

## “BABYLON versus JERUSALEM”

There are TWO great “epicenters” in the world. An epicenter is the key focal point of some major activity.

The Bible shows that in the history of the world, there are two “epicenter cities”. Redemptive history revolves around these two cities. One is Babylon and the other is Jerusalem. Babylon is “***the city of man***”, while Jerusalem is “***the city of God***”.

Interwoven throughout the Bible from Genesis to Revelation is the story of these two cities. Jerusalem is the most prominent city in the Bible being mentioned over 800 times; while Babylon is second, being mentioned about 300 times. What these cities typify is developed throughout the Bible and culminates in the book of Revelation.

### ***Babylon – the city of man***

The “***cradle of civilization***” began in the Tigris- Euphrates River valley and the history of this age will end there as well. The word Mesopotamia literally means “***the land between two rivers***”. Both the Tigris (***Hiddekel***) and Euphrates rivers are mentioned in close connection to the Garden of Eden in Genesis 2:14. The area that Abraham originally hailed from was Mesopotamia (cf. Acts 7:2).

It was in this area of Mesopotamia that the city and the territory of Babylon was found.

#### 1. ***Babylon Idealized*** (cf. Gen. 10:8-10, 11:1-9)

Nimrod is introduced to us in Genesis 10. His name means “***rebel***”. He is a type of Antichrist. He was the man who founded the city of Babylon, as seen in Gen. 10:10. Apparently, he was the man behind the building project of the Tower of Babel, as seen in Gen. 11.

Babel literally means “***to confound***”. Babylon is “***the city of confusion***”. Babylon is both a ***city*** and a ***system***. It represents UNIFIED REBELLION and hence, confusion. It represents the combination of HUMAN GOVERNMENT and FALSE RELIGION.

The key thing about Babylon is that it represents FALSE RELIGION working in concert with human government. Babylon signifies the seat of false religion and idolatry. It represents unified, man-centered, idolatrous rebellion.

After the worldwide flood in Noah's day, people began to repopulate the earth. But, contrary to God's directive to scatter through the earth (cf. Gen. 9:7), they congregated in one place. Nimrod was the first ruler of the global community. He was a mighty hunter against the Lord, with the understanding being that he was a hunter of souls in a negative sense.

Nimrod, in effect, was the first world dictator, and the beginning of his kingdom was Babel (cf. Gen. 10:8-10). The capital city of his empire was Babylon. And in this sense, he prefigures the Antichrist who will rule over Last Days' Babylon, as seen in the book of Revelation.

Nimrod had a wife named Semiramis, who founded the "mystery religions" of Babylon. Revelation 17:5 indicates that Babylon is the mother of all religious harlotry on the earth. All systematized, idolatrous false religion traces its roots back to BABYLON. It is the EPICENTER of all false religion. And we find it IDEALIZED in Genesis 11.

## **2. *Babylon Imperialized* (cf. Daniel 1-5)**

After Genesis 11, Babylon is not mentioned again until Joshua 7:21; and then not again until the prophets of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. Near the time of Abraham, Babylon became a city-state. It rose to worldwide prominence under the leadership of Nebuchadnezzar, who is dealt with at length in the book of Daniel.

It was under Nebuchadnezzar that Jerusalem fell and the Jewish temple was destroyed in 586 BC (cf. 2 Kg. 24:12-16). This marked the beginning of the Babylonian Captivity for the Jews and the beginning of what is known as "***The Times of the Gentiles***" (cf. Lk. 21:24).

Thus, we see in the days of Judah's prophets that Babylon became IMPERIALIZED into a powerful worldwide empire (cf. Dan. 2, 7).

The city of Babylon became the capital of an entire empire, called Babylon. The center of this empire corresponds to modern-day Iraq. The rebuilt city of Babylon is still on the Euphrates River today.

## **3. *Babylon Prophesied* (cf. Isa. 13-14, 47, Jer. 50-51, Zech. 5:5-11)**

Prophecy scholars note that often prophecy has an element of near-partial fulfillment; and at the same time, interwoven is an element of distant-complete fulfillment. The fulfillment of the near assures fulfillment of the distant.

