

This week, we will look into the past and the future of Babylon to discover why God addresses this city first before calling down judgment on any of the other nations mentioned in Isaiah 15 through 23.

Day 1 - The Descendants of Ham and Shem - Genesis

In order to look at Babylon's origin, we must go all the way back to Genesis 10. The flood has wiped out all of mankind except for those who escaped on the ark that Noah built. These men and their wives who survived the flood were Noah's sons, Ham, Shem and Japheth. The population of the whole earth came from these three men. In Genesis 10:6, we discover that Ham had a son named Cush and Cush had a son named Nimrod. This is what the Scripture says about Nimrod in Genesis 10:8-10, "Now Cush became the father of Nimrod; he became a mighty one on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, 'Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the LORD.' And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel and Erech and Accad and Calneh, in the land of Shinar." It seems like Nimrod must have been a pretty good guy from the description of him here, but let's take a closer look at what the name "Nimrod" means. Also, Babel becomes Babylon in Genesis 11.

You will need to look at a Bible dictionary or expository notes in the margins of your Bible to discover what the name "Nimrod" means.

I found that this was very difficult information to find. Here is what I found under Nimrod/Babel:

"Nimrod, the son of Cush and founder of the kingdom of Babylon"... "Nimrod is represented as the establisher of Babylon"... This "is invariably outlined in Scripture both in type and prophecy as a religiously and morally evil system."ⁱ Nimrod's name "no doubt suggested to the Israelites the idea of 'rebel' ...against God."ⁱⁱ

"The name Nimrod in the divine account is definitely"... "descriptive of the character of this first world empire-builder"... The simple meaning of "a mighty hunter before Yahweh" ... "is that Nimrod was the exact opposite of the divine ideal of a king – that of a shepherd. Whereas a hunter gratifies himself at the expense of his victim, the shepherd expends himself for the good of the subjects of his care."ⁱⁱⁱ

"Nimrod: This powerful leader was evidently the force behind the building of Babel."
"Babel: The beginning of what later would prove to be Babylon, the destroyer of God's people and His city Jerusalem."^{iv}

In what land do we find this city of Babel? (10:10)

Let's go on to Genesis 11. Please write the description of Babel below using the Scripture wording:

What kind of people can we deduce these people were?

What had God told Ham, Shem, and Japheth when they exited the ark in Genesis 9:1 and 9:7?

What did the descendants of Ham do that would give you the idea that they were rebellious?

What did this descendant of Shem, Abram, do that showed not his rebelliousness toward God, but his obedience to God? (See Genesis 12:1, 4.)

Please record what you have learned about Babylon from today's lesson on the What-the-Bible-Teaches-About-Babylon chart found in the Appendix. Remember to mark where in the Scripture you found this information.

Day 2 – Babylon during Jeremiah's Day and Babylon during the Tribulation Period

Today, I would like you to read all three of these references in one sitting, Isaiah 13 through 14:27, Jeremiah 50 through 51, and Revelation 17 through 18. I know that you have read and studied Isaiah 13 and 14 before now, but I think it will give you a good basis from which to gauge the other two passages. This is all that you will need to do today. It is a lot of reading. Remember as you read, these passages are prophecy and sometimes there is no indication given for when a paragraph moves from one point to another point in prophetic history. Your job today is to discern when God is talking about the Babylon who will come against Jerusalem and Judah in 605 B.C. and the Babylon who will arise again during the Tribulation period yet future to us.

Day 3 – Babylon according to Jeremiah 50

Let's write some things down about Babylon from just Jeremiah chapter 50.

When did Jeremiah prophesy?

Will Babylon be captured according to Jeremiah 50:2?

Who are the idols of Babylon who will be put to shame or be shattered according to Jeremiah 50:2,38?

Who will come up against Babylon according to Jeremiah 50:3, 50:9?

Why will Babylon not be inhabited according to verse Jeremiah 50:13?

What has Babylon done for which she is under this devastating judgment according to Jeremiah 50:14?

What will happen to Babylon because of what she has done to others according to Jeremiah 50:15?

In what time frame will this be according to verses Jeremiah 50:19-20?

What does Babylon look like to the other nations according to Jeremiah 50:23?

Why has Babylon been seized according to Jeremiah 50:24?

Who will come from the land of Babylon to declare in Jerusalem (Zion) the vengeance of the LORD for His Temple (Jeremiah 50:28)?

What is God's purpose in doing this to Babylon according to Jeremiah 50:45?

When will the earth shake and an outcry be heard among the nations according to verse 46? (Also see the seventh bowl judgment in Revelation 18.)

Day 4 – Babylon according to Jeremiah 51

Who will God send to Babylon to devastate her (Jeremiah 51:1-2)?

