

BABYLON—ITS ORIGIN-ITS NATURE-ITS FALL

(Your questions and comments are welcome)

(**Bold type** and underlining in scripture text have been added for emphasis)

In considering Babylon it will be helpful to briefly review her background in the Old Testament. **Zechariah 5**

¹ Then I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a flying roll.

² And he said unto me, **What seest thou?** And I answered, I see a flying roll; the length thereof is twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten cubits.

³ Then said he unto me, This is the **curse** that goeth forth over **the face of the whole earth:** for every one **that stealeth** shall be **cut off** as on this side according to it; and every one **that sweareth** shall be cut off as on that side according to it.

⁴ **I** will bring it forth, saith **the LORD** of hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the **thief**, and into the house of him that **sweareth falsely by my name:** and it shall **remain** in the midst of his house, and shall **consume** it with the timber thereof and the stones thereof.

⁵ Then the angel that talked with me went forth, and said unto me, Lift up now thine eyes, and **see what is this that goeth forth.**

⁶ And I said, **What is it?** And he said, This is **an ephah** that goeth forth. He said moreover, This is **their resemblance** through all the earth.

⁷ And, behold, there was lifted up **a talent of lead:** and this is **a woman that sitteth in the midst of the ephah.**

⁸ And he said, **This is wickedness.** And **he cast it into the midst of the ephah;** and he **cast the weight of lead** upon the mouth thereof.

⁹ Then **lifted I up mine eyes,** and looked, and, behold, there came out **two women,** and the **wind was in their wings;** for they had wings like the **wings of a stork:** and they **lifted up the ephah** between the earth and the heaven.

¹⁰ Then said I to the angel that talked with me, **Whither do these bear the ephah?**

¹¹ And he said unto me, To build it **an house** in the **land of Shinar:** and it shall be **established,** and set there upon **her own base.**

Zechariah saw a flying roll that symbolized a curse from the Lord that goes throughout the whole earth, and “into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth falsely by my name”. The curse will consume the house, and **he that deceives** (the word “thief” is translated from the Hebrew word gannab, which derives from the Hebrew word ganab, a primary root meaning to *thieve* (lit. or fig.); by impl. to *deceive*. (Strong’s Concordance), and he that swears falsely in the Lord’s name will be cut off from the house.

Then Zechariah saw an ephah (a measuring container) go forth, which is “their” (the people above mentioned) resemblance or outward appearance throughout the earth. There was a talent of lead that symbolizes a woman sitting in the midst of the ephah, declared to be wickedness. Zechariah saw two women having the wings of a stork carrying the ephah, containing the

wicked woman, to the land of Shinar, to build it a house that is placed on “her own base”.

The **message** in this scripture is that where people use **the Lord’s name** in a **false** and **deceitful** manner, **He invokes evil upon them** and cuts them off, or **separates them from Himself and His house**. **They build a house** for this wicked woman (the woman and the whore described in Rev. 17:1-6), and it sets on **“her” base**. In contrast, **the Lord’s house** is a spiritual house **built “upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone”**. Significantly, “her” house is built in **“Shinar”**, the land where the Old Testament **Babylon** was located (See Dan. 1:1,2).

The **origin** and the **content** of this house is described at **Genesis 11**

¹ And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech.

² And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of **Shinar**; and they dwelt there.

³ And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had **brick for stone**, and **slime** had they **for mortar**.

⁴ And **they said**, Go to, let **us build us** a city and a tower, whose top may **reach unto heaven**; and let **us make us** a **name**, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.

⁵ And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the **children of men** **builded**.

⁶ And the **LORD said**, Behold, the **people is one**, and they have all **one language**; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which **they have imagined to do**.

⁷ Go to, **let us go down**, and there **confound** their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.

⁸ So **the LORD** scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of **all the earth**: and they left off to build the city.

⁹ Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because **the LORD did there confound** the language of all the earth: and **from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth**.

We observe that early in man’s history, after the flood, the generations of Noah were self-motivated **to build something** that would **reach to heaven**, making **a name for themselves**, lest they be scattered throughout the earth and **lose their common identity**. **This man made edifice** has a **religious connotation** that is **displeasing to God**. Instead of being **substantively Divine**, it’s construction consists of “brick for stone”, and “slime” “for mortar”. Scripture refers to “untempered mortar”, metaphorically, to illustrate a structure that is built, but not according to His word. **This is addressed at: Ezekiel 13**

⁷ Have ye not seen a **vain vision**, and have ye not spoken a **lying divination**, whereas ye say, **The LORD saith it; albeit I have not spoken?**

⁸ Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; **Because** ye have spoken vanity, and seen lies, therefore, behold, **I am against you, saith the Lord GOD.**

⁹ And mine hand shall be upon **the prophets** that see **vanity**, and that **divine lies**: they **shall not be in the assembly of my people**, neither shall they be **written in the writing of the house of Israel**, neither shall they enter into the land of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the Lord GOD.

