churches are flowing into a union with the Roman Catholic church which already has a membership of more than 710 million. Negotiations are being conducted for unity between the Pope, Archbishop of Canterbury, Catholicos of Malankara Orthodox church and Bishops of other churches. The woman whom John sees

as 'sitting on many waters' can be none other than this unified Christian church.

- 3. She is traveling on a scarlet beast (Revelation 17:3):** This beast is similar to the fourth beast that Daniel saw. It has seven heads and ten horns and comes out of the sea. It represents Antichrist who becomes the head of the newly emerging Roman empire. During the first half of the Great Tribulation, Antichrist will enter into a covenant relationship with Babylon church. The seven heads of the beast are seven hills on which the woman sits (Rev. 17:9). It is well known that the city of Rome is situated on seven hills. The headquarters of the Babylon church will be Rome.
- 4. She is dressed in purple and scarlet** and wearing gold, precious stones and pearls (Rev. 17:4): Official robes of Bishops, Cardinals and other dignitaries of the Roman church are scarlet color. Crowns, crosses, etc., that they wear are adorned with gold and precious stones. Their luxurious palaces are beyond description!
- 5. She is drunk with the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus (Rev. 17:6):** In the first three centuries the Roman empire drank the blood of Christian martyrs. Later on, the Roman church became powerful enough to kill thousands of saints labeling them as Protestants who disagreed with their doctrines and practices. In coming days, the Roman church will have greater powers through Antichrist to persecute those who bear testimony of Jesus.

End of harlot (the nominal church): The harlot will rule the world using her covenanted relationship with the Antichrist during the first half of the Great Tribulation.: At the end of 3 1/2 years, Antichrist will be possessed by Satan and bring the harlot to ruin and leave her naked and burn her with fire (Rev. 17:16). It means that Antichrist will break his covenant with the church and will nationalize their churches, schools, hospitals, etc. and destroy all their leaders. Then all the rulers of the union will hand over absolute power to him. At this time, the Church, the Bride of Christ, will be in heaven receiving her rewards. Let us keep our separation and holiness and be ready for the coming of our Lord.

2. City of Babylon (Commercial Babylon):

Rev. 18 describes the end of the commercial Babylon after the end of Babylon church. Right from the time of the Roman emperors till the last days, the city of Rome has been the source of all

evils, blind rituals and beliefs and hence deserves just punishment. Also, the fall of Babylon represents all that are ungodly and materialistic in the world. They all come to an end after the removal of the Christ less church. The merchandise of Babylon is listed in Rev. 18:4-20: The extent of moral degradation can be seen from the fact that even bodies and souls of men have become goods for sale. The city will be destroyed by earthquake and fire.

Notes:

1. Rome has been taken as synonymous with Babylon because historically ancient Babylonian religion shifted from there to Pergamum and then to Rome.
2. Some scholars are of the opinion that Babylon refers to the ancient Babylon itself. Then a new city of Babylon has to be rebuilt for the fulfillment of this prophecy.

Marriage of the Lamb and celebrations in heaven (Rev. 19:1-10):

After the destruction of Babylon church and Babylon city, roar of great multitudes are heard four times shouting ‘Hallelujah’. ‘Hallelujah’ has been translated: ‘Praise the Lord’ and used 24 times in the Old Testament. But the word has been left untranslated only four times and found in Rev. 19. The first roar of ‘Hallelujah’ is in connection with the destruction of the Babylon church, the harlot. The second roar is connected with the fall of the Babylon city the Great. The third shout is joined mainly by 24 elders and the 4 living creatures. The fourth roar is connected with the enthronement of the Son of God and His wedding celebrations. What are they shouting like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder? “Our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give Him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and His bride has made herself ready”.

Wedding feast of the Lamb:

‘Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!’ (Rev. 19:9). Who are the invitees? Those who are saved through faith in Jesus Christ during the Great Tribulation and the Old Testament saints are the invitees.

We have studied about two final judgements. Both are connected with Babylon. The Babylon church is pictured as a harlot because it has broken its relationship with Jesus Christ. We must be concerned about the condition of churches at the present time and keep ourselves holy and in the right relationship with our Lord as His spotless Bride.

Questions:

1. Who are the people coming under the final judgements?
2. What is the name carried by Babylon church on their foreheads? Why is she pictured as a harlot?
3. Prove that the Babylon church is the Roman Catholic church and other nominal churches joining it as a union?
4. Identify the beast on which the woman is sitting.
5. What is the judgement that befalls the harlot? Who executes the judgement?
6. How does the city of Babylon fall? Which is this city?
7. Four shouts of 'Hallelujah' are heard in Rev. 19. Which event is each of the shouts associated with?
8. Who is the Bride of the Lamb? Who are the invitees to the wedding feast?
9. Are you a member of the church that will form a part of the Bride of the Lamb? Do you have the love and relationship with the Bridegroom?