

26. November 2020

“God's justice”

Rev 18:1-2.21-23;19:1-3.9

After this, I saw another angel come down from heaven, with great authority given to him; the earth shone with his glory. At the top of his voice he shouted, 'Babylon has fallen, Babylon the Great has fallen, and has become the haunt of devils and a lodging for every foul spirit and dirty, loathsome bird. Then a powerful angel picked up a boulder like a great millstone, and as he hurled it into the sea, he said, 'That is how the great city of Babylon is going to be hurled down, never to be seen again. Never again in you will be heard the song of harpists and minstrels, the music of flute and trumpet; never again will craftsmen of every skill be found in you or the sound of the handmill be heard; never again will shine the light of the lamp in you, never again will be heard in you the voices of bridegroom and bride. Your traders were the princes of the earth, all the nations were led astray by your sorcery. After this I heard what seemed to be the great sound of a huge crowd in heaven, singing, 'Alleluia! Salvation and glory and power to our God! He judges fairly, he punishes justly, and he has condemned the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her prostitution; he has avenged the blood of his servants which she shed.' And again they sang, 'Alleluia! The smoke of her will rise for ever and ever.' The angel said, 'Write this, "Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb," ' and he added, 'These words of God are true.'

Yesterday we had heard about the victorious multitude that survived all tribulations and sang the song of Moses and the Lamb to glorify God!

Today we hear how the anti-God city of Babylon, which stands for all godlessness in the world, is being brought to its deserved end. Instead of bearing witness to the glory of God and using all the wonderful gifts of God for His glory, it has become the dwelling place of spirits in rebellion against God. She became a whore because she had become involved with bad spirits and was seduced by them into a detestable way of life.

However we want to interpret this text, whether it is individual judgments of God in certain cities or kingdoms throughout history or whether it is the judgment at the end of times for godlessness: it is an act of the righteousness of God!

There is rejoicing in heaven over this: a great multitude expresses their joy over God's action and praises the truth and justice of God!

Here we hear something that is also deeply ingrained in us. It is the call for justice. Even if mercy triumphs over judgment (*Jas 2:13*), justice is connected with our being as human beings. Certainly, this process is not about joy over the punishment that individual people may receive, whose transgressions we can always regret and mourn, but about the God-given creation of the true being in which justice dwells.

A godless life that darkens the light on earth and seduces many people is a perversion. Even if we have become more and more accustomed to perversion in our godless times and our conscience and rebellion against sin are weakened, godlessness remains a terrible reality, which can often make life on earth a hell!

We know this as human beings - and even more so as believers! All the more so does that flock in heaven, which is allowed to live in the glory of God and therefore knows even more precisely the depravity of demons and those who follow them and do their works! Since this flock in heaven is completely inflamed with love for God and perceives the insults of God through such a life even more than we do, there is great rejoicing when God, after times of infinite patience and deep suffering, restores justice!

But we too can feel such joy without having to have a bad conscience. Let us think of a godless political dictatorship which gagged and bound people and took away their freedom! Let us think of the nightmare of the Hitler dictatorship with a godless and blinded leadership which send millions of people to their death in gas chambers and to enslave the people under its knee! How will the people have breathed a sigh of relief when this perversion is over and those responsible are brought to justice!

This is not a petty act of revenge, such as paying back at a low level! It is a deep sigh of relief that God will not allow godlessness to continue forever, that light and darkness will separate in the end, that there will be a kingdom in God in which love and justice reign, and in which wheat and weeds will no longer grow together (*cf. Mt 13:24-30*)!

Sometimes we may be impatient to know when the time will finally come and want to call down the fire from heaven as the disciples did (*cf. Lk 9:54*). But then we know in faith that everything is in hands, of our beloved God, than we know God's judgments are true and just!

So we can praise the Lord and join in the call of the multitude in heaven:

*“Alleluia! Salvation and glory and power to our God!
He judges fairly, he punishes justly”*