

Pentwater Bible Church

Isaiah Message 26

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Oil painting by Lucas van Valckenborch (1535–1597)

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Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Isaiah
Message Twenty-Six
THE SUBJECT OF BABYLON
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BABYLON INTRODUCTION

The concept of Babylon is presented in eight chapters in sets of two which are found in four individual books of the Bible. It first appears in Genesis chapters 10 and 11. Then it reappears with additional detail in Isaiah chapters 13 and 14. The third set of chapters is found in Jeremiah chapters 50 and 51 and the final set is located in Revelation chapters 17 and 18. Since we are entering chapter 13 of Isaiah it is important to see exactly what the Bible teaches about Babylon;

Babylon the concept is found in three separate categories in the Bible.

A physical location (city)

An ecclesiastical corruption in the plan that God has laid out.

A way of life on this earth; the world's system and its resulting corruption.

Genesis chapters 10 and 11 describe its origin in terms of its physical location, world systems, founder and corruption. Noah emerging from the Ark had three sons. Shem Ham and Japheth. One son mentioned of Ham was Cush.

Genesis 10:8–10

⁸And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. ⁹He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD. ¹⁰And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar (KJV).

BABYLON THE PHYSICAL CITY

The city of Babylon has existed in one form or another since the time of Nimrod cited in this passage and locates it in modern day southeastern Iraq which were the ancient area of Shinar. This was roughly 1757 AH (Anno Homini, the year of man) counting from the dates given for Adam's life. The translates out to about 2130 B.C. It had been ruled by the ancient Sumerians and Neo-Babylonians who were conquered by the Medes and Persians (cir. 539 B.C.) and was home to Alexander the Great until his death (323 B.C.). It has never yet been destroyed and was partially renovated by Saddam Hussain in the 1990's. It has yet to be destroyed completely as the text in Isaiah 13:19–22 describes. It will be the world political and economic headquarters by the Antichrist when he implements absolute imperialism of a one-world-government. It is located in the area of the fertile crescent where the Garden of Eden is thought to have been.

Herodotus the Greek historian wrote a description of the city (Cir 440 B.C.) which shows it to be quite impressive. He describes a huge metropolis, with large dimensions approximately 14 miles on each of the four sides surrounded by a moat. It is enclosed by a wall 82 ft. wide and 328 ft. high. It is

made entirely of baked bricks. On top of the wall are small houses. Between them is a track wide enough for a four-horse chariot to be driven around the town's circumference. 100 bronze gates are set into the wall. The Euphrates flows in a straight line through the center of the city dividing it into two equal halves. In the middle of each of these halves is a massive building: one contains the royal palace, the other the temple of Zeus Belos (Marduk). The temple area measures 1,246 ft. on each side. At its center is a tower. It consists of eight separate towers standing on top of each other and is accessible via a spiral ascent, which winds upwards around the structure. It is so high that half-way up benches have been set to allow the ascending visitor to take a rest.¹

THE CULTIC ECCLESIASTICAL CORRUPTION

The word "before" in Hebrew is *paneh* and in this context it means defiant. Nimrod: The name means to rebel or to be rebellious. Principally it means to rebel against God.

Josephus says:

"Now it was Nimrod who excited them to such an affront and contempt of God. He was the grandson of Ham (the Biblical text does not name his father), the son of Noah, a bold man, and of great strength of hand. He persuaded them not to ascribe satisfaction to God, as if it was through His means they were happy, but to believe that it was their own courage, which procured that happiness. He also gradually changed the government into tyranny, seeing no other way of turning men from the fear of God, but to bring them into a constant dependence on his power..."²

The Tower of Babel was in essence an attempt to have their own way apart from God. They were commanded to "Be fruitful and fill the earth." Instead they attempted to settle down in one location and establish a world state to offset the divine rule. The tower was meant to be a rebellious attempt to break from divine rule. They did not wish to obey God.

