(Scriptures quoted from New King James Version, unless noted otherwise; first published April, 2022)

Revelation 18 posts:

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Appendix 5: Rise of the Merchant Class (20th Century and Beyond)

See also Revelation 17 posts:

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1 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."

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***I saw another angel…* (18:1-2)**

This is no ordinary angel, for he has *"great authority"* and shines so brightly that *"the earth was illuminated with his glory."* So whatever he has to say must be extremely important. He could be the same angel mentioned earlier in chapter 14; at least the announcement he makes is

much the same: *"Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."* (14:8) The twice-repeated phrase, *"fallen, fallen",* indicates that it is to be a great catastrophe.

Chapter 14 depicts three angels who are sent *"to preach to those who dwell on the earth – to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people"*. (14:6) How they deliver their messages is an intriguing side-question: do they appear in the sky somehow and boom their message out to the world? Or do they manage to broadcast it through the world's media systems? Anyway, we can only speculate on that point. However it happens, somehow these angels are able to give their messages in such a way that the world hears it.

And it is the second of these three angels whose message resembles the one we read here in chapter 18. And what the angel says in this chapter enlarges on what the public declaration in chapter 14 had said. Evidently, God cares greatly that the world should know how He sees things… because the spiritual Darkness will be so great in those days.

In the angel's message, we learn that this once proud nation, so glorious in the eyes of the world, *"has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!"* Not a pretty picture, but this is what it looks like to God. The *Harlot* is pictured as a Dark kingdom, on the same level as the *Beast* who *"will ascend out of the Bottomless Pit"* – her religiosity an empty shell hiding the corruption within. (17:8) Underneath the veneer of religiosity, this is what the *Harlot* looks like.

How clever of the demons of Darkness to use the cover of religion to conceal and/or justify their evil deeds. But it will be a sad end result for that nation or people who harbour and spread such demonic activity within and beyond their borders.

When Christ confronted the false religious leaders of His day (who were also the political leaders), He said much the same thing, *"You are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy*

and lawlessness." **(Matthew 23:27-28) Instead of bringing seekers into the Kingdom, all they were doing was to *"shut up the kingdom of heaven against men"* and prevent *"those who are entering to go in."* (Matthew 23:13)**

History repeats itself. Modern America's bad example is shutting the Kingdom of God to would-be seekers, while giving the world and the Antichrist regime every reason they need to turn against the God of the Bible. (See here in Appendix 3 articles about the lack of integrity among America's religious and political leadership.)

Christ went on to warn the political-religious leaders, *"You are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' guilt. Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?"* (Matthew 23:31-33) All their pretence of religion was not going to save them in the end. And after their crucifixion of the Messiah and later persecution of the Early Church, Jerusalem suffered in a catastrophic way at the hands of the Roman legions.

And the story will repeat itself with the fall of the *Great Harlot* before the rising powers of our modern day.

Besides the pronouncement of how complete is the *Harlot's* fall, the angel's declaration also explains why she had to fall. Everyone will know already that the *Harlot* (the American empire) has collapsed. But what is not so obvious is why it was allowed to happen.

America is viewed nowadays as the stronghold of Christianity, so why didn't God protect her? Well, it is simple enough. God is just and does not play favorites. If those who claim to be His people are hypocritical and misbehaving, then they too should receive chastisement, just like anyone else. On top of that, America's greed and warmongering ways have disillusioned Earth's inhabitants and given the world and the Antichrist regime every reason they need to turn against the God of the Bible.

So the angel's pronouncement serves to set the record straight: God Himself condemns the *Harlot* for her *"fornication".* (*"Fornication"* is the metaphor used here for Materialism and departure from God and His ways – outlined in Post 2.) Despite her claims of religious devotion, she has

departed from the faith and has set a bad example before the world of how a godly nation is supposed to behave.

It is important that Christ's followers stay relevant to the world of today. Thus, they should disassociate themselves from the *Harlot* and be willing to uncover the façade, to proclaim the ugly truth of what she has become. This is what many truth-seekers need to hear in a Gospel message nowadays.