¹⁰ Because, even because they have **seduced my people**, saying, **Peace**; and **there was no peace**; and **one built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar**:

¹¹ Say unto them which daub it with untempered mortar, that **it shall fall**: there shall be an overflowing shower; and ye, O great hailstones, shall fall; and a stormy wind shall rend it.

¹² **Lo, when the wall is fallen**, shall it not be said unto you, **Where is the daubing wherewith ye have daubed it?**

¹³ **Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; I will** even rend it with a stormy wind in my fury; and there shall be an overflowing shower in mine anger, and great hailstones in my fury to **consume it.**

¹⁴ **So will I break down the wall that ye have daubed with untempered mortar**, and bring it down to the ground, **so that the foundation thereof shall be discovered**, and it shall fall, and ye shall be **consumed in the midst thereof**: and ye shall know that **I am the LORD.**

Referring back to the Genesis passage, the Lord intervened against the effort to build a city and a tower that would reach to heaven. In the above passage in Ezekiel, **the Lord is against His people's effort to build a religious edifice founded on distortions of His revealed truth.** In the Genesis passage this effort was named "**Babel**" because **God confounded** their language. Similarly, in the Ezekiel passage God will bring down what His people build with "untempered mortar", "so that the **foundation** thereof shall be discovered". **The word "Babel" means confusion because the Lord confounds the effort. Any theological system of thought that is held together with concepts that are inaccurate has its' confusion revealed when placed under the scrutiny of the word of God.**

Lest someone think that the scriptures in the Old Testament are not credible testimony for explaining the Lord's working with the church, we will inquire in the New Testament. **We read at: 1 Corinthians 10**

¹ Moreover, **brethren**, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that **all our fathers** were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;

² **And were all baptized unto Moses** in the cloud and in the sea;

³ And did all **eat the same spiritual meat**;

⁴ And did **all drink the same spiritual drink**: for they drank of **that spiritual Rock** that followed them: and **that Rock was Christ.**

⁵ **But with many of them God was not well pleased**: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

⁶ **Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.**

⁷ Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

⁸ Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.

⁹ Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.

¹⁰ Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.

¹¹ **Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.**

Hebrews 3

¹ Wherefore, **holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling**, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;

² Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house.

³ For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house.

⁴ For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God.

⁵ And **Moses verily was faithful in all his house**, as a servant, **for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after;**

⁶ But **Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.**

⁷ Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice,

⁸ Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

⁹ When **your fathers** tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.

¹⁰ Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, **They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways.**

¹¹ So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)

¹² **Take heed, brethren**, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of **unbelief, in departing from the living God.**

¹³ But **exhort one another daily**, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the **deceitfulness of sin.**

¹⁴ For we are made **partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;**

We have viewed the origin and nature of Babylon. Now we will view Babylon as it exists at the end of this age.

Revelation 17

¹ And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of **the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:**

² **With whom the kings of the earth** have committed fornication, and **the inhabitants of the earth** have been **made drunk** with the wine of her fornication.

³ So he carried me away in the spirit **into the wilderness:** and I saw **a woman** sit upon a scarlet coloured **beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.**

⁴ And **the woman was arrayed** in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in **her hand** full of **abominations** and **filthiness** of her fornication:

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

⁶ And I saw the **woman drunken** with **the blood of the saints**, and with **the blood of the martyrs of Jesus**: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.

The Lord calls Babylon the great whore, which suggests that she invites in and includes that which should not be there. **Babylon** “is become **the habitation of devils**, and the hold of **every foul spirit**, and a cage for **every unclean and hateful bird**”-18:2. The “many waters” that she sits on are “peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues”-17:15. She is aligned with the “beast” that has seven heads and ten horns-17:3. She has great wealth-17:4, and glorifies herself, living in luxury with the kings of the earth-18:7,9. The merchants of the earth are made rich through her material abundance-18:3.

Babylon, as the habitation of devils, and every foul spirit has a religious context. This religious aspect is evidenced in the Old Testament description of Babylon:

Jeremiah 50

³⁸ A drought is upon her waters; and they shall be dried up: for **it is the land of graven images, and they are mad upon their idols.**

Daniel 1

¹ In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah **came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it.**

² And **the Lord gave** Jehoiakim king of Judah **into his hand**, with part of **the vessels of the house of God: which he carried** into the land of Shinar **to the house of his god**; and he brought the vessels into the **treasure house of his god.**

Daniel 3

¹⁴ **Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them**, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, **do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?**

¹⁵ Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye **fall down and worship the image which I have made**; well: **but if ye worship not**, ye shall **be cast** the same hour **into the midst of a burning fiery furnace**; and **who is that God** that shall deliver you out of my hands?

