

The Downfall Of The Two Babylons

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INTRODUCTION

ISAIAH 44:28 That said of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shall be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.

It was foretold of Cyrus that he would be used of God to lay the “foundation” of the temple. He would commence the work of the restoration and rebuilding of the temple. This he did by his decree. This decree was the first of the three decrees given by Persian kings.

In Ezra 1:2,3 we have the amazing statement of Cyrus, a pagan king.

NOW in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might he fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,

2 Thus said Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

3 Who is there among you of all his people? His God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem.

This is amazing to have come from a Persian king, because the Persians were fire and sun worshippers and were opposed to the use of buildings in worship. Yet here is a Persian king giving a decree to restore the temple, for the worship of “the Lord God of heaven.” How could this be? Prophecy is the answer!

PROPHECY

Cyrus was shown his own name in the prophecy of Isaiah and the work he would accomplish in the overthrow of Babylon and that he would lay the foundation to restore Jerusalem's temple. Cyrus was amazed! Through this prophecy “the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, that he made a proclamation.” Ezra 1:1. (See Josephus, Book 11, page 228).

Thus it was prophecy that arrested the attention of Cyrus and led to Israel's restoration. God uses the heathen to accomplish His will. In Isaiah 44:28, God calls Cyrus “My shepherd,” for God used him through prophecy to lead His people back from Babylonian captivity. In Jeremiah 27:6, Nebuchadnezzar is likewise called “MY servant.” God used him to punish an apostate Israel. In Jeremiah 51:20 Babylon is called by God “My battle axe.” Babylon is the last power addressed in this chapter, so it is evident that He is here addressing Babylon. In Jeremiah 50:23, Babylon is called “the hammer of the whole earth.” God used these earthly powers and pagan kings to accomplish His will.

When Jerusalem was taken by the Babylonians they could see that it had happened by the hand of God. Even the captain of the army of Babylon exclaimed to Jeremiah, “The Lord thy God has pronounced this evil upon this place.” Jeremiah 40:2. The hand of God is often seen in the affairs and tragedies of men.

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Josephus bears testimony that when the Roman army captured Jerusalem? Titus, the Roman general acknowledged that God had intervened and enabled them to capture Jerusalem, for this victory was not his doing. (Wars of the Jews," Book 5, Page 568). Likewise Cyrus, as we have noticed, acknowledges the intervention of the Lord God of heaven.

THE RAVENOUS MAN FROM THE EAST

In Isaiah 44:11 Cyrus is called "a ravenous bird from the east." He was a ruthless killer. Herodotus, the historian of these bygone years tells of Cyrus' anger at the river for the drowning of a favorite horse. He states "Cyrus, enraged at the insolence of the river. Having however, wreaked his vengeance on the Gyndes, by dispersing it through three hundred and sixty channels, marched against Babylon." Book 1, page 96. He was finally killed on the field of battle; and of the queen that he was fighting against when he was killed, Herodotus records, "She took a skin and filling it full of human blood, she dipped the head of Cyrus in the gore, saying, as she thus insulted the corpse. "By this I give thee thy fill of blood." book 1, page 108. He was well named a ravenous bird of prey and died as one. Let every lover of the Lord Jesus Christ hesitate before claiming that Cyrus is a type of Christ, as some have done, to try to uphold a doubtful interpretation of prophecy.

In Revelation 17:17, we have another case of God over-ruling and using the wicked to be His servants in accomplishing His will and fulfilling His prophetic Word, for the Scriptures cannot be broken. Speaking of the downfall of modern Babylon by the powers of earth, we read "For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil His will, until the words of God shall be fulfilled." So God used Nebuchadnezzar as His "servant," Titus and Cyrus, "His anointed," although they were all as ravenous birds of prey. While it can present many difficulties to try to make Cyrus a type of Christ, a parallel could be drawn however, between the decree of Cyrus and the first Angel's message for these last days, when modern Babylon goes down forever and God's Israel, His God-ruled people, at last are lifted home to glory to be "forever with the Lord." The parallel is worthy of notice.

THE FOUNDATION

Cyrus laid "the foundation" or began the deliverance of God's people. His decree, the first of three decrees', is certainly a parallel of the first of the three Angel's messages. Three decrees were given by the Persian kings. The decree of Cyrus was followed by the decrees of Darius and Artaxerxes and these were followed by the commission of Nehemiah. So in Revelation 14:6-12, we have the messages of the three Angels, followed by "the loud cry" of Revelation 18:1-5. Cyrus could be used as a parallel of the first Angel's message, but not the Advent of our Lord, as some have thought. Cyrus died a century before the work of restoration was completed and centuries before the complete downfall of Babylon.

The work of restoration was completed under the leadership of Nehemiah and his commission. So the work of God will be finished in the preaching of the three Angel's messages and the loud cry of Revelation 18:1-5.

Cyrus, the man from the east, began the work of restoration, and in like manner the angel of Revelation 7 is pictured as ascending or arising from the east. This is a picture of the beginning of God's last message to the world. The final overthrow was to be accomplished by powers from the "north." This is repeated again and again in Scripture

JEREMIAH

50:1 THE word that the LORD spoke against Babylon and against the land of the Chaldeans by Jeremiah the prophet.

50:2 Declare you among the nations, and publish, and set up a standard; publish, and conceal not: say, Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in pieces; her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces.

50:3 For out of the north there comes up a nation against her, which shall make her land desolate, and none shall dwell therein: they shall remove, they shall depart, both man and beast.

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50:41 Behold, a people shall come from the north, and a great nation, and many kings shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth.

