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THE DOWNFALL OF RELIGIOUS INTERNATIONALISM IN THE TRIBULATION

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION
REVELATION 18:1-24
NUMBER 30

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We are now living in the Church Age and during the Church Age "Religious Internationalism" will be very powerful, but it will not be the dominant force in the world. But one day, when the church is taken out of the world, then this great religious force will dominate the whole earth.

1 THESSALONIANS 4:16-17 "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." You recall that Revelation, chapters 2 and 3 dealt with the Church Age. Revelation, chapters 4 and 5 gave us a picture of the church in heaven. Beginning with chapter 6 we began to study about the seven-year period known as "The Tribulation". Now during the course of the entire Church Age this system of Religious Internationalism will become stronger and stronger and the devil will use this system in an attempt to destroy all four divine institutions. To be sure, we have many forms of religious internationalism today, but this system will not reach its peak until the Tribulation. In chapters 15 and 16 and 17 we have been studying the rise of this religious system, and now in Revelation 18 we are to study of the downfall of this system.

REVELATION 18:1 "And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory." Here we meet the angel of judgment. After all this study of the seven drinking cup judgments, we have now come to the judging angel. You recall in these drinking cup judgments, the Armageddon Campaign was judgment no. 6, and now judgment no. 7 is the judgment of this worldwide system of Religious Internationalism. This entire chapter is devoted to a detailed description of the final destruction of Religious Internationalism. Rev. 16:17 introduced us to this seventh angel. REVELATION 16:17 "And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done."

Here we hear the voice of God saying, "It is finished. It is accomplished." This is exactly the same thing Jesus said on the cross. When Jesus said, "It is finished", the word is in the perfect tense and this means it was accomplished in the past and will stand finished forever. Salvation has been completed and it will stand completed forever. When we are saved, we simply accept that which Christ accomplished for us on the cross.

JOHN 1:12 "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" Religion opposes all of this, and Religious Internationalism now comes up for her final judgment here in chapter 18. In Rev. 16:17-19 we had a brief mention of this subject, but here in chapter 18 we get the detailed description. In ancient times Babylon was great, but eventually Babylon faded and fell and is a desolation to this day. In the Old Testament Babylon refers to this ancient city and empire which long ago fell, but in the New Testament the word Babylon refers to Rome and to Ecumenical Religion.

This seventh angel came from heaven with great power and with great light. The glory of God has always been described as a light brighter than the light of the sun. So here we meet the glory of God's presence.

Religion has long been one of the great evil forces in our own nation and is one of the forces leading to our national decay and decline. One of the reasons why we are in real trouble today in this nation is that the forces of religious internationalism have tried to inflict their program into every facet of our national life. Angels contain light and here that light is allowed to flash forth. Adam and Eve originally had that light, but when they sinned they lost that light and became naked.

REVELATION 18:2 "And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." This is the announcement of judgment upon this religious system. Here the great angel shouted his judgment-- "Babylon is fallen, is fallen". Ever since that day on the cross when Jesus said, "It is finished", we have known that this was going to happen some day. The devil and all his demon forces finally took over religion and God pronounced the system's doom. "Is fallen, is fallen" is in the aorist tense and it means that in a point of time, when the system was at its peak, the destruction finally fell. Here we get a picture of devils, evil spirits, and all kinds of demons. "Unclean and hateful bird" takes us back to two scriptures--

ISAIAH 13:21 "But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there."

JEREMIAH 50:39 "Therefore the wild beasts of the desert with the wild beasts of the islands shall dwell there, and the owls shall dwell therein: and it shall be no more inhabited for ever; neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation."

The Devil's communion table is described in this passage--

1 CORINTHIANS 10:19-21 "What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils."

You see, Satan has his religious organization all over the world--

2 THESSALONIANS 2:9-10 "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." When you strip religion down you always see this framework of demon power.

REVELATION 18:3 "For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies." This happened at the peak of her power. "Drunk on the wine of her wrath" refers to the success of religious internationalism in gaining converts in every nation of the earth. This is a perfect picture of the union of church and state. They are so entwined you can't tell one from the other. In our picture before us religion has taken over the state and the state had taken over religion. Here in our nation we have a Constitution which calls for a free church in a free state, but liberals are trying to tear this down all the time. There will come a time when these constitutional provisions will be discarded and we will succumb to this great evil. One threat to this today is the desire of many to take tax money for religious schools and institutions. We are now moving rapidly in this direction. Right at the end of time, the United States will become a member of the ten-nation federation which makes us the Revived Roman Empire and religion and the state will be one. The U.S.A. could never become a part of this religious empire if we were to follow our Constitution, but we are slipping away from that concept today. This religious empire will spread rapidly throughout the entire earth and this is emphasized with the phrase "The merchants of the earth waxed rich". This refers to a fat, rich and corrupt religious combine.

REVELATION 18:4-5 "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." Here we have the attitude of tribulational saints toward this religious system. "Come out of her my people" is a command for separated living. The point for us today is this--if you are in a liberal, God-denying, scripture-denying organization, then get out of it as fast as you can. Christian people in every age are commanded to "separated living". If you do not separate from this system, then you will share in her sins and in her judgment.