Who does God tell to flee the city of Babylon according to Jeremiah 51:5-6?

What has Babylon been to the whole earth and by whose hand according to Jeremiah 51:7?

According to Jeremiah 51:8-9, will Babylon be restored after God devastates her in the final days? And in Jeremiah 51:26, 29?

What happens to the people who have seen her devastation and have tried to help her in Jeremiah 51:9?

Do the people know who caused her judgment according to Jeremiah 51:9?

Who has God appointed to conquer Babylon in the near future to Jeremiah's day according to Jeremiah 51:11?

Who are the Medes today?

What does God compare Babylon to in Jeremiah 51:25?

What do you think God means when He says of Babylon in Jeremiah 51:33: "the daughter of Babylon is like a threshing floor at the time it is stamped firm; yet in a little while the time of harvest will come for her?"

Why is God going to strike out against Babylon according to Jeremiah 51:36? In Jeremiah 51:49 it says, "Indeed Babylon is to fall for the slain of Israel, as also for Babylon the slain of all the earth have fallen."

Who in Jeremiah 51:19, is not like the idolaters in Jeremiah 51:17-18?

Who is the Portion of Jacob?

For your own understanding, know that when Babylon fell, after the last king of Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon was overthrown, the Medo-Persians did not destroy the city of Babylon. You can read about the takeover of Babylon by the Medo-Persians in Daniel 5. Many years later, when Alexander the Great took Babylon, he made it his capital. So, when the Scripture speaks of Babylon's complete destruction, it is not referring to this take-over by the Medo-Persians, but it is speaking of a time yet future to Daniel's day. Therefore, Babylon must arise again to prominence. Today, Babylon is located 62 miles south of Baghdad in Iraq. The great gate is still intact and Saddam Hussein in recent years rebuilt and refurbished many of the palatial buildings once used by the kings of ancient Babylon, Persia, and Greece. During Operation Desert Storm and the recent Operation Enduring Freedom, the structures in Babylon's ruins were off-limits for bombing raids made by the U.S. and her allies. Many who study the end-time events of Scripture are stumped by this information. Some have changed their viewpoint to that which says Scripture is not talking of literal Babylon in the last days, but to the world-system that Babylon represents. Some have even gone as far as to say that the Catholic Church in Rome is this Babylon of destruction.^v There are others who study and hold to the belief that it was made uninhabitable after Alexander the Great and that even Saddam Hussein or the new Iraqi government would not be able to rebuild the city on the site of Ancient Babylon. However, some of these scholars still believe that the city will be rebuilt, only on a different site than the original city.

Day 5 – Babylon “in that day” – Revelation 17, 18

Today, we will take a look at the New Testament passages in Revelation that tell of Babylon's demise “in that day.” Remember that Revelation was written after Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon fell to the Medo-Persians and after the Messiah had already come as a man and died for the peoples' sins on the cross. There can be no confusion. This prophecy refers to the end times and not to Babylon's overthrow by the Medo-Persians in Daniel's day. Please turn to Revelation 17 and 18.

In Revelation 4, we see that the only One who is worthy to open the book with the seven seals is the Savior, Himself, Jesus Christ. The “book” referred to here is a scroll written on both sides with seven seals distributed throughout. The seals refer to judgments of God during the Tribulation Period of the end times. The first seal is broken and the scroll is spread out and this first judgment is poured out upon the earth and its inhabitants. Then, the second seal is broken and the scroll spread out, the second judgment poured out upon the earth and its inhabitants, and so on and so forth until we get to the seventh seal. With the breaking of the seventh seal, seven more judgments are unleashed upon the inhabitants of the earth. These are called the seven trumpet judgments. When the seventh trumpet is blown, seven more judgments, called the bowl judgments, are unleashed. Revelation 17 starts out after the seventh bowl judgment has been poured out upon the earth and its inhabitants.

Please mark the following words, synonyms, and pronouns with some distinctive markings, for Revelation 17 and 18: woman, Babylon, harlot, beast, and Lamb. If you

don't want to mark in your Bibles, then at least go through the two chapters and mentally do the exercise.

Who has made those who are on the earth drunk with the wine of her immorality and has committed acts of immorality with the kings of the earth?

What metal is the cup made of that is in her hand? (Revelation 17:4)

Who is with the Lamb in Revelation 17:14?

Who is the Lamb in Revelation (17:14)?

Who hates the harlot and will make her desolate and naked and will eat her flesh and burn her up with fire in Revelation (17:16)? Who has put this into their hearts to execute His purpose (Revelation 17:17)?

Who is the woman whom John saw (Revelation 17:18)?

Who was called to come out of Babylon, the great city (Revelation 18:4)?

