

## **WHO ARE THE MERCHANTS OF THE EARTH?**

(Excerpt from my book, “The Book of Revelation Decoded”, pages 591-593)

In Revelation 18:3<sup>b</sup>, we read:

***“<sup>b</sup>and the merchants of the earth became rich from her uncontrollable passion.”*** (AT)

### **Who are “the merchants of the earth”?**

In the explanation of Revelation 1:5<sup>c</sup>, we concluded that the symbolic term “*earth*” refers to “all those who claim to know and believe the True God of the Bible; **the Judeo-Christian community**”. Therefore, the symbolic term “*the merchants of the earth*” refers to the merchants of that community who become rich by selling things which are used in the religious ceremonies and festivities of “*Babylon the great*” (and of her harlot daughters). They become rich because the people of the symbolic “*earth*” spend money during these holidays and festivities with an “*uncontrollable passion*”. The things the “*merchants of the earth*” sell are listed in verses 11-13. Let’s read these verses:

***“<sup>11</sup>And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, because no one buys their cargo any longer; <sup>12</sup>cargo of gold, and silver, and precious stone, and pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and every fragrant wood, and every vessel made of ivory, and every vessel made of very expensive wood, and of bronze, and of iron, and of marble, <sup>13</sup>and cinnamon, and unblemished, and incenses, and myrrh, and frankincense, and wine,***

*and oil, and semolina, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.*"  
(AT)

**What do the last words of verse 13 above, “and souls of men”, indicate?**

They indicate that the title “*the merchants of the earth*” is extended to include religious leaders who “sell”, so to speak, the souls of men and women who trust them, for profit! These leaders don’t seem to care about the salvation of their followers and, for this reason, they do not teach them **the pure biblical gospel of salvation** (1 Corinthians 15:3,4; John 3:16; 6:40) or **what they must do to be saved** (Romans 10:9,13,14; Acts 16:31) or **the freedom from religion Jesus brings to those who believe and follow Him** (Luke 4:18).

Hence, they captivate them in spiritual darkness, they feed them “*other gospels*” (Galatians 1:6-9), and **they instill in them religious fear** in order to exploit them through religious rituals, tithing and other offerings, not to mention real estate and inheritances which should go to the rightful heirs and which cannot buy them forgiveness of sins and salvation!

Also, the words, “*and souls of men*”, can be applied to certain harlot daughters of “*Babylon the great*”, who, not only become rich by exploiting their followers while they are alive, they continue to make money from their families by offering prayers for the forgiveness of their sins and even for the salvation of their souls (!) **after they have departed!** How awful! I wonder, do they really believe that Jesus was raised from the dead, that He is alive today, and that

***WHO ARE THE MERCHANTS OF THE EARTH? .....3***

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He will return to reward each one according to his work?  
(Revelation 1:17,18; 22:12)