

What Saith the Scripture?

<http://www.WhatSaithTheScripture.com/>

Babylon the Great (Part 1) **Or, The Coming Destruction of the One World Religion**

The Purpose and History of Babylon the Great

"And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH"
(Revelation 17:5).

by Tom Stewart

2-7-99

Preface

Any attempt to describe the final destruction of Babylon the Great-- "THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (Revelation 17:5)-- demands an identification of that system, i.e., its purpose, history, as well as present and prophetic future. Because the spiritual warfare of the Saints involves wrestling not with simply flesh and blood, but "against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12); it becomes increasingly apparent to us-- the earthly participants-- as the end draws near, that the identity of Babylon the Great has been plainly written "upon her forehead" (Revelation 17:5) by our Great God and Saviour Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13).

Understanding the true nature of Babylon the Great is as simple as knowing whether a child is good or bad. "Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right" (Proverbs 20:11). It only remains for God's people to "judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24) concerning Babylon the Great. To act consistently with that understanding, will require coming out of her that "ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Revelation 18:4). Also, to reach out to those still enslaved by Babylon the Great, is consistent with Christian love. "And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh" (Jude 23).

Purpose of Babylon the Great: To Seduce the World to Worship Antichrist

Eve was seduced by Satan. "And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat" (Genesis 3:13). And, through Adam's transgression "death passed upon all men" (Romans 5:12), because Adam sought to please his wife more than God. The LORD Jesus Christ said, "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me" (Matthew 10:37). Satan seduced Eve, the "weaker vessel" (1Peter 3:7), to get at Adam, both to whom were given "dominion" over the Earth (Genesis 1:28). In so doing, Satan usurped dominion of the planet from both of our original parents, becoming the "god of this world" (2Corinthians 4:4).

And so, "death reigned" (Romans 5:17), because the Seducer questioned the "goodness of God" (2:4)-- "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" (Genesis 3:1)-- and contradicted the truthfulness of God-- "Ye shall not surely die" (3:4). Thus, the Seducer, who "is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44), seeks not just dominion over God's creation; but, Beelzebub seeks the worship reserved only for the Almighty. "13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into Heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High" (Isaiah 14:13-14).

The purpose of Babylon the Great is to direct the world in worshipping the Antichrist, the Man of Sin (2Thessalonians 2:3); so **"that [the Antichrist] as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God"** (2:4). In somewhat the same fashion that the Father, Son, and Spirit "are one" (John 17:22); even so, Satan, the Antichrist, and the False Prophet are one. At least for a time, the False Prophet will direct the world to worship the Antichrist. "And he [the False Prophet] exerciseth all the power of the first beast [the Antichrist] before him, and causeth the Earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed" (Revelation 13:12). Accordingly, worship of the Antichrist "in the temple of God" (2Thessalonians 2:3) will be the same as worshipping the "Adversary the Devil" (1Peter 5:8), whose heart's desire is to "exalt [his] throne above the stars of God" (Isaiah 14:13). And, Babylon the Great, who employs the "servants of corruption" (2Peter 2:19), is the vehicle to accomplish that worship.

Subtily, deception, and seduction are the necessary modes of operation for those who descend to so low a level as to serve Babylon the Great. "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (2Timothy 3:13). Notice that the servants of Babylon the Great are not just **guilty** of "deceiving" but also of "being deceived" (3:13). Any time man submits to obey sin and the Devil, he becomes the "servant of sin" (John 8:34). The Tempter thus enlists his followers through a voluntary servitude-- "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not" (2Corinthians 4:4). The success of Babylon the Great will finally be so great that all but the Elect, the "Called, and Chosen, and Faithful" (Revelation 17:14), will be seduced. "For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the Elect" (Mark 13:22).

History of Babylon the Great: Beginning of Babylon and the Tower of Babel

Nimrod, whose name means "rebellion", was the great-grandson of Noah, through the lineage of Ham. He was a "mighty one in the Earth" (Genesis 10:8)-- a "mighty hunter before the LORD" (10:9). Nimrod's might and skill in the hunt easily lent itself to the exercise of human government; for God intended the force of arms to be used in human government's punishment of evil doers. "For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain" (Romans 13:4). The cunning employed to hunt an animal can be as easily applied to snare the "souls of men" (Revelation 18:13).

