

10. God Has Stated the Destiny of People and Nations

Many people ignore their destiny believing that they are without obligation to obey God. Others simplify their future: eat, drink, for tomorrow we die, mimicking the Epicureans of old. Others follow helter-skelter the teaching of the new age apostles and prophets, who pay no attention to God's specific teaching about the destiny of man and the temporal powers of evil. In Rev 1:1-2, God gave the Revelation to instruct his servant on what **must** take place:

1 The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants **what must soon take place**. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, 2 who testifies to everything he saw – that is, **the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ**.

At the end of days, God will fulfill the destiny of all people in the hour when his judgment shall come.

The End of Days

Rev 14:6-7

6 Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth – to every nation, tribe, language and people. 7 He said in a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water."

Since each person faces the end of days with exactly the same perspective as all those of every tribe, nation, language and people, no one will be exempt from God's hour of judgment. That day is imminent to every soul who ever lived. We all stand in the exact place before the judgment seat of Christ. Paul taught in 2 Cor 5:9-10:

9 So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. 10 For we must **all** appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

Our destiny has been set by God; and according to Rev 14:13, that destiny is dependent on our deeds (what we have done while in the body):

13 Then I heard a voice from heaven say, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on."

"Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them."

That destiny will come as thief, suddenly, unexpectedly. Rev 16:15 teaches:

15 "Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed."

In Rev 19:8, we find that our clothes are our righteous acts:

8 Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear."

(Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)

The Great Prostitute, the City of Babylon

Rev 14:8

A second angel followed and said, "Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great, which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries."

This announcement by a second angel begins a set of contrasting destinies where Babylon the Great is set against the New Jerusalem, the holy city. The righteous and the unrighteous have opposite destinies in the hour of God's judgment. In this last hour God's judgment is completed, according to Rev 15:1-2:

15 I saw in heaven another great and marvelous sign: seven angels with the seven last plagues – last, because with them God's wrath is completed.

Rev 17:1-2, 5

17 One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the punishment of the great prostitute, who sits on many waters. 2 With her the kings of the earth committed adultery and the inhabitants of the earth were intoxicated with the wine of her adulteries."

5 This title was written on her forehead:

MYSTERY

BABYLON THE GREAT

THE MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES

AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

The metaphor of good and evil continues: Babylon the Great City contrasts to the New Jerusalem the heavenly City. Babylon is the mother of prostitutes; The New Jerusalem is the pure virgin bride of Christ. What follows is a description of those people making up the city of Babylon. The people of Babylon are at constant war with the saints of the New Jerusalem. Rev 17:6

I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus.

Rev 18:1-3

18 After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven. He had great authority, and the earth was illuminated by his splendor. 2 With a mighty voice he shouted:

"Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great!

She has become a home for demons

and a haunt for every evil spirit,

a haunt for every unclean and detestable bird.

3 For all the nations have drunk

the maddening wine of her adulteries.

kings of the earth committed adultery with her,

and the merchants of the earth grew rich from her excessive luxuries."

There is victory in Jesus for all of us who hear and obey: Rev 1:3 began the Revelation by saying:

3 Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.

This story is the conclusion of the gospel story, begun by Christ and revealed by his apostles and holy prophets. Paul wrote 1 Cor 15:22-26:

22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. 23 But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. 24 Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. 25 For he must reign until he has put all

his enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

And again, in 1 Cor 15:54-57:

54 When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."

55 "Where, O death, is your victory?

Where, O death, is your sting?"

56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Not so for the citizens of Babylon, whose destiny is destruction: her demons and evil spirits, her unclean and detestable birds, the nations, mad, the wine of her adulteries, the adulterous kings, and the greedy merchants—all of these will share her destiny of destruction.

The Destruction of Babylon and the Christian Imperitive

Rev 18:4-8

4 Then I heard another voice from heaven say:

*"Come out of her, my people,
so that you will not share in her sins,
so that you will not receive any of her plagues;
5 for her sins are piled up to heaven,
and God has remembered her crimes.*

*6 Give back to her as she has given;
pay her back double for what she has done.
Mix her a double portion from her own cup.*

*7 Give her as much torture and grief
as the glory and luxury she gave herself.*

*In her heart she boasts,
'I sit as queen; I am not a widow,
and I will never mourn.'*

*8 Therefore in one day her plagues will overtake her:
death, mourning and famine.
She will be consumed by fire,
for mighty is the Lord God who judges her.*

The Christian Imperitive is to flee Babylon, for if we share in her sins we shall receive her plagues. In one day, her destined will be fulfilled in death and mourning and famine, as she is consumed by fire.

