

General Service in Malang, September 25, 2022 (Sunday Morning)

Peace and grace in the love of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Revelation chapter 17 in the arrangement of the Tabernacle refers to Aaron's rod that budded, bloomed, and yielded fruits. It refers to the growth or development of the spirituality of the church from the sinful fleshly men to the perfect bride of God.

On the contrary, Revelation 16-19 refers to the growth of the punishment of God towards Babylon until the drowning in the sea of fire and brimstone to perish forever.

Revelation 16:19

16:19 Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.

Revelation 17 is about the judgment over Babylon.

Revelation 18 is about the fall of Babylon.

Revelation 21:11,23

21:11 having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.

21:23 The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light.

Babylon is a great city that wants to compete with the great city of God, namely the New Jerusalem that is very beautiful and bright by the light of the Lamb.

The world or Babylon always wants to compete with the power of God to draw people to her. For example, the people make the artificial sun for the light. Be careful! Do not magnify the bright lights from the world in the service to God or else they do not realize that they are used by Babylon.

God shows the system of the heavenly kingdom that is very strong; even it is impossible for the world. For example, in economy, God was able to feed five thousand men, not including women and children, with five loaves and two fish. In health, Jesus was able to revive Lazarus, who had died four days.

In galaxy, God is able to arrange the orbit of the sun, moon, and stars in order until they never collide for arranging the time in the world.

Thus, how great the effort of the world or Babylon for competing with heaven, it will fail; even it will only aim at perdition.

Numbers 17:1-10

17:1 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying:

17:2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and get from them a rod from each father's house, all their leaders according to their fathers' houses -- twelve rods. Write each man's name on his rod.

17:3 "And you shall write Aaron's name on the rod of Levi. For there shall be one rod for the head of each father's house.

17:4 "Then you shall place them in the tabernacle of meeting before the Testimony, where I meet with you.

17:5 "And it shall be that the rod of the man whom I choose will blossom; thus I will rid Myself of the complaints of the children of Israel, which they make against you."

17:6 So Moses spoke to the children of Israel, and each of their leaders gave him a rod apiece, for each leader according to their fathers' houses, twelve rods; and the rod of Aaron was among their rods.

17:7 And Moses placed the rods before the LORD in the tabernacle of witness.

17:8 Now it came to pass on the next day that Moses went into the tabernacle of witness, and behold, the rod of Aaron, of the house of Levi, had sprouted and put forth buds, had produced blossoms and yielded ripe almonds.

17:9 Then Moses brought out all the rods from before the LORD to all the children of Israel; and they looked, and each man took his rod.

17:10 And the LORD said to Moses, "Bring Aaron's rod back before the Testimony, to be kept as a sign against the rebels, that you may put their complaints away from Me, lest they die."

Aaron's rod was a dead wood. It means that there is no hope. Nevertheless, it could bud, bloom, and yield fruit after being put before God all night long.

If we bring our life that is dry or dead spiritually and has no hope before God through the service, ministry, and worship to Him, He or the power of Holy Spirit can quickly be able to revive, choose, and use us for the great work of God.

On the contrary, how great a man in the world is, he will be a dry and dead rod spiritually if he is outside the presence of God (not serving to Him) until the perdition like the great Babylon that rejected the work of Holy Spirit.

Revelation 17:1-2,5

17:1 *Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters,*

17:2 *"with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication."*

17:5 *And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.*

The great Babylon is the same as the great harlot, namely Israel and Judah or the unfaithful servants of God.

Jeremiah 3:6-10

3:6 *The LORD said also to me in the days of Josiah the king: "Have you seen what backsliding Israel has done? She has gone up on every high mountain and under every green tree, and there played the harlot.*

3:7 *"And I said, after she had done all these things, 'Return to Me.' But she did not return. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it.*

3:8 *"Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also.*

3:9 *"So it came to pass, through her casual harlotry, that she defiled the land and committed adultery with stones and trees.*

3:10 *"And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah has not turned to Me with her whole heart, but in pretense," says the LORD.*

They were disobedient and rebellious because of making friendship with the world.

James 4:4

4:4 *Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.*

The disobedience came from Korah and his friends or the servants of God who always murmur because of the dissatisfaction of the flesh. Nevertheless, at that time God showed Moses and Aaron or the servants of God whom He chose for calming the murmuring of the disobedient. The truth can calm the murmuring.

In Revelation 17, God appears in the power of Holy Spirit (Aaron's rod) for punishing Babylon. Therefore, there must be Aaron's rod or the power of Holy Spirit in the congregation so that they do not become Babylon and get the punishment with her.

Numbers 16:1-3

16:1 *Now Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men;*

16:2 *and they rose up before Moses with some of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation, representatives of the congregation, men of renown.*

16:3 *They gathered together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "You take too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?"*

The rebellion in the fight for power in the ministry in the congregation may use the power of mass.

Why did Korah and his friends rebel against God?

- It is because they felt that they came from the Levites like Moses and Aaron, so they insisted to be the same as Moses and Aaron.
- They summoned the men of renown for attacking Moses and Aaron. It means relying on the power of the world for attacking the righteous.

