

1. Last week I finished teaching several of Jeremiah's prophecies which foretold of the demise of the Chaldean Empire, gave you a number of lessons to be learned from the chapter and was in the process of teaching the Doctrine of Babylon when time ran out.
2. I want to complete the Doctrine of Babylon and then we will start a study of Daniel chapter six.
3. Let's review some of that learned last week and then pick-up with new material at point nine.

### *The Doctrine of Babylon*

1. In the accounts of ancient history, the name "Babylon" occurs again and again, usually as a reference to a specific geographical location in the area of Iraq.
2. Historical Babylon is situated approximately sixty miles south of Baghdad on the banks of the Euphrates River near the present town of Al Hillah.
3. The word "Babylon," as found in Scripture, has several connotations.
4. Not only does it refer to a particular city but also to a religious system so abhorrent to God that He will eventually destroy it completely (Rev 17, 18 and 19).
5. In the Old Testament, the term "Babylon" is given as "Babel," a derivation of the Hebrew root Balal, and means "to confound" or "to confuse".
6. God did not see fit to disclose their specific locations in Scripture; yet we are told that both had been built in the land of Shinar (Gen. 11:2), more commonly known as southern Babylonia.
7. The oldest extant tower has been excavated at Erech (Gen. 10:10) and dates from the latter part of the fourth millennium B.C. Although the Bible does not identify the original Tower of Babel as a temple tower, later such edifices were used as such.
8. From archaeology and extant Babylonian cuneiform we know that the concept of religious Babylon has existed since the time of the great Flood.
  - 8.1 All temple towers were dedicated to the various guardian deities in an attempt to assure their protection or to placate hostile gods of the pantheon.
9. Throughout its long history, Babylon has been the political center of many Gentile nations, and its prominence can be traced to approximately 2000 B.C.

9.1 As near as can be determined, the Sumerians were the first major inhabitants of Babylonia after the early descendants of Nimrod and Cush.

9.2. Dwight Pentecost in his book *Things to Come* quotes H. A. Ironside on this subject as he relates the Sumerian Myths to the Babylonian church of the Tribulation called Jezebel, the whore church--mystery Babylon etc.

"The woman is a religious system who dominates the civil power, at least for a time. The name upon her forehead should easily enable us to identify her. But in order to do that we would do well to go back to our Old Testament, and see what is there revealed concerning literal Babylon, for the one will surely throw light upon the other ... we learn that the founder of Bab-el, or Babylon, was Nimrod ... Nimrod ... was a grandson of Ham, the unworthy son of Noah ... Noah had brought through the flood the revelation of the true God ... Ham on the other hand seems to have been all too readily affected by the apostasy that brought the flood, for he shows no evidence of self-judgment ... his name means ... darkened, or more literally, the sunburnt.

"And the name indicates the state of man's soul ... Ham begat a son named Cush, the black one, and he became the father of Nimrod, the apostate leader of his generation. Ancient lore now comes to our assistance, and tells us that the wife of Nimrod-bar-Cush was the infamous Semiramis the First. She is reputed to have been the foundress of the Babylonian mysteries and the first high priestess of idolatry. Thus Babylon became the fountainhead of idolatry, and the mother of every heathen and pagan system in the world. The mystery religion that was there originated spread in various forms throughout the whole earth ... and is with us today ... and shall have its fullest development when the Holy Spirit has departed and the Babylon of the Apocalypse holds sway.

"Building on the primeval promise of the woman's Seed who was to come, Semiramis bore a son whom she declared was miraculously conceived! ... and when she presented him to the people, he was hailed as the promised deliverer. This was Tammuz ... Thus was introduced the mystery of the mother and the child, a form of idolatry that is older than any other known to man. The rites of this worship were secret ... It was Satan's effort to delude mankind with an imitation so like the truth of God that they would not know the true Seed of the woman when He came in the fullness of time ...

"From Babylon this mystery religion spread to all the surrounding nations ... everywhere the symbols were the same, and everywhere the cult of the mother and the child became the popular system; their worship was celebrated with the most disgusting and immoral practices. The image of the queen of heaven with the babe in her arms was seen everywhere, though the names differ as languages differed. It became the mystery religion of Phoenicia, and by the Phoenicians was carried to the ends of the earth.