The Destiny of the Kings of the Earth

Rev 18:9-10

9 "When the kings of the earth who committed adultery with her and shared her luxury see the smoke of her burning, they will weep and mourn over her. 10 Terrified at her torment, they will stand far off and cry:

*"Woe! Woe, O great city,
O Babylon, city of power!
In one hour your doom has come!"*

What will make the kings of the earth weep and mourn? Being terrified at the sight of the doomed city, Babylon, in whom they placed their hope and trust. They shared in her luxury; why should they not share in her destiny.

The Destiny of the Merchants of the Earth

Rev 18:11-24

11 "The merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her because no one buys their cargoes any more – 12 cargoes of gold, silver, precious stones and pearls; fine linen, purple, silk and scarlet cloth; every sort of citron wood, and articles of every kind made of ivory, costly wood, bronze, iron and marble; 13 cargoes of cinnamon and spice, of incense, myrrh and frankincense, of wine and olive oil, of fine flour and wheat; cattle and sheep; horses and carriages; and bodies and souls of men.

14 "They will say, 'The fruit you longed for is gone from you. All your riches and splendor have vanished, never to be recovered.' 15 The merchants who sold these things and gained their wealth from her will stand far off, terrified at her torment. They will weep and mourn 16 and cry out:

*"Woe! Woe, O great city,
dressed in fine linen, purple and scarlet,
and glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls!*

17 In one hour such great wealth has been brought to ruin!"

*"Every sea captain, and all who travel by ship,
the sailors, and all who earn their living
from the sea, will stand far off.*

18 When they see the smoke of her burning, they will exclaim, 'Was there ever a city like this great city?' 19 They will throw dust on their heads, and with weeping and mourning cry out:

*"Woe! Woe, O great city,
where all who had ships on the sea became rich through her wealth!*

In one hour she has been brought to ruin!

20 Rejoice over her, O heaven

Jesus had warned from the beginning that we cannot serve God and money. Now the merchant of earth greet a destiny where they throw dust on their heads, weep and morn, and cry out.

The Destiny of Babylon

Rev 18:21-24

21 Then a mighty angel picked up a boulder the size of a large millstone and threw it into the sea, and said:

*"With such violencethe great city of Babylon will be thrown down,
never to be found again.*

*22 The music of harpists and musicians, flute players and trumpeters,
will never be heard in you again.*

*No workman of any trade
will ever be found in you again.
The sound of a millstone
will never be heard in you again.
23 The light of a lamp
will never shine in you again.
The voice of bridegroom and bride
will never be heard in you again.
Your merchants were the world's great men.
By your magic spell all the nations were led astray.
24 In her was found the blood of prophets and of the saints,
and of all who have been killed on the earth."*

Babylon's destiny was a complete throwing down: no music, no trades, no milling; no light, no weddings, and no merchants. She is held accountable for the blood of the prophets and saints and those killed on the earth.

The Destiny of the New Jerusalem, the Bride of Christ

Rev 19:1-9

9 After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting:

*"Hallelujah!
Salvation and glory and power belong to our God,
2 for true and just are his judgments.
He has condemned the great prostitute
who corrupted the earth by her adulteries.
He has avenged on her the blood of his servants."*

3 And again they shouted:

"Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up for ever and ever."

4 The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God, who was seated on the throne. And they cried:

"Amen, Hallelujah!"

5 Then a voice came from the throne, saying:

*"Praise our God, all you his servants,
you who fear him, both small and great!"*

6 Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting:

*"Hallelujah!
For our Lord God Almighty reigns. 7
Let us rejoice and be glad
and give him glory!
For the wedding of the Lamb has come,
and his bride has made herself ready."*

8 *Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.*"

(Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)

9 *Then the angel said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!'" And he added, "These are the true words of God."*

The church—the New Jerusalem, the bride of Christ—is vindicated and the wedding day has come. The bride in fine linen—her righteous acts. All of heaven celebrates the destiny of the saints, fulfilled in Christ—the bride groom.

The Destiny of the Beast and the False Prophet

Rev 19:20-21

20 *But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur.*

The beast and the false prophet end up in the fiery lake of burning sulfur.

The Destiny of Devil, Death, and Hades

Rev 20:9-10

9 *They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them. 10 And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.*

The devil's fate was to be thrown into the same lake of burning sulfur as the beast and the false prophet. There, they will be tormented day and night forever and ever [the Greeks would have said into the ages of the ages].

Rev 20:12-15

The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. 14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. 15 If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Death and Hades and everyone whose name is not in the Book of Life join their cohorts of evil in lake of fire. The destiny of the evil and wicked is complete.

The Destiny of the Righteous

Rev 21:1-8

21 *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. 2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."*

The destiny of the church of the Lord Jesus is complete: the old order has passed away.