

“FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS”

by Pastor Stephen Bohr

The Three Angels' Messages in Summary

Introduction

Each speaker to this point has explained individual phrases of the three angels' message. In this study, 3ABN has asked me to present how all the pieces fit together. In order to accomplish this we need to consider four things:

- ✓ Their timing
- ✓ Their meaning
- ✓ Their sequence
- ✓ Their importance

We must also review the prophecy of Daniel 7 and the context that comes immediately before and after the three messages:

- ✓ Briefly review the prophetic chain of Daniel 7
- ✓ Examine the parallel but expanded prophecy of Revelation 13:1-10
- ✓ Consider the prophecy of the land beast of Revelation 13:11-18
- ✓ Take into account the victory scene of the 144,000 on Mt. Zion (Revelation 14:1-5)
- ✓ Consider the harvest scene that follows the third angel's message (Revelation 14:14-20)
- ✓ Take into account the victorious song of Revelation 15:2-4.

Daniel 7

Review of the stages of prophetic history in Daniel 7:

- Lion (605-539 BC)
- Bear (539-331 BC)
- Leopard (331-168 BC)
- Dragon (168 BC -476 AD)
- Ten horns (476 AD)
- 3 horns uprooted by the little horn (493, 534, 538 AD)
- Little horn (538-1798 AD)
- Judgment scene (1844 AD)
- The Father gives Jesus the kingdom (?)

Revelation 13:1-10 Parallels Daniel 7

Revelation 13:1-10 repeats the content of Daniel 7. We discover in these verses that the little horn of Daniel 7 is the same power as the sea beast for three reasons:

- They are both in the same location in the prophetic chain (after the dragon beast with ten horns).
- They both perform the same actions (blasphemies, persecution of the saints, trampling on the truth).
- They both rule for the same time (time, times and the dividing of time, 42 months).

Daniel 7 and Revelation 13:2

"Then I stood on the sand of the sea and I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. ² Now the beast that I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority."

"For Such A Time As This"

Sequence of powers in Daniel 7 and Revelation 13:1-10:

Daniel 7

Lion

Bear

Leopard

Dragon

10 horns

Little horn

42 months

Revelation 13:1-10

Lion

Bear

Leopard

Dragon

10 horns

Sea beast

3.5 times

Revelation 13 Expands Daniel 7

Although Revelation 13 repeats the prophetic sequence of Daniel 7, it expands **three significant ways**:

- It brings to view the **deadly wound** that the little horn/beast received with the sword at the end of the 1260 years.
- It describes the **healing** of the wound.
- It tells us **who** will heal the wound and **how**.

Revelation 13:11-18

This passage describes a beast that rises from the earth, has two horns like a lamb but ends up speaking like a dragon. **History and prophecy** prove that this beast represents the **United States** and the two horns symbolize the **two foundational principles** of the nation (Republicanism and Protestantism), civil and religious liberty that entails the separation of church and state.

Notably, this beast, though **claiming to advocate** for civil and religious liberty will **end up repudiating** these principles and will speak like a dragon. This beast will **heal the wound of the first beast** by giving it back the sword of civil

“For Such A Time As This”

power that it lost in 1798. Everything this beast does, it does to **please the first beast** and restore it to power. Verses 11-18 tell us that:

- It will exercise all the **authority** of the first beast (verse 12).
- It will do everything **in the presence** of the first beast' (verses 12, 14; **NIV**: '**on behalf** of the first beast; **CEV**: 'it **worked for** the beast'; **lexicons**: 'at the **commissioning** of the beast'.
- It will force the whole world to **worship** the first beast (verse 12).
- It will make an **image of** the first beast (verse 15).
- The image will be **in honor** (verse 14, **to** the beast), and whoever does not worship the image will be **sentenced to death**.
- It will enforce the **mark** of the first beast on pain of not being able to **buy or sell** (verses 16, 17).

The key words in Revelation 13:11-18 are 'the beast', 'the image' and 'the mark'.

We shall find these three elements **again** in:

- Revelation 14:9-11
- Revelation 15:2-4
- Revelation 19:19, 20

A Victorious Group

A question lingers in our minds when Revelation 13 ends. Did anyone **remain faithful** in the conflict over the beast, his image and his mark? Did everyone bow to the authority of the land beast and the sea beast?

We find the answer to the question in the following chapter where a **remnant** described as the 144,000 stands victorious on the heavenly Mt. Zion. We should see **Revelation 14:1-5 as the conclusion** of chapter 13 **rather than** the introduction to chapter 14.

*"Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His **Father's name** written on their foreheads. ² And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. ³ They **sang** as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living*

"For Such A Time As This"

creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn **that song** except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. ⁴ These are the ones who were **not defiled with women**, for they are virgins. These are the ones who **follow the Lamb** wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being **first fruits [in terms of quality]** to God and to the Lamb. ⁵ And in their mouth was found **no deceit**, for they are **without fault** before the throne of God.”

Thus, Revelation 13:1-14:1 have led us full cycle from the kingdom of Babylon to the moment when God’s faithful remnant stands victorious on the heavenly Mt. Zion:

- The lion (Babylon, 605-539 BC)
- The bear (Medo-Persia, 539-331 BC)
- The leopard (Greece, 331-168 BC)
- The Dragon with ten horns (Roman Empire, 168 BC – 476 AD)
- The Dragon gives its power, its throne and great authority to the sea beast (538 AD)

“In the sixth century the papacy had become firmly established. Its seat of power was fixed in the imperial city, and the bishop of Rome was declared to be the head over the entire church. Paganism had given place to the papacy. The dragon had given to the beast “his power, and his seat, and great authority.” Revelation 13:2. And now began the 1260 years of papal oppression foretold in the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation.” GC, p. 54

- The sea beast rules for 42 months (538-1798 AD)
- The sword wounds the sea beast (1798 AD)
- The land beast heals the wound by making an image of the sea beast and enforcing its mark (in the process but not fully accomplished)
- The 144,000 stand victorious over the beast, his image and his mark

The Three Angels’ Messages

After describing the 144,000 standing on Mt. Zion victorious over the beast, his image and his mark, we find the **three angels’ messages**. It is obvious that the proclamation of the three angels’ messages does not occur after the 144,000

“For Such A Time As This”

stand victorious on Mt. Zion. Revelation 14:6-12 takes us back in time to the beginning of the proclamation of the three angels' messages leading up to 1844 and ending with the close of probation.

That is to say, the three angels' messages take us **back in time** to explain **how the 144,000 gained** the victory over the beast, his image and his mark—they accepted and proclaimed the three messages! We know this to be true because the **third angel's message warns** against worshiping the beast, his image and receiving his mark which Revelation 13:11-18 had previously mentioned (the beast, his image, his mark).

