

“JERUSALEM MEETS ROME AND FINDS BABYLON: A STUDY IN CHURCH PURITY”

FALL 2022-SPRING 2023

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“WHAT ROME AND JERUSALEM REPRESENT”

I. JERUSALEM, THE CITY OF GOD

- A. *Jerusalem is the capitol of Israel; the location of the holy temple; the focal destination to meet with God; the meeting place for major festivals; the place of heard and answered prayer.*
- B. *Besieged many times, fought over, fought in, burned, destroyed and rebuilt, expanded, the home of great kings and horrible ones, the place of learning and teaching, the place of pluralistic idolatry, the place of government, of palatial homes, of destitute cannibalism, the place of the presence of God and the place of burning children in the fire in worship of Molech and other horrid beings posing as gods, one of the oldest continuing cities in the world!*
- C. *Jerusalem is loved by the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the city in which both Jew and Gentile crucified Him; the Jews for saying He was God in the flesh and teaching differently from them and the Gentiles through the power of the Roman empire for sedition against the kingdom and emperor of Rome. It is the place where the miracle of the resurrection happened and where Jesus was seen alive from the dead for 40 days afterward. It is the place from which He ascended to heaven to be seated at the right hand of the Father. It is the place to which our Lord Jesus will return to establish His kingdom. It will one day, upon His return, be His earthly capitol. It will be the central city of the whole world and will be loved by the whole world.*
- D. *Consequently, it is the place where our Lord Jesus Christ and the Father sent the Holy Spirit to anoint His disciples to bring the message of the gospel. It is the place of the birth of the church. It is the first home of the church and from it many churches were started and flourished worldwide. It is the place where the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ became the foundational teachings of the church; it is where those teachings of the person and work of Jesus Christ were expanded as the*

Scriptures were made clear that Jesus of Nazareth, crucified in this city, was also raised in this city.

E. Jerusalem represents for us in our study, the seat of the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ and the birthplace of our faith. It represents the presence of God almighty in His plan for the coming restoration of the whole world. It is the seat of righteous Judaism and the church. It represents the heritage of God's calling out a people for His own in a world divorced from Him from the Tower of Babel to this current time. It is the old ways of God, the original ways. It is Mount Zion, the earthly home of the Living God. It is the symbol of godly faith and practice!

II. BABYLON, THE NEMESIS OF ALL HUMANITY BUT ESPECIALLY GOD'S PEOPLE, ISRAEL AND THE CHURCH

- A. Babylon, founded by Nimrod, is the personality of Babel*
- 1. Full independence from God and heaven in defiance and rebellion against Him*
 - 2. Self-centered utopian empire*
 - 3. Stubborn rejection of godliness*
 - 4. Worship of the creation while rejecting its Creator; practice of rituals not prescribed by God to express devotion to the object of worship; making of objects to be worshipped*
 - 5. Unlimited imagination and the power to carry it out*
 - 6. Domination over other people by an elitist group*
 - 7. No conscience, with the willingness to prostitute oneself for one's desires; values are corrupted and empty*
 - 8. A willingness to murder and destroy any object in the path to fulfillment*
 - 9. Seduction, lies and deceit to obtain what one wants*
- B. Babylon is the seductive power behind all national conquests of people groups and their possessions. Babylon is non-ethnic, hating any ethnic group that has what she wants. Babylon convinces "kings" and their accomplices to attack others and steal from them, destroying their stewardship to God*
- C. Babylon is "drunk" from the blood of the saints and God's people; Babylon is always looking for the slaughter and destruction of Israel and later the church of Jesus Christ. She cannot be satiated*

D. Babylon is Satan's tool to lure the people of God away from Him and from true faith. It is the tool of the Antichrist and the Prophet to enslave people to false hopes and utopias, to be done with guilt, to promote the delusion of escaping the judgment of God, to pretend He is not there. Babylon wants to be the alternative to God it can never be.

III. ROME, THE MOST CURRENT EXPRESSION OF BABYLON IN THE DAYS FOLLOWING OUR LORD'S ASCENSION AND THE MOVEMENT OF THE CHURCH

A. From the Creator, in His revelation to Nebuchadnezzar, we learn that Rome was the "legs" of the great image he saw in his very troubling dream/vision. In this vision, each of the components of the vision which represented empires were progressively less valuable in worth than the previous one. Rome, with its legs and toes, was the least valuable but most destructive and terrible.

- 1. Nebuchadnezzar, representing Babylon, was seen as the head of the image. This head was of gold and is described as being valued by God as the greatest of the kingdoms of the world expressed by this image*
- 2. The chest was of silver, of less value than gold, and therefore inferior to what God had done for Babylon. It represented the Medo-Persian empire*
- 3. The midsection was of bronze. It is not as valuable as gold or silver but it is of more value than iron since it is stronger than iron and is more resistant to corrosion. It represented Greece*
- 4. Finally the two legs were of iron and susceptible to the environment where it could oxidize (rust). The feet were also of iron but were mixed with ceramic clay and it did not adhere to one another well. This final stage of the image was both fragile and strong. The LORD identifies this ceramic clay as the seed of man indicating a worldwide conquest by this last empire (kingdom). But this would be a fragile kingdom when the seed of men (all the other nations) resisted being bound by this kingdom. This kingdom would have two parts (legs) and the two parts would have 10 divisions, 5 on each side of*

the divisions. This is the Roman empire. In its pieces, it still remains to this day.

- B. It should be noted that any revival of the Roman empire is ultimately a revival of the empire of Babylon since it is the head of the image. Rome is guided by the old Babylonian empire.*
- C. As a reminder, the Babylonian empire is the nemesis of Israel and the church. When God's people have encountered Babylon it is a strained relationship to say the least. Babylon has been used to paddle or discipline, even punish, Israel in the past. When Israel tried to befriend Babylon it always wound up with captivity, death and/or confiscation of Israel's property and people. In those encounters, Israel was usually fascinated with the ways of idolatrous Babylon and learned her ways.*
- D. To rescue His people worldwide from the clutches of Babylon and Satan, He sent the church into the kingdom first of Rome and then to all the places Rome and its vassals had gone for the centuries which followed, conquering and enslaving, robbing and stealing, deceiving and fooling, condemning and killing.*
- E. Our study is how the church (Jerusalem) would fare in its encounters with Rome around the world. Would the church still be the church Jesus initiated in Jerusalem? Would Rome infect it so with its viral, deadly infections that the church would become as sick as Babylon? Would Babylon hold the church captive or would the church overcome through Jesus Christ? WHAT WAS THE CHURCH SUPPOSED TO BE? ARE WE REFLECTING JERUSALEM OR BABYLON?*

IV. HINTS OF THE INFLUENCE OF ROME AND BABYLON ON THE CHURCH - REVELATION 2, 3

- A. False teachers and Nicolaitans*
- B. Fake Jews and the synagogue of Satan*
- C. Into the throne room of Satan, martyrdom, Balaam's seduction and food for idols*
- D. Being taught by Jezebel, invasion of sexual immorality, learning the depths of Satan*
- E. Nearly dead to what the church is supposed to be*
- F. God gives an open door to the church but the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, is resisting. Could this be replacement theology?*
- G. The people have lost sight of the church Christ birthed*