

Revelation 18 posts:

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6C: No More Trade, No More Luxury (18:12-20)

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.

14 The fruit that your soul longed for has gone from you, and all the things which 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!

17 For in one hour such great riches came to nothing" 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."

20 Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for

God has avenged you on her!

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 list of trade items sounds antiquated, of course. The ancient vocabulary didn't have words for modern merchandise, so the message had to be restricted to the kind of goods that were common in those ancient times. But the list is comprehensive and seems to emphasize luxury goods more than basic needs. Evidently, the *Harlot* is living in luxury and has everything she desires, or needs.



We may wonder, though, how does “*the merchandise of... bodies and souls of men*” fit into the picture here, knowing that slavery is supposed to have been abolished in this modern day? In the Roman world, and for centuries, slavery was an entrenched feature of society. Slaves were just merchandise, almost like cattle whose only purpose was to serve their masters.

Nowadays, the situation is different, and yet much the same. And this we can see in the dollars-and-cents calculations of the “*merchants*”. Their view of profit-making casts the masses of people into the role of “*cash cows*” - cattle whom they can manipulate to maintain their position of luxurious privilege and power. So in this way the *Harlot’s “merchants”* are making merchandise of nations and peoples.

This is not the same as the old slave trade. Nevertheless, the *Harlot's "merchants"* are in the business of degrading human souls spiritually - to serve their god of Materialism - making "*merchandise of... souls of men*", not just their bodies. And that is human trafficking of the worst kind - to pull human society away from the Source of life, the Light of Christ, thereby enslaving them in the realm of Darkness and its barren Materialism.

We may not realize it, but the capitalist economy of the West has driven the younger generation into debt slavery. No one owns anything anymore; everything is just too expensive. Klaus Schwab, who seems to be a sort of spokesman for the plans of the "*merchants*", accidentally let loose with this slip-of-the-tongue remark: "You will own nothing and be happy." Here are one author's comments about it:

The infamous [tweet](#) and article, which threatened humanity with a modern, updated version of slavery, proved deeply unpopular...

Why did the World Economic Forum delete the infamous message? Does this mean they have changed their mind about enslaving you in the near future? Don't count on it...

Without ownership, people don't have stakes in the game. They aren't invested. They become rogue actors, prone to dissent and violence and chaos...

(from "[WEF Caught Scrubbing 'You Will Own Nothing and Be Happy' Post From Internet](#)" by Baxter Dmitry)

In spite of Western nations and leaders who loudly proclaim their devotion to the ideal of freedom, the reality is that the new generation is being dispossessed of freedom; we are caught in the web of the "*merchants*". (That, as Schwab inadvertently brought to light, is their plan of how the ultra-rich will manage the populace and make sure to stay on top in their capitalist financial system.)

14 The fruit that your soul longed for has gone from you, and all the things which are rich and splendid have gone from you, and you shall find them no more at all.

What a shocking turnaround for a rich and wealthy people - to be thrown into poverty, to plunge suddenly into the same kind of despair and

fear they had inflicted on so many nations and peoples around the world.

Those *“rich and splendid”* things they once enjoyed were paid for by the poor of the world. The whole business is horrible when seen as it really is from God’s perspective: robbing the poor of the World by so many devious means, such as huge interest-rate loans that force nations to surrender their resources; war and devastation against those nations that won’t submit to American demands.

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!

17 For in one hour such great riches came to nothing”...

Not only the *“kings of the earth”* (18:9) and inhabitants of the *Harlot*, but her rich *“merchants”* also get their just reward - *“weeping and wailing”*. Perhaps most of them will have absconded or are living in other nations (since they are said to be standing *“at a distance”*). Since the *Harlot’s “great riches”* will have come *“to nothing”*, their riches also will come to nothing.



17 ...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."

First it was the *"kings of the earth"*, then the *"merchants"*, and now we read that the *"shipmasters... and as many as trade by sea"* are grieving over the *Harlot's* destruction. *"They threw dust on their heads."* This was an ancient custom, a way of expressing deep sorrow. And it will be sorrowful for those who've invested so much in the *Harlot* to lose everything and be forced into poverty.

