

# 1.

## TODAY'S BABYLON

According to the New Testament, someday soon God's judgment is going to fall on a place called "Babylon." It will be a judgment of enormous proportions and have a catastrophic effect which will impact the entire world. Our Lord, Jesus, has issued a very specific warning to His people about this event. He has instructed us to "get out" of the place called Babylon.

There are two reasons He gives for commanding this exodus. The first is so that we will not be enticed by her evil ways. The second is so that when His judgment comes, we will not suffer along with those He is judging. He says: "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues" (Rev 18:4).

Therefore, it is essential for all of God's people to clearly understand just what and where this "Babylon" is. Equipped with this understanding, they can then make the necessary choices to conform their lives to His will and avoid the suffering and loss which they might otherwise experience.

With this serious warning in mind, we will now go on to make a scriptural investigation concerning the location and identity of the Babylon of the book of Revelation.

Although the ancient city and empire of Babylon is mentioned in the Old Testament many times, our study here will concentrate on the words of the New Testament. It is here in the book of Revelation that we find the final, prophetic revelation concerning this entity. No doubt the Old Testament record will have some bearing on our discussion but it will not form the major part of it.

The reason for this is that at the time the Old Testament prophecies were written, there was a real place in the Middle East called Babylon. Many of these prophecies concerning it have already been fulfilled or at least partially fulfilled. It is very difficult, from today's vantage point, to tease out which part of a passage or verse may refer to the past and which to the future.

Indeed there is even a city, Babylon, today. It is located in the country that is currently known as Iraq. Although in recent times Saddam Hussein made an effort to reconstruct the ancient glory of that city, it was a feeble attempt and the city itself is of no social or economic consequence.

In our present investigation we will focus our attention on chapters 17 and 18 (along with the first few verses in chapter 19) in the book of Revelation, which address the subject at hand at some length. We can have confidence that all of this prophetic vision relates to the “end-time” Babylon.

Sometimes understanding the prophetic utterances of the Bible can be a very difficult proposition. Often, the words written are portraying pictures or figures which have a specific meaning but which can be difficult to interpret.

In order to try to minimize this problem, in our inquiry together we will not go very far afield attempting to divine the significance of obscure words or phrases. We will try to confine our discussion to parts of this vision which are quite simple and easy to understand.

One thing which could possibly hinder the reader’s comprehension of this revelation is any preconceived notions. For example, many

believers may come to this subject with interpretations which they received from previous teachings. A good number of them may not have looked into these things for themselves, but simply have relied on other Bible teachers for their understanding.

If the reader has such entrenched preconceptions, it may be very difficult for even the most clear, simple words of the biblical record to have the proper impact. Therefore, I would like to urge all readers, as much as they possibly can, to try and approach this subject with an open mind and a willingness to receive a fresh understanding.

As previously stated, we will try to concentrate on those parts of the biblical revelation which are most clear and do not require a lot of "revelation" or interpretation. However, as is common with much discussion of end-times prophecy, there will be times when I will engage in some speculation or extrapolation. But when I do, I will try to clearly indicate that I am giving an opinion or theory. When I use words such as: "could be," "may be" or "possibly," for example, the reader should understand that there is a degree of speculation being expressed.

Before proceeding, please read for yourself these two chapters, Revelation 17 and 18.