

Nimrod - The Rebellious Panther

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN -

CONCLUSION: GREAT BABYLON

Babylon rises from the anarchy and distress and restlessness of Nimrod's world. It is mentioned 297 times in the Bible - more than any other city except Jerusalem. Babylon is the theme of six long chapters in the Bible: Jeremiah 50-51; Isaiah 13-14 and Revelation 17-18. In Genesis Babylon's tower is reaching into the heavens; in Revelation the destruction of Babylon reverberates to the ends of the earth. The world's government, politics, religion, commerce, and idolatry originated in Babylon; they reach their climax in, and are destroyed with, Babylon. Babylon's first king, Nimrod, hated GOD, ruled the earth in tyranny, and was destroyed. Babylon's last king, Antichrist, will hate GOD, will rule the earth in tyranny, and will be destroyed.

Look at the Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar. Sir H. Rawlinson, no mean authority on Babylonian-Assyrian matters, said that Babylon was the site of the Garden of Eden (where Satan got his foothold in this earth). Ge. Rawlinson ("*Five Great Monarchies*") said that Babylon was probably the largest and most magnificent city of the ancient world.

Babylon made a profound impression on Daniel. To Daniel, Babylon was "**a tree in the midst of the earth**" (it was the center of wickedness - as it will again be). The height was great. The leaves were fair. The fruit was much. The sight of it reached to the end of the earth. (Daniel 4.) Babylon was a universal city.

In those days Babylon occupied an area of 200 square miles - more than twice the area of London, which occupies but 94.279 square miles. The city was built on both sides of the Euphrates river, in the form of a square. It was enclosed with a double row of high walls. The walls were 335 feet high. On those walls were 250 towers, and between the towers a four-horse chariot could turn. The walls were built of bricks. There were 100 gates, all of them brass. A moveable drawbridge, 30 feet high, supported on stone piers, spanned the Euphrates, and joined the two parts of the city together. At either end of the bridge was a palace.

Nebuchadnezzar's palace was on the east bank of the river.

The palace was surrounded by three walls, the outmost wall being seven miles in circuit. The inner walls of the palace were decorated with hunting scenes. There were two gates of brass so heavy that they had to be opened and shut by machine.

The hanging gardens remain to this day one of the wonders of the world. Nebuchadnezzar built

them as a token of his love for his Persian wife. They were in the precincts of the palace. They were on top of a series of arches 75 feet high, and built in the form of a square. They were watered by water raised from the Euphrates with a screw.

The temple of Belus was 606 feet high, and rested on a platform 200 yards each way. At the top was a shrine of the god.

The shrine was occupied by three colossal images of gold. Before the image of Beltus were two golden lions. Near them were two enormous serpents of silver. There was a golden table 40 feet long and 15 feet broad.

There was in Babylon an obelisk of gold, 90 feet high and nine feet broad. There was a reservoir 140 miles in circumference, and 180 feet deep.

Babylon was a naval power, a military power, a manufacturing center, a city of commerce and trade. It was a city of wisdom and knowledge, a city of idolatry and magic. It was the city of the great eagle, the head of gold, the lion with eagle's wings.

Grand and stately, Babylon was the golden city in the land of Shinar.

What is the philosophy of Babylon? Why is Babylon the mightiest wicked name of all history? Why does the Bible give it so much space? Why is it so central? Why is it so permanent? Why is it that this name will not die? There is something deep and profound about Babylon. What is it?

You will never understand Babylon until you concede and appreciate and understand the personality and character of Satan. Before he was cast out of the presence of GOD, this person, perfect in wisdom and beauty, walked up and down in the midst of the stones of celestial fire. He was the prince of indestructible glory, and he lived in the midst of music.

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

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:

I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High" (Isaiah 14:12 ff).

Come to Babylon. This "Lady of the kingdoms" was built for you. Here within her great walls you find sympathy and companionship. There is commerce and trade and wisdom. Your genius can be employed in something better than trying to find a GOD who doesn't exist. When you have finished with business, there is the Babylonian twilight. Slender, sensuous, jeweled arms will be extended to you. There is perfume and purple and gold and scarlet. There is dancing and music. Here in Babylon you will find the "Queen of Heaven."

She has the mother heart. She gathers into herself all the tender love and understanding and sympathy your mother had for you when she gathered you as a child into arms and lullabyed all the chill and fear out of your life.

What an appeal to the withering hearts and spirits of the lonely sons and daughters of parents who themselves had been driven from a garden into a night of fear and pain - a night in which they saw one son murdered by their other; and then all their descendants but one family were drowned in the flood.

The Devil knows how to appeal to loneliness and emptiness and pain and fear.

Babylon was (and is) the Devil's answer to an empty, lonely world.

Babylon is Satan's attempt to establish his own center in the earth as against GOD's center - Jerusalem.

