

I. Review

- A. John has just witnessed the bowls of wrath being poured out upon those who worship the Antichrist and bear his mark of allegiance. One of the angels responsible for pouring out the bowls tells John that he wants to explain why so many individuals received such harsh judgement and still refused to repent and blasphemed God. (Rev. 16:2, 9,11, 21, 17:1)
- B. The angel then shows John a symbolic vision to explain to him how the nations positioned themselves to be so wicked and deceived. He shows him a beautiful powerful luxurious woman, riding on a beast of prosperity. The vision represented a ideological system (harlot Babylon) that in the future many of the leaders and peoples of the earth will give their love and worship to. (Rev. 17:1-6)
 - 1. Even though on the outside everything about this system seems wonderful and desirous her golden cup of happiness and wealth is filled with abominations and acts of harlotry against God.
- C. John is overcome with awe and marvels at the greatness of this system that has infiltrated the religion, government, and commerce of the earth and persecutes and kills the saints of God.

II. Babel “Gate to Heaven”

- A. What John saw was a miracle to behold indeed. Can you imagine a world in which the great majority of its leaders and people all held the same religious and governmental values? A world where China, Russia, America, and the Middle East were working together towards the same goal and there was no longer striving between them? There was only one time in the history of the planet where this type of unity existed.
- B. Only a few generations after the Lord destroyed wickedness from the planet with the exception of Noah and his family humanity became fully united with one purpose and one ideology. Their desire and purpose was to throw off the restraints of the righteousness and supremacy of God and pursue the depths of their own desires apart from Him. (Gen. 11:1-9)
 - 1. The residents of Babel sought to build a tower whose “top is in the heavens.” This refers to reaching into the spirit realm on their own and being their own gods. It is not a reference to the height of a building that was made of mud bricks. The Lord had told the people to multiply and *fill the earth* (Gen. 1:28). The people of Babel wanted to *stay in* Babel to accomplish more together instead of going forth to fill the earth. (Gen. 11:4, 28:12, Jhn. 1:51)

2. God makes an alarming statement concerning their endeavor to build the great city of Babel in which they could explore the depths of their desires with no God to put them in check. He tells us that if they in fact were to maintain their unity that they nothing that they wanted to accomplish in sin would be impossible for them.
3. The Lord scattered their language to slow down their escalation of sin until the end times. I believe the harlot will reality is to have a “tower of access” to the depths of unrestrained depravity in the demonic realm enabling them to go to new heights of sin. In the Babylonian language, Babel means the “*gate of heaven or gate of God,*” yet in Hebrew it means “*confusion.*”
4. A word of caution – There are numerous books and websites that speak of the ancient city of Babel, Nimrod its king, his wife, and the demonic religion they started. There is very little detail of these things in the bible so unfortunately these resources pull heavily on extra bible sources and ancient traditions. Many of these sources and traditions are demonstrably not true and often times contradict one another. In my opinion a person must engage in large amounts of speculation concerning these things and should keep their focus upon what the scriptures say. (Gen. 10:8-10)

III. Babylon the Great

- A. Fourteen hundred years later the great Babylonian empire emerged upon the world scene unparalleled in its power and wealth. Its capital city Babylon was located in the same exact place as the original tower of Babel. The ideology of this nation and its great king was different than any other who had come before it or since. Rather than conquering nations and change their citizenship and culture through force they endeavored to change their allegiance and identity by eliminating ultimate truth and slowly assimilating them into their culture.
 1. Whereas the scriptures give us very little information about the ancient city of Babel and its culture the bible has vast amounts of information concerning this empire, its kings, its culture and ideology. (2 Chron., 2 Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel)
- B. In 598 BC King Nebuchadnezzar invaded Jerusalem and took its King and 10,000 of the nation of Israel’s top governmental, military, educational, marketplace, and religious leaders and their families back to Babylon as slaves. (2 Kings 24:14)
 1. Nebuchadnezzar mixed the articles of the God of Israel with the gods of his nation and chose from the captives some of the children of the nobles and kings of Israel to be assimilated into the Babylonian culture. Among these were Daniel and his friends. These individuals were given roles and responsibilities within the Babylonian empire in order to secure peace with the conquered nation of Israel. (Dan. 1:1-7)