How much time will God take to destroy Babylon (Revelation 18:8, 10)?

Why did God pronounce judgment on Babylon (Revelation 18:20)?

Will the city be completely destroyed (Revelation 18:21)?

ⁱ Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, Chicago, Moody Press, 1977, p.794.

ⁱⁱ A. Dillman, *Genesis, Volume I*, Edinburg, 1897, p. 350.

ⁱⁱⁱ Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, Chicago, Moody Press, 1977, pp. 794-795.

^{iv} John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible notes*, USA, Word Publishing, 1997, p. 29.

^v Dave Hunt, *The Roman Catholic Church and the Last Days, A Woman Rides the Beast*, Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, Oregon, 1994.

BABEL/BABYLON

| Babel | Babylon | | |
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| Genesis 10-11 | Isaiah 13-14 | Jeremiah 51 | Revelation 17-18 |
| <p>Establisher of Babel: Nimrod -son of Cush -grandson of Ham -name means: “let us rebel” “mighty one or mighty tyrant in the face of Jehovah “mighty hunter” who persuades men to obey his will, not God’s -type of antichrist -suggested to Israelites the idea of ‘rebel’ against God. -a hunter who gratifies himself in contrast to a shepherd who expends himself for the good of the sheep under his care -in contrast to Shem’s descendant, Abram Babel, the city -type of religiously & morally evil system -birthplace of the k. of man that opposes the k. of God -Babel revived dur. Trib-Rev 17,18 -the beg. of Babylon-would be destroyer of God’s people & His city Jerusalem -in land of Shinar -people purposed to build for a tower to reach to heaven -people disobeyed God: did not fill the earth; stayed together -spoke 1 language; could do anything</p> | <p>Oracle Against Babylon Babylon deserves God’s wrath or judgment b/c she has often been the rallying point of activity against God History after Babel -part of Assyrian empire during Isaiah’s time -will become the world power after Isaiah’s time -will take Jeru/Judah captive for 70 years to punish them for their sin against the land -future to us, Babylon will be hdqtrs for rebellion agst God in end time; will be antithesis of Jerusalem Theories of who or what Babylon is future to us -actual city will be rebuilt -Babylon is metaphor for evil in the world -Babylon is really Rome & the Roman Catholic Church Babylon’s doom -in Is’s day: Medo-Persians -future to us: complete destruction; all nations will come against her (Rev 17:16-17) -the Almighty will destroy it, land desolate, will exterminate sinners from it, like Sodom & Gomorrah, never inhabited again</p> | <p>-a land of idols:Bel, Marduk & other fearsome idols who will be put to shame or shattered (2,38) - a nation from the north & a horde of nations fr. north will make her an object of horror (3,9) to rest of nations (23) - will be taken captive (2) - no inhabitant left in her b/c of indignation of God, God’s purpose to make her desolate (45), & never again inhabited, like Sod & Gom (13, 39,45) -under judgment b/c she has sinned agst the LORD (14); seized b/c has engaged in conflict w/ LORD (45) struck b/c of unjust tx of Israel (52:36,49) -same shall be done to her as she has done to others (15, 29) -time period - when God pardons the Remnant (future to us) -fugitives & refugees will come out of her to declare God’s vengence for His Temple in Jer. Jeremiah 52 -foreigners sent to devastate her -Israel & Judah told to flee her (5,6) -she has been golden cup in God’s hand intoxicating earth (7) -not restored,desolate w/o inhabitants forever (8-9, 26,29) -people who see devastation forsake her & return to own countries -her judgmt is fr heaven fr God -Medo-Persians appt to conquer Bab in Jer’s day (11) - Kurds -calls her a destroying & burned-out mtn in contrast w/ the mtn of God in Jer. -not like the portion of Jacob (17-19)</p> | <p>Name Woman who rides the beast Babylon Harlot Deeds -made those on earth drunk w/ immorality; committed immorality w/ kings of earth (17:2) Description -in wilderness (17:3) -sitting on scarlet beast -full of blasphemous names -having 7 heads & 10 horns -clothed in purple & scarlet -adorned in precious stones & pearls - gold (17:4) cup in hand, full of abominations & unclean things of her immorality -on forehead written a mystery, “BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS & OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH” (17:3) -the woman John saw is the great city who reigns over the kings of the earth (17:18) Doom -10 horns & beast hate her & will burn her at God’s prompting (17:6,17) -God will destroy her in 1 day, 1 hr (18:8,10) -God pronounced judgmt on her for heaven, saints, aposles, prophets (18:20) -completely destroyed (18:21) The Remnant & Tribulation Saints -the called, the chosen, the faithful w/ Lamb (14) -called out of the great city s.t. not participate in her sins, & rc’v plagues (18:4)</p> |