The battle is for the earth. The Incarnation took place on earth. The Cross was erected on earth. Satan would make Babylon, not Jerusalem, the gravitational point. It all makes a great deal of sense. The periphery will be what the center is.

Thus the age-old conflict between Jerusalem and Babylon. Since all history, good and bad, originates in persons and culminates in persons, we should not be surprised when the Bible tells us that the wickedness of this earth will culminate in the person of Antichrist ultimately reigning in Babylon, and that the good of this earth will culminate in the Person of Messiah reigning in Jerusalem (after Antichrist and his world have been destroyed).

First, there are Antichrist and his Great Babylon.

Last week I discussed the rebuilding of Babylon. Isaiah (chapters 13-14), Jeremiah (chapters 50-51) and John (Revelation 17-18) unite in giving us a detailed picture of that great city. It will be the greatest wicked city the world ever saw.

"I will be like the most High."

The Most High promised (in Genesis 3:15) a supernatural Deliverer. The Most High has a Messiah. The Most High has miracles and a Resurrection. The Most High has a center on earth - Jerusalem.

"I will be like the most High."

As true today as when he fell from among the stars.

Babylon is Lucifer's false and wicked refuge for the loneliness of mankind. In that far ancient time men were lonely, as they are today. They were profoundly conscious that something had happened, that they had been cut off from GOD. In their restlessness they crowded together. They yearned, as they do today, for something to fill up the emptiness and aimlessness of their weary lives.

And they were afraid. A whole world had disappeared in a watery sepulcher, "unwept, unmourned and unknelled."

"We are the voices of the wandering wind,
Which moan for rest, and rest can never find;
Lo! as the wind is, so is mortal life,
A moan, a sigh, a sob, a storm, a strife."

Men and women didn't originally go to the night clubs of Paris because they were necessarily wicked; they went there to try to find faces and voices and forms of music to fill up their empty, lonely lives.

Babylon is the Devil's answer to the loneliness of mankind. And none knows more of the hell of isolation and loneliness than he. None knows better how to appeal to the loneliness of mankind than he.

Why continue in your misery? Why go on trying to find and know and worship and serve a GOD who drowned all your fathers? If there were a GOD, do you think He would be so cruel as to permit isolation and loneliness to wither your spirit? Why continue the tormenting suffering?

How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously.

"Babylon, that mighty city!

...The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble.

And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.

. . . that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! ...What city is like unto this great city!

...Alas, alas that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness!" (Revelation 18).

Throughout the Bible the king of Babylon is presented to us in type, shadow and symbol. He is foreshadowed by Nimrod, the first king of Babylon. He is the "**Assyrian.**" He is the "**nail [that is fastened] in a sure place.**" He is the ultimate fool who "**hath said in his heart, There is no God.**"

Isaiah gives us a graphic description of him in chapter 14, verses 1-20:

"For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob. And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place: and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the Lord for servants and handmaids: and they

shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors.

And it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou was made to serve. That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!

The Lord hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers. He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, and none hindereth.

The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing. Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us.

Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee.

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! 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: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?

All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, everyone in his own house. But thou are cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under feet. Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people: the seed of evildoers shall never be renowned."

I want to emphasize that those words were addressed to the king of Babylon, all of them. "**How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! 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"**

All of that is addressed the king of Babylon - who is Satan incarnate.

That king and that city will be the climax of the Devil's One World.

The Bible also tells us in great detail about Messiah and His city. You will find a detailed description in Ezekiel, chapters 40-48.

First of all, they tell us that those chapters are figurative. How can we know whether they are figurative or whether they are to be taken literally.

In the first place, they make no sense when taken figuratively.

In the second place, the description GOD gave Noah of the Ark was to be taken literally.

In the third place, the description that GOD gave Moses of the Tabernacle was to be taken literally.

The description in these chapters of Ezekiel make as much sense as the description of the Ark given to Noah, as much sense as the description of the Tabernacle given to Moses.

Why literalize the ark and spiritualize these chapters in Ezekiel? Why literalize the Tabernacle and spiritualize these chapters in Ezekiel? When Ezekiel speaks of a column 120 feet high, he very definitely does not mean a 120 feet of "heavenly principle" suspended over the earth during the Millennium. To me a 120 feet of literal column makes more sense than 120 feet of "heavenly principle."

And they say that Bible expositors are dull!

There is Messiah's land. It will include all the territory from the Nile on the south to the Euphrates on the north, and all the land from the blue Mediterranean on the east to the Persian Gulf on the west. The city will be 144 square miles. There will be 3,600 square miles of suburbs.

Messiah's palace will be a mile each way. At the East Gate there will be columns 120 feet high. Messiah, with the marks of His Cross in the palms of His hands, in His side and in His feet, will enter through the East Gate. **"And I heard him speaking to me out of the house; and the man stood by me. And he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever . . ."** (Ezekiel 43:6 ff).