Exodus 6:16-20

6:16 *These are the names of the sons of Levi according to their generations: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. And the years of the life of Levi were one hundred and thirty-seven.*

6:17 *The sons of Gershon were Libni and Shimi according to their families.*

6:18 *And the sons of Kohath were Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. And the years of the life of Kohath were one hundred and thirty-three.*

6:19 *The sons of Merari were Mahali and Mushi. These are the families of Levi according to their generations.*

6:20 Now Amram took for himself Jochebed, his father's sister, as wife; and she bore him Aaron and Moses. And the years of the life of Amram were one hundred and thirty-seven.

Only the people whose ages were mentioned were chosen by God to minister to Him.

Exodus 6:26-27

6:26 These are the same Aaron and Moses to whom the LORD said, "Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their armies."

6:27 These are the ones who spoke to Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring out the children of Israel from Egypt. These are the same Moses and Aaron.

Exodus 7:7

7:7 And Moses was eighty years old and Aaron eighty-three years old when they spoke to Pharaoh.

The duties were divided among the families of Kohathites, Gershon, and Merari.

Numbers 4:17-19

4:17 Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying:

4:18 "Do not cut off the tribe of the families of the Kohathites from among the Levites;

4:19 "but do this in regard to them, that they may live and not die when they approach the most holy things: Aaron and his sons shall go in and appoint each of them to his service and his task.

But, the ministry of the priests and high priest had to be to the sons of Aaron [Exodus 29], not only from the Levites, not only from the sons of Kohath, not only from the sons of Amram.

God chooses each of us in the ministry according to His will and trust.

1 Timothy 6:6

6:6 Now godliness with contentment is great gain.

Moses and Aaron ministered to God according to His calling and election or His plan and will with faithfulness and obedience. As a result, there were satisfaction and thanksgiving to God. Likewise, we will get the great gain as follows:

- Being accompanied by the power of God or Holy Spirit (Aaron's rod) for defeating Pharaoh although Moses had been afraid of facing Pharaoh.
- The two wings of a great eagle for facing the Antichrist that will reign over the world for three and a half years.

Revelation 12:14

12:14 But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.

We are evacuated to the wilderness, far away from the eyes of the Antichrist. We are preserved directly by God through the teaching Word and Holy Communion.

Korah was disobedient and unfaithful in the service and ministry to God, so he was dissatisfied as well as murmured to Moses or rebelled against God.

Numbers 16:11

16:11 "Therefore you and all your company are gathered together against the LORD. And what is Aaron that you complain against him?"

Numbers 16:30-31

16:30 "But if the LORD creates a new thing, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into the pit, then you will understand that these men have rejected the LORD."

16:31 Now it came to pass, as he finished speaking all these words, that the ground split apart under them,

Consequently, he was swallowed by the earth that opened its mouth.

The sin of Babylon is the same as stumbling.

Luke 17:1-2

17:1 Then He said to the disciples, "It is impossible that no offenses (*skandalon* = stumbling) should come, but woe to him through whom they do come!

17:2 "It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.

One easily stumbles and becomes the stumbling-block for others. Consequently, a millstone will be hung around his neck and he was thrown into the sea.

Revelation 18:21

18:21 Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore.

Babylon is the same as the millstone or the stumbling-block that is thrown into the sea of fire and brimstone.

Thus, the beginning of falling into the sin of Babylon is disobedience, unfaithfulness, and dissatisfaction or murmuring. It happens because of not understanding the system of the edification of the body of Christ until using the own way according to the self-will as well as following the system of Korah, namely gossiping, slandering, and vilifying the other servants of God.

Moses and Aaron refer to the servants of God who are obedient, faithful, and in the anointing of Holy Spirit to be used and chosen by Him until none can make them fail and used by Him for stopping the murmuring in the congregation.

Luke 17:3-4

17:3 "Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.

17:4 "And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him."

Falling into the sins of Korah and Babylon as well as the stumbling already, the solution is making peace or confessing and forgiving one another. As a result, the blood of Jesus washes away all our sins, so we have the peaceful heart to be the dwelling place of Holy Spirit who fills us up or anoint us, so the dry wood can bud, bloom, and yield fruits.

1. Budding is the same as living.

Romans 8:11

8:11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

Holy Spirit is able to give life physically in the midst of the difficulties in the world. He is able to heal impossible problems. He is able to erase impossibility or solve impossible problems.

Romans 8:13

8:13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

Holy Spirit is able to give life spiritually or put to death the sinful deeds of the body, so we can live in righteousness and holiness. He is able to make us faithful and fervent in spirit in the service and ministry to God. He can give us the heavenly satisfaction, so we can give thanks, testify, and worship God.

2. Blooming is the same as being beautiful.

Holy Spirit gives the gifts of Holy Spirit or the miraculous ones that determine the ministry, so we can be used by God in the ministry for the edification of the perfect Christ's body. It begins from the marriage, shepherding, and so on.

All things become beautiful and successful in time of need.

3. Yielding fruits is the same as changing.

Holy Spirit is able to renew the fleshly men to become the spiritual ones like Jesus is, namely being strong and of good courage, not being disappointed or hopeless, and not leaving God in facing all things, as well as being obedient regardless of any risk we must take. Obedience opens the doors in the world until the door of heaven is also opened. Disobedience is the same as closing the doors. We are changed until being perfect for welcoming Jesus' second coming.

God blesses you.