

Lucan: It's time to begin. Bro. David, will you please offer the opening prayer?

Zahakiel: Dear Father in Heaven, we are blessed by another week in Your holy service. We give thanks for the movements of providence, directed by Your loving care, protecting us from evils both seen and unseen. We come before your presence with rejoicing, and by your grace awaiting the blessing prepared for us from the foundation of the world. May your Spirit rest upon this fellowship, for sanctification and rest, in Yahshua's name. Amen.

Pastor Chick: Amen.

Adriel7777: Amen

Elyna1: Amen.

Barb: Amen

Gloria Bailey: Amen.

Lucan: Amen.

Daphna: Amen

Marie-kadeth: Amen

Naraiel: Amen

Ruthline: Amen

Lucan: Tonight I would like to review a subject that we looked at some years ago, but has come up recently in online discussions; namely, the merchants and merchandise of Revelation 18. As a result, tonight's study will be called "The Merchants of the Earth."

Revelation, as we have seen in previous studies, is a book that repeatedly emphasizes trade, commerce, and merchandizing. Whether buying or selling, we see the spiritual application of trade throughout:

"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and [that] the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." (Revelation 3:18)

And again: "And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more." (Revelation 18:11)

And again: "And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." (Revelation 13:17)

This last verse is one of the most well known and most speculated on in all of Revelation, particularly among Adventists. It is followed by Revelation 14, which deals with the three angel's messages that produce a people - the 144,000 - who resist this mark. While the mark forbids any man to "buy or sell," these are "bought from the

earth," and "bought from among men" in what would seem to be flagrant violation. (Revelation 14:3, 4)

While the King James renders the word "redeemed" rather than "bought" in these verses, we may note that the Greek word here, "agorazo," is only used to mean "buy" with the exception of a few mistranslations in Revelation. There is another word for "redeem, ransom, recover through payment" in Greek; that is "exagorazo," and it is not used in these passages of Revelation.

Of the difference in words and the translation in Revelation, the lexicon explicitly notes of "agorazo:" "But agorazo does not mean redeem (exagorazo) — as is commonly said. (Compare: exagorazo.)" — Thayer's Greek Lexicon on Strong's G59 (Agorazo)

With this in mind, we read also in Revelation:

"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast bought ("redeemed", KJV) us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." (Revelation 5:9-10)

It is true of Christ that we are "redeemed by thy blood," and so the mistranslation is not particularly offensive. Yet it may lead us to miss a key theme of Revelation — it is "buying," not "redeeming," that is written of both the mark of the beast and those who resist it. The Mark forbids buying or selling, yet Christ sells gold, white raiment, and eyesalve. The Mark forbids buying or selling, yet Christ buys His people from among the whole of the earth.

This matter of "buy or sell" makes little sense outside of this context. Very few lines of Scripture are dedicated to the description of the mark of the beast, yet the warnings are severe. While the idea is often advanced that "If you are in jail for a Sunday law you can't buy or sell," Yahweh did not draw attention to this specific matter idly. To claim that Yahweh used one of few lines to say "cannot buy or sell" when He really meant "will be jailed" would be like using the words "couldn't find a cracker" to describe someone starving to death.

Yet in the midst of this prohibition on buying and selling, enforced via the mark of a name, there is one portion of Revelation that stands out above all others in mention of trade. We read of the fallen church of Revelation 18:

"And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies." (Revelation 18:1-3)

Among the defining sins of this fallen body is that "the merchants of the earth" have been made rich by her. Yet it does not end there. The next several verses we have seen in past studies are quoted from Isaiah, written especially to those who persecute their brethren for "stealing their identity," saying in their hearts, "I am, and none else beside me." (Isaiah 47:10)

Yet after this, we read the following:

"And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men." (Revelation 18:11-13) (LMK)

Barb: F

Adriel7777: F

Pastor Chick: F

Daphna: F

Zahakiel: Finished

Lucan: While relevant application has been made to "bodies and souls of men," or "slaves and souls of men" as the KJV has it, there is more listed here. Application may be made to "oil," particularly in reference to "those that sell" in the parable of the ten virgins, but what of all the rest? We will revisit this lengthy list of merchandise momentarily, but first, let us continue the description of the fall of this trade-based church:

"The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What [city is] like unto this great city! And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate." (Revelation 18:15-19) (LMK)

Zahakiel: Finished

Peter_Jr_18: F

Barb: F

Daphna: F

Gloria Bailey: Finished.