The Lord’s call to His people is to “**Come out of her**” and to not share in her sins. *If the Lord’s people remain in this vast religious system, they will be judged with it*-Rev. 18:4. Just as the three Hebrew men were cast into the furnace of fire because they would not worship the image that the king had made, even so, those of the Lord’s children who, at the end of this age, will not worship the image of the beast will be killed-Rev. 13:15. Babylon is

“drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus”. *Those of the Lord’s people who continue in Babylon will escape persecution at the hands of men, however, they will suffer divine judgment for their unfaithfulness.*

This Babylonian condition has application with the same admonition to the Lord’s people during this entire age. We read at **2 Corinthians 6**

¹¹ O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged.

¹² Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels.

¹³ Now for a recompence in the same, (I speak as unto my children,) be ye also enlarged.

¹⁴ **Be ye not unequally yoked together** with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

¹⁵ And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

¹⁶ And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for **ye are the temple of the living God**; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

¹⁷ **Wherefore come out from among them, and** be ye separate, saith the Lord, **and** touch not the unclean thing; **and** I will receive you.

¹⁸ **And** will be a Father unto you, **and** ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

The basis upon which the Lord’s people “come out” is explained by the following passages of scripture:

1 John 2

²⁶ These things have I written unto you concerning them that **seduce** you.

²⁷ But **the anointing which ye have received** of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: **but as the same anointing teacheth** you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and **even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.**

²⁸ And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, **and not be ashamed before him at his coming.**

²⁹ If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that everyone that doeth righteousness is born of him.

John 10

¹ Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

² But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

³ To him the porter openeth; and **the sheep hear his voice**; and he calleth his own sheep by name, and **leadeth them out.**

⁴ And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and **the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.**

⁵ And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: **for they know not the voice of strangers.**

Babylon’s involvement in commerce is such that when Babylon falls the system of commerce collapses. We read at **Revelation 18**

⁹ And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with

her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning,

¹⁰ Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas **that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.**

¹¹ **And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more:**

God's judgment on Babylon is referred to in several different passages in the book of Revelation.

Revelation 14

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

Revelation 16

¹⁹ And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

Revelation 17

¹ And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:

Revelation 18

² 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.

To understand what John recorded, we must be mindful that the things do not necessarily occur in the order in which he recorded them. Chapter seventeen is the only passage that explains the fall of Babylon. The first beast in **chapter thirteen is the beast having seven heads and ten horns. Also, he is identified as the beast "that was, and is not, and yet is"-Rev. 13: 8. In **chapter seventeen** we learn that the "seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth"-Rev. 17: 9. There have been seven consecutive kings, five are fallen, the sixth king is in power. When the seventh king ascends to power, he holds power for only a short time-Rev. 17:10. He is replaced by the beast that "was, and is not", who is the eighth king, and is of the seven. **This eighth king is the one who goes into perdition-Rev. 17:11. He is the beast who is worshipped by all persons whose names are not written in the Lambs book of life.****

The ten horns are ten kings who receive power for a short period of time with the beast-Rev. 17:12. They are one mind with the beast and give their power to serve him-Rev 17:13. These ten kings hate the "whore" and God puts in their hearts to fulfill His will and bring about her fall-Rev. 17:16,17. Babylon, referred to as the "woman", and that "great city" that reigned over the kings of the earth comes to her end-Rev.17:16-18.

Also, in the Old Testament, the fall of Babylon is accomplished by certain nations:

Jeremiah 50

⁹ For, lo, I will raise and cause to come up **against Babylon** an assembly of **great nations** from the north country: and **they shall set themselves in array against her; from thence she shall be taken:** their arrows shall be as of a mighty expert man; **none shall return in vain.**

¹⁰ And Chaldea shall be a spoil: all that spoil her shall be satisfied, saith the LORD.

Jeremiah 51

²⁷ Set ye up a standard in the land, blow the trumpet among the nations, **prepare the nations** against her, call together against her **the kingdoms** of Ararat, Minni, and Ashchenaz; appoint a captain against her; cause the horses to come up as the rough caterpillers.

²⁸ Prepare against her **the nations with the kings of the Medes**, the captains thereof, and all the rulers thereof, and all the land of his dominion.

²⁹ And the land shall tremble and sorrow: **for every purpose of the LORD shall be performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation without an inhabitant.**

Here again, we see the parallel between Old Testament events and the events that they foreshadowed in the New Testament. Such parallel enabled those who heard the gospel proclaimed by the apostles to “search the scriptures daily, whether those things were so”. (Acts 17:11) At that time the scriptures that they searched were those of the Old Testament. Paul declared that he ministered, “saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come”-see Acts 26:22.