

Earth's Last War 11 of 12

Two Cities—Zion / Babylon

#0296

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—March 1960

In the book of Revelation, Zion and Babylon stand opposed each to the other. The great war which the book of Revelation describes is fought between these two cities—Jerusalem, the holy city, and Babylon, the city of sin.

These names, of course, come down to us from Old Testament times. The Spirit of Prophecy tells us that in the Revelation all the books of the Bible meet and end: Those literal cities, Jerusalem and Babylon, we meet way back in the book of Genesis.

You remember that Abraham, when he was returning from the effort to rescue Lot and his family, he met a certain king named Melchizedek. Do you remember of what city Melchizedek was king? Salem. Salem means peace. This was Jerusalem. You will find that in Genesis 14:18. God intended that Jerusalem should always be the city of peace.

Coming down some 800 years from the time of Abraham and Melchizedek, we find David selecting this site as his capital. He planted his standard there and established the headquarters of his kingdom. Thus Jerusalem came to be the metropolis of Israel, the people of God.

It was God's plan, my dear friends, that as the message that God gave Israel should be preached, and converts gathered in, as the prosperity that God gave to His people would vindicate the truth and wisdom of His plan, it was God's intention that eventually Jerusalem should become the metropolis of the whole earth. You'll read that in *Desire of Ages*, page 577. In *Great Controversy*, page 19, you will find that it was God's plan that that city should remain forever.

If you have those two statements in mind, it will help you to understand many of the Old Testament prophecies. Anyone who reads Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah, and others of the Old Testament prophets, will be impressed with the many, many prophecies looking forward to the glory of Zion, Jerusalem, reaching out to the whole earth. It was God's intention that that city should be a diadem of glory; that it should so carry out God's plan that all the nations of the earth would flow into it. That was God's plan.

Of course, you know that when Jesus, the long-looked-for Messiah came, they rejected Him. He who was Israel's true King was nailed to a cross, and above His head was written, "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews." And since Israel had crucified her King, her capital no longer had any meaning, my friends. So,

Jesus had had to speak those mournful words, those few hours, as it were, before He was crucified, "Your house is left unto you desolate." And so Jerusalem, which was destroyed a few years later, ceased to have any meaning as a location, as a place.

Jesus made it very plain. He said:

"...Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" Luke 21:24.

And so my friend, Jerusalem is no longer a sacred place, old Jerusalem over there in Palestine. And the prophecies of the Old Testament that were to find their fulfillment in the glory and exaltation of Jerusalem, have, in New Testament times, another application entirely. And what is that? If you read Acts 15, you will find that the apostles, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, apply those prophecies to the work of the church. And we find an interesting statement in the book, *Prophets and Kings*, in agreement with this. Listen carefully:

"That which God purposed to do for the world through Israel, the chosen nation, He will finally accomplish through His church on earth today" *Prophets and Kings*, page 713.

How will those promises be fulfilled, and those plans carried out? Through the church, my friends, through the church:

"...to them will be fulfilled all the covenant promises made by Jehovah to His ancient people" *Ibid.*, page 714.

So, in the book of Revelation, when we read in the 11th chapter concerning the work of apostasy in treading down the holy city:

"...the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months" Revelation 11:2.

What is it talking about? Jerusalem over there in Palestine? Ah no, my friends. There was no treading down by the papal power for 1260 years of old Jerusalem over there in Canaan. No, no. What was trodden down? The true church was trodden down. In the book *Great Controversy*, page 266, you will find this prophecy is applied to the church. And in the old *Great Controversy*, *Spirit of Prophecy*, I read:

"The Holy City (the true church) shall they tread under foot forty and two months" *Spirit of Prophecy*, Volume 4, page 188.

So here we have a key to the application of this symbol of Jerusalem, or Zion. Way back there in Old Testament times, that name was applied to a literal city, the

capital of Israel, the nation of God. But when Israel rejected God, and God had to reject her, when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Roman armies, then, friends, it passed out of the prophetic picture. And when God speaks of Jerusalem, His holy city, in New Testament times, He's dealing with His church. He's dealing with His people scattered wherever they may be in this world.

