

Handout Revelation Lesson 21: Chapter 18

John made three statements about the angel/messenger in 18:1 who announces the fall of Babylon/Jerusalem. Compare this description with statements John made in his Gospel about Jesus Christ:

1. He comes from heaven (John 3:13, 31; 6:38, 58)
2. The messenger has great authority (John 5:27; 10:18; 17:2)
3. He illuminates the earth with his glory (John 1:4-5, 9, 14; 8:12; 9:5; 11:9; 12:46)

As in John’s Gospel: 1) the angel comes from heaven, 2) he has all power and authority, 3) and like the light of Christ which illuminates the earth, the angel/messenger gives glory so bright that he fills the earth with light. The various passages in John’s Gospel which describe Jesus Christ parallel the description of the messenger in 18:1 and the messenger John saw in Revelation 10:1 ~ *Then I saw another powerful angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in cloud, with a rainbow over his head; his face was like the sun, and his legs were pillars of fire.* This angel/messenger is likely Jesus Christ.

In 18:2, the contrast is instead of being the dwelling of the Presence of Yahweh, Jerusalem has now become the dwelling place of demons and the watchtower or stronghold of every unclean thing!

**The Five Laments over the “Great City”**

1. Revelation 18:2-3	The messenger who illuminates the earth
2. Revelation 18:9-10	The kings of the earth
3. Revelation 18:11-17a	The merchants of the earth
4. Revelation 18:17b-19	The seamen of the earth
5. Revelation 18: 20-24	The Church

*She is to have a doubly strong cup of her own mixture* (18:6) and in 14:9-10 recalls drinking the cup of God’s wrath from the curse-judgments of the prophets for apostasy from Yahweh’s covenant in the “Drinking Wine” imagery:

Symbolic Image <b>Drinking Wine</b>  Examples in Scripture	<b>Part I: Covenant faithfulness</b> Joy of drinking good wine Isaiah 25:6-8; 62:8-9; 65:13; Jeremiah 31:12; 40:12	<b>Part II: Covenant Apostasy</b> Becoming drunk Isaiah 5:11-12; 28:1; Jeremiah 8:13; 48:26; 51:7; Joel 1:5	<b>Part III: Judgment</b> Loss of wine; drinking the “cup of God’s wrath” Psalm 75:9; Isaiah 51:17-23; 63:2-3; Jeremiah 13:12-14; 25:15-31; 49:12; 51:6-7; 48:26; Ezekiel 23:31-34; Joel 4:13; Habakkuk 2:16	<b>Part IV: Redemption in rejoicing in the best “new wine” at the Master’s table</b> Promise: Zechariah 9:15-16; Joel 4:18; Amos 9:13 Fulfilled: Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-32; Revelation 19:7-9
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In Revelation 18:8, the harlot city’s punishment appears to be in the future, but all the laments are in the past tense (see verses 10, 17 & 20). In Revelation 18:21, the angel speaks first in the future and, after throwing the millstone into the sea, in present tenses. His action of throwing the millstone is a prophetic ‘ot (Hebrew), a dramatic and symbolic act that brings about a future event (for examples of a prophetic ‘ot, see Jer 25:10-14, 51:63; Ez 26:13; Dt 32:43; Mt 18:6).

This passage also recalls the Song of Moses in Exodus 15:5 in which song describes the Pharaoh's chariots and men as going down into the sea like a stone. A millstone was two round, flat stones. It came in two types: a small millstone that could be used by hand but also a large millstone introduced during the Greco-Roman period that was so large it had to be worked by donkeys. The Greek word refers to the massive millstone, which indicates the strength of this angel of destruction!

Three classes of people affected by the Prostitute City's destruction in Revelation 17:15, 18:3, and 18:9-19. Instead of converting the nations, the nations began to corrupt Israel! Trade became a snare by exposing Israel to foreign goods and foreign gods. Ecumenism and tolerance led to polluting and corrupting her own people into apostasy to the point that the "seafarers cried out: *Who is like the Great City?*," the cry of the worshipers of the beast in Revelation 13:4 when they called out *Who is like the Beast?*"

<b>Revelation 17:15</b>	<b>Revelation 18:3</b>	<b>Revelation 18:9-19</b>
Populations	Nations	Kings
Nations	Kings	Merchants
Languages	Merchants	Seafarers

Revelation 18:21 identifies "a powerful angel" for the third and final time in Revelation:

#1 Revelation 5:2 when John hears the powerful angel calling for someone to open the scroll declaring God's covenantal judgments on the "Great City."

#2 Revelation 10:1ff when the powerful angel appears as the Witness to the New Creation and is holding the "little scroll" which speaks of the New Covenant and the Church's role in the history of redemption, in the plan of implementing in the "Last Days" of "the Mystery of God," revealed to the prophets. As you will recall, the "Last Days" are the same "Last Days" spoken about by St. Peter in his Pentecost homily in Acts chapter 2 and refers to the "Last Days" of the Old Covenant.

The five parts of the Church's lament in Rev 18:22-23 in the loss of:

1. Music: harpists, minstrels, flute players, trumpeters
2. Productivity of the people: craftsmen
3. Productivity of the land: millers of grain
4. God's word: the light of the lamp in you
5. Covenantal union: the voice of the Bridegroom and the Bride

These five classifications correspond to the functions of the Temple in Jerusalem:

1. Music: The musicians of the Temple's Levitical orchestra and choir (1 Chron 25)
2. Craftsmen: Bezalel, Oholiab (Aholiab), and Hiram who were the craftsmen in charge of building the desert Sanctuary and the Temple (Ex 31:1-11; 35:34; 36:1-2; 38:23; 1 Kng 7:13, 40, 45)
3. Mill: The Temple built on an ancient threshing floor (see 2 Chron 3:1)
4. Lamp: The Lampstand(s) that symbolized the Presence of God in the desert Sanctuary and the Temple's Holy Place (Ex 25:31-40; 2 Chron 4:19-22)
5. Marriage: the covenant/marriage of Yahweh and Israel (Ez 16:1-14)

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