

BABYLON AND JERUSALEM

PART I

"BABYLON" USED AS A METAPHOR FOR "JERUSALEM"

By Arlen L. Chitwood

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

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

And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (Rev. 17:3-5).

"Babylon" is used as a metaphor for *Jerusalem* in the Book of Revelation (*cf.* Rev. 11:8; 14:8; 16:19; 17:4, 5, 18). And to see "Babylon" used in this manner in this book, one could only expect to find *a prior Jerusalem-Babylon association in the Old Testament*, for there is nothing in the New Testament that does not have its roots somewhere in the Old Testament. The New is simply an opening up and unveiling of that previously brought into existence and dealt with in the Old.

A relationship of this nature between the two Testaments can be seen in the opening verse of the last book of Scripture, the Book of Revelation, stating at the outset the nature of the book's contents:

"The Revelation [Gk., *Apokalupsis* ('a revealing' in the sense of 'an uncovering,' 'an unveiling,' 'a laying bare')] of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must

shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it ['communicated it,' 'made it known'] by his angel unto his servant John" (1:1).

The entirety of the Old Testament is about *the person and work of Jesus Christ* (Luke 24:25-27; John 5:39-47). And the New Testament, continuing from the Old — with "the Word" (the Old Testament Scriptures) *becoming* "flesh" (John 1:1, 2, 14) — must be viewed *in exactly the same light*. The New is an opening up and unveiling of the Old; and the Book of Revelation, forming the capstone to all previous revelation (both the Old and New Testaments), *completes the unveiling*. The Book of Revelation, by its own introductory statement — an introductory statement peculiar to this book alone — forms the one book in Scripture which brings *all previous revelation to its proper climax*.

Thus, not only should a Jerusalem-Babylon association be found in the Old Testament, one which would allow "Babylon" to be used as a metaphor for *Jerusalem*, but an association of this nature should also exist as it pertains to the numerous other things dealt with throughout Revelation chapters seventeen through the first part of nineteen as well (*e.g.*, the Beast in ch. 17, and the trade and commerce in ch. 18). And this is exactly what one finds when going back to the Old Testament, comparing Scripture with Scripture.

Again, *there is nothing in the Book of Revelation that does not have its roots in the Old Testament Scriptures*.

Note that "Babylon" in Revelation chapter seventeen is referred to as not just "Babylon," but as "a mystery, [which is] Babylon..." (v. 5, NASB), and the word "mystery" is used again in verse seven of both "the woman" and "the beast."

A *mystery* in the New Testament does not have to do with something completely new, something not dealt with at all or unknown in the Old Testament. Rather, a *mystery* in the New Testament has to do with an opening up and an unveiling of something previously introduced and dealt with in the Old Testament. A *mystery* has to do with additional revelation, commentary, on that

already seen in the Old Testament, allowing the Old Testament revelation to be fully opened up and revealed.

And the preceding is exactly what is in view through referring to "the woman" and "the beast" by the use of the word *mystery*. This alone would tell a person that foundational material for both can, and must, be found in the Old Testament.

Dealing with *Babylon, Jerusalem, and the Beast* in the Book of Revelation, one would naturally turn to the Book of Daniel. Though Babylon, Jerusalem, and the Beast are first mentioned early in Genesis (3:15; 10:10; 14:18), Daniel is the book which deals with the whole of the matter in relation to the beginning, progression, and end of the Times of the Gentiles. The kingdom of Babylon is brought into full view in this book, Daniel deals with Israel and the nations in relation to this Babylonian kingdom, and Daniel places a particular emphasis on details pertaining to the latter days — details having to do with Babylon's end-time ruler, the Beast, exactly as seen in the Book of Revelation (though this man had previously been introduced in different ways and places in the Old Testament, beginning in Genesis, then quite extensively in Exodus).

The Times of the Gentiles

The complete period of the Times of the Gentiles is depicted through two main means in the Book of Daniel — through a four-part great image in chapter two (revealed through a dream) and through four great beasts in chapter seven (revealed through a vision). That depicted by the great image in chapter two is *Babylonian* in its entirety (from the head of gold to the feet part of iron and part of clay), as is that depicted by the four great beasts in chapter seven (from the lion to the dreadful, terrible, and exceedingly strong beast). The great image and great beasts present *exactly the same picture*, though from two different perspectives.

(*Ref.*, the author's two pamphlets, "The Great Image, Great Beasts.")

That seen through the great image and the great beasts centers around and sets forth *Gentile world rule during the Times of the Gentiles, from its beginning to its end, as this period relates to Babylon*. The Times of the Gentiles began in Babylon, and this period of time will end in Babylon.

