

The Antichrist Chapter 13 BABYLON AND THE ANTICHRIST

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Transcript

The Antichrist

Chapter 13 BABYLON AND THE ANTICHRIST.

We arrive now at a branch of our subject upon which the Lord's people are in evident need of instruction: they have less light here than on most prophetic themes. And perhaps we should not be surprised at this. The very name Babylon means confusion, and widely prevails the confusion concerning it. Yet here and there God has raised up individuals who have borne faithful testimony to the teaching of His Word concerning the past and future of Babylon, and to their witness the writer acknowledges his indebtedness. In view of the ignorance which generally obtains we shall proceed the more cautiously. We here propose to examine carefully the principal scriptures in the Old Testament bearing upon our present theme. "Babylon was a mighty city of old; its beginnings were in Shinar in the days shortly after the flood; it played an important part in the history of Israel and of Judea; it was the head of the kingdoms of the earth in the days of Nebuchadnezzar; after its capture by the Medes and Persians it fell from its high estate, but for some centuries after Christ it was still a city of importance, and the head of a district. In the New Testament it is first mentioned by Peter (1 Pet. 5:13), and here in the book that tells of the events that occur in the Day of the Lord we read of it as a city again dominating the world, and that at a time when Israelites are again prominent in the story of the earth. Here, too, Babylon reappears in its ancient dual aspect, political and social, the first city of earth and also the leader of the worship and religion of the world powers. The site of old Babylon is known at the present day; it covers a wide extent of ground, and parts of it are inhabited, as for instance Hillah, where there are some five or six thousand people. When the long-talked-of Euphrates Valley Railway becomes a reality, Babylon will be one of the most important places on the line" (Col. VanSomeron—"The Great Unfolding"). This quotation supplies a brief but fairly comprehensive outline of our subject. The earliest mention of Babel in scripture is in connection with the name of him who first after the deluge attained to greatness in the earth—greatness apart from God. Nimrod was the grandson of Ham, who called down upon him the curse of his father, Hoah. "The sons of Ham were Cush...and Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord, and the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, in the land of Shinar" (Gen. 10:7-10). Let the reader turn back to the previous chapter for our comments on Nimrod as a type of the Antichrist. "Thus mightiness in the earth and commencement of kingly rule are first mentioned in connection with one, the seat of whose power was Babylon and the land of Shinar. Nimrod—Nebuchadnezzar—Antichrist,

are, as we shall see, the three great names connected with that region and with that city" (B.W. Newton: "Babylon; Its Revival and Final Destruction"—1859). The first mention of anything in scripture always calls for the most particular attention, inasmuch as the initial occurrence of any term or expression in the Word of God invariably defines its meaning and forecasts its subsequent significance and scope. The passage just quoted from Genesis 10 is inseparably connected with and is in fact the key to what is found in Genesis 11. There we learn that the land of Shinar is mentioned as the place where men first united in confederate action against God. God had commanded that men should spread abroad—Genesis 9:1. But they, in blatant defiance, preferred to centralize. They determined to make for themselves a name, saying, "Go to, Let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth" (Gen. 11:4). And this, we are told, was "In the land of Shinar" (Gen. 11:2). But the Lord interfered, came down, confounded their speech, and scattered them—"And they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth," etc. (Gen. 11:8,9). Thus we see that at the beginning, the land of Shinar and the city of Babylon were the scene of confederate evil, and of judgment from the hand of God. Shinar, then, was the land around Babel. Now, though the building of the city of Babylon was checked during the days of Nimrod, yet his kingdom was not overthrown. In Genesis 14:1 we read of "Amraphal king of Shinar." It would appear from several scriptures that "the land of Chaldea"—the capital of which was the city of Babylon—is but another name for "the land of Shinar." In Daniel 5:30 Belshazzar is termed "the king of the Chaldeans," while in Daniel 7:1 he is called "the king of Babylon"—cf Isaiah 47:1; Jeremiah 50:8; 51:54; Ezekiel 12:13. In addition to these passages, Daniel 1:2,3 seems to positively establish this conclusion, for there we are expressly told that the Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar's day was situated in "the land of Shinar"! This serves to confirm the fact that Chaldea or Babylonia was the most ancient of the early empires. It was from "Ur" of Chaldea (Gen. 11:28) that Abram was called; and it was "the Chaldeans" who plundered Job (Job 1:17); and in Joshua 7:21 we read of the "goodly Babylonish garment" which tempted Achan, among the spoils of Jericho. In striking accord with this is the statement found in Jeremiah 5:16, where the Holy Spirit terms the Babylonians as "ancient" as well as a "mighty" nation. After the days of Joshua, Babylon was not directly referred to again till the days of Esar-Haddon, of whom it is said, "And the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, and from Cutthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel: and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof" (2 Kings 17:24, and cf. Ezra 4:2). Closely connected with the land of Shinar is Assyria. For a time the supremacy alternated between Assyria and Babylonia, until in the days of Nabopolassar, the father of Nebuchadnezzar, Nineveh was conquered and Assyria became subject to Babylon. But though Shinar and its capital are referred to in Genesis 10 and 11, and though there are occasional allusions to them in the centuries that followed, it was not until Israel's apostasy had been fully manifested that we find Babylon coming into the place of prominence and dominion. "Until Jerusalem had been sufficiently tried, to see whether she would prove herself worthy of being God's city, Babylon was kept in abeyance. The founder of Babylon's greatness was that great king who was raised up to scourge Jerusalem, and who commenced the "Times of the Gentiles," by receiving from God that endowment of power which was taken from Israel, and remains vested in the Gentiles, till Jerusalem shall be forgiven and cease to be trodden down. It was Nebuchadnezzar who 'walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. The king spoke and said, Is not this great Babylon which I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power and for the honor of my majesty?' (Dan. 4). The greatness of Babylon dates only from Nebuchadnezzar" (B.W.N.). The fifth chapter of Daniel tells how Belshazzar, the successor of Nebuchadnezzar, was slain by Darius, who took over the kingdom. Neither the city nor the kingdom was then destroyed, and so far from it being