51:48 Then the heaven and the earth, and all that is therein, shall sing for Babylon: for the spoilers shall come unto her from the north, said the LORD.

While Cyrus began the movement of Israel back to Jerusalem, he also began the destruction of Babylon, but he certainly did not complete that destruction. Our Bible Commentary makes that fact very clear. "Babylon was not destroyed by Cyrus, and its decline came in slow stages." SDA Bible Commentary, Volume 4, page 526. Babylon's destruction was to be final and complete. She would be made "desolate." (Jeremiah 50:3). It was to "be wholly desolate." Jeremiah 50:13. It was to be complete, for "none shall raise him up. Jeremiah 50:32. "It shall be no more inhabited for ever; neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation." Isaiah 13:19,20. This was not accomplished by Cyrus, for Babylon was inhabited for centuries after Cyrus was dead and gone. God repeatedly stated that complete destruction was to be accomplished by powers from the north. The Bible Commentary adds these interesting facts of history:

"By prophetic foresight Jeremiah looks down through the centuries and beholds the result of a succession of catastrophes that would cause Babylon to become "a wilderness, a dry land and a desert." "The predicted desolation came, although not immediately." "It did not become a wilderness until much later." "The Mongols, under the grandson of Genghis Khan swept over Western Asia." "Since that time, the central and southern plains of Mesopotamia have been largely desert." SDA Bible Commentary, Volume 4, page 526.

Babylon's destruction was finally complete. This final destruction came from "the north," as foretold in God's infallible "Scriptures of Truth."

OUT OF THE NORTH

The North has a strange significance in Scripture, and is worthy of tote and careful consideration as the following facts reveal. "There was a peculiar mystery attached to the north in the Hebrew mind, as, in fact, the word for "north" in Hebrew (literally the hidden) indicates." Pulpit Commentary, Volume 11, page 274.

Satan's ambition was to reach "the sides of the North." He wanted the throne of God, for as stated in Psalms 48:2, "The sides of the north, the city of the great King."

God gave strict instructions that the burnt offering was to be sacrificed on the north side of the altar. "He shall kill it on the side of the altar northward before the Lord." Leviticus 1:11. The four cherubim are stated to come out of the north as stated in Ezekiel 1:4. "I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire unfolding itself, and a brightness was about it."

Ancient Babylon's fall was completed by powers out of tip north, so modern Babylon will go down to rise no more, by the now "hidden" power of our Christ, who is today preparing a city, the City of the Great King, in the sides of the North. He and He alone, will write "finish" on modern Babylon. So, as Babylon of old was reduced to ruins by powers from the north, so also modern Babylon will fall by the power from the north. As God used the Moslem powers to punish apostate Christendom, as revealed in Revelation 9, so he used the Mongols from the north to complete the doom of Babylon forever on that once blasphemous and Satan-ruled city. God Himself addressed Lucifer as the king of Babylon. Isaiah 14:4,12. This destruction, although commenced by Cyrus, was completed by the northern powers.

Cyrus could not be a type of our Lord and His glorious advent. Babylon's destruction merely "began to be fulfilled in the edict of Cyrus." Pulpit Commentary, Volume 119, page 274.

BABYLON, THE COUNTERFEIT

Jeremiah 50:6 Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: he not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the LORD'S vengeance; he will render unto her a recompence.

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7 Babylon hath been a golden cup in the LORD'S hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad.

8 Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed: howl for her; take balm for her pain, if so he she may be healed.

9 We would Wave heated Babylon, but she is not healed. Forsake her and let us go every one into his own country: for her judgment reaches unto heaven, and is lifted up even to the skies.

Note "Her wine." "She is not healed." These pronouns are feminine. A woman in prophecy symbolizes a church. Babylon was and is Satan's church. As Christ is the unseen Head of the Church! His Church, Colossians 1:18, so Satan was the unseen king of Babylon. This city was the center of a counterfeit system of religion.

Jeremiah 51:45. Flee out of the midst of Babylon, just as Christ told His disciples to flee from Jerusalem when it was surrounded by the armies of Rome. They obeyed Christ's word literally and not a single Christian perished. So here Israel was to flee literally from Babylon. Also Christians are to flee literally from modern Babylon. Yes literally, not merely a mental or figurative assent, but by a literal change of life "a new birth from sin to holiness, to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." Revelation 14:12. Not as monks flee from the world, to hide in silent cloisters, or in far away desert solitude. This would be a double mistake. For they would neglect their duty to a dying world. Some who think they heed this call become supremely selfish. They seek to save their soul while others can suffer and perish. This is a false "Come out." Remember those who hear and heed Christ's call out of Babylon, will repeat the call for "let him that hears say, Come." Revelation 22:17.

Jeremiah 51:9. "We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed." Babylon is beyond help. By the captivity God planned? Not only to bring Israel to repentance but to acquaint Babylon with His truth. Through men like Daniel and Ezekiel, the people-of-Babylon were given opportunity to know and follow the truth of the Great Creator, but Babylon's failure to heed was the cause of their downfall and doom.

GOD WARNS BEFORE HE STRIKES

Jeremiah 51:59-62. The warning was read to Babylon. Jeremiah 51:62,63. It's downfall was enacted. So is that of modern Babylon. Revelation 18:21.

Evidently this call of mercy fell on deaf ears in old Babylon. They refused the call of God, therefore His truth could afford them no protection. Thus the experience of ancient Babylon is as a lesson-book for us in these days of modern Babylon. Unless we take heed, the Bible will be a witness against US. These prophecies and historical facts are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come." 1 Corinthians 10:11. Thus the two Babylons are linked in warning and appeal.

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