There are two great texts that prophesy of the future destruction of Babylon. They are found in Isa. 13 and 14 and in Jeremiah 50 and 51. These texts speak of a destruction of Babylon that came at the hand of the Medes and Persians (cf. Isa. 13:17, Jer. 51:11, 28).

Yet, interwoven is prophetic truth that was NOT fulfilled at that time and must be fulfilled at a future time in THE DAY OF THE LORD. In order for this to happen, there must be a resurgence of Babylon in the Last Days.

### **Isaiah 13:6 (NKJV)**

**6** Wail, for the day of the Lord is at hand! It will come as destruction from the Almighty.

### **Isaiah 13:19 (NKJV)**

**19** And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, The beauty of the Chaldeans' pride, Will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.

### **Jeremiah 50:39 (NKJV)**

**39** "Therefore the wild desert beasts shall dwell there with the jackals, And the ostriches shall dwell in it. It shall be inhabited no more forever, Nor shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation.

### **Jeremiah 51:62 (NKJV)**

**62** then you shall say, 'O Lord, You have spoken against this place to cut it off, so that none shall remain in it, neither man nor beast, but it shall be desolate forever.'

The final destruction of Babylon comes in the Day of the Lord, which is the Tribulation Period. In the past, Babylon was never desolated completely and permanently. In 1983, Saddam Hussein began rebuilding the city on top of the old ruins.

So in recent years, there has been a restoration of Babylon taking place. The prophecies of Scripture necessitate a yet future fulfillment of a revitalized Babylon, followed by the TOTAL AND FINAL destruction of it in the Last Days.

Babylon is like a large ancient city that has been sitting dormant, waiting to be revitalized to her greatest glory in the Last Days under Antichrist. However, her greatest glory will be short-lived and will give way to thorough and complete devastation and destruction at the hand of the Lord.

Israel in the Bible always refers to literal Israel. Jerusalem, unless specifically noted (cf. Rev. 11:8), always refers to literal Jerusalem. And likewise, Babylon consistently refers to literal Babylon. That is the NORMAL and NATURAL way to take it. Thus, the Bible predicts a Last Day's revival of the city of Babylon.

Tucked away in Zechariah 5 is a very specific prophecy about Last Days' Babylon. Zechariah 5:5-11 presents a vision of a basket that is full of wickedness, which is personified as a woman. A heavy lid is put on the basket to keep evil in check. Zechariah then sees the basket with the woman being carried away, and he asks **WHERE** it is being taken. He is then told that it is being carried back to the land of Shinar (which is Babylon), when the time is ready.

### **Zechariah 5:8 (NKJV)**

**8** then he said, "**This is Wickedness!**" And he thrust her down into the basket, and threw the lead cover over its mouth.

### **Zechariah 5:10–11 (NKJV)**

**10** So I said to the angel who talked with me, "**Where** are they carrying the basket?"

**11** And he said to me, "To build a house for it **in the land of Shinar**; when it is ready, the basket will be set there on its base."

When Zechariah asked the interpreting angel where this basket of wickedness was being taken, the answer was "***To build a house for it in the land of Shinar;***".

House refers to a place of dwelling. In view is the CENTER, or the key base of operations. This will be located in the land of Shinar, which is Babylon. It is there that the basket will be set on its base, or on its pedestal. In effect, this will be the HEADQUARTERS for Last Day's wickedness!

Shinar is the old name for Babylon. Shinar is the oldest designation for this area, followed by Mesopotamia, followed by Chaldea, followed by Babylon – all referring to the same basic locale. Shinar is the more ancient term, harking back to the days of Nimrod and the hatching of the mystery religions and corrupt commercialism in this area, in conjunction with the Tower of Babel (cf. Gen. 10:10, 11:2, Dan. 1:2).

The idea is that wickedness, as a system involving corrupt commercialism, originated in the land of Shinar and then emanated outward and corrupted the entire world, but was still restrained. It was under Nimrod that Babel became the earth's "***mother of harlots***" (cf. Rev. 17:5).

At a future time, this wickedness will once again be concentrated where it first originated – in the land of Shinar, which is in the heartland of modern-day Iraq.