Regarding the sea-traders who *"became rich by her wealth"*, for a long time it has been true that any merchant who could manage to trade with America would get rich. In the last few decades, America's industry has hollowed out, outsourcing itself to nations around the world. But due to her money manipulation, she still has the affluent culture that demands the goods that other nations produce, and the finances to pay for them.

How long this situation will last is difficult to predict, but if the observations made in [Post 6B](#) are accurate, then she will somehow continue to be somewhat prosperous right up until the *Beast* empire gets around to destroying the *Harlot* militarily.

And when that happens, the *"kings"* and *"merchants"* and *"shipmasters"* will be sorry - *"weeping and wailing"* - but only for themselves. They could care less about the terrible devastation and suffering going on in the *Harlot* empire.

In the passage above, we hear again, for the third time, that they *"stood afar off."* (18:10,15,17) Again, for the third time we hear about the *Harlot's "burning/ smoke of her burning"*. (17:16, 18:8-9,18) On two other occasions, instead of *"burning"*, the phrase *"for the fear of her torment"* is used. (18:10,15) And again, for the third time, we hear that the destruction is swift: *"in one hour"* (18:10,17); *"in one day"* (18:8).

The repetition of these phrases serves to emphasize that the

destruction is unusual compared to how it was in ancient times. And we, with our knowledge of modern war technology, are left with the ominous conclusion that these prophetic words from long ago are describing a form of devastation that has become possible only in recent times - the kind that results from nuclear weapons. If it arrives rapidly *"in one hour"*, and if they *"will stand at a distance for fear of her torment"*, that fits all too well the onset of nuclear warfare with its deadly, blistering atomic radiation.



Getting back to the subject of international trade, nowadays, especially on the Eurasian continent, much of it is carried on by rail (as well as by air and sea). (China's *Belt and Road Initiative* - a huge infrastructure project - is uniting the Eurasian land mass into an economic union.) But in America's case, because of her geographical location, international trade must be conducted mostly by sea across the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

After World War 2, America re-calibrated the international system in such a way that she became the center of wealth distribution in the world.

And so the world's wealth had to flow through and into the coffer of the American treasury. She became the aristocrat, and the rest of the world her tenants.

In the Colonial Age, the exploitation was similar. But in those days European powers did at least try to leave behind some infrastructure in their colonies. America, on the other hand, after invading nations (Iraq, Libya, Viet Nam, Afghanistan) has left behind devastation and ruined economies. And her rich "*merchants*" who have profited from those wars and those nations' resources, get to enjoy their fat bankrolls, made by devastating the pitiful poor of the world! Like the colonial masters of former times, their aim is to rule the world and exploit those nations' wealth... but without the responsibility of having to govern them.

By her behaviour on the international scene, America is writing her own death warrant! She is digging her own grave! With no care for the poor, no concern for those foreign countries, how can God continue to tolerate such monstrous behaviour that has slaughtered millions of people and enslaved so much of the world under economic tyranny? He can't, of course; in fact, the only thing left now is chastisement, His judgments that are coming via the rise of the new superpowers of our day.

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

And the next chapter continues the victory song:

(Revelation 19:1-3)

After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God!

For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her."

Again they said, "Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!"

In contrast to the "*weeping and wailing*" of the *Harlot's* kings, merchants, and shipmasters, the assembly in Heaven and the "*holy apostles and prophets*" will be celebrating - thankful that God has served

His justice on a regime that had perpetrated so much evil.

But then we may wonder, is it right to rejoice over such terrible calamity and suffering that will have befallen the *Harlot*? For the “*holy apostles and prophets*”, we could well imagine how they felt. The *Harlot*’s hypocrisy has grieved them to the core. Her claim to be religious while destroying the poor peoples of the world has undermined their work of trying to present a true and sincere version of the Gospel to those same peoples.

But the important question remains, is God being too nasty, too harsh in allowing her to come to such a catastrophic end? After all, doesn’t the *Harlot* nation behave nicely towards God, claiming that she has Him on her side? Shouldn’t God respond to such seeming devotion by being “nice” to her? Of course, the *Harlot* has been rather nasty herself - wreaking havoc all over the world through her wars and destruction of innocent peoples and their lands and economies. But couldn’t God just overlook that?