We find in the book of Revelation this symbol of Jerusalem, the city of God, used to represent the people and work of God here on earth.

Let us think of Babylon, on the other hand, for a few moments. Again we go back to Genesis, the book of beginnings. In Genesis 10, we find the story of Nimrod, the great-grandson of Noah. Concerning him, we read that he began to be a mighty one in the earth. In other words, as we would say today, he started out to be somebody. That's the eighth verse. The 10th verse says:

“And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel...”
Genesis 10:10.

And the margin says what? Babylon. That's it. This is the man that led out in the building of the tower of Babel. But whereas the Hebrew there is Babel, the margin gives the Greek, which is Babylon. This is how Babylon started, my friends.

If you read the next chapter, the 11th chapter, you'll see what started it. It was a confederacy and a conspiracy to defy God, to set up the rule of man on earth in rebellion against God, as Lucifer had tried to set up his government in Heaven against God. It was inspired by the Devil. From that day to this, Babylon has stood as the central point of opposition to God. In Old Testament times, for hundreds of years, we see Babylon as the center of idolatry, of pagan worship.

When we come to the 12th chapter of Genesis, we see Abraham, God's witness and representative on earth, being called out of Ur of the Chaldeans. That's the Babylonian country. And as God called Abraham out of Babylon, He's calling His people out of Babylon today. That's the message of the book of Revelation, isn't it friends? But it started way back there in the days of Abraham. God said, “Abraham, take yourself and your family and get out of Babylon. Come into the land that I will show you.” I'm glad he did, aren't you, friends?

Hundreds of years later, as Nebuchadnezzar came to the throne of Babylon, he embarked on an ambitious plan to magnify Babylon, and make it indeed the golden metropolis of a golden kingdom. True, much of his building had to be done with bricks and mud, but he did use some gold plating on various things. He had a great wall around that city, so broad, we're told, that three chariots could ride abreast on it all the way around. And it was built with the river Euphrates running through it.

Those who've studied the matter have thought that perhaps Lucifer, whose inspiration it was that was back of the city of Babylon, remembering the glorious capital of God where once he had lived, sought to reproduce here on earth an imitation of that wonderful city above. And so he had the river flowing through. But

ah, it must have taken a great deal of imagination to see in those muddy waters any likeness to those glorious streams that flow from the throne of God, my friends. And it must have taken certainly some colored glasses to see in those walls of brick and mud any resemblance to those beautiful jasper walls of the city of God above.

Nevertheless, my friends, the men who worked with those things on earth, had never seen the glories of Heaven, and to them, Babylon was indeed the glory of the kingdoms. As Nebuchadnezzar built his hanging gardens, and as he built those temples to his gods, and as he gathered the wealth of the nations and poured them into that capital city, Babylon indeed became one of the wonders of the ancient world.

It is a terrible thing, as we look at the pages of the Old Testament, to see how that in spite of all the goodness of God to His people, they leaned again and again toward that sun worship, which was the center and core of Babylonian idolatry. Again and again, they set up the images of Baal and other gods right in the temple of Jehovah, until finally all that God could do for them (Watch this point!), was to let them feel the iron heel of the oppressor, Babylon.

In other words, they had been ensnared and allured by her idolatry. God said they must drink that cup to its dregs. And so He allowed Jerusalem to be overcome by Babylon. He allowed Nebuchadnezzar to come and lay her palaces waste, and destroy that beautiful temple, tear down that wall, and lead the cream of her young men to Babylon in chains. It looked like Babylon had won in this age-long war—And how the hosts of Satan triumphed.

But ah, God was not through. God is never taken by surprise. And His purposes can never be frustrated, my friends. Right in that army of captives that Nebuchadnezzar caused to be brought to Babylon in chains, right in that army were the seeds of something so mighty and so wonderful that it would shake Babylon to its foundations. For there were a few young men there that loved God more than they feared men.

For just a few moments scan the book of Daniel with me, and think of what was happening there in Babylon, this very city which was the citadel of Satan's government on earth. Think of its meaning to us today.