Babel-- also translated as "Babylon"-- was the city that was the "beginning of [Nimrod's] kingdom" (Genesis 10:10). It was situated "in the land of Shinar" (10:10)-- modern Iraq. In that location, we are

told by Scripture, a significant event occurred "in the Earth after the flood" (10:32)-- the building of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11). Though Scripture does not use the expression Tower of Babel, nor does it pointedly declare that Nimrod built the infamous Tower of Babel, we are informed that the people purposed to build "a city and a tower" (11:4), i.e., implying that Nimrod built both the city of Babylon and the Tower of Babel. It providentially connects the location of Nimrod's city to the location of the site of the Tower-- a "plain in the land of Shinar" (11:2). The very name Babel means "confusion", just as we presently describe one whose speech we cannot understand as "babbling". "Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the Earth" (11:9).

What is the significance of the Tower of Babel to Babylon the Great? The opening statement of Genesis 11 gives us the setting for the construction of the fabled Tower. "And the whole Earth was of one language, and of one speech" (Genesis 11:1). Following the Almighty's destruction of the planet by the Flood, the Earth had yet to be overspread by the migration of man. "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" (11:4). Man's unity is a blessing from God. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psalm 133:1). However, it is an insolent and disgusting thing for man to unite against the LORD God. "Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished" (Proverbs 16:5). Ultimately, all attempts at unifying man without God, and especially against God, will fail; for the LORD Jesus Christ will "rule all nations with a rod of iron" (Revelation 12:5) and shall "dash [all rebels] in pieces like a potter's vessel" (Psalm 2:9).

Just as the Creator evicted Adam (and Eve) from the Garden of Eden "lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the Tree Of Life, and eat, and live for ever" (Genesis 3:22), and as Jehovah destroyed the Earth by the Flood because "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually" (6:5); even so, God Only Wise (Romans 16:27) scattered man from building the Tower of Babel, lest "nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do" (Genesis 11:6). Therefore, the God of Love and Peace (2Corinthians 13:11) has continued to restrain man from **the purpose of the Tower of Babel, which was the exaltation of the name of man in the face of God**. "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" (Genesis 11:4).

The Mystery of Iniquity (2Thessalonians 2:7) will finally be unleashed and unrestrained-- at the time of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture (2:7)-- to allow for the exaltation of the Antichrist, the Son of Perdition (2:3), as the final affront against the Blessed and Only Potentate, the King of Kings, and LORD of Lords (1Timothy 6:15). [See our article, "Must There Be a Pre-Tribulation Rapture?", for an exposition of 2Thessalonians 2.] But, this affront is doomed, because we have it on God's own Word that (prophetically) "Babylon the Great is fallen, is fallen" (Revelation 18:2).

History of Babylon the Great: Baal Worship Plagues the People of God

Israel's reoccurring plague had to be its constant confrontation with the worship of Baal, the sun-god whose name meant "lord". "The priests said not, Where is the LORD? and they that handle the Law

knew Me not: the pastors also transgressed against Me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit" (Jeremiah 2:8). The wicked prophet Balaam, who counselled Balak against Moses and the children of Israel, was responsible for introducing this offence and stumbling to Israel. **Balaam told Balak that Israel could be defeated by encouraging the Israelites to intermarry with the Canaanites, who would teach Israel to worship Baal; and then, Israel's God would be forced against His own people.** "1 And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. 2 And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. 3 And Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel" (Numbers 25:1-3).

We have a limited idea of the nature of Baal worship-- limited to the Word of God-- because we are intentionally "simple concerning evil" (Romans 16:19). However, Scripture does wisely describe the degradation of Baal worship, in that:

- (1) Israel gave their children over as a sacrifice to Baal, i.e., they murdered their own children. "They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind" (Jeremiah 19:5).
- (2) Israel worshipped before the image of Baal, i.e., they paid homage to the god that the image represented. "For he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and made also molten images for Baalim" (2Chronicles 28:2).
- (3) Israel kissed the image of Baal, i.e., they gave submission and affection to an inanimate "thing". "Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him" (1Kings 19:18).
- (4) Israel burned savour and incense to Baal, i.e., they attempted to cultivate the favour of their god. "Then shall ye know that I am the LORD, when their slain men shall be among their idols round about their altars, upon every high hill, in all the tops of the mountains, and under every green tree, and under every thick oak, the place where they did offer sweet savour to all their idols" (Ezekiel 6:13).
- And (5) Israel promoted abuse of themselves with mankind, i.e., they descended to the level of Sodom and Gomorrha. "And he brake down the houses of the sodomites [homosexuals], that were by the house of the LORD [i.e., where Baal was being worshipped], where the women wove hangings for the grove" (2Kings 23:7).

