

Revelation

S P E A K S



*Messages
of Hope
for a
World in
Turmoil*

Lesson 20

God's Final Appeal

[This chapter is based on Revelation, Chapter 18]

Character is not determined in a moment. Daily decisions, repeated choices, and habitual acts eventually shape our eternal destiny. God's appeals resisted today become less powerful tomorrow. God's voice neglected today becomes less recognizable tomorrow. God's commands willingly ignored today are often openly disregarded tomorrow!

The first world empire, Babylon, rejected God's loving invitation through the prophet Daniel. And a bloodless hand out of the sleeve of darkness wrote upon that banquet wall, "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin" - "Thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting." Their choice fixed their eternal destiny. On that very night their lives were taken by the army of Cyrus.

Once again in these last days, God makes His final appeal to mankind. To reject or neglect this appeal is to seal one's eternal destiny! The choice we make is of utmost importance. There will be no middle ground; there will be only two choices, either to receive the Seal of God, or the Mark of the Beast.

Let's study about God's final appeal of love to us.

READ: Revelation 18:1-12; 19:1-9.

1. How does God picture the final revelation of His truth to this world?
Revelation 18:1.

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2. How does God illuminate the world with His glory? Psalm 119:105; Habakkuk 2:14.

NOTE: Jesus declared: "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12). Jesus reveals Himself through His Word. The prophet Habakkuk clearly predicts that the knowledge of God will fill this world, "as the waters cover the sea." God's truth will be proclaimed to the ends of the earth. Everyone will have an opportunity to choose God's way (Revelation 14:6, Matthew 24:14).

3. What solemn announcement does the mighty angel of Revelation 18:2 make?

4. Who dwells in Babylon, and who drinks of her wine (false doctrines)? Revelation 18:2, 3.

NOTE: The only safeguard against the deceptions of the devil is the truth of God's Word! To reject truths of Scripture prepares the mind to accept the deceptions of Satan (John 12:35). To deny truth is to open the mind to error (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12).

5. Why were the kings of the earth deceived by the teachings of Babylon, and what agencies did Satan use to deceive them? Revelation 18:23; 16:13, 14; 19:20.

a. _____

b. _____

NOTE: In the last days of earth's history, God will pour out His Holy Spirit through His true church so that the earth will be illumined with the truths of His Word. At the same time, evil spirits will reveal themselves mightily through false religious leaders. Masquerading as angels of light, they will work marvelous miracles, performing extraordinary signs and wonders! These false miracles will attract the leaders of the world. All nations will "drink the wine of Babylon."

Intoxicated by her false doctrines, enamored with the dazzling signs and wonders, the state powers, along with the economic leaders, will cast their influence behind the false church. Millions will be deceived. God said, "Even the very elect if it were possible" will be deceived (Revelation 18:3)

6. How did spiritualism first manifest itself? What was Satan's first lie to Eve? Genesis 3:3, 4.

NOTE: Satan, using a serpent as a medium, declared to Eve, "You shall not surely die." In other words, he said, "You are immortal-you will never die if you eat of this tree." But the Bible says that only God has immortality (1 Timothy 6:16). God's people will receive immortality at Jesus' second coming! (1 Corinthians 15:51-54).

There are two major errors undergirding the entire Babylonian system of religion. The first is the immortality of the soul, which is the basis of all pagan religions. We shall study this in detail in the next chapter.

7. Of what is Babylon guilty that will cause her to receive the plagues? Revelation 18:4, 5.

8. How does the Bible define sin? 1 John 3:4.

NOTE: Sin is lawlessness. It is willfully disregarding the principles of God's law. It is living in disobedience rather than obedience.

9. What does the Lord say to those who profess faith in Him but do not do the will of the Father in Heaven? Matthew 7:21, 23.

NOTE: The word *iniquity* in Matthew 7:23 is "lawlessness." It is the exact same word used to define sin in 1 John 3:4. It indicates an attitude of disobedience.

10. What error which brought the judgment of God upon Israel is repeated by many religious leaders today? Ezekiel 22:26.

NOTE: As we discovered, the first error which the Babylonian system of pagan religion is based upon is the immortality of the soul. The second major error is the acceptance of a counterfeit sabbath in place of the true Sabbath of the Lord.

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11. How did Jesus describe the worship of those who teach the commandments of men in place of the commandments of God? Matthew 15:9.

NOTE: It is a sobering thought that we can worship Christ in vain by holding to man-made traditions. A mixture of truth and error leads to spiritual confusion. Any organization which holds teachings contrary to the Bible is contributing to the state of confusion which God calls Babylon.