They say this doesn't make sense. It makes as much sense as Deity wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying on a bed of straw, doesn't it? If it makes sense for GOD to come to Bethlehem in the form of man, why doesn't it make sense for GOD in Messiah come to Jerusalem?

Some of the commentators are the dear fellows who don't make sense. I can understand the Bible better than I can understand a lot of commentaries on the Bible.

In the very center of Messiah's city - which will be the very geographical center of the earth (as Jerusalem always has been) there will be an altar. It will be 24 x 24 feet, 14 feet high, resting upon a base 28 x 28 feet.

This altar, erected in the geographical center of the earth during the Millennium, with the smoke of sacrifice spiraling toward the purified heavens, has perhaps been to Bible students the most puzzling thing in the whole Word of GOD. They simply cannot understand it.

With sincere humility, and with respect for the speculations and conclusions of good men let us consider it.

The altar is there. No doubt about that. Every truth in the Bible rests upon a solid philosophic foundation. There is no doubt about that. There must be sound philosophic reasons for this altar.

The sacrifices offered in the Millennium differ fundamentally from those offered by Moses. There is no High Priest here. There is no Holy of Holies here. There is no Great Day of Atonement here.

The offerings here are memorial offerings. They do not anticipate; they look back. They are a constant reminder of something that happened long before.

These memorial offerings are not alone for Jews; they are also for the Gentiles (as are all the glories of the Millennium) who come into that city (As the Queen of Sheba came to Solomon's city) to see that city and its King. That altar will remind the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, that something happened in the long ago. That altar will constantly remind those reigning with CHRIST (the Church) that something happened long ago.

That altar, of course, will be a constant reminder of the Cross. It will be a constant reminder that all the glory and health and peace and happiness of the Millennium came out of the Cross of Messiah.

Why, after all, should this sound so strange? What is the Cross?

First of all, the Cross is the proof of GOD's love for us. Apart from the Cross, there is not now, nor ever has there been, any convincing proof that GOD loves men. Nature does not prove it.

The Cross is the physical proof of GOD's love. **"Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us."** There is no inspiration, no healing, no warmth, no hope in abstract love; only in the love that is demonstrated. And just here is the fatal weakness of Modernism. It is always talking about love, but it repudiates the only demonstration the world ever had of GOD's love.

In the second place, the Cross is the source of all our healing, our peace, our blessed fellowships, our inspiration and hope to go on living in the world. Bethlehem with all its sweet simplicity and charm, is not that source. The gentle slopes of Mount Olivet are not that source. The Temple with all its majesty and splendor, is not that source. The turquoise-tinted waters of Galilee are not that source.

Let me attempt to gather the central truth of this Altar in my own personal experience, if I may be pardoned for doing so.

Today I have hundreds of friends in this country and in foreign countries. I have seen hundreds of souls saved in my meetings. There are faces dearer to me than star or dawn. I know voices more inspiring than the notes of any great music. I am no longer afraid of GOD - as I once was -

but know Him as my FATHER.

The personality of CHRIST answers to all the yearning of my spirit. I am not afraid to live. I am not afraid to die - as I once was. I have the hope of seeing once again faces I long since saw go down into the grave, and of hearing once again voices that have long been silent. Despite the pain and loneliness and toil of the long journey, I believe it will end at the River of Water of Life. I believe there is continuity of all that is good and pure, and I believe there will be climax.

From whence have I gotten all this? What is the source of all this health and hope and fellowship and joy?

I never got it from Bethlehem, nor from Mount Olivet, nor from the Temple, nor from Galilee. I never got it when listening to a great music, nor when listening to a great oration. I never got it when studying in school. I never got it in my home. I never got it from my friends.

I got it all at Golgotha. It was there, as I so well remember, that the haunting fears of my life departed. It was there that my burden, long borne, rolled from my weary heart. It was there that GOD ceased to be a terror to me. It was there that I was made conscious that I, even I, was the object of His compassion and His tender love and care. It was not the blue waters of Galilee, but the scarlet streams of His own royal blood that washed my guilt and shame away.

If I may say so, I don't think that in the Millennium - and in the new Heaven and the new earth - that Gabriel, bright and shining and splendid as he is, will ever stir me to worship and praise as will the Altar in the center of the earth - reminding me that all that I am seeing and hearing originated in Messiah's Cross. I don't think I shall ever grow tired of seeing the smoke ascend from the Altar. I don't think that I shall ever become tired of seeing the prints of the nails in His hands and in His feet.

Even in the Millennium love, not glory, is the greatest thing in the world. It must be a demonstrated love. The physical Altar in the very center of the earth will be a constant reminder that the love we shall be talking about was demonstrated.

I think the Altar in Messiah's city and land makes a good deal of sense.

And so I am no pessimist. We have, it is true, Babylon and her king. But we also have Jerusalem and her King. We have the Harlot on the Beast and we have - Messiah's Altar in the center of the earth.

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