God used the first king of Babylon (Nebuchadnezzar [the first king during time covered by the great image, or the great beasts]) to complete the removal of the Jewish people from their land — because of their prior, continued disobedience, extending over centuries of time — resulting in an end to the Old Testament theocracy.

And God will use the last king of Babylon (Antichrist) to complete *the reason* for the removal of His people under the first king of Babylon — *to effect repentance, resulting in a reestablishment of the theocracy at a future time*.

The former theocracy was established under the old covenant, and the latter theocracy will be established under a new covenant (cf. Ex. 19:5, 6; Jer. 31:31-33).

The Visions of Zechariah

With these things in mind, note the eight visions in the first six chapters of Zechariah, for these visions deal with *exactly the same thing* seen in both the Books of Daniel and Revelation, though from a different perspective yet. These are visions revealed to and recorded by Zechariah following the return of a remnant from the Babylonian captivity. And it is within these visions that possibly the best Old Testament basis for an association of “Jerusalem” with *Babylon*, as seen in the Book of Revelation, can be found.

These eight visions are introduced by the Lord’s statement surrounding Israel’s past *disobedience*, the result of this disobedience, the call for *repentance*, and that which will result following Israel’s repentance (1:1-6). *Disobedience* resulted in the Times of the Gentiles, and *repentance* would ultimately be effected through Gentile persecution during this period.

Then, the visions begin immediately following

this, with verse seven, and continue uninterrupted until part way through chapter six of the book.

These visions have to be understood in the light of the manner in which they are introduced. They have to be understood in the light of Israel’s past disobedience, which has resulted in the Times of the Gentiles; and they have to be understood in the light of *the reason* for the Times of the Gentiles — *Israel not only reaping the consequences of her actions, but ultimately bringing the nation to the place of repentance — and that which will occur once God’s purpose for this period is realized*. The visions, understood contextually, must be looked upon as having to do with *Israel and the nations during and at the end of the Times of the Gentiles*.

(Note that one of the laws of the harvest has to do with the fact that a person *always reaps more than he sows*. Israel has “sown the wind” [violating God’s covenant through centuries of harlotry], and they will, resultingly, “reap the whirlwind” [Hosea 8:7; cf. vv. 1, 8-14].

Thus, with Israel occupying center-stage, this law of the harvest would reflect upon the reason for the intensity of the judgments and related activity seen during the Tribulation [cf. Matt. 24:14].)

Though God drove His people out among the nations, to effect repentance, the principles set forth in Gen. 12:3 remain. God will not only use *Gentile persecution* to bring about repentance but He will also subsequently *judge the Gentiles* because of this persecution.

Summarily, these visions bridge the centuries of time between the first and last kings of Babylon. They have to do with different facets of Israeli persecution at the hands of the Gentiles, with the principles set forth in Gen. 12:3 ultimately being worked out and realized. They have to do with Israel ultimately being brought to the place of repentance, the Times of the Gentiles being brought to an end, and Gentile persecution of Israel being fully dealt with.

Only then will Israel occupy her proper place at the head of the nations in a restored theocracy, with the nations being blessed through Israel.

That, in short, is how the eight visions in Zechariah must be understood. *Each* presents a different facet of the matter, and *all of the visions together* form a composite picture of that which God revealed concerning Israel and the nations through Zechariah.

Then, immediately after the last vision (6:1-8, dealing with the destruction of Gentile world power), Zechariah calls attention to the crowning of *Joshua, the high priest*, with reference then made to “the man whose name is The BRANCH,” which is followed by a reference to the building of the Temple (6:11-13).

The name “Joshua” (Heb., *Jehoshua*) is an Anglicized form of the Hebrew name for “Jesus” (Gk., *Iesous*). The Septuagint (Greek translation of the O.T.) uses *Iesous* in Zech. 6:11, and this is the reason that the KJV translators erroneously translated *Iesous* as “Jesus” instead of “Joshua” in Acts 7:45 and Heb. 4:8. They are the same name, whether *Jehoshua* in Hebrew or *Iesous* in Greek. And the name, “The BRANCH,” in Zech. 6:12 is a Messianic title applied to Christ elsewhere in the Old Testament (Isa. 4:2; 11:1; Jer. 23:5; 33:15; Zech. 3:8).

Thus, note that which is in view immediately following the visions in Zechariah, immediately following the Times of the Gentiles, when Israel occupies her proper place at the head of the nations, in a restored theocracy. Events surrounding the crowning of Joshua (at the termination of the visions), the high priest during Zechariah’s day, foreshadow future events surrounding the crowning of Jesus (at the termination of that set forth in the visions), Who will then be the great King-Priest. And the building of the Temple following the restoration of a remnant during Zechariah’s day foreshadows the building of the millennial Temple by Messiah Himself, in that future day following Israel’s restoration.

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