Adriel7777: F

Pastor Chick: F

Ruthline: F

Lucan: It is clear then, that in addition to the sins of a church fornicating with the civil power to oppress God's people, the characteristic of buying and selling is paramount to this body's identity before heaven. It is so much the case that the merchants and products take up the majority of the chapter's focus. This church is known for its trade, yet it is not Christ that is buying and selling through them, but the "merchants of the earth." And these merchants do so despite the law that "no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark – the name of the beast, or the number of his name." We must conclude, then, that this body has that mark, is in cooperation with that mark, and being so intimately connected with trade as they are, we would expect them to be intimately involved with the enforcement of that mark as well.

Adventists originally understood this chapter to apply to a union of Protestant churches that would enforce the mark of the beast via a Sunday law. As in the parable of the ten virgins, the truth has developed differently than once expected.

We now see before us a single church, which itself enforces the mark of the beast via a trademark law – explicitly forbidding the "buying and selling" of the gospel, persecuting the people of God in the process, and defining themselves by their commercial trade before the world. That is to say, the very name by which they are known - "Seventh-day Adventist (R)" - is a commercial identity and name of blasphemy through the commercial trade symbol.

While we have the broad strokes of this prophecy, tonight we will be looking closer at the remaining specifics. While much of Revelation, and particularly chapter 18, comes from Isaiah and Jeremiah, we now look to another prophet for these passages on commerce. We find them in Ezekiel, written in the context of a familiar passage on the king of Tyre, also called Tyrus:

"Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone [was] thy covering (...) Thou [art] the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee [so]: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou [wast] perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.

By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee." (Ezekiel 28:11-18) (LMK)

Adriel7777: F

Pastor Chick: F

Peter_Jr_18: F

Barb: F

Daphna: F

Ruthline: F

Gloria Bailey: Finished.

Zahakiel: Finished

Lucan: We have looked at the spiritual implications of this passage in past studies, including the "multitude of thy merchandise" and "the iniquity of thy traffick." We may recall that these are both the same word in Hebrew, and it is defined as, significantly, "trade." We may see that this matter of spiritual commerce, and the spirit to sell and exalt self over Yahweh in such commerce, is not a new sin. Indeed, it is the oldest sin recorded in our universe, and a fitting close to the great controversy.

Often when this passage is read, the focus is merely on the allegory in this passage – that is, Lucifer himself rather than the king of Tyrus, and the people who follow his example in this last generation. Yet this chapter deals primarily with the judgment of Tyrus and Zidon, of which Yahshua later said:

"Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day."
(Matthew 11:21-23)

As we look in the preceding chapters, also written to Tyrus as a warning of judgment, we find very familiar language. While Revelation 18 lists in extensive detail the various goods and merchandise of fallen Babylon, we read of Tyrus in Ezekiel:

"Tarshish [was] thy merchant by reason of the multitude of all [kind of] riches; with silver, iron, tin, and lead, they traded in thy fairs. Javan, Tubal, and Meshech, they [were] thy merchants: they traded the persons of men and vessels of brass in thy market. They of the house of Togarmah traded in thy fairs with horses and horsemen and mules." (Ezekiel 27:12-14)

This goes on from verses 12-24, listing sources and their wares verse by verse; for the sake of time I won't quote the whole passage. It goes on to list, along with the cities of origin, merchandize of "horns of ivory and ebony, emeralds, purple, brodered work, fine linen, coral, agate, wheat, honey, oil, balm, white wool, bright iron, cassia, calamus, clothes for chariots, lambs, rams, goats, spices, precious stones, gold, blue clothes, chests of rich apparel, bound with cords and made of cedar."

Without spending too much time in the specifics, we see here that Tyrus shares a list of goods and merchandise with Revelation 18; in short, it was also a "merchant city." In fact, this title is given explicitly by Isaiah in a parallel judgment:

"Who hath taken this counsel against Tyre, the crowning [city], whose merchants [are] princes, whose traffickers [are] the honourable of the earth? The LORD of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, [and] to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth. He stretched out his hand over the sea, he shook the kingdoms: the LORD hath given a commandment against the merchant [city], to destroy the strong holds thereof." (Isaiah 23:8, 9, 11)

We see similar wording in terms of their merchandise and who constitutes their merchants ("the great men of the earth"), but what of their judgments?