Jesus taught long ago, “*By their fruits you will know them.*” And “*every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.*” (Matthew 7:19-20) And the apostle Paul taught, “*Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man [or a nation] sows, that he will also reap.*” (Galatians 6:7) Make no mistake. God will not put up forever with evil works of violence and greed... and even more so when its perpetrators claim to have God on their side. “*For true and righteous are His judgments.*” (19:2)

And another point to keep in mind: more than just a victory over the Dark forces from lands ignorant of the Light of God, this is a victory over the Dark forces from a land that claims to have the Light of God.

In the Old Testament, God allowed certain empires to rule over Israel, either for the purpose of protecting the Hebrew nation, or to offer her the chastisement she sometimes needed. In ancient times, for example, the Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek, and Roman empires were out-and-out worshipers of the gods of Darkness. And when they invaded the land of Israel, their interaction with God’s people of those days opened opportunities to influence them towards the Light of God.

In Egypt and Babylon, Joseph and Daniel became prime ministers. When the Assyrian empire was starting its rise to power, God sent His prophet Jonah to warn them of their soon collapse; and as a result of his warnings and their repentance and turning away from corruption, Assyria thrived for another 200 years. In Persia, Esther became queen and used her influence to protect the Israelites. Alexander, the Greek conqueror, learned about himself from prophecies in the Book of Daniel (chapter 8), and as a result left Israel alone and did not try to impose the Greek religion on them. (See [video clip about this interesting bit of history](#).) Christian teaching so influenced Roman leaders that Christianity became the empire's official religion in the 4th century A.D.

In other words, God was trying in those days to use Israel to draw those nations who dwelt in Darkness towards the Light. And when Israel sometimes fell into spiritual harlotry, corrupting herself and a few nearby nations, she had to pay the price for her decadent behavior. But in the case of the End Time *Harlot*, she is no small nation like ancient Israel, but a huge empire who exerts a huge influence over the world.

In the above passage, the *"great multitude in heaven"* declares that the *"harlot corrupted the earth with her fornication"* and *"the blood of His servants"* was *"shed by her"*. (19:2) This modern version of the *Harlot* has been responsible for the death of untold numbers of innocents and godly men and women. (See [here in Post 3](#) and [here](#) and [here](#) in Appendix 3, which expound on this subject.)

So is the *Harlot's* influence drawing nations towards the Light of God? No. In fact, her practice of misusing the Name of God is driving nations and peoples away. No wonder then that the forces of Light are rejoicing over the *Harlot's* fall. The usurper has been dethroned, and it is a cause for great rejoicing. *"For true and righteous are His judgments."* (19:2)

Following is a sobering passage that offers more insight into this question of why the *Harlot* empire had to come crashing down:

(Hebrews 10:26-31)

**For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,
but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery**

indignation...

Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he [or a nation] be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot... and insulted the Spirit of grace?

For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The Lord will judge His people."

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Untold blessing, favor, and fulfilment await and overflow into the lives of those who follow in the path of God's choosing; this is the grace of God. But for those who are hypocritical and attempt to use His Name to further their own agenda to commit evil, who "*insult the Spirit of grace*", there is a contrasting destiny. And they will find that "*it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*"

Whether on an individual level or a national level, it is a serious breach to misuse God's favor (His grace) as an excuse for a person or a nation to carry on in sin. God is merciful, true enough, and forgives sin when we repent. But it grieves Him to see His merciful nature exploited and used as license to continue in disobedience, even cruel behavior.

Following the rejoicing over the *Harlot's* fall comes a new celebration. Again "*a great multitude*" appears, this time to proclaim the glorious news about the true *Bride*, those who maintained their integrity and did what they could to follow the Light of Christ during their earthly lives:

(Revelation 19:6-8)

And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!

"Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."

And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

And the Good News continues in the next chapter where we learn that "*they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.*" (20:6) And earlier in the Revelation Book, the elders proclaimed, "*We shall reign on the earth.*" (5:10)

So there is much to look forward to, although for now human society has to put up with the rule of the Dark forces and their earthly agents.

Then in that Age to come, Earth will be governed the way we've so often imagined it should be governed: justice triumphing over prejudice and unfairness, peace winning against war and turmoil, wisdom replacing error, righteousness standing firm against immorality, truth speaking louder than deception, and love reigning instead of hate and cruelty. So much to look forward to!

Continue to [7: A Mighty Angel's Millstone \(18:21-24\)](#)