Whether the text that follows is fact or not is not important. It became worship to the people who followed the occult apart from the true God. Tradition suggests that Nimrod died a violent death. One tradition says that a wild animal killed him. Another says that Shem killed him because he had led the people into the worship of Baal. According to ancient Egyptian and Babylonian traditions, his mother was Semiramis. Sometimes Semiramis is also referred to as his wife, leading to the belief that Nimrod married his mother. Also, according to these traditions, Semiramis, who rose to greatness because of her son, was presented with a difficulty when her son died, so instead she pronounced him to be a god, so that she herself would become a goddess.

Even though Semiramis claimed to be a virgin she had another son, named Tammuz, who she said was the reincarnation of Nimrod. She became known as the "Virgin Mother", "Holy Mother" and the "Queen of Heaven" and was symbolized by the Moon. So, began the worship of Semiramis and the child-god, and the whole paraphernalia of the Babylonian occultic religious system.

¹ Herodotus, *The Histories*, translated out of Greek by Aubrey de Selincourt, Published by the Easton Press, Norwalk, Ct 2000 pgs.70–72

² Josephus, Flavius Translated by William Whiston, *The Works of Josephus*, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA 01916-3473, 1987, Pg. 35 Antiquities of the Jews Chapter 4:2”

After the decline of Babylon, the false religion spread through migrations of the Babylonians to other cultures where the occultic worship flourished under different names.

In its organized form false religion began with the tower of Babel and Nimrod, from which Babylon derives its name. Certainly, Cain was the first false worshiper, and many individuals after him followed his example. But *organized* pagan religion began with the descendants of Ham, one of Noah's three sons, who decided to erect a great monument that would "reach into heaven" and make themselves a great name. Under the leadership of the proud and apostate Nimrod they planned to storm heaven and unify their power and prestige in a great worldwide system of worship. That was man's first counterfeit religion, from which every other false religion in one way or another has sprung.

God's judgment frustrated their primary purpose of making a grand demonstration of humanistic unity. By confusing "their language, that they may not understand one another's speech," and scattering "them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth" (Genesis 11:7–8) the Lord halted the building of the tower and fractured their solidarity. But those people took with them the seeds of that false, idolatrous religion, seeds that they and their descendants have been planting throughout the world ever since. The ideas and forms were altered, adapted, and sometimes made more sophisticated, but the basic system remained, and remains, unchanged. That is why Babel, or Babylon, is called "the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth" (Revelation 17:5). She was the progenitor of all false religions. From various ancient sources, it seems that Nimrod's wife/mother, Semiramis apparently was high priestess of the Babel religion and the founder of all mystery religions. After the tower was destroyed and the multiplicity of languages developed, she was worshiped as a goddess under many different names. She became Ishtar of Syria, Astarte of Phoenicia, Isis of Egypt, Aphrodite of Greece, and Venus of Rome—in each case the deity of sexual love and fertility. Her son Tammuz, also came to be deified under various names and was the consort of Ishtar and god of the underworld.

According to the cult of Ishtar, Tammuz was conceived by a sunbeam, a counterfeit version of Jesus' virgin birth. Tammuz corresponded to Baal in Phoenicia, Osiris in Egypt, Eros in Greece, and Cupid in Rome. In every case, the worship of those gods and goddesses was associated with sexual immorality. The celebration of Lent which has no basis in Scripture, but rather developed from the pagan celebration of Semiramis' mourning for forty days over the death of Tammuz (cf. Ezekiel 8:14) before his alleged resurrection is another of Satan's mythical counterfeits.

Ezekiel 8:13–15

¹³ He said also unto me, Turn thee yet again, [and] thou shalt see greater abominations that they do. ¹⁴ Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the LORD'S house which [was] toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz. ¹⁵ Then said he unto me, Hast thou seen [this], O son of man? turn thee yet again, [and] thou shalt see greater abominations than these (KJV).