We read in Revelation: "The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What [city is] like unto this great city! And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate." (Revelation 18:15-19)

And we read in Ezekiel: "And all that handle the oar, the mariners, [and] all the pilots of the sea, shall come down from their ships, they shall stand upon the land; And shall cause their voice to be heard against thee, and shall cry bitterly, and shall cast up dust upon their heads, they shall wallow themselves in the ashes: And they shall make

themselves utterly bald for thee, and gird them with sackcloth, and they shall weep for thee with bitterness of heart [and] bitter wailing. And in their wailing they shall take up a lamentation for thee, and lament over thee, [saying], What [city is] like Tyrus, like the destroyed in the midst of the sea? When thy wares went forth out of the seas, thou filledst many people; thou didst enrich the kings of the earth with the multitude of thy riches and of thy merchandise. In the time [when] thou shalt be broken by the seas in the depths of the waters thy merchandise and all thy company in the midst of thee shall fall." (Ezekiel 27:29-34) (LMK)

Zahakiel: Finished

Ruthline: F

Barb: F

Pastor Chick: F

Peter_Jr_18: F

Adriel7777: Amen F

Gloria Bailey: Finished.

Lucan: In both cases the pilots/shipmasters stood far off on the land crying. In both cases they lamented, asking what city is like that great city. In both cases they are renowned for making others rich; in both cases they pour dust and ash on their heads to mourn. By reviewing Ezekiel, we find the language of Revelation 18. The extensive list of specific goods is a reference to an earlier prophecy; the focus on sailors and the mourning of sea-based merchants is a reference to this same prophecy. Evidently Yahweh wishes us to understand the judgment of Revelation 18 as not only connected to prophecies against Babylon (both ancient and modern), but also with those against Tyre, "the crowning city," "the merchant city."

What was the cause of that judgment? As a heathen city, it would not be particularly evil that they should engage in trade or commerce. Even a sanctified people would have no particular issue with this.

In the earlier days of Tyre, we find they were on good terms with the people of Yahweh:

"And Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants unto Solomon; for he had heard that they had anointed him king in the room of his father: for Hiram was ever a lover of David. And it came to pass, when Hiram heard the words of Solomon, that he rejoiced greatly, and said, Blessed [be] the LORD this day, which hath given unto David a wise son over this great people. So Hiram gave Solomon cedar trees and fir trees [according to] all his desire." (1 Kings 5:1, 7, 10)

The chapter goes on to describe an alliance formed between Israel and Tyre in the days of Solomon:

"And the LORD gave Solomon wisdom, as he promised him: and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon; and they two made a league together. And the king commanded, and they brought great stones, costly stones, [and] hewed stones, to lay the foundation of the house. And Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders did hew [them], and the stonesquarers: so they prepared timber and stones to build the house." (1 Kings 5:12, 17, 18)

Tyre was not only allied with the people of Yahweh when laying the foundation of the temple, but aided its construction with both labor and materials. Yet by the time of the captivity in Babylon, we see rebukes against pride and self-exaltation of the same spirit as Lucifer. Indeed, we see rebukes against the very sin of blasphemy we see today; those sitting in the place of Yahweh before the people:

"Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thine heart [is] lifted up, and thou hast said, I [am] a God, I sit [in] the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou [art] a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God: Behold, thou [art] wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from thee: With thy wisdom and with thine understanding thou hast gotten thee riches, and hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasures. By thy great wisdom [and] by thy traffick hast thou increased thy riches, and thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches: Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God; Behold, therefore I will bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the nations: and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of thy wisdom, and they shall defile thy brightness." (Ezekiel 28:2-7)

As with Lucifer, so with Tyre; as with the Papacy, so with the General Conference. Gifts and success are worshipped more than the one who gave them, the greatness of these things is "bought and sold," and self is exalted until the creature claims the prerogatives of the Creator. We see before us today a like spirit; a "prince," an office of leadership that sits in the seat of God, claiming to be the source of that which God gave. We see this despite, in ages past, their cooperation with the people Yah had appointed, and their aid in building up His temple. We see a General Conference that is "wiser than Daniel" in the exposition of his own prophecies, that by "trade," or "traffick," has increased riches and been lifted up by them, both in terms of membership and earthly wealth. We see a denomination lead by those who "sit in the midst of the seas" – and what are seas?

"And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." (Revelation 17:15)

And from where are the last people of God "bought," despite the prohibition on buying and selling without the mark of the beast?

"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast bought ("redeemed", KJV) us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." (Revelation 5:9-10)

We see, then, a judgment against a church that identifies itself by commercial trade in spiritual matters. We see a judgment against a church that is exalted by its riches, yet knows not that it is wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. We see a judgment against a church that is "worldwide," having influence with many nations and kindreds and peoples and tongues – yet uses that influence to prohibit, rather than further, the selling of the gospel.