Revelation 14:6-12

*"I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the **everlasting gospel** to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—⁷ saying with a loud voice, "**Fear God** and **give glory** to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and **worship** Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water."⁸ And another angel **followed**, saying, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."⁹ Then a third angel **followed them**, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the **beast** and his **image**, and receives his **mark** on his forehead or on his hand, ¹⁰ he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. ¹¹ And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."¹² Here is the patience of **the saints**; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus."*

Characteristics of the three angels' message:

- The messages are **sequential** and must be proclaimed in their **order**.
- The messages go to **every nation**, kindred, tongue and people so God must have a **worldwide church** to proclaim them.
- The messages are God's **final appeal** before the close of probation because the harvest follows their proclamation.

"For Such A Time As This"

- Their proclamation is accompanied by the **power of the latter rain** that ripens the harvest and the grapes.
- Their acceptance or rejection is a matter of **life or death**.
- The **first angel's message** contains **three imperatives**: fear, give glory, worship.
- The **second angel** proclaims the fall of Babylon for **rejecting the first message**.
- The third angel's message warns what will happen **if people stay in Babylon**.

The elements of the three angel's message

The **first angel** preaches the **everlasting gospel** that consists of the fact that:

- Jesus was **sacrificed once for all**.
- He is our **only** and **sufficient high priest**.
- We saved by **his righteousness alone** and not by our works.

The first angel contains the **distinctives** of SDA theology:

- To '**fear God**' which is manifested in reverent obedience to His commandments (children commanded to 'fear' their **parents**, Abraham **sacrificing Isaac**, **Abimelech**, there is no fear in this place)
- To reflect the **glory** of God's **character** (Moses on Mt. Sinai, sun/moon)
- We are now in the hour of **God's judgment** (the judgment is before the second coming and involves only professed believers)
- That the **dead are dead** until the resurrection (if they went to heaven when they died then the judgment is at death)
- That we should keep the **Sabbath** in honor of the Creator

The Two Harvests

When the **three angels finish** proclaiming God's message, there will only be **two groups**. On the **one side** are those who worship the beast, his image, receive his **mark**, and on **the other** are those who worship God, keep His commandments and the faith of Jesus who have the **seal**. Thus, the three angels' messages polarize the world!

"For Such A Time As This"

Revelation 14:14-17: The harvest will take place when every person on earth has either **accepted or rejected** the messages. When probation closes, there will be only **two groups**. The first group to be reaped in the harvest of the earth, is the righteous:

*"Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a **sharp sickle**.¹⁵ And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the **harvest** of the earth is ripe." ¹⁶ So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped."*

- ✓ The harvest of the earth and the grapes. The harvest accepted the three angels' message and the grapes rejected them.
- ✓ The harvest has the **seal of God** and the grapes have the **mark of the beast**.
- ✓ The harvest is **within the spiritual city** and the wicked are **outside**.

Revelation 14:18: After God has sealed the righteous the wicked are marked for destruction:

*"And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, 'Thrust in your **sharp sickle** and gather the **clusters of the vine** of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe.'"*

The Final War and Deliverance

When probation closes, the 144,000 will experience a time of trouble such as never has been seen. Those who worshiped the beast and his image and received the mark will **surround the faithful remnant** with the intention of **destroying them** but Jesus will come with the **armies of heaven** to trample the winepress and deliver His people:

Revelation 14:19, 20: The **deliverance** of the faithful remnant:

*"So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw it into the **great winepress** of the wrath of God [reference to the*

"For Such A Time As This"

third angel's message. These are the ones who worshiped the beast, his image and received the mark].²⁰ And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs."

Revelation 19:11-16 expands upon Revelation 14:19, 20. We now discover who is riding the horses that trample the winepress:

"Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse and He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.¹² His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself.¹³ He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.¹⁴ And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.¹⁵ Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.¹⁶ And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."

The reason why Jesus comes is to deliver His people from annihilation by the three-fold union:

Revelation 19:19-20

"And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.²⁰ Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image."

Revelation 15:2-4

In chapter 15:2-4 the 144,000 stand victorious over the beast, his image and his mark:

"And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God.³ They sing the song

"For Such A Time As This"

of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: "Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints! ⁴ Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, For Your judgments have been manifested."

The Link between Revelation 13, 14 and 15:2-4

- ✓ **Revelation 13:11-18**: The **land beast commands** the world to worship the beast, makes an image of/to the beast and imposes the mark of the beast.
- ✓ **Revelation 14:9-11**: **God warns** the world not to worship the beast, or his image and to refuse the mark.
- ✓ **Revelation 15:2-4**: The remnant **gained the victory** over the beast and the image and refused to receive the mark.

The Importance of the Messages

*"I was shown three steps-- the first, second, and third angels' messages. Said my accompanying angel, "**Woe** to him who shall move a block or stir a pin of these messages. The **true understanding** of these messages is of vital importance. The **destiny of souls** hangs upon the manner in which they are received." EW, pp. 258, 259*

*"In a **special sense** Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as **watchmen** and **light bearers**. God has entrusted them with the last warning for a perishing world. On them is shining wonderful light from the word of God. God has given them a work of the most **solemn import**--the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages. There is **no other work** of so great importance. They are to allow **nothing else** to absorb their attention." 9T, p. 19*

“FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS”

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Babylon's Financial Meltdown

Review of Revelation 17

Revelation 16:12-16 describes three evil spirits like frogs that gather the kings of the earth and the whole world for the final battle against the government of God. These **three fallen angels** are the **counterpart** of the three angels' message of Revelation 14. That is to say, the three angels gather people from every nation, kindred, tongue and people on the Lord's side and the three counterfeit angels gather people from every nation, kindred, tongue and people on Satan's side. The three evil spirits use a trilogy of earthly powers to accomplish their purpose (the **dragon**, the **beast**, and the **false prophet**). Revelation 17 further amplifies this triple alliance under the names of the **kings** of the earth, the **harlot** and the **daughters**. The symbolic waters of the Euphrates (Revelation 17:1, 2) support this apostate trilogy and the waters they control are at flood stage, swirling to overwhelm God's people. However, Revelation 17:16 informs us that the kings and the multitudes will eventually turn against the harlot and annihilate her.

Ellen White on the Timing of Revelation 18:6-24

There are **three chapters** toward the end of **The Great Controversy** where Ellen White begins the chapter with a **Bible passage** that presents the central theme of the entire chapter.

