Revelation Study ~ Chapter 18 part 5

Revelation 18:15-20 ~ Merchants and Shipmasters

As with the kings of the earth, the merchants (verse 15) and the shipmasters (verse 17) will stand far off from Babylon in cries of woe [alas] (see key words) in fear of the torment inflicted upon the city.

The merchants gained wealth (see key words) through Babylon. What is the danger of gaining wealth from the world?

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Consider the response of Abram [Abraham] when the king of Sodom offered him the treasures of conquest (Genesis 14:22).

Having expounded on the cargoes of the merchants (verses 11-13), the merchants describe the beauty of the city in two ways—her clothes and her adornments (verse 16).

What is the significance of each description?

- **Her Clothes –**

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- **Her Adornments –**

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The merchants, as with the kings, bewail the fact that in a moment (one hour) all that they treasured was laid waste. It is important to note that the term "laid waste" is in the passive voice – thus it is done by an outside agency.

What implications come from all the wealth being laid waste (see key words)?

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What is the importance of the rhetorical question in verse 18?

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What imagery is conveyed by the shipmasters throwing dust on their heads?

Like the kings and the merchants, the shipmasters wail in grief over the loss of Babylon in a "single hour." The kings lived in luxury, the merchants gained wealth and the shipmasters grew rich all in league with Babylon. Take a moment to read James 5:1-6 in comparison with the kings, merchants and shipmasters of Revelation 18.

What comparisons/observations can you make from James 5:1-6?

In a moment of transition, with all the cataclysmic destruction upon the earth, the voice from heaven (see verse 4) changes tone and commands four different groups to rejoice.

What is the significance of each group being commanded to rejoice (see key words)?

- **Heaven –**
- **Saints –**
- **Apostles –**
- **Prophets –**

What is the focus of their rejoicing?

Key Words:
Alas – (Greek: "ouai") meaning: "a primal expression of grief, woe"
Wealth – (Greek: "ploutesantes") meaning: "made rich, abound in, be increased"
Laid Waste – (Greek: "eremothe") meaning: "brought to desolation, destroyed"
Rejoice – (Greek: "euphrainou") meaning: "cheer, make merry, revel, rejoice"