made desolate and without inhabitant, it remained for long centuries a city without inhabitant, it remained for long centuries a city of note. Two hundred years after its capture by Darius, Alexander the Great, after his conquest over the Persians, selected Babylon as the intended capital of his vast dominion, and, in fact, died there. In the first century of the Christian era Babylon still stood, for Peter refers to a church there! (See 1 Peter 5:13). Several of the church "Fathers" refer to Babylon, and at the beginning of the sixth century A.D. the famous Babylonian Talmud was issued by the Academies of Babylonia. Mr. Newton tells us that "Ivan Hankel in A.D. 917 speaks of Babylon as a small village. Even in the tenth century, therefore, it had not wholly disappeared." Slow and almost indiscernible was its decline and decay. Even in this day there is still a small town, Hillah, standing on the original site of ancient Babylon. What, then, of the future? That there will yet be another Babylon, a Babylon eclipsing the power and glory of that of Nebuchadnezzar's day, has long been the firm conviction of the writer. Nor are we by any means alone in this conviction. A long list of honored names might be given of those who have arrived, independently, at the conclusion that the Scriptures plainly teach that Babylon is going to be rebuilt. But there is no need to buttress our conviction by an appeal to human authority. Better than the faith of the reader rest on the Word of God, than in the wisdom of the best of men. Before we set forth some of the many scripture proofs on which our conviction rests, let us ask, Would it not be passing strange if Babylon had no place in the End-time? Scripture tells us that Jerusalem, which has been so long trodden down by the Gentiles, is to be restored by human agency, and have a re-built temple (Matthew 24:15). Egypt and Assyria have yet an honored future before them, as is clear from Isaiah 19:23,24. Moab, Edom, and Seir are to figure in the coming day, as is intimated in Numbers 24:17,18. Greece awaits her final judgment from God (Zech. 9:13). And so we might go on. Why, then, should Babylon be exempted from the general renovation of the East? But we are not left to logical deductions, the Word of God expressly affirms that Babylon will play a prominent part at the Time of the End. The empire over which the Antichrist will reign is described in the identical symbols which were applied to the four world-kings of Daniel 7. In Daniel 7:3 Daniel beheld "four great beasts" come up from the sea, and in Daniel 7:17 we are told "these great beasts, which are four, are four kings (or kingdoms) which shall arise out of the earth." These four beasts or kingdoms were the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman. Daniel 7:4 says "The first was like a lion." Daniel 7:5 says "The second was like a bear." Daniel 7:6 says the third was "like a leopard." Daniel 7:7 says the fourth was "dreadful and terrible." Now, in Revelation 13:1, 2, where we have a symbolical description of the empire which the Antichrist shall head, we are told that John saw "a Beast rise up out of the sea," and then it is added, "the Beast...was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion." Of the fourth beast of Daniel 7 we read, "It had ten horns" (Dan. 7:7); so in Revelation 13:1 the Beast there has "ten horns." Who, then, can doubt that Revelation 13:1, 2 is given for the express purpose of teaching us that the four great world-kings of the past—not merely the fourth but all of the four—are to be revived and restored at the Time of the End? But as this point is disputed by some, we tarry to advance further proof. It is to be noted that the Beast (kingdom) of Revelation 13:1 is said to have "seven heads." This has puzzled many of the commentators, but once it is seen that the Beast of Revelation 13:1, 2 is a symbolic description, first of a composite kingdom, made up of and perpetuating the features of the four world-empires of old; and second, a symbolic description of the one who shall head it, all difficulty disappears. That we have here in Revelation 13:1, 2 a composite kingdom is clear from the "seven heads." Now note that in Daniel 7 the first, second and fourth kingdoms are not said to have more than one head, but the third has four heads" (Dan. 7:6). Thus the beasts of Daniel 7 have, three of them one head each, and the third four heads, or seven in all; which tallies perfectly with Revelation 13:1. But even this does not exhaust the proofs that the four kingdoms of Daniel 7 are to be restored, and play their final parts immediately before the Millennium. If the reader will turn to