- On **page 603**, at the beginning of the chapter on *“The Final Warning”* Ellen White cites **Revelation 18:1, 2, 4**. This chapter contains her commentary on the Loud Cry of Revelation 18:1-5.
- On **page 613**, at the beginning of the chapter on *“The Time of Trouble”* she quotes **Daniel 12:1**. This chapter is her commentary on the close of probation and the ensuing time of trouble.

- **Pages 635, 636** begin the chapter titled *“God’s People Delivered”*. Although Ellen White does not begin this chapter with a Biblical quotation, a careful examination of these two pages at the beginning of the chapter indicate that she is interpreting the meaning of the fifth, sixth and seventh plagues that will be poured out **at the very end** of the time of trouble (see below).
- On **page 653**, at the beginning of the chapter on *“The Desolation of the Earth”* Ellen White quotes **Revelation 18:5-10, 11, 3, 15-17**. Therefore, this chapter is Ellen White’s commentary on the fulfillment of Revelation 18:5-24.

Sequence of Events in The Great Controversy, pp. 635, 636

The **first two pages** of the chapter “God’s People Delivered” (pp. 635-652) contain Ellen White’s commentary on the fifth, sixth and seventh plagues:

GC, p. 635: After the **first four plagues** are poured out (GC, pp. 627-629), the multitudes (waters) that support Babylon are swirling and are **about to rush** upon God’s people to execute the death decree. At this point, the harlot is sitting on many waters with the intent of destroying God’s people:

*“With shouts of triumph, jeering, and imprecation, **throngs [multitudes]** of evil men are **about to rush** [waters rush: Isaiah 17:12, 13] upon their **prey** [God’s people].”*

GC, p. 635: Suddenly when the darkness of the **fifth plague** falls upon the earth, the raging waters of the spiritual Euphrates are suddenly **arrested**. This is the **sixth plague**, the drying up of the Euphrates:

*“The **angry multitudes** are suddenly **arrested [dried up]**. Their mocking cries die away. The objects [the faithful remnant] of their murderous rage are forgotten.”*

GC, p. 636: **God’s voice** then says from the most holy place, ‘it is done’ that marks the outpouring of the **seventh plague**:

*“In the midst of the angry heavens is one clear space of indescribable glory, whence comes the **voice of God** like the sound of many waters, saying: “It is done.” **Revelation 16:17.** **That voice** shakes the heavens and the earth.”*

The Desolation of the Earth

In the next chapter, (*“The Desolation of the Earth”*, beginning on p. 653) Ellen White **picks up** at the very same point where she left off in The Great Controversy, pp. 635, and 636. This means that she is going to amplify the events that occur when God delivers His people when He pours out the seventh plague:

"When the voice of God turns the captivity of His people [GC 635, 636], there is a terrible awakening of those who have lost all in the great conflict of life." GC, p. 654

This quotation on the second page of the chapter 'The Desolation of the Earth' takes us **back to the moment** when the voice of God delivered His people at the time of the seventh plague. This provides us with the **precise chronological point** for the fulfillment of Revelation 18:6-24. Revelation 18:6-24 is a description of the **seventh plague**. It is a vivid description of how the wicked will wail and lament when they forsake Babylon and Babylon falls. Ellen White vividly describes the scene:

*"The people [waters] see that **they have been deluded**. They accuse one another of having led them to destruction; but all unite in heaping their bitterest condemnation upon **the ministers**. **Unfaithful pastors** have prophesied **smooth things**; they have led their hearers to **make void the law** of God and **to persecute** those who would keep it holy. Now, in their despair, **these teachers** confess before the world their work of deception. The **multitudes are filled with fury**. "We are lost!" **they cry [this is their lament and wailing]**, "and you are the cause of our ruin;" and they **turn upon the false shepherds**. The very ones that once admired them most will pronounce the most dreadful curses upon them. The very hands that once crowned them with laurels will be raised **for their destruction**. The swords that were to slay God's people are now employed **to destroy their enemies**. Everywhere there is strife and bloodshed." GC, pp. 655, 656*

The following paragraph captures in summary form the **central theme** of Revelation 18:6ff:

*"The **rich [the merchants]** prided themselves upon their superiority to those who were less favored; but they had obtained their **riches** by violation of the law of God. They had neglected to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to deal justly, and to love mercy. They had sought to **exalt themselves** and to obtain the homage of their fellow creatures. Now they are stripped of all that made them great and are left destitute and defenseless. They **look with terror** upon the destruction of the idols that they preferred before their Maker. They have sold their souls for earthly **riches** and **enjoyments**, and have not sought to become rich toward God. The result is, their lives are a failure; their **pleasures** are now turned to **gall**, their treasures to corruption. The gain of a lifetime is swept away in a moment. The rich **bemoan** the destruction of their grand houses, the scattering of their gold and silver **[in the light of James 5]**. But their **lamentations** are silenced by the fear that they themselves are to perish with their idols." GC, p. 654*

Thus the central theme of Revelation 18:6ff is the collapse of the **world political and economic** system that supported the Babylonian harlot and her daughters. At that point, the kings, the merchants and the multitudes will see that they are lost and that their riches are worthless. Moreover, they are infuriated primarily at the wicked religious leaders who have deceived them with a prosperity gospel!

"For Such A Time As This"

The literary style of the entire chapter is that of a **lamentation or funeral dirge**. When the Babylonian system collapses, the multitudes will realize that their **religious leaders have deceived them** and they will turn on them. Their religious leaders encouraged them to get rich and to persecute those who keep the Sabbath. Both Ezekiel 7:15-19 and James 5:1-7 point forward to this time.

Ezekiel 7:15-19

*“They will throw their **silver** into the streets, and their **gold** will be like refuse; their **silver and their gold** will not be able to deliver them in the day of the **wrath of the LORD**; they will not satisfy their souls, nor fill their stomachs because it became their stumbling block of iniquity.”²⁰ ‘As for the **beauty of his ornaments**, He set it in majesty; but they made from it the images of their **abominations** their detestable things; therefore I have made it like refuse to them.”²¹ I will give it as plunder into the hands of strangers, and to the wicked of the earth as spoil; and they shall defile it.”*

James 5:1-6 points to the same point of time:

*“Come now, you **rich, weep and howl** for your miseries that are coming upon you!”² Your **riches** are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten.”³ Your **gold and silver** are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will **eat your flesh** like fire. You have heaped up **treasure in the last days**.⁴ Indeed the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.”⁵ You have lived on the earth in **pleasure and luxury**; you have **fattened your hearts** as in a day of **slaughter**.⁶ You have condemned, you have **murdered the just**; he does **not resist you**.”*

GC, p. 641: On this page, Ellen White quotes Revelation 19:11, 14, 16 thus completing the cycle of Revelation 16-19

The Composite Picture of Revelation 16-19

Revelation 16:12-16

- The spirits of devils have totally **possessed Babylon** toward the close of probationary time and have **gathered the kings** of the earth and the whole world to war against Christ in the person of His witnesses.
- At the **close of probation**, the waters of the spiritual Euphrates are at **flood stage**. With each of the **first four plagues**, the anger of the waters increases until they are ready to **annihilate God’s people** from the earth.