Right in the very first chapter, we see Daniel and his three friends refusing what? The king's wine, the wine of Babylon. Are we to refuse the wine of Babylon today? Yes. And as the result, in the second chapter, we see a message come to the king of Babylon through one of those young men, Daniel. His dream is given and interpreted, and the history of the world in advance is given him through the spirit of prophecy.

In the third chapter, we see Babylon erecting a great golden image and telling everyone to bow down. But, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego stand up. Are we to face Babylon over an image today? Will there be some young people today that'll stand up when all the world bows down? Yes.

Then in the fourth chapter, we see the glorious climax of it, as again, through the ministry of Daniel and the chastening rod of God, Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, is at last brought to pay humble submission to the King of kings. Oh, my friends, it's a wonderful type of this fact, that down here today, in spite of all the sins and idolatry of Babylon, there're going to be some leading men in this world and in the churches in these last closing hours, that will be brought into fellowship with God's message. Aren't you glad, friends?

In spite of Nebuchadnezzar's conversion, Babylon itself went on and on in sin until finally there was nothing further that God could do for Babylon. Did you know that God, through Israel, through His representatives, made every effort to help Babylon? Read the plaintive lament in Jeremiah:

“We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed...”
Jeremiah 51:9.

And today, infinite love is making every effort to reach every soul in Babylon, my friends. We must join in that loving call.

The final impiety of Babylon is revealed in the fifth chapter of this book of Daniel as Belshazzar, the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, gathers a thousand of his lords with a great feast, and called for the sacred vessels of the temple of God from Jerusalem to pour the wine of Babylon into. I want to tell you something, friends. Heaven could stand that no longer. That was the last daring act of impiety. The finger of God wrote on the wall of that palace the doom of Babylon.

But, could those men read it? No. They were so drunk with their wine and so full of their false ideas that it took a prophet of God to interpret it. And I want to tell you today, friends, the only ones that will be able to read the handwriting on the wall of this world, as it goes down to doom, will be those whose minds are sober, under the influence of the Spirit of God, and utterly free from the influence of Babylon's wine. All these lessons are very meaningful for us today.

You remember that even while Daniel was interpreting that writing on the wall, the armies of Cyrus were slipping through, under the wall. They had drained the waters of the Euphrates around, diverted it to a side lake, and they were slipping in under the wall and up through the gates. And there, they slipped into the palace and slew the king before he had hardly heard the news that his capital was invaded. All this has its typical lessons. Today, as we come to the crisis of the ages, those things that happened back then in Old Testament times, are to be repeated on a world scale.

That is the Old Testament story. Babylon falls and God's people go back to Jerusalem under Ezra and Nehemiah and others, and build up Jerusalem.

But now down here today, as we come into New Testament times, and as I've already shown you, Jerusalem represents God's church, God's people. Babylon,

where do we find Babylon? It's no longer on the Euphrates, friends. It's on the Tiber. It's no longer a city in the valley of the Tigris. No. It's a seven-hilled city. A woman is sitting on those seven mountains, mystic Babylon.

Did you know that Peter, when he wrote his epistle from the city of Rome, called that Babylon? You'll find that in 1 Peter 5:13. Even in those days, those who were led by the Spirit of God recognized that Rome was the counterpart of old Babylon. And there Satan chose to set up his headquarters, and to so mix Christianity and paganism, that by the time we come to the middle ages, pagan Rome has come to be so-called Christian Rome. But in reality, according to the Bible, it is Babylon.

And so according to Revelation 17, we see Babylon sitting upon the beast, sitting upon its seven heads, and giving orders to all the world. And between those two women, the scarlet woman of Revelation 17 and the white-robed woman of Revelation 12, there is a war till the end of time. Between these two cities, there is a war to the death, my friends. The last closing chapters of Revelation, from the 17th on through, are concerned with the final judgments upon Babylon, and the final exaltation of Jerusalem.

