

The Revelation

by Dr. Charles "Buddy" Parrish



Revelation 18:1-24

Vss. 1-3

- In vss. 1-3 we have a bit of prose known as a Doom Song. Similar songs are also found in the Old Testament: Is. 13:19-22 for Babylon and Is. 34:5-15 for Edom, as well as Jer. 50:39; 51:37 and Zeph. 2:13-15.
- The angel has come so fresh from God that he is still shining with God's glory strong enough to illuminate the whole world.
- The ruins of Rome have become like Hell itself, a prison for all that is evil, for demons: the dead pagan gods.
- All the earth had been seduced by her promises of power and wealth.

Vss. 4-8

- As in each previous plague in Revelation, God's people are spared from the destruction and pain of Rome's fall, just as God called Lot to come up out of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:12-14).
- Justice comes to Rome, but it is not for men to mete out Rome's punish. Justice is in God's hands.
- See Matthew 7:1-2
- Rome's ultimate sin was pride. Nothing could touch her, she was so wealthy and powerful, just like Babylon before her (Is. 47:7-9).
- What the Greeks called "hubris" was an arrogance born of wealth, success, and power that one comes to a place where they have no need of God. This was the idea behind Jesus' comments about a certain camel following his encounter with the rich, young ruler. The up and out are always the most difficult to reach.

Vss. 9-20

- In these verses we have three songs of lament, dirges for Rome's demise. The lament of the kings (9-10) the merchants (11-16), and the ship masters, passengers, and sailors. The Jewish Talmud says that the world was only given 10 measures of wealth, and Rome had nine of them. She was the economic engine that drove everything and the status that wealth brings meant everything. It was said that a senator who paid too low of rent while in Rome or whose entourage as he roamed the streets was too small, the social price he would pay for such things was devastating. You had to flaunt your wealth to be respected. Nero once through a dinner party where the imported Egyptian roses alone cost roughly \$1,043,000. The Roman historian Suetonius said of Nero that he never traveled with less than 1000 carriages and the animals were shod with silver horseshoes. The Roman writer, Pliny the Elder, wrote of a dinner party that included food from India, Egypt, Cyrene, and Crete, such was the flaunting of his host. Imports outside the empire came from Arabia, all of Africa, India, China (silk was equal in price to gold), and the far north. Nero, Caligula, Cleopatra and the like enjoyed dissolving large and rare pearls in wine or vinegar. The writer Horace said that Emperor Valerian swallowed a dissolved pearl worth \$250,000 just to say he did it. Vitellius, who reigned for only a year, spent \$208,775,000 on food alone.
- The lament of the merchants is very similar to the lament over Tyre in Ezek. 26-27.
- Citron wood: also called thuyine wood; part of the cedar family; had a very strong pleasing fragrance that was used for sacrificial fires in pagan worship. It was also used in furniture, especially as a tabletop that would have marble or ivory legs and be inlaid with silver.
- To envision Rome without slaves is like to envision Rome without air.
- Vs. 20: this is not vengeance, but justice, sin in judgement by a Holy God

Vss. 21-24: Jer. 51:63-64; Ezek. 24:6 - Tyre as the bloody city