Daniel 2, which is parallel with Daniel 7—the "image in its four parts (the head, the breast and arms, the belly and thighs, the legs and feet) corresponding with the four beasts—it will be found that when we come to Daniel 7:45, which speaks of Christ (under the figure of "the Stone cut out of the mount without hands") returning to earth to destroy the forces of evil, and then set up His kingdom, we discover that the Stone "brake in pieces the iron (Rome), the brass (Greece), the clay (apostate Israel), the silver (Medo-Persia), and the gold (Babylon). What we desire the reader to note particularly is that the Stone strikes not only the iron, but the brass, clay, silver, and gold; in fact, Daniel 7:35 tells us, expressly, they shall be "broken to pieces together"! If, then, they are destroyed together, they must all be on the scene at the time of Christ's return to earth to inaugurate His millennial reign, and if so, each of them must have been revived and restored!! As our present inquiry concerns not the renovation of Persia, Greece and Rome, but only that of Babylon, we shall confine ourselves to the scriptures which speak of the last mentioned. 1. Isaiah 13 and 14 contain a remarkable bearing directly on the theme before us. It is termed in the opening verse. "The burden of Babylon." It tells of the terrible judgment which God shall send on this city. It speaks of the total and final destruction of it. It declares that "Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah." It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation (Isa. 13:19, 20). Now the one point pertinent to our present inquiry is, Whether Isaiah 13 describes the doom which befell the Babylon of Belshazzar's day, or the judgment which shall overtake the Babylon of the coming day. Upon this point there is, for those who desire to be subject to God's Word, no room for uncertainty. The sixth verse expressly declares that this "burden of Babylon" is to receive its fulfillment in "the Day of the Lord." This, we need hardly add, is the name for that day which follows the present Day of Salvation (2 Cor. 6:2). If the reader will consult a concordance he will find that "the Day of the Lord" never refers to a period now past, but always has reference to one which is yet future! If any doubt remains as to whether or not Isaiah 13 is speaking of a future day, the contents of Isaiah 13:10 should forever remove it. There we are told that "the stars of heaven and the constellation thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine." All students of prophecy will see at a glance that these cosmic phenomena are what are to be witnessed during the Tribulation period—cf. Matthew 24:29. There is not a hint anywhere either in Scripture or (so far as we are aware) in secular history, that such disturbances among the heavenly bodies occurred at the captivity of Babylon by Darius. And it is at that time, in "the Day of the Lord" when the sun is darkened and the moon shines not, that Babylon is overthrown (Isa. 13:19). This one scripture is quite sufficient to establish the futurity of Babylon and its coming overthrow. 2. The 14th of Isaiah reads right on from 13, completing the "burden of Babylon" there begun. It supplies further proof that there is to be another Babylon. The chapter opens with a declaration of Israel's coming restoration. It declares "the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land" (Isa. 14:1). It goes on to say, "It shall come to pass in the day that the Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve, That thou shalt take up this taunting speech against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!" (Isa. 14:3, 4). Should the quibble be raised that these verses are speaking of the restoration of Israel to Palestine following the captivity of Nebuchadnezzar's time, it is easily silenced. The verses that follow those just quoted make it unmistakably clear that this prophecy yet awaits its fulfillment. Thus we read in Isaiah 14:7, 8, "The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing. Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us." The whole earth never has been "at rest" since the days of Cain (except it were during the brief period when the Word tabernacled among men). But it will be during the Millennium! Notice, too, that following the overthrow of "the golden city," Israel exclaims, "Since