“For Such A Time As This”

- When it appears that the waters will drown God's people, the plague of **darkness** (the fifth plague) falls upon the earth immediately followed by the **drying up** of the flooding waters under the sixth plague.
- The **seventh plague** then divides Babylon into three parts and desolates the earth (Revelation 16:17-21).

Revelation 17

- Once again, the Babylonian harlot seems to be in full control. She is **sitting** on many waters, is **fornicating** with the kings of the earth and has the support of her **daughters**. The waters are flowing and God's people are **in jeopardy**.
- The **unity of Babylon** is destroyed when the **kings turn on her** (Revelation 17:16). This unity comes to an end when the **words of God are finished** at the moment of the seventh plague (Revelation 17:17).

Revelation 18:6-24

- This chapter describes the **lamentation of the multitudes** of the world when they see that Babylon has fallen.
- God will utter His voice and deliver His people shortly before the coming of Jesus with the armies of heaven (the kings that come from the east). During this period, the **merchants and the kings** of the earth will **lament and wail** over the fact that their riches cannot save them in the day of God's wrath.

Revelation 19:1-10 (clearly denoted in verses 2, 3):

- There is a **song of joy in heaven** because God has judged the harlot and avenged God's people.
- This song stands in **contrast to the lamentation** of the multitudes when they see that Babylon has fallen.
- **Jeremiah 51:48, 49** describes the joyous celebration in heaven:

*"When the **heavens and the earth and all that is in them** shall sing joyously over Babylon; for the plunderers shall come to her from the north," says the LORD. ⁴⁹ As Babylon has caused the slain of Israel to fall, so at Babylon the slain of all the earth shall fall."*

Revelation 19:11-21

- The kings from the east—Jesus and His angels—come for the one-sided **final battle** against the **kings** of the earth, the **beast** and the **false prophet** (Revelation 19:19, 20).

"For Such A Time As This"

- The winepress symbolism from Revelation 14:18-20 is now further described. GC, p. 641

The flow of Chapter 18

Revelation 17:18 bridges chapter 17 with chapter 18. This verse tells us that the harlot and the city are interchangeable:

"And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth."

- Revelation 18:1-5: The call to come out before Babylon is punished
- Revelation 18:6-8: Retribution upon Babylon for her sins
- Revelation 18:9, 10: The lament of the kings
- Revelation 18:11-16: The lament of the Capitalists ('the great men of the earth')
- Revelation 18:17-19: The lament of the employees and travelers
- Revelation 18:20: Rejoicing in heaven over Babylon's fall
- Revelation 18:21-24: Drowning of the Great City and cessation of her activities

The Location of Verses 1-5

Revelation 18:1-5 is a bridge between Revelation 17 and 18:6-24. Revelation 17 portrays the final global apostasy of Babylon and her doom, as does Revelation 18:6ff. In between these two passages, we find the warning to come out so as not to participate in Babylon's sins and receive her plagues. It is rather obvious that this warning must be in the context of the end time shortly before God pours out the plagues.

- Revelation 17 describes the sins and doom that will fall upon Babylon.
- Revelation 18:1-5 calls God's people to come out before doom falls on Babylon.
- Revelation 18:6-24: The lamentation of those who fail to respond to the call.

The Passage

Revelation 18:1-5 (The Great Controversy, pp. 603-612)

"After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. ² And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! ³ For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury." 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. ⁵ For [because] her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities."

"For Such A Time As This"

Repetition of the Second Angel's Message

There is a close link between the second angel's message in Revelation 14:8 and the message of the Loud Cry angel in Revelation 18:1-5. The Millerites proclaimed the message of Revelation 14:8, leading up to 1844. God's faithful left the fallen Protestant churches and joined those who were proclaiming the judgment hour message. The second angel's message will be proclaimed once more just before the close of probation. However, the message will be global extension in extension and will have far greater power. Ellen White explained the relationship of Revelation 14:8 and 18:1-3 in this way:

"When Jesus began His public ministry, He cleansed the temple from its sacrilegious profanation. Among the last acts of His ministry was the second cleansing of the temple. So in the last work for the warning of the world, two distinct calls are made to the churches. The second angel's message is, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." And in the loud cry of the third angel's message a voice is heard 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" RH, December 6, 1892

"This scripture points forward to a time when the announcement of the fall of Babylon, as made by the second angel of Revelation 14 (verse 8), is to be repeated, with the additional mention of the corruptions which have been entering the various organizations that constitute Babylon, since that message was first given, in the summer of 1844. A terrible condition of the religious world is here described. With every rejection of truth the minds of the people will become darker, their hearts more stubborn, until they are entrenched in an infidel hardihood. In defiance of the warnings that God has given, they will continue to trample upon one of the precepts of the Decalogue, until they are led to persecute those who hold it sacred. Christ is set at naught in the contempt placed upon His word and His people. As the churches accept the teachings of spiritualism, the restraint imposed upon the carnal heart is removed, and the profession of religion will become a cloak to conceal the basest iniquity. A belief in spiritual manifestations opens the door to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, and thus the influence of evil angels will be felt in the churches." GC, pp. 603, 604

Revelation 14:8 and Revelation 18:1-5

Notice the following comparison between the second angel's message in Revelation 14:8 and the Loud Cry angel:

Revelation 14:8

An angel proclaims the message

No mention of a loud voice

Revelation 18:1-5

A mighty angel proclaims the message

Angel cries mightily with a loud voice

"For Such A Time As This"

Revelation 14:8 - Continued

Fall because she made nations drink wine
No call to come out of her
No mention of demons in Babylon
No mention of kings and merchants
No mention of sins piled up to heaven
No mention of God's punishment of Babylon

Revelation 18:1-5 - Continued

Fell because she **gave wine** to the nations
Call to come out of her before the plagues
Babylon is the **habitation of demons**
Mention of **kings and merchants**
Her sins have **filled the cup**
Mention of God's **punishment of Babylon**

Counterfeit before the Genuine

Satan understands the message of Revelation 18:1-5. He knows that there will be a revival of primitive godliness just before the close of probation. Therefore, before the final revival comes, Satan will introduce a counterfeit. According to Revelation 13:13 and the Spirit of Prophecy describe this counterfeit revival just before the outpouring of the Latter Rain and the proclamation of the Loud Cry:

*"Notwithstanding the **spiritual darkness** and alienation from God that exist in the **churches** that constitute Babylon, the **great body** of Christ's true followers is still to be found in their communion. There are many of these who have never seen the special truths for this time. Not a few are dissatisfied with their present condition and are longing for **clearer light**. They look in vain for the image of Christ in the churches with which they are connected. As these bodies depart further and further from the truth, and ally themselves more closely with the world, the difference between the two classes will widen, and it will **finally result in separation**. The time will come when those who love God supremely **can no longer remain in connection** with such as are "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof."*

Revelation 18 points to the time when, as the result of rejecting the threefold warning of Revelation 14:6-12, the church will have fully reached the condition foretold by the second angel, and the people of God still in Babylon will be called upon to separate from her communion. This message is the last that will ever be given to the world; and it will accomplish its work. When those that "believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thessalonians 2:12), shall be left to receive strong delusion and to believe a lie, then the light of truth will shine upon all whose hearts are open to receive it, and all the children of the Lord that remain in Babylon will heed the call: "Come out of her, My people" (Revelation 18:4). GC, p. 390

"Notwithstanding the widespread declension of faith and piety, there are true followers of

"For Such A Time As This"

Christ in these churches. **Before** the final visitation of God's judgments upon the earth, there will be, among the people of the Lord, such **a revival of primitive godliness** as has not been witnessed since apostolic times. The Spirit and power of God will be poured out upon his children. At that time many **will separate themselves** from those churches in which the love of this world has supplanted love for **God and his Word**. Many, both of **ministers and people**, will gladly accept those great truths which God has caused to be proclaimed at this time, to prepare a people for the Lord's second coming. The enemy of souls desires to hinder this work; and **before the time** for such a movement shall come, he will endeavor to prevent it, by **introducing a counterfeit**. In those churches which he can bring under his deceptive power, he will **make it appear** that God's special blessing is poured out; there will be manifest what is thought to be **great religious interest**. **Multitudes** will exult that God is working marvelously for them, when the work is that of another spirit. Under **a religious guise**, Satan will seek to extend his influence over the **Christian world**." GC, p. 464

Ellen White seems to indicate that literal fire from heaven will accompany this counterfeit revival much as what happened on the Day of Pentecost:

"Satan will work **through his agents** who have departed from the faith to bring fire down from heaven in the sight of men." Selected Messages, volume 2, p. 54

Someone might say: Literal fire falling from heaven, are you kidding? Really? How could such a thing happen?

We can illustrate how this might happen by considering some remarks that world-renowned Pentecostal evangelist and faith healer, Benny Hinn made. On Friday evening, **November 13, 2001** I was in a hotel room near Tucson, Arizona and happened to tune into TBN's "Praise the Lord" program. Paul Crouch, President of TBN, was interviewing **Benny Hinn** about his conversion experience. Hinn explained that before he was a Christian he had visions and dreams of himself preaching in stadiums before thousands of people. Then he said this, and I quote:

"In the last twelve months I have been having some new dreams and visions . . . some amazing dreams. I have been seeing fire. I have seen myself in stadiums where literal fire was falling from heaven. The glory of God is about to be revealed visibly."

Hinn then referred to the tongues of fire on the **Day of Pentecost**, the Elijah experience on **Mt. Carmel** and the **pillar of fire** in the wilderness as proof that in the future the fire would fall from heaven at his meetings.

The critical question is this: Would the descent of literal fire from heaven at Benny Hinn's meetings and the performance of undeniable miracles be a sign that the Holy Spirit is being poured out and that his message is true? Of course not! The Bible provides the standard whereby we must test all supernatural phenomena. Our senses cannot be trusted and our feelings can lead us astray.

"For Such A Time As This"

Isaiah 8:20 clearly states:

"To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

Do Benny Hinn's teachings square with the Bible? Two items will prove that they don't. Hinn claims to speak regularly with the spirit of **Katherine Kuhlman** at her grave at the Forest Lawn Cemetery in Glendale, California. He has also stated that he gathers power from the mausoleum of **Amee McPherson** at the same cemetery. He has also gone on the record stating that **Sunday** is the day that God made for Christians to keep in honor of the resurrection of Christ.

Comments on Revelation 18:1:

The word 'power' is *exousia* and it should be translated, 'authority'. This angel not only has authority, he has **mega** authority. This is the reason we call it the **Loud Cry** angel. This angel must be distinguished from the voice that calls the faithful out of Babylon in verse 4.

In the period of **greatest darkness** in history, will be revealed the **greatest light** and the light is the truth about God's glorious character of love as revealed in His Law (see Exodus 33:18, 19; 34:6, 7):

*"The three angels' messages are to be **combined**, giving their threefold light to the world. In the Revelation, John says, "I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory." [Revelation 18:2-5 quoted.] This represents the giving of the last and **threefold message** of warning to the world (MS 52, 1900). {7BC 985.6}*

*"The prophecies in the eighteenth of Revelation will soon be fulfilled. **During the proclamation** of the third angel's message, 'another angel' is to 'come down from heaven, having great power,' and the earth is to be 'lightened with his glory.' The Spirit of the Lord will so graciously bless consecrated human instrumentalities that men, women, and children will open their lips in praise and thanksgiving, filling the earth with the **knowledge of God**, and with His **unsurpassed glory**, as the waters cover the sea." 7BC, p. 983*

*"The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His **character of love**. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own **life and character** they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them." COL, p. 415*

*"By beholding Christ, by talking of Him, by beholding the loveliness of His character we become changed. Changed from glory to glory. And **what is glory**? Character—and he becomes changed from character to character. Thus we see that there is a work of purification that goes on by beholding Jesus." SD, p. 337*

"For Such A Time As This"

Comments on Revelation 18:2

The words, 'He **cried** out with a **strong** voice' describe the might of the message. This is the reason why Seventh-day Adventists call this the 'Loud Cry'.

This verse contains **three synonymous** expressions each building upon and intensifying the previous one:

- 'a dwelling place of **demons**'
- 'a prison for every **foul spirit**'
- 'a cage for every **unclean and hated bird**'

The **two-fold** repetition that Babylon has fallen and these three expressions denote a **crescendo**. In the Hebrew way of thinking, this is what we call **synonymous parallelism**. The expression underlines the fact that just before the close of probation Babylon will be fallen morally and will be beyond repair. She is totally possessed by the forces of evil.