Ezekiel is communing with The Lord in a vision and the Lord showed him these things. The Babylonians took Ezekiel to Babylon in the second invasion of Nebuchadnezzar. He came to Jerusalem three times. The first in 605 B.C. and subsequent to that there were two additional invasions in 597 B.C. and 586 B.C. Sometime after the 2nd invasion and before the 3rd invasion the Lord showed Ezekiel the extent of the apostasy the Jews had fallen into.

That the text of the Bible develops the concept of Nimrod being “against” the Lord is confirmed in several Jewish writings. The Targum of Jonathan describes Nimrod to be the mightiest rebel against the Lord that ever was on the earth. The Jerusalem Targum reads that he was mighty in sin before the Lord and a hunter of men exhorting them to leave the judgments of Shem and adhere to the judgments of Nimrod. Nimrod founded a system of government, which was apart from God and set men to worship the sun, the moon and the stars. A Targum is a Jewish writing similar to a commentary of the first century A.D, which explained the Hebrew text of the Old Testament in an era when Hebrew was declining as a spoken language. Unenlightened humans did not gradually develop idolatry.

It came about two generations after Noah’s sons left the ark (about 100 years). Idolatry rose suddenly under Nimrod the great grandson of Noah. He brought it into being to counteract the will and worship of the true God, Jehovah. It began to deify The Lust of the Eyes, The Lust of the Flesh and the Pride of Life instead of the true Creator.

THE BABYLONIAN WAY OF LIFE

For nearly 2,000 years Babylon was the most important city in the world. It was a commercial and financial center of Mesopotamia. The arts of divination, astronomy, astrology, accounting, mathematics and private and commercial law all sprang up from Babylon. In short many of our world systems came from that region. With the exception for divination and astrology, here is nothing wrong with the systems they created. The problem arises when mankind worships these systems instead of God.

Herodotus, the father of history in describing the city said that inside the walls were fortresses and temples containing immense statues of solid gold.³ Nebuchadnezzar came from the sea lands of the tribe of Kedar in the south. (Kuwait) So did Mohammed and Sadaam Hussein. Nebuchadnezzar also built the Ishtar Gate. It was a double gate at the south end of the processional way, which was dedicated to the goddess Ishtar. It was covered with brilliant blue glazed bricks and bas-relief animal sculptures. It is now in the state museum of Berlin. Nebuchadnezzar paved the street sidewalks with small red stone slabs. Along the edge of each stone were carved, "I am Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, who made this," demonstrating Nebuchadnezzar's absolute power and influence over Babylon.

The Babylonians divided the day into 24 hours, each hour into 60 minutes, each minute into 60 seconds. This form of counting (hexasegimal or base 60) has survived for 4000 years. Their year and calendar had 30-month days and 360-day years. (Same as Genesis 7 & 8, Daniel 7:25 Revelation 12:6, 14 and Revelation 13:5)

They had tables of squares, square roots, cubes, cube roots, reciprocals, exponential functions, and log functions. They had knowledge of trigonometry, the Pythagorean theorem 1200 years before Pythagoras did, and pi. They divided the circle into 360 degrees.

³ Herodotus, *The Histories*, translated out of Greek by Aubrey de Selincourt, Published by the Easton Press, Norwalk, Ct 2000 pgs.70–72

Babylon spiritually symbolizes the city of man or the city of Satan. It has never been destroyed yet. It fell into disrepair over the years since Cyrus took over the city. Under Saddam Hussein rebuilt it and God will destroy it.

THE TWO WOMEN

The book of Revelation describes two women who are mothers that represent God's chosen people and the Babylonian system from Nimrod to the end of the present age. It is important to demonstrate the contrast between the two to see how God characterizes His chosen in true faith and the abomination of idolatry that He is about to overthrow with the destruction of Babylon and the Babylonian system.