- C. The people of Israel discovered their captivity would be nowhere near as brutal as their forefathers endured in Egypt. In fact, the luxury and freedoms of Babylon fed their desire for comfort and stability and they fell in love with the splendor and spirit of the great city. Within a few generations they had all but forgotten their destiny and role as the people of God.
1. The Babylonian ideological system of tolerance allowed them to continue to have and celebrate the worship the God of their fathers as long as they pledged their love and allegiance to the Babylonian Gods as well. This system had so infiltrated the nation of Israel that when Nebuchadnezzar built a statue of himself and demanded all peoples and nations to worship him only 3 men refused. (Dan. 3)
 2. As the years of captivity wore on the Jewish people as a whole chose to forsake Gods purpose for Jerusalem and His covenants with them in exchange for citizenship in Babylon. A short 70 years from the time Nebuchadnezzar first invaded Jerusalem God made a way for His people tot return home. Of the roughly 1.5 million Israelites who went into captivity only 50,000 individuals said yes and came out of the Babylonian system. (Ezra 2, Rev. 18:4)

IV. Spirit of Babylon

- A. Although there are difference's in ancient Babel and the Babylonian empire the major values of the spirit behind these two is very clear. The culture of both was a culture that celebrated the worship of self and human accomplishment apart from God and established themselves as the gods of their own lives and destiny's.
- B. They unified under the banner of tolerance at the expense of truth and prostituted themselves out to the glory human accomplishment, comforts, and the desires of the flesh.

"Come let us build ourselves a city, and a tower who's top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves; lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the earth." (Gen. 11:4)

"Is this not Babylon the Great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?" (Dan. 4:30)

"In the measure that she (Harlot Babylon) glorified herself and lived luxuriously in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, I sit as a queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow." (Rev. 18:7)

"They cried out when they saw the smoke of her (Harlot Babylon) burning, saying 'What is like this great city!'" (Rev. 18:18)

V. Resisting Babylon

“The kings of the earth committed fornication (with the Harlot Babylon) and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication. (Rev. 17:2)

“But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the kings delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank;” (Dan. 1:8)

- A. The lifestyle of Daniel stands as a shining beacon of hope and way forward in the coming days as the ideological system and spirit of Babylon takes hold of the earth in its fullness. He held a high governmental position in a system of spiritual harlotry and rather than being seduced by it or running from it, he overcame and brought truth to those around him. He was an influencer of righteousness and truth in a culture of darkness and deception.
- B. There is much to be gleaned from his life that we would be wise to emulate in the days in which we live. We will look at this much more in the days ahead but for now let's examine a few of the proponents of his overcoming lifestyle and the spiritual disciplines he embraced.
 1. Lifestyle of Fasting – Though Daniel was surrounded by luxury, comforts, wealth, and power he lived a lifestyle of fasting and in so doing he positioned himself to keep his spirit tender and sensitive to the Lord in a culture of spiritual dullness. (Dan. 1:8, 5:17, 9:3, 10:3)
 2. Lifestyle of Prayer – He prioritized his life around his prayer schedule rather than fitting prayer into it. His prayer life consisted of both communing with God and intercession. (Dan. 2:20-23, 6:10, 9:3-19)
 3. Lifestyle of Understanding – Daniel set himself to understand the why and what of the Lord's leadership and His heart. As he positioned himself to understand the Lord gave him understanding of the days he lived in. As Daniel understood what the Lord wanted to do he partnered with it rather than leaning on his own wisdom. (Dan. 1:17, 2:14, 21-22, 7:16, 8:16, 9:2, 10:14)
 4. Lifestyle of Godly Community – Daniel was very intentional to spend time in fellowship, discipleship, and corporate prayer and worship with others. He fought for it knowing the mutual strengthening it would bring to withstand the culture of Babylon. (Dan. 1:6, 12, 2:17-18, 48-49, 3:12-30, 6:23)

Book of Revelation Study
The Mystery Revealed

Sunday Oct 28th 2018
(Rev. 17:7-18)