Revelation 18:2 is a confirmation of **Revelation 16:13** where the trilogy of Babylon will speak by the authority of the **spirits of demons** and their purpose is to congregate the global community for the final battle against God in the person of His witnesses. Ellen White used the same type of parallelism when she stated that:

*"There will be a **universal bond** of union, one **great harmony**, a **confederacy** of Satan's forces." Last Day Events, p. 137*

The hateful birds here are not sparrows! They are birds of prey. **Revelation 19:17** uses the same Greek word to refer to the **fowl of the air**. In other words, these birds are **scavengers** and they prey upon those whom Babylon deceives. The word 'cage' is translated 'prison' elsewhere in the New Testament.

Ellen White remarks about this time:

*"After the truth has been proclaimed as a witness to all nations, **every conceivable power of evil** will be set in operation, and minds will be confused by many voices crying, "Lo, here is Christ; lo, He is there. This is the truth, I have the message from God, He has sent me with great light." Then there will be a **removing of the landmarks**, and an attempt to **tear down the pillars of our faith**. A more decided effort will be made to exalt the false sabbath and to cast contempt upon God Himself by supplanting the day He has blessed and sanctified. This false sabbath is to be enforced by an oppressive law. **Satan and his angels** are wide-awake and intensely active, working with energy and perseverance **through human instrumentalities** to bring about his purpose of obliterating from the minds of men the knowledge of God. But while **Satan works** with his lying wonders, the time will be fulfilled foretold in the Revelation, and the mighty angel that shall lighten the earth with his glory will proclaim the fall of Babylon,*

"For Such A Time As This"

and call upon God's people to forsake her." *The Review and Herald*, December 13, 1892

The Proclaimers of the Message

What will characterize those who proclaim this message?

*"As the time comes for it to be given with greatest power, the Lord will work through humble instruments, leading the minds of those who consecrate themselves to His service. The laborers will be qualified rather by the unction of His Spirit than by the training of literary institutions. Men of faith and prayer will be constrained to go forth with holy zeal, declaring the words that God gives them. The sins of Babylon will be laid open. The fearful results of enforcing the observances of the church by civil authority, the inroads of spiritualism, the stealthy but rapid progress of the papal power--all will be unmasked. By these solemn warnings the people will be stirred. Thousands upon thousands will listen who have never heard words like these. In amazement they hear the testimony that Babylon is the church, fallen because of her errors and sins, because of her rejection of the truth sent to her from heaven. As the people go to their former teachers with the eager inquiry: Are these things so? The ministers present fables, prophesy smooth things, to soothe their fears and quiet the awakened conscience. But since many refuse to be satisfied with the mere authority of men and demand a plain "Thus saith the Lord," the popular ministry, like the Pharisees of old, filled with anger as their authority is questioned, will denounce the message as of Satan and stir up the sin-loving multitudes to revile and persecute those who proclaim it." *GC*, pp. 606, 607*

Comments on Revelation 18:3

The word 'merchants' in verse 3 literally means 'one who is on a journey' with the purpose of trading. The concept comes from Ezekiel 27 where the merchants of Tyre went on journeys in ships to sell their wares. We must link the merchants of Revelation 18 with Revelation 13:15 where the sea beast and the land beast forbade God's faithful people from buying and selling because they did worship the image of the beast or receive his mark. Now, in return, Babylon is unable to sell her wares. She is bankrupt!

At the end of verse 3, the word that is translated 'luxury' is *dunamis* that should be translated 'power'. The power of Babylon resided in her economic clout. When she falls, she will lose her power because she will no longer be able to sell her merchandise.

Comments on Revelation 18:4

The angel that comes down from heaven to the earth proclaims that Babylon is fallen. However, the voice that calls the faithful out of Babylon is the voice of Jesus.

"Babylon is said to be "the mother of harlots." By her daughters must be symbolized churches that cling to her doctrines and traditions, and follow her example of sacrificing the truth and

"For Such A Time As This"

the approval of God, in order to form an **unlawful alliance with the world**. The message of Revelation 14, announcing the fall of Babylon must apply to religious bodies that were once pure and **have become corrupt**. Since this message follows the warning of the judgment, it must be given in the last days; therefore it **cannot refer to the Roman Church alone**, for that church has been in a fallen condition for many centuries. Furthermore, in the eighteenth chapter of the Revelation the people of God are called upon to come out of Babylon. According to this scripture, many of God's people must still be in Babylon. And in what religious bodies is the greater part of the followers of Christ now to be found? Without doubt, in the various **churches professing the Protestant faith**." *GC*, p. 382

We must understand the call to come out of Babylon in verse 4 in the light of the Old Testament **literal parallel** (Isaiah 48:20; Jeremiah 50:8; 51:6, 45). God called literal Israel in the Old Testament to come out of literal Babylon in order escape her doom. However, they were not merely to come out without any particular destination. They were to come out of Babylon to **go to Jerusalem**. This will happen in a **spiritual sense** at the end of time. God has a global spiritual Israel in global spiritual Babylon and He will call them to come out of Babylon to enter spiritual Jerusalem (the faithful remnant). Regarding this spiritual application Ellen White wrote:

*"No longer have the hosts of evil power to keep the church captive; for "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city," which hath "made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication;" and to **spiritual Israel** is given the message, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." Verse 8; 18:4. As the captive exiles heeded the message, "Flee out of the midst of Babylon" (Jeremiah 51:6), and **were restored** to the Land of Promise, so those who fear God today are heeding the message to **withdraw from spiritual Babylon**, and soon they are to stand as trophies of divine grace in the earth made new, the **heavenly Canaan**." *PK*, p. 715*

Comments on Revelation 18:5

Revelation 17, 18 contains a list of the **sins of Babylon**:

- Pride and arrogance (Revelation 18:7)
- Crass materialism (Revelation 18:11-14)
- Giving wine of false doctrine to the nations (Revelation 14:8; 17:2; 18:2, 3)
- Fornication between the church and the state (Revelation 17:2; 18:3)
- Persecution of God's people (Revelation 17:6; 18:20, 24; see Jeremiah 51:24)
- Practicing the 'art' of deception through sorcery/spiritualism (Revelation 16:13, 14; 18:23)

Revelation 16 describes Babylon's plagues. The culmination of her punishment will be during the sixth and seventh plagues when the multitudes withdraw their support and the

"For Such A Time As This"

kings of the earth turn against her (Revelation 16:19; 17:1, 16; 18:6-8).

The word '**remembered**' does not mean that God forgets and then suddenly remembers. God has been aware of Babylon's sins all along and they have been accumulating (see Jeremiah 51:9). The divine ledger has been adding up. When the sins have reached the limit that God has established, God will remember, that is, **execute punishment**. We must understand God's 'remembering' in the sense of God delaying the ultimate punishment until the cup of iniquity is full. God delays punishment and when the cup is full, He 'remembers' (Genesis 15:16; Revelation 14:10; 16:19; Matthew 23:32).