The first is called woman clothed with the sun the moon and the stars and she is presented in the 12th chapter of Revelation as representing the Nation Israel or God's chosen. This is not to say that all Israel were true to Him. However, He chose them and gave them His oracles (Scripture) and brought His Messiah through them (Romans 3:2). The woman presented in the 17th chapter of Revelation represents the Nimrod initiated Babylonian system of corruption. Both are mothers. The first brought forth a son who is to rule all nations (Jesus). The second is the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth. Both are splendidly dressed. The first of clothed with the sun and her clothing is made of light from heaven. The second is clothed in purple, and scarlet, decked with gold and precious stones and pearls. All her ornaments are from below, either in the earth or the sea. Both are very influential in their relative spheres of influence. The first has the moon, the empress of night and the powers of darkness under her feet. The second has the rule of kingdoms and kings upon the earth. Both suffer. The first gets persecuted by the dragon (Satan) who tries to devour her child (Jesus) and the second gets persecuted by ten kings who make her desolate and naked and eat her flesh, and burn her with fire, while God in His strength and judgment gives her plagues. Both are very conspicuous and fill a lot of space in the history of the world. Both are counterparts of each other. One is a pure woman and the other is a harlot. The first is hated by the powers on the earth the second is loved, flattered, and caressed by them. The first produces masculine nobility and is caught away to God and His throne. The second produces effeminate impurity, which calls down the fierceness of the divine wrath. The first is sustained and helped by celestial wings and the second is supported and carried by the beast with seven heads and ten horns. The first has a crown of twelve stars wearing the patriarchs and the apostles in her royal diadem while the second has upon her forehead the name of the greatest destroyer and oppressor of the holy people and is drunken with the blood of the prophets and of saints and of all that been slain upon the earth. The first will finally give way to the New Jerusalem with its entire heavenly splendor as the kingdom of heaven is finally here on earth in the restoration of the eternal order. The second gives way to the city of Babylon that becomes under the intense wrath of heaven a habitation of demons and a hold of unclean spirits.

These two women are set against each other as rivals and opposites. Just as Antichrist is the antitheses to Christ so Great Babylon is the antitheses to the Woman who bears the man-child Christ as her rival and antagonist. The true woman is made up of the whole congregation of the faithful from the beginning and the Harlot is made up of the faithless from the beginning.

The Angel calls her the Great Harlot and she wears that name on her forehead. Harlotry is the word God uses to stand for a debauched worship, idolatry and false devotion. When people worship something in place of God for God or give their hearts to idols, systems, doctrines, rites or

administrations that take the place of God the Scriptures call it whoredom, adultery and fornication. (See Jeremiah 3:6, 8, 9; Ezekiel 16:32; Hosea 1 & 2; Revelation 2:22).

The reasons are obvious. God ordained marriage to be a pure and holy union of one man and one woman. When that is broken it is separating what God has placed together. It is a sin against Him. So too is the worship of anything that is outside of God in place of God. We are commanded to love the Lord our God with all of our hearts, souls, mind, and strength. Government was instituted by God, instituted for human good, necessary to man, and invested with rights from the eternal throne. Satan has perverted it to his own evil ends. Most of the world's governments throughout history have served him and his adulterous bride the Great Harlot. True Godly worship have never suited the representatives of power or pleased them for very long. Their worldly ambitions are at odds with their needs of unrestrained power. This is not to say that all have been this way but sooner or later they all fall victim to selfish pride, power and ambitions. They will continue to do so until Christ establishes His government which the Bible says will be upon His shoulders. (Isaiah 9:6)

Revelation 18:4-5 implores us to come out of her.

⁴ And I heard another voice from heaven, saying Come out of her, my people that ye be not partakers of her sins and that ye receive not of her plagues. ⁵ For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities (KJV).

This message that the apostle John received on the isle of Patmos was given by Christ through an angel to him about 96 A.D. It is therefore directed to all people since that time including us. So, 1923 years ago the book of Revelation described the downfall of Babylon. This destruction will include the city, the government, the ecclesiastical systems and the economy. The city of Babylon will be destroyed during the campaign of Armageddon. The three systems will be destroyed and replaced upon Christ's Second Coming. He will replace the government, during Millennium with Jesus on the throne in Jerusalem running it according to His law.

Next message: THE BURDEN OF BABYLON CONTINUED

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