thou art laid down, (laid low) no feller (no cutter off) is come up against us"! This establishes, unequivocally, the time of which this prophecy treats. Long after the days of Belshazzar, the Romans came up against Israel and cut them off. But none shall do this again when the last king of Babylon is destroyed! Above, we have quoted to the end of the 8th verse of Isaiah 14. In the 9th verse the prophet suddenly turns from Babylon to its last king. Verses 9 to 20 contain a striking portrait of the lofty arrogance and fearful doom of the Man of Sin. Then, in verse 21, the "burden returns again to the subjects of the Antichrist: "Prepare slaughter for his children for the iniquity of their fathers; that they do not rise, nor possess the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities. For I will rise up against them, saith the Lord of hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, and son, and nephew, saith the Lord. I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water: and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of hosts" (Isa. 14:21-23). Finally, the prophet concludes with a parting word concerning the Antichrist: "The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand: That I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders. This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this is the hand that is stretched upon all the nations. For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? And His hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back? (Isa. 14:24-27). Well has it been said, "These are remarkable and significant words, and certainly we cannot say they have been fulfilled. Will any one affirm that God's purpose which He hath purposed upon the whole earth was accomplished when Babylon was overthrown by the Medes and Persians? Did the hand that was stretched out over all the nations, then fulfill its ultimate designs? Was the Assyrian then trodden under foot in The Land, And On The Mountains Of Israel, and, that at a time when the yoke of bondage is finally broken from off the neck of Israel? If this were so we should no longer see Jerusalem trodden down now. "The times of the Gentiles' would have ended. Israel would be gathered, and Jerusalem be "a praise in the earth." The concluding words of this prophecy, therefore, might alone convince us that it yet remains to be fulfilled" (B.W.N.).

3. We appeal next to the 50th chapter of Jeremiah. The opening verses contain a prophecy which certainly has not received its complete fulfillment in the past. It declares, "The words that the Lord spake against Babylon and against the land of the Chaldeans by Jeremiah the prophet. Declare ye 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. For out of the north there cometh 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. In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: they shall go, and seek the Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant which shall not be forgotten" (Jer. 50:1-5). Mark carefully three things in these verses. First, it is announced that the land of Babylon shall be made so desolate that neither man nor beast shall dwell therein. Second, the time for this is defined as being when Israel and Judah together (and since the days of Rehoboam they have never been united) shall "seek the Lord." Third, it is when Israel and Judah shall join themselves to the Lord in "a perpetual covenant"! Still more explicit is the time-mark in Jeremiah 50:20: "In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found."

4. The whole of Jeremiah 51 should be carefully studied in this connection. Much in it we reserve for consideration in the two chapters which will follow this. Here we simply call attention to Jeremiah 51:47-49: "Therefore, behold, the days come, that I will do judgment upon the graven images of Babylon: and her whole land shall be confounded, and all her slain shall fall in the midst of her. Then the