Turning to an earlier chapter, we see further reasons for the destruction of Tyre:

"Son of man, because that Tyrus hath said against Jerusalem, Aha, she is broken [that was] the gates of the people: she is turned unto me: I shall be replenished, [now] she is laid waste: Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I [am] against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up." (Ezekiel 26:2, 3)

We see a judgment against a church that is pleased at the physical destruction of Yahweh's people – and why are they pleased? It is for the expectation of gain, both of people and finances, of gold and of souls of men.

What is the cause for a trademark lawsuit? Before the courts of this earth, the General Conference has claimed that silencing the people of Yahweh will give them monetary relief; "I shall be replenished." It is claimed that putting away the people of Yahweh will cause the people to "turn unto her" rather than her "unfair competitor," "now that she is laid waste."

By the time of the return from captivity, we see the merchants of Tyre inducing the people of Yahweh to break the Sabbath, in violation of the firm teaching of Nehemiah's reformation:

"There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem." (Nehemiah 13:16)

Likewise, in our day we see the professed merchants of Adventism inducing the people of Yahweh to break the Sabbath, either by joining to the civil power directly or by disregarding Yahweh's plain instructions for the name of His people. Either is to fail to "cease from his own works, as God did from His," (Hebrews 4:10) thus failing to "enter into His rest."

Finally, we have the judgment against Tyre for their dealing with the people of Yahweh near the close of the Old Testament:

"Yea, and what have ye to do with me, O Tyre, and Zidon, and all the coasts of Palestine? will ye render me a recompence? and if ye recompense me, swiftly [and] speedily will I return your recompence upon your own head; Because ye have taken my silver and my gold, and have carried into your temples my goodly pleasant things: The children also of Judah and the children of Jerusalem have ye sold unto the Grecians, that ye might remove them far from their border. Behold, I will raise them out of the place whither ye have sold them, and will return your recompence upon your own head:" (Joel 3:4-7)

Finally, we see the judgment of Yahweh on a people who have pillaged and claimed ownership of the valuable and holy things of His worship, selling the people of the Lord into bondage to the world and its philosophies. We see, then, that Tyre as well as the church of Revelation 18 deal in the selling of slaves. These scattered faithful Yahweh promises to gather, and in the fourth angel's message we see that gathering taking place among those who have heeded the call to "come out of her, my people."

The next time Tyrus is mentioned, it is as "Tyre" in the words of Yahshua we looked at earlier. The Savior there spoke to a people who were accountable for more light than the people of Tyre, and who, having rejected it, would be found condemned by Tyre of old. In Revelation, we see a church that is accountable for the light of all ages, yet has "fallen from her high estate." We see a church that is called Babylon in spirit, and is identified with Tyre in commerce, having failed to learn from the examples of both. We see a church that of which it is therefore said, "And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth." (Revelation 18:24)

Of this church, a prophet in its own membership rightly wrote:

"We are in danger of becoming a sister to fallen Babylon, of allowing our churches to become corrupted, and filled with every foul spirit, a cage for every unclean and hateful bird; and will we be clear unless we make decided movements to cure the existing evil?" [Ellen G. White, 21MR 380]

Finally, in the midst of an article regarding the danger of managing institutions by a worldly standard lest God withhold the latter rain and cast them aside, we find the following:

"Of those who boast of their light, and yet fail to walk in it, Christ says, 'But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum [Seventh-day Adventists, who have had great light], which art exalted unto heaven [in point of privilege], shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have

remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee." [Ellen G. White, RH Aug 1, 1893]

May the people of Yahweh be encouraged to "walk in the light," firm in their resistance to "the merchant church," offering to "buy and sell" the word of Yahweh freely to all "kindred, and nations, and tongues, and peoples" in violation of the "mark of her name."

Lucan: Are there any comments on the study tonight?

Adriel7777: Amen

Lucan: If not, I'll ask Pastor to offer the closing prayer.

Pastor Chick: Dear Father in heaven. Thank You for your encouragement by the Word of Yah. We see without any doubt where we are in terms of the clock of Heaven. May our zeal be increased to finish the work set before us. In Yahshua's holy name, Amen.

Barb: Amen

Lucan: Amen

Adriel7777: Amen

Gloria Bailey: Amen.

Zahakiel: Amen.

Ruthline: Amen

Daphna: Amen

Peter Jr 18: Amen.

Elyna1: Amen.