REVELATION 18:6-7 "Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow." Here the principle of judgment is given. Judgment is coming, don't ever forget that. God has a pay day coming for sin. "Double" here means that even though the other judgments brought payment for sin, this seventh drinking-cup judgment is to be two-fold. One judgment will come in time and one will come in eternity. This simply means that hell is filled with self-righteous, religious do-gooders and the word "reward" here means a pay back. God is going to pay back to these self-righteous, religious people on the basis of his righteousness and justice and fairness. God will never condemn anyone except in fairness and justice. The basis for judging religious people in the final judgment is their good works. They depend on their works and on the basis of their works will they be judged. "The cup which she has filled is the cup of religious good works which finally was completed. This verse 7 is a picture of pride and these religious people live by pride and lust and arrogance. Nothing is worse than living on a prolonged religious drunk. Here is a queen who in her mind says that she has it made. If one lover deserts her, she has many more to step in and take over.

REVELATION 18:8 "Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her." This is a picture of the suddenness of the destruction. Religious Internationalism will meet her destruction in one day. The religious crowd tries to shake herself out of her sleep, but alas it is too late! This system dies in a day. The mourning here means mental regret. "Utterly burned with fire" refers to the second part of the double judgment, and this refers to be burned in the fire of hell and destruction.

REVELATION 18:9-10 "And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come." Not only is there doom from her religious associates, but there is doom also from her political associates. This is the wail of the ten-league nations of the Revived Roman Empire. The bottom fell out quick and the political entities realized that their doom had arrived. Notice the emphasis on "One hour". This judgment in the Tribulation is sudden and conclusive.

REVELATION 18:11-12 "And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble" Here we begin the wail of the economic leaders of this system and their wail will continue all the way through verse 19. This is the breakdown of the economic system of this vast empire. Wealth is always a false foundation for life, whether it be an individual or a nation. I am glad the list included "Thyine Wood" for this is a citrus tree of North Africa. The wood of this tree was used for making table tops and fine furniture. It is wood that takes a beautiful finish. This indicates that in the Tribulation, Africa is an industrial nation.

REVELATION 18:13 "And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men." Here are the dainties of the earth. This is a picture of the wealthy lording it over the poor. Also please notice from this verse that slavery is still in existance in the Tribulation. As long as men have old sin natures there will still be slavery and the only solution to slavery is regeneration.

Illustration--Robert E. Lee was one of the greatest men ever to live in this nation. He was a devoted student of the Bible. He married a relative of George Washington and this is the way he inherited his vast holdings, and this land is Arlington Cemetery today. His famous house still stands in Arlington. By reading the Bible, he concluded that slavery was wrong, and he made provision for the freeing of his slaves. Lincoln offered Lee the leadership of the Union Army but Lee refused, and said, "I give my sword to Virginia". Lee believed in the right of states, and for this reason he went with the South. He did not go with the South because he believed in slavery. He realized that slavery could be overcome only as people became regenerated.

REVELATION 18:14 "And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all." Wealth, position and leadership all vanished overnight in this collapse of the Ecumenical Religious system. This is an amazing picture of financial disaster.

REVELATION 18:15 "The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing" Here is the collapse of the stock market and the collapse of the entire financial system of this religious empire.

REVELATION 18:16 "And saying, Alas, alas that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!" People of wealth lost their entire fortunes in a day.

REVELATION 18:17-19 "For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, and cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate." This is a picture of the collapse of transportation in the Tribulation.

REVELATION 18:20 "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her." What is God's attitude toward all this? What is the attitude of born-again believers to this? The divine viewpoint is expressed with the word "Rejoice". The rejoicing comes from the fact that God has finally triumphed over a worldwide system of evil.

REVELATION 18:21 "And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all." This is an illustration of how God will judge this whole evil system. The millstone is a picture of God's sudden destruction of all this evil.

REVELATION 18:22-23 "And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived."

Here we see how other groups are affected by the collapse of this worldwide empire. Musicians find themselves out of business. "Craftsmen" refer to mechanics and engineers. The whole system falls apart at one time. "The light of the candle" refers to the entertainment world and "The voice of the bridegroom" is a reference to all social activities. So we see that their economic, political system controlled every area of life and it all fell apart in one day. "For by sorceries were all nations deceived" refers to Satan and his demon power over men and nations. Evil spirits led in this worldwide deception and destruction.

REVELATION 18:24 "And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth." This verse reveals the true nature of these religious leaders. They slaughtered God's believers. Millions of believers are going to be killed in the Tribulation. It will be the worst period of world history. Chapter 18 is a photograph of religion and all her system of deception. Here we see evil finally is called to the judgment seat.

Satan must have a free hand, but he finally runs out of gas and final judgment falls. This is a challenge to believers to learn doctrine and thereby avoid religion, and such things as tongues, healings, emotionalism, liberalism and do-goodism.

Let me conclude our study of Chapter 18 with this thought--
If anyone ever doubts that God is going to bring sin into judgment, then let him read Revelation 18. Every sin, every evil, every disobedient unbeliever in the earth will have to face up to his failure to accept Christ.