The doom of the **cities of the plain** provides an illustration. God did an investigative judgment of the cities because the outcry against them had reached unto heaven. When God determined that the ledger of the cities was full, destruction fell upon them (Genesis 13:13; 18:20, 21).

*"The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was on account of their great wickedness. They gave loose rein to their intemperate appetites, then to their corrupt passions, until they were so debased, and their sins were so abominable, that their **cup of iniquity was full**, and they were consumed with fire from heaven." Counsels on Diet and Foods, p. 60*

*"With unerring accuracy the Infinite One still keeps **account with the nations**. While His mercy is tendered, with calls to repentance, this **account remains open**; but when the **figures reach a certain amount** that God has fixed, the ministry of His wrath begins. The **account is closed**. Divine patience ceases. Mercy no longer pleads in their behalf." PK, p. 364*

*"Of the Amorites the Lord said: "In the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is **not yet full**." Although this nation was conspicuous because of its idolatry and corruption; it had **not yet filled up the cup** of its iniquity, and God would not give command for its utter destruction. The people were to see the divine power manifested in a marked manner, that they might be left **without excuse**. The compassionate Creator was willing to bear with their iniquity until the fourth generation. Then, if **no change was seen for the better**, His judgments were to fall upon them." 5T, p. 208*

*"The **professed Christian world** is advancing, as did the Jewish nation, from one degree of sinfulness to a **greater degree**, refusing **warning after warning**, and rejecting a 'Thus saith the Lord', while crediting the fables of men. The Lord God will soon arise in His wrath, and pour out His judgments upon those who are repeating the sins of the inhabitants of the Noachic world. Those whose hearts are fully set in them to do evil, as were the hearts of the inhabitants of Sodom, will like them be destroyed. The fact that God had long forbearance, patience and mercy, the fact that His judgments have been **long delayed**, will not make the punishment any less severe when it does come." 4BC, p. 1143*

On the other side of the coin, we could say the same about the relationship between **God**

"For Such A Time As This"

with His people. As His faithful children are suffering to the utmost in the time of trouble, and God seems to have forgotten them God will ‘remember’ **His covenant** and will deliver them (see Exodus 2:24; 6:5). God’s eye is on them all the time but their faith must pass the test and their characters fixed for eternity before God will ‘remember’ his Covenant with them (see Luke 18:1-8).

Comments on Revelation 18:6-8: Babylon’s Reward

*“Render to her just as she rendered to you, and **repay her double** according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her. ⁷ In the measure that she **glorified herself and lived luxuriously**, in the same measure give her **torment and sorrow**; for she says in her heart, ‘I sit as queen, and am **no widow**, and will not see sorrow.’ ⁸ Therefore her plagues will come in one day, death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly **burned with fire**, for strong is the Lord God who judges her.”*

*“Fallen angels upon earth form confederations with evil men. In this age antichrist will appear as the true Christ, and then the law of God will be fully made void in the nations of our world. Rebellion against God’s holy law will be **fully ripe**. But the true leader of all this rebellion is Satan clothed as an angel of light. Men will be deceived and will exalt him to the place of God, and deify him. But Omnipotence will interpose, and **to the apostate churches** that unite in the exaltation of Satan, the sentence will go forth, ‘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.’” *TM*, p. 62*

Isaiah 47:8, 9: Babylon will be a **widow** because she will lose the support of her lovers, the kings, and she will lose the support of her **children**. Both her lovers and her children will turn against her. She will come to her end with none to help her (Daniel 11:45):

*“Therefore hear this now, you who are given to pleasures, who dwell securely, who say in your heart, ‘I am, and there is no one else besides me; I shall not sit as a **widow**, nor shall I know the loss of **children**’; ⁹ But these **two things** shall come to you in a **moment**, in **one day**: The **loss of children**, and **widowhood**. They shall come upon you in their fullness because of the multitude of your **sorceries**, for the great abundance of your **enchantments**.”*

Comments on Revelation 18:9, 10: The Lament of the Kings

*“The **kings of the earth** who committed fornication and **lived luxuriously** with her will **weep and lament** for her, when they see the smoke of her burning, ¹⁰ standing **at a distance** for fear of her torment, saying, ‘Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in **one hour** your **judgment** has come.’*

“For Such A Time As This”

The Greek word 'judgment' is *krisis* and it refers to the **execution** of the judgment rather than the **sentence**, which would be *krima* (as used in Revelation 17:1: 'I will show you the judgment upon the harlot').

*"Whereas chapter 17 deals primarily with the **sentence** against Babylon, chapter 18 is concerned with the **execution** of that sentence." The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, volume 7, p. 864*

The expression "at a distance" no doubt means that the kings now realize that by collaborating with the harlot, they were involved in her sins and thus must share in her plagues. In other words, their fate is inexorably bound up with hers. They did not listen to the call to come out of her and therefore they **shared in her sins** and **received her plagues**.

Comments on Revelation 18:11-16: The Lament of the Capitalists

These verses describe the **extreme anguish** of the capitalist merchants when they see that their trust in Babylon has all been in vain:

*"And the **merchants** of the earth will **weep and mourn** over her, for **no one buys** their merchandise **anymore**:¹² merchandise of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, fine linen and purple, silk and scarlet, every kind of citron wood, every kind of object of ivory, every kind of object of most precious wood, bronze, iron, and marble;¹³ and cinnamon and incense, fragrant oil and frankincense, wine and oil, fine flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and bodies and souls of men. The fruit that your **soul longed for** has gone from you, all the **things** that are rich and splendid have **gone from you**, and you shall find them no more at all.¹⁵ The merchants of these **things**, who became **rich by her**, will stand **at a distance** for fear of her **torment, weeping and wailing**,¹⁶ and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls! **[Revelation 17:4]**¹⁷ for in one hour such great riches **came to nothing**.'*

These verses describe the **reaction of the merchants** of the earth when Babylon falls apart. The text tells us that these are 'the great men of the earth' (18:23). The merchants would be the **capitalists** who accumulated the wealth of the world at the expense of the poor and needy.

The wicked **do not lament that they sinned**. Their entire lamentation in the chapter is that they have **lost their riches**. Babylon will no longer benefit them and they have lost eternal life. Time and again, as the plagues are being poured out we are told that the wicked **did not repent** (Revelation 16:9-11).