The prophets in the Old Testament were faced with a similar situation. Ancient Israel was supposed to be an example to surrounding nations of a society that worshiped the true God. But when she became unfaithful – *bride* transformed into *harlot* – she began to misrepresent the true God. In a passage in the Book of Ezekiel, God asks His prophet to *"cause Jerusalem to know her abominations"* (16:2); and then goes on to list some examples of Israel's bad behavior that had disillusioned surrounding nations:

> **"You also committed harlotry with the Egyptians… The Philistines… were ashamed of your lewd behavior. You also played the harlot with the Assyrians… You multiplied your acts of harlotry as far as the land of the trader, Chaldea…**
>
> **…You became more corrupt than they [referring to the Hittites, Amorites, Samaritans, dwellers of Sodom]… they are more righteous than you…**
>
> **(Ezekiel 16:26-29, 47, 52)**

Ancient Israel had gone so far off track that there was no remedy anymore, except the difficult instruction of chastisement – at the hands of the rising *Beast* nations of those ancient times. And the same can be said for the modern *Harlot* of Revelation 17. The American empire has played the harlot, created havoc all over the world, and is on the verge of destruction – at the hands of the rising powers of our day (Russia and China). Anyway, these matters have been discussed in previous posts, especially here in Post 4B, so no need to go on about them here.

Following are the angel's explanations of why the modern-day *Harlot* will have to suffer catastrophic judgment:

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***1) All the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication* (18:3)**

This phrase repeats what was said in 14:8, so it must be important. To drink this *"wine of the wrath of her fornication"* is no pleasant drinking experience. It is painful and violent. In order to continue fornicating, to maintain her Materialism, her extravagant culture and *"luxury"*, the *Harlot* has destroyed other nations militarily and economically. They experience the *Harlot's "wrath"*; they're the ones who pay the price for the *Harlot's* continued peace and prosperity. (See here in Appendix 3.)

But the *"wrath"* spoken of here appears to be more all-encompassing. For the *Harlot* also will pay the price, which she (and a good many nations allied to her) will experience as they begin to collapse.

The *Harlot* has *"corrupted the earth with her fornication"* (19:2), so *"wrath"* is the only end result that can be expected:

> **1) to those who are the unfortunate victims of the *Harlot's* wrath,**
> **2) to those western nations whom God allows to become victims of the anger of the *Beast,***
> **3) and in the End, to all the cities of the nations. They will be levelled in *"a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth"* when *"great Babylon"* will be *"remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath."* (16:18-19)**

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***2) The kings of the earth have committed fornication with her* (18:3)**

It is not just America, but a wide range of nations all over the world are caught in her net. And of course, it is the leaders (*"the kings"*) of those nations who make the decisions to be enticed by the *Harlot* and allow her to control them.

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3) The merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of

***her luxury* (18:3)**

The *"kings"* and *"merchants of the earth"* are in league with each other. Both benefit from their association with the *Harlot.* As explained further ahead, *"the kings of the earth… lived luxuriously with her,"* and *"the merchants… became rich by her."* (18:9,15)

But it is the *"nations"*, and the peoples of those nations, who must experience the *"wrath of her fornication"* – meaning a slide into poverty and/or military devastation.

Meanwhile, the *"kings"* and *"merchants"* are benefiting from the *Harlot's "abundance of her luxury"*. Every country in the world wants to sell to America, because she's willing to pay the most for their products. And the reason America can afford it rests on the dollar's value and on her ability to manipulate the world's money markets to her advantage. (See articles on this subject in Post 6B.)

Even in the wake of the Pandemic, America has remained as the prime consumer of the world's goods, as noted in the article below:

> **"Trade deficit in goods tops $1 trillion in 2021 for first time as U.S. gobbles up imports" by Jeffry Bartash, 26 January 2022, *MarketWatch***
>
> **The U.S. trade deficit in goods topped $1 trillion in 2021 for the first time ever, as an economic recovery enabled Americans to snap up a record amount of imports such as toys, cell phones and appliances.**
>
> **For all of 2021, the trade gap in goods rose to $1.08 trillion from $893.5 billion in the prior year. The deficit in 2020 had also been a record high.**
>
> **….**
>
> **The speedy rebound in the U.S. economy compared to most other countries — fueled by massive government stimulus — helps explain the record trade deficit. Americans could afford to buy more foreign-made goods, and they did.**
>
> **Demand for U.S. exports was slower to bounce back because other countries lagged behind in their economic recoveries.**
>
> **The deficit is expected to subside once other countries catch up, but the U.S. has run large trade gaps for years and there doesn't**

appear to be any end in sight.

In spite of the rise of China and growing shift in the balance of economic power, the U.S. manages somehow to hang on to its wealth, riding still on the wave of prosperity that began after World War 2 and the creation of financial institutions that re-shaped the structure of the financial world to America's advantage. (See here and here in Appendix 3 for more information about this.)

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Continue to: 6A: Warning Voice from Heaven (18:4-8)