12. What is God's urgent appeal to His people who still remain in a religious system designated by the term *Babylon*? Revelation 18:4.

NOTE: There are conscientious Christians in every religious communion. Some Christians wonder whether they should remain in churches which teach the Babylonian doctrines of the immortality of the soul and Sunday worship. God's Word is clear: "Babylon is fallen, is fallen. Come out of her, My people."

13. What is the ultimate, final fate of Babylon? Revelation 18:8,21.

14. Jesus tells us how all true sheep who hear His voice respond. What will God's people in Babylon finally do? John 10:16, 27, 28.

15. What glorious scene does John describe in contrast to the destruction of Babylon, in Revelation 19:1-6?

16. What magnificent reward will those receive who heed God's call and come out of Babylon? Revelation 19:7-9.

NOTE: Have you heard the voice of Jesus speaking to your heart as you have studied this chapter? Have you seen new glimpses of truth in God's Word? Have you felt the convicting power of the Holy Spirit leading you to obedience?

My Response

After studying this chapter, I see the urgency of this message, and it is my desire to make the choice to "come out" in response to God's urgent appeal.

___ Because I love Jesus, I desire to become a Sabbath-keeping Christian.

___ I have never surrendered my life to Christ, but I want to do so now.

___ I would like to talk to someone about this decision.

___ I am planning to be baptized soon.

Revelation - A Book of Contrasts

It graphically represents:

1. Two Leaders. Jesus, the Lamb of God, the suffering sacrificial victim, lovingly appealing to mankind; and Satan, the dragon, coercing the conscience. Revelation 5:6; 13:8; 12:7-9; 17:13, 14.
2. Two Worships. Throughout Revelation is presented a call from the false worship of the beast to the true worship of the Creator. Revelation 14:7, 9; 13:16-18.
3. Two Women. The contrast between the true church and all counterfeit systems stands out in bold relief in the contrast between the woman in white, represented as the bride of Christ in Revelation 12, and the harlot of Revelation 17 who passes around her wine cup of false doctrine. Revelation 12:1,2; 17:1-6.
4. Two Cities. The book contrasts Jerusalem, the citadel of truth, with Babylon, the center of confusion, deceit, and rebellion. Jerusalem, the dwelling-place of Christ, the nerve center of the universe, is contrasted with Babylon, the center of the beast's activity. Revelation 12:5; 18:1-4; and Revelation 21, 22.
5. Two Signs. The Seal of God, as a symbol of total consecration and loyalty to God, is presented in contrast to the Mark of the Beast. It is interesting to observe that the Seal of God is placed only on the forehead, the mind, signifying intelligent choice, whereas the Mark of the Beast is received on the forehead (the mind) or in the hand. The hand as a symbol of coercion becomes Satan's method of enforcement. Revelation 7:1-3; 14:1-5; 13:15-18
6. Two Spirits. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit in latter rain power for the finishing of God's work on earth is strikingly contrasted with the miracle-working powers of evil spirits in a counterfeit revival prior to the coming of Jesus. Revelation 18:1,2; 13:14; 16:14; 19:20.

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7. Two Harvests. As the result of either receiving or rejecting Revelation's message, two harvests will be produced: the harvest of golden grain for the garner of God, and the harvest of grapes trodden out in the winepress of His wrath. Even now the world is hastening toward these two harvests. Revelation 14:14-20.

8. Two Troubles. The long era of papal persecution (the 42 months-time, times, and half a time-1,260 days) reveals a great period of persecution for the church. The coming tribulation of the seven plagues is the greatest time of trouble for the world in the history of mankind. In the former there were between 40 million and 50 million martyrs; in the latter after the close of probation, God will care for His people! Revelation 12:6, 12; 13:5; 15:1,8; Revelation 16; Psalm 91:3-12.

9. Two Suppers. All inhabitants of Planet Earth will eventually be present at one of two suppers: the marriage supper of the Lamb, or the supper of the birds. The first is a glorious beginning of new life; the second, the tragic ending of a life that was. One is filled with joy, the other with sorrow and death. Revelation 19.

10. Two Choices. The Book of Revelation climaxes by presenting its readers with two choices: eternal salvation or eternal damnation. Its last chapter is a mighty appeal to choose the way of salvation. In view of the coming of Christ, all men and women will ultimately be led to make their final, irrevocable, irreversible decision. Revelation 2.