I want to call your attention to something very important at this point. Before that final crisis can be allowed to take place, there must be a calling out and a culling out. God is calling all His people out of Babylon, and God is culling out of His church call those who are in sympathy with Babylon. There must be no fifth column left in the church when the final war breaks. And one of the great topics of the book of Revelation is the process by which God accomplished those two purposes.

In Revelation 18, we see an angel coming down from Heaven with great power. The earth is lightened with his glory. And what does he say?

“...Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils...” Revelation 18:2.

But is there anyone left in there? Oh, yes:

“...Come out of her...”

Who?

“...my people...” Revelation 18:4.

God has a people in Babylon? Yes, my friends. What's He doing about it? Calling them out before that awful storm of wrath breaks, before the plagues are poured out.

And so it is also within the true church of God. Zion must be purged, my friends. Zion must be purged of those who trouble her. Read the ninth chapter of Ezekiel, and what do you find? An angel going through the city of Jerusalem, putting

a mark on whom? Those that sigh and cry over sin. Read the fourth chapter of Isaiah, and what do you see? You'll find that in the closing work, it is plainly stated that everyone at that time that is left in Jerusalem will be holy—no sin left in the church when God finishes His work of purging and cleansing. And they will all be written to life. Their names remain in the book of life.

But oh, friends, to accomplish that work, there must be, first of all in our hearts, this work of purification and cleansing, and then the church must be purified. God is going to allow terrible persecution to come upon His church. That's what Revelation 13 tells about, as the mark of the beast and his image are enforced. And oh, then, as the winds of persecution blow, what will happen to the chaff? It'll be blown out.

Read the picture in *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 5*, page 81. Clouds of chaff will be blown away. Read the picture as given us in *Selected Messages*:

“The church may appear as about to fall, but it does not fall. It remains, while the sinners in Zion will be sifted out—the chaff separated from the precious wheat. This is a terrible ordeal, but nevertheless it must take place”
Selected Messages, Book 2, page 380.

Oh friends, get that clear. What happens to the chaff? It's blown out by the winds of persecution. What happens to the wheat? It remains. If good and honest people understand this, they'll never be misled by any offshoot, my friends. They'll know that the purging of the church takes place, not by the truehearted leaving it, but by remaining in it and putting their influence on the side of purifying every individual Christian.

But oh, friends, what a glorious day it will be when the church of God appears:

“...fair as the moon and clear as the sun and terrible as an army with banners” Song of Solomon 6:10.

When clad in the armor of Christ's righteousness, she enters upon her final conflict. Then God can pour out His plagues upon Babylon because not one of His children is left in it.

Then as those plagues are poured out one by one, finally, we come to the drying up of the Euphrates under the sixth angel, and then, under the seventh angel, the great city Babylon is broken up into three parts, Revelation 16 says. Her hosts are thrown into confusion. Then Jesus comes, my friends, to deliver His people, and Babylon goes down like a great millstone, as the angel pictures in the closing verses of Revelation 18. That's the end of Babylon, my friends. That city, which for ages has defied God, goes down.

But, ah, what's the climax of it all? Turn to Revelation 21 and watch, friends. For coming down through Orion, what do we see? Oh, a city. What city is it?

Jerusalem—Old Jerusalem? No. That's gone. This is the New Jerusalem, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. It comes down and settles right on the place of old Jerusalem. Read it in Zachariah 14. And there, where David used to reign, the Son of David will reign forever and ever. There, my dear friends, throughout eternal ages, all the nations of the saved will join in that jasper city, that golden city, that city with the crystal river running through in all its beauty. There will be the capital of God's kingdom through the endless ages of eternity.

Ah friends, I ask you tonight, to which of these cities do you belong? Where is your citizenship? Is it in Babylon, or is it in Jerusalem? Do you belong to the sinful city or the holy city?

Do you want to know how to tell? Study Psalm 137. Ask yourself this question: do I sing the songs of Zion or the songs of Babylon? Ask yourself how you feel when you are in Babylon. Do you sing, or do you sigh? The children of Zion weep when they are in Babylon. They're sighing for Zion. Their mirth awaits the glorious day of deliverance.

And so tonight, friends, I pray that God will bless every one of us.

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