“Ashtoreth and Tammuz, the mother and child of these hardy adventurers, became Isis and Horus in Egypt, Aphrodite and Eros in Greece, Venus and Cupid in Italy, and bore many other names in more distant places. Within 1000 years Babylonianism had become the religion of the world, which had rejected the Divine revelation. Linked with this central mystery were countless lesser mysteries ...”

10. The most important ruler of the First Dynasty of Babylon was the remarkable Hammurabi (1728-1686 B.C.). Prosperity, as well as advances in literature, astronomy, mathematics and architecture, characterized his reign.

11. To date, we have recovered the Creation and Flood Epics which were edited during his rule, and copies of these stories (dated about 640 B.C.) have been found in the ruins of Ashurbanipal's library at Nineveh.

12. Doubtless, Hammurabi's most notable contribution to history was his code of laws, uncovered at Susa (Shushan one of the capitals of the Persian Empire) by Jacques de Morgan in 1901.

13. This code set up a social order based on the rights of individuals and was backed by the authority of the state.

13.1 Although Hammurabi preceded Moses by several centuries, his code parallels many of the laws Moses recorded in the Pentateuch.

14. As was the case of Jerusalem, Babylon had its share of conquerors. Several generations after Hammurabi, came under the rule of first the Hittites, then the Kassites, and later the Elamites.

15. In 745 B.C. the yoke of the Assyrian Empire was felt, and the city itself was sacked and looted by Sennacherib in 689 B.C. Esarhaddon, Sennacherib's son, rebuilt the city about eleven years later.

16. When the Chaldean Empire was united under Nabopolassar in 625 B.C., Babylon became its capital city.

16.1 Under his heir, Nebuchadnezzar, this oft fought-over piece of real estate reached the height of its glory and became the most glamorous city of the ancient world.

16.2 In his turn, Nebuchadnezzar contributed vast fortifications, wide streets, canals, stunning temples and palaces.

16.3 Not the least of his beautifications were the Ishtar Gate and the famous Hanging Gardens (considered by the ancient Greeks to be one of the seven wonders of the world).

17. Yet the future of this once magnificent city was far from secure; it would be vanquished again and again.

18. On October 13, 539 B.C. Babylon fell to the army of Cyrus the Great of Persia. Later it was partially destroyed by Xerxes I of Persia (486-465 B.C.) in retribution for their continued rebellion.

19. Alexander the Great captured the city in 331 B.C. and began an extensive rebuilding program, soon halted, however, because of the prohibitive cost.

20. Babylon, the physical city, by about A.D. 200 was in a state ruin, never again to be revived. About twelve hundred years after the earthly ministry of our Lord, Arabs looted the ruins of that once proud city and used many of its bricks to build the present Al Hillah.

20.1 Thus the full circle was completed; Babylon had risen to a pinnacle of fame and had returned to dust!

21. With such a varied history is it any wonder that throughout the Scriptures God chose to use Babylon as a teaching aid for spiritual lessons?

22. While Sodom and Gomorrah represent absolute moral depravity and political degradation, Babylon is synonymous with abject apostasy and unbelief.

23. I have described for you briefly how the Medo-Persians conquered the "impregnable" city.

23.1 Before leaving our study of Babylon the Great let me provide a series of points from Merrill F. Unger's Bible Dictionary which will document much of that which I have earlier related.

24. All of this to answer the question "how could Babylon be taken without a shot being fired?" I shall quote from Unger's Dictionary:

"First to be considered was the geographical fact that the Euphrates River flowed through the center of Babylon. According to the Greek historian, Herodotus, a large bridge spanned that river and connected the eastern and western sections of the city. Another Greek writer, Diodorus Silucus, reveals that a tunnel had been laid under the river bed. Numerous canals which existed on the outskirts of the city were used for irrigation purposes and also constituted a part of the defense system. In fact, all of southern Babylonia was laced with these canals whereby water could be diverted at will for the needs of the people.

“Second, was the engineering feat which Herodotus records of the Persians rerouting the Euphrates by constructing a dam some distance from the city. Thus the river was caused to flow around Babylon rather than through it. After this daring exploit, the Persian Army approached the fortifications by night. Because of the general state of lethargy which had lulled the population into a false sense of security, the army slipped past the sentries without difficulty. As you may recall from Daniel, Chapter 5, Belshazzar's notorious banquet culminated in the shocking events of the handwriting on the wall.