This area is known as the “cradle of civilization”. The roots of humanity go back to here. The corrupt, rebel Babylonian system started there under Nimrod, and it will end there as well (cf. Gen. 10:10, 11:2).

This will then set the stage for the final form of the rebel Babylonian System, which in its final form will be headed up by the Antichrist, as reflected in Rev. 17-18.

#### 4. ***Babylon Globalized*** (cf. Rev. 14:8, 16:19, chps. 17 & 18)

The book of Revelation serves as a “**Grand Central Station**” that gathers up the prophecies of “**Babylon**” and brings them to a head. The book of Revelation has a total of 404 verses, with 44 of them addressing Babylon.

That means that 11 percent of the entire book of Revelation deals with the subject of Babylon. Revelation deals with the final culmination of Babylon that began back in Genesis. Revelation presents the fully developed concept as it presents a globalized Babylon.

Remember that Babylon is both a CITY and a SYSTEM. The city is the fountainhead of all organized idolatry. The system is the idolatrous values, ideas, and concepts that unite a rebel world of false religion and politics.

The idea behind Babylon is always the UNITY of false religion and government in unified rebellion against God. It is the concept of UNIFIED IDOLATROUS REBELLION that Babylon represents from Genesis to Revelation. It is progressive in nature, emanating forth until it infects and corrupts the entire world.

Revelation 17 and 18 present the final form of Babylon in its globalized form. There are two aspects to it. Revelation 17 speaks of ECUMENICAL, RELIGIOUS BABYLON.

#### **Revelation 17:5 (NKJV)**

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

A mystery in the NT is that which was previously hidden, but is now made known by divine revelation. God is showing us that all false, idolatrous

religion is traced back to Babylon; and it has been developing throughout history and will find complete fulfillment in the Tribulation Period.

Babylon represents the UNION of all false religion under one umbrella, which is in league with the political leaders of the world. Initially, this “**great harlot**” (cf. Rev. 17:1) will be in union with the Antichrist (cf. Rev. 17:3). However, Antichrist will hate this great ecumenical harlot and will destroy her (cf. Rev. 17:16-17).

This will result in the final form of Babylon under Antichrist. Now, all false religion will be under the Antichrist as he declares himself to be God and demands that all worship him (cf. Rev. 13:5-7, 2 Thess. 2:4). This will be the ULTIMATE expression of government and false religion in UNION.

This is the climactic expression of BABYLON. And, the key to Antichrist controlling the world will be his control of the ECONOMY. He will be a ONE-WORLD dictator, heading up a ONE-WORLD religion, with the controlling factor of a ONE-WORLD economy. Thus, the climax of Babylon represents a materialistic and rebel ONE-WORLD ORDER.

### **Revelation 13:16–17 (NKJV)**

**16** He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive **a mark** on their right hand or on their foreheads,

**17** and that **no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark** or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

The ECUMENICAL BABYLON of Rev. 17 gives way to the COMMERCIAL BABYLON of Rev. 18. Both combine false religion and corrupt government, but the climax is found under Antichrist. This is the globalization of Babylon in its final form.

In both Rev. 14:8-10 and Rev. 17:3-6 (cf. 17:18), Antichrist is intimately associated with the city of Babylon. This close relationship of Antichrist with the rebuilt city of Babylon suggests that this will be the commercial capital of his worldwide empire.

### **5. *Babylon destroyed* (cf. Rev. 14:8, 18:21)**

### **Revelation 14:8 (NKJV)**

**8** And another angel followed, saying, “**Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city**, because she has **made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.**”

The great city of Babylon was great in her influence. She spread the seeds of false religion throughout the world. This city, which will be revived in the Last Days and bring her idolatrous influence to a head under Antichrist, will SUDDENLY be permanently destroyed in conjunction with the Second Coming of Christ.

**Revelation 18:21 (NKJV)**

**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.**

Thus, the city of man with her greatest representative (Antichrist) will come crashing down. Babylon is fallen, never to be found again! All the UNIONS related to IDOLATROUS, FALSE RELIGION are forever destroyed!