"For Such A Time As This"

Ellen White describes **the reason** for the lamentation of the wicked:

*"The rich **bemoan** the destruction of their grand houses, the scattering of their gold and silver. But their **lamentations** are silenced by the fear that they themselves are to perish with their idols." GC, p. 654*

*"The wicked are filled with **regret**, not because of their sinful neglect of God and their fellow men, but because God has conquered. They **lament** that the result is what it is; but they **do not repent** of their wickedness. They would leave no means untried to conquer if they could." GC, p. 654*

*"The people see that they have been deluded. They accuse one another of having led them to destruction; but all unite in heaping their **bitterest condemnation upon the ministers. Unfaithful pastors** have prophesied smooth things; they have led their hearers to make void the law of God and to persecute those who would keep it holy. Now, in their despair, these teachers confess before the world their work of deception. **The multitudes are filled with fury.** "We are lost!" **they cry**, "and you are the cause of our ruin;" and they turn upon the false shepherds. The very ones that once admired them most will pronounce the most dreadful curses upon them. The very hands that once crowned them with laurels will be raised for their destruction. The swords that were to slay God's people are now employed to destroy their enemies. Everywhere there is strife and bloodshed." GC, pp. 655, 656*

Several different Greek words describe the extreme anguish of the wicked. The first of these is **klaio** that is translated 'bewail' (used in verses 9, 11, 15, 19; see also Luke 6:25; Matthew 2:18; 27:75; Mark 16:10; Luke 8:52; Revelation 5:5; Acts 21:13; James 5:1 [which is especially significant]).

The second word is **penthos** that means 'to mourn' (used in verses 11, 15, 19; see also James 4:9; Revelation 21:4).

The third word is **kopto** and it means 'to lament' (used in verse 9; see also Matthew 24:30; Luke 8:53; Revelation 1:7).

The fourth word is **krazo** that is translated 'cry'. This word is used twice in Revelation 18:18, 19 and it is also used to describe Jesus crying out on the cross as He died (Matthew 27:50), a woman crying out in travail to have a child (Revelation 12:2), the disciples crying out in fear (Matthew 14:26), the demons crying out (Mark 5:5), the wicked mob crying out for the blood of Stephen (Acts 7:57) and the wages withheld from the laborers crying out to heaven (James 5:4).

Another sign of the affliction of the wicked is the **sprinkling of dust** upon their heads (see Joshua 7:6; Job 2:12; Lamentations 2:10; Ezekiel 27:30)

"For Such A Time As This"

This **list of merchandise** includes necessities, commodities and luxuries. It includes most of the items of trade in the ancient world. It represents total control of the world economy and living in luxury as a result.

There are **28 items** mentioned on the merchandise list. Some of the items on this list are **staples** and others are **luxuries**. The list includes items that were common in the days of John. God spoke to the prophet in the language of the time. If a prophet were writing today, he would refer to stocks, bonds, I-Phones, I-Pads, wide-screen televisions, etc. The point is that Babylon had a stranglehold on all the commerce of the world and she used it to oppress God's people.

Of particular interest are the last two items on the list: *'the bodies and souls of men.'*

The word 'bodies' refers to the present physical life of persons while the word 'soul' refers to the spiritual and future life in the kingdom. Jesus used the two words in this way in Matthew 10:28:

*"And do not fear those who kill the **body** [take away our present physical existence] but cannot kill the soul [take away our eternal life]. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both **soul** and body in hell."*

Elsewhere in Revelation the word 'souls' is used to describe those who are killed for **refusing to practice** the false worship of Babylon (Revelation 6:9-11).

Babylon not only traded with the physical bodies of human beings but also with their very salvation and eternal destiny.

Comments on Revelation 18:17-19: The Lament of the Employees and Travelers

*"Every **shipmaster**, all who **travel by ship**, **sailors**, and as many as **trade** on the sea, stood at a distance ¹⁸ and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What is like this great city?' ¹⁹ "They threw **dust on their heads** and **cried out, weeping and wailing**, and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city, in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth! For in one hour she is **made desolate**.'"*

Comments on Revelation 18:20: Heaven Rejoices

*"Rejoice over her, **O heaven**, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!"*

Revelation 19:1-3 picks up the central theme of the chapter where a heavenly host is singing about the judgment that fell upon the harlot and her cohorts.

"For Such A Time As This"

Comments on Revelation 18:21-24: Cessation of City Life

*"Then a **mighty angel** took up a stone like a **great millstone** and threw it into **the sea**, saying, 'Thus with **violence** the great city Babylon shall be **thrown down**, and shall not be found anymore. ²² The sound of harpists, **musicians**, flutists, and trumpeters shall not be heard in you anymore. No **craftsman** of any craft shall be found in you anymore, and the sound of a **millstone** shall not be heard in you anymore. ²³ The light of **a lamp** shall not shine in you anymore, and the voice of **bridegroom and bride** shall not be heard in you anymore. For your merchants were **the great men** of the earth, for by **your sorcery** all the nations were **deceived**. ²⁴ And in her was **found the blood** of prophets and saints [**Revelation 17:6**], and of all who were slain on the earth."*

The picture of throwing the stone into the sea finds its backdrop in **Jeremiah 51:63, 64** where the prophet tells us that the stone is cast into the Euphrates River.

*"And it shall be, when thou hast made an end of reading this book, that thou shalt bind **a stone to it**, and cast it into the **midst of Euphrates**: ⁶⁴ And thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon **sink**, and shall **not rise** from the evil that I will bring upon her: and they shall be weary."*

In other words, Babylon will be drowned in the waters of the Euphrates. They will dry up like the waters of the Red Sea and then avalanche themselves upon the apostate Babylonian system.

All the activities that characterize a city will cease when Babylon falls (verses 22, 23).

Babylon deceived the nations by her sorcery (*pharmakeia*). This word appears only in Galatians 5:20 but a cognate word *pharmakon* is used in Revelation 9:21; 21:8; 22:15). The word denotes the use of magic, often involving drugs and the casting of spells upon people. The simple fact is that those who visit **Babylon's pharmacy** are not able to think straight!

Isaiah 47:9

*"But these two things shall come to you in a **moment**, in **one day**: The loss of **children**, and **widowhood**. They shall come upon you in their fullness because of the multitude of your **sorceries**, for the great abundance of your **enchantments**."*

The great sin of Babylon is that it persecuted God's people and shed their blood. This is the picture that is provided in every one of the antichrist passages (Matthew 24:14, 15 Daniel 7:21, 25; Daniel 8:24; Daniel 11:44, 45; Revelation 13:7; Revelation 17:6; Revelation 18:20, 24).

"For Such A Time As This"



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Study Notes by Pastor Stephen Bohr | SecretsUnsealed.org | SUMTV.org | Page **30** of **30**