“The evening had been characterized by debauchery and drunkenness, a condition which had permeated every social milieu in Babylon. Thus because of a distracted citizenry and a relaxed military vigilance, it was a simple task to march by way of the riverbed into the city proper! Babylon had once more been conquered. A decadent national entity and its ruler had been judged and replaced by another (Dan. 2:21).”

25. This, then, is the background to our study of the sixth chapter of the Book of Daniel. Now we are ready to begin a study of Daniel chapter six.

Now for our exegesis of Daniel Chapter six.

1. Daniel chapter 6 actually begins with the last verse of Daniel five.

Dan 5:31 And Darius the Median took (received; the kingdom, being about threescore and two) years old.

2. The next question that arises is who is Darius the Mede? The Bible records three persons who bear the name Darius.

- First, there is Darius the Mede, found in our passage and following

Dan 6:1 It pleased Darius to appoint 120 satraps to rule throughout the kingdom,

Dan 6:6 So the administrators and the satraps went as a group to the king and said: "O King Darius, live forever!

Dan 6:9 So King Darius put the decree in writing.

Dan 6:25 Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations and men of every language throughout the land: "May you prosper greatly!

Dan 6:26 "I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel. "For he is the living God and he endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end.

Dan 9:1 In the first year of Darius son of Xerxes (a Mede by descent), who was made ruler over the Babylonian kingdom--

Dan 5:1 And in the first year of Darius the Mede, I took my stand to support and protect him.)

- The second personage is Darius the king, or Darius king of Persia. He is better known in history as Darius I, Darius Hystaspes or Darius the Great. A cousin of Cyrus the Great, he ruled as king of Persia from 521 to 486 B.C.
- Third, there is the reference to Darius the Persian in Nehemiah 12:22. This is Darius Codomannus or Darius III, the last king of Persia, whose empire was destroyed by Alexander the Great.

3. Scripture and secular history both substantiate the fact that both the Medes and the Persians played an important role in the downfall of the Chaldean Empire.

4. Recall our numerous prophecies in such passages as:

4.1 Jeremiah 50:9 predicts: "...I [the Lord] will raise and cause to come up against Babylon an assembly of great nation ..." This would include not only the army of Cyrus, but the armies of the Median king Astyages and Croesus of Lydia, whom Cyrus had defeated.

4.2 Jeremiah 50 and 51 describe the actual fall of Babylon in some detail, and Jeremiah 51:11 states: "... the LORD hath raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes: for his device is against Babylon, to destroy it...."

4.3 Isaiah 45:1 confirms that Cyrus is the Lord's anointed of whom God said: "whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him."

5. Thus we see once again that Scripture accurately prophesied historical facts long before they occurred. According to both the divine record and history, Chaldea fell to the Medes and the Persians.

6. The army that captured Babylon was led by Gobryas, a Persian general under Cyrus, while the man who assumed the rulership of the Chaldean Empire was Darius, a Mede.

7. Although many historians have attempted to present these two men as one and the same person, they were separate individuals.

8. Daniel 9:1 declares without equivocation that Darius was "the son of Ahasuerus [Achasherosh--a title for king or ruler, as is czar or caesar], of the seed of the Medes," a royal personage.

9. This fact was verified by the Jewish historian, Josephus:

“Such, then ... was the end to which the descendants of King Nebuchadnezzar came. Now Darius, who with his relative Cyrus put an end to the Babylonian sovereignty, was in his sixty-second year when he took Babylon; he was a son of Astyages but was called by another name among the Greeks ...”

10. The royal houses of the kingdoms of Media and Parsee (or Anshan) were closely related by a marriage, which the Median king, Astyages, had arranged.

11. He had wed his daughter, Mandane, to Cambyses, King of Anshan. This union produced Cyrus the Great, King of Anshan, who later became king of Persia.

12. Astyages also had a son Darius II. He is both Darius the Mede of our passage and an uncle of Cyrus the Great.

13. Cyrus spent little time in Babylon after its capture; he left the throne in the royal hands of his uncle, Darius.

End Lesson Taught 9-9-2001