History of Babylon the Great: Elijah Confronts the Prophets of Baal

About 300 years before the Babylonian Captivity, Israel's contest with Baal worship reached a climax when the prophet Elijah confronted the 450 prophets of Baal atop Mount Carmel. "17 And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? 18 And he answered, **I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the Commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim.** 19 Now therefore send, and

gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table. 20 So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel" (1Kings 18:17-20).

Put simply, Elijah challenged the people to serve God. "And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word" (18:21). Elijah conspired with God to humiliate Baal in front of the nation of Israel. "22 Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. 23 Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: 24 And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the Name of the LORD: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken" (18:22-24).

The prophet Elijah gave the prophets of Baal the opportunity to transact their Baal worship in a familiar environment, i.e., "upon every high hill, in all the tops of the mountains" (Ezekiel 6:13). "25 And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye are many; and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire under. 26 And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made" (1Kings 18:25-26). Even as Jehovah "will mock when [their] fear cometh" (Proverbs 1:26); likewise, Elijah mocked these prophets of Baal, "whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things" (Philippians 3:19). "27 And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked. 28 And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them. 29 And it came to pass, when midday was past, and they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded" (1Kings 18:25-29).

Elijah was not simply attempting to rebuild the LORD's altar, but to call the people back to obedience to the Living God, Who acknowledges that "to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1Samuel 15:22). "30 And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down. 31 And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the Word of the LORD came, saying, Israel shall be thy name: 32 And with the stones he built an altar in the Name of the LORD: and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed" (1Kings 18:30-32).

As the Great God has condescended to teach man "precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little" (Isaiah 28:10); also, He will resort to the dramatic, i.e., an End Time angel flying "in the midst of heaven, having the Everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the Earth" (Revelation 14:6). "33 And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid him on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt

sacrifice, and on the wood. 34 And he said, Do it the second time. And they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time. And they did it the third time. 35 And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water" (1Kings 18:33-35).

Elijah gave what modern, evangelical Christians might term an "altar call", like Joshua before him. "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Joshua 24:15). "36 And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that Thou art God in Israel, and that I am Thy servant, and that I have done all these things at Thy Word. 37 Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that Thou art the LORD God, and that Thou hast turned their heart back again" (1Kings 18:36-37).

Elijah knew that the LORD's "secret is with the righteous" (Proverbs 3:32), and he was "bold as a lion" (Proverbs 28:1), when he stood in front of the people waiting for God's answer to his prayer. "Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench" (1Kings 18:38). The people responded immediately. "And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, He is the God; the LORD, He is the God" (1Kings 18:39). But, since "faith without works is dead" (James 2:26), Elijah demanded the people to act, i.e., to slay the prophets of Baal. "And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there" (1Kings 18:40).

Conclusion

Since Satan, who is the "prince of this world" (John 12:31), has been so successful in promoting the rebellion against our LORD Jesus Christ, "Who is the Blessed and Only Potentate, the KING of Kings, and LORD of Lords" (1Timothy 6:15), it would be a mistake to assume that God's people do not have good reason to rejoice, because:

- (1) The Almighty is sovereignly controlling **all** of the present circumstances, i.e., concerning Babylon the Great. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee: the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain" (Psalm 76:10).
- (2) The Judge of All the Earth (Genesis 18:25) is allowing the cup of Babylon the Great's iniquity to be filled until it is ready for her slaughter. "For in the hand of the LORD there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and He poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the Earth shall wring them out, and drink them" (Psalm 75:8).
- (3) The LORD of the Harvest (Luke 10:2) is allowing more time to bring the unredeemed to Christ, i.e., "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" (Psalm 126:6).
- And, (4) Our Hope, which is the LORD Jesus Christ (1Timothy 1:1), is even more preparing

His people for the Blessed Hope of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture (Titus 2:13) as Babylon the Great's wickedness increases. "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your Redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28).