heaven and the earth, and all that is therein, shall sing for Babylon: for the Spoiler shall come upon her from the north, saith the Lord. As Babylon hath caused the slain of Israel to fall, so at Babylon shall fall the slain of all the earth." Surely little comment is needed here. When did the slain "of all the earth" (i.e. of all nations) fall in the midst of Babylon? And when did heaven and earth and all that is therein rejoice at her overthrow? "When Babylon passed into the hands of the Medes there was little occasion for such joy. It made little difference to the earth whether Babylon was reigned over by Chaldeans, or by Persians, or Greeks, or Romans. There was little cause for thanksgiving in such transfer of authority from one proud hand to another. But if there be a fall of Babylon that is to be immediately succeeded by the kingdom of Him, of whom it is said, "All nations shall call Him blessed."..then there is indeed sufficient reason why heaven and earth, and all that is therein should sing" (B.W.N.). 5. "Be in pain, and labor to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail: for now shalt thou go forth out of the city, and thou shalt dwell in the field, and thou shalt go even to Babylon; there shalt thou be delivered; there the Lord shall redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies" (Mic. 4:10). In the light of such scriptures as Micah 5:3, Matthew 24:8 ("sorrows" literally means "birth-pangs"), etc., there can be no room for doubt as to the time to which this prophecy refers. It is at the close of the Great Tribulation. And at that time a remnant of Israel will be found in Babylon and they shalt be delivered by the Lord. 6. Both the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah as well as the Apocalypse speak of the immediateness of the blow which is to destroy Babylon. "Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate...therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart I am, and none else besides me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children: But these two things shall come to thee in a moment, in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in thy perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments" (Isa. 47:1,8,9). "Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed; howl for her" (Jer. 51:8). "Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come" (Rev. 18:10). There has been nothing in the past history of Babylon which in any wise corresponds with these prophecies. 7. Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the Revelation each declare that Babylon shall be burned with fire. "And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorah" (Isa. 13:19). "The mighty men of Babylon have forborne to fight, they have remained in their holes: their might hath failed; they become as women: they have burned her dwelling places; her bars are broken...Thus saith the Lord or hosts; the broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, and her high gates shall be burned with fire" (Jer. 51:30, 58). "And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city!" (Rev. 18:18). We know of nothing in either Scripture or secular history which shows that Babylon was burned in the past. "But it will be said, perhaps, How can this be? Has not Babylon already been smitten? Has it not already been swept with the besom of destruction? Our answer is—Not at the time and with the concomitant circumstances specified in the passage just quoted. It is true indeed that the Euphratean countries have been smitten—sorely smitten under the hand of God. God is wont in His goodness to give premonitory blows. He is accustomed to warn before He finally destroys. Egypt, Jerusalem, and many other places, have all experienced premonitory desolations, and so has Babylon. Its present ruin (which came on it slowly, and if I may so speak, gently), is a memorial of what God's righteous vengeance can do, and a warning of what it will more terribly do, if human pride in contempt of all His admonitions, shall again attempt to rear its goodly palaces when He has written desolation. But if it be the habit of God thus graciously to warn, it is equally the habit of man to say, "The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stone; the sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars'. Unbidden, the hand of man revived what God had smitten (that is what happened in Chicago and

San Francisco! A.W.P.). Without therefore undervaluing the lesson given by past visitations of God's judgments—without hiding, but rather seeking to proclaim the reality and extent of the ruin, His holy hand has wrought, we have also to testify, that the hand of man uncommissioned from above will, sooner or later, reconstruct the fabric of its greatness—its last evil greatness, on the very plains which teem with the memorials of a ruin entailed by former and yet unrepented of transgressions. Egypt, Damascus, Palestine, and in a measure, Jerusalem, are already being revived. And if these and neighboring countries which have been visited by inflictions similar to those which have fallen on Babylon, are yet to revive and flourish with an evil prosperity at the time of the end, why should Babylon be made an exception?" (B.W.N.). That the Antichrist will be intimately connected with the land of Chaldaee is clear from a number of scriptures, notably, those which speak of him as "the Assyrian" and "the king of Babylon." But as this is a disputed point we are obliged to pause and make proof of it. Let us turn, then, first to Isaiah 10 and 11 which form one continuous prophecy. We can not now attempt even an outline of this long and interesting prediction, but must merely single out one or two statements from it which bear on the point now before us. In the fifth verse of Isaiah 10, the Lord addresses the Antichrist as follows: "O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation." This intimates, as pointed out in a previous chapter, that the Son of Perdition is but a tool in the hands of the Almighty, His instrument for threshing Israel. His consuming egotism and haughtiness come out plainly in the verses that follow (Isa. 10:7-11). But when God has accomplished His purpose by him, He "will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks" (Isa. 10:12). How this serves to identify him with the "little horn" of Daniel 7:20, the Man of Sin of 2 Thessalonians 2:4!—cf further his proud boastings recorded in Isaiah 10:13,14. In 5:23 is another statement which helps us to fix with certainty the period of which the prophet is speaking, and the central actors there in view: "For a consummation, and that determined, shall the Lord, the Lord of hosts, make in the midst of all the earth" (R.V.). The words "consummation" and "that determined" occur again in Daniel 9:27—"He (Antichrist) shall make it (the temple) desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the Desolator." The "King of Assyria" and "the Desolator" are thus shown to be the same. In Isaiah 10: 24 and 25 we read, "Therefore thus saith the Lord God of hosts, O My people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian: he shall smite thee with a rod, and shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt. For et a very little while, and the indignation shall cease, and Mine anger in their destruction." Clearly this is parallel with Daniel 11:36: "And the King shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished." In the 11th chapter of Isaiah there is a statement even clearer, a proof conclusive and decisive: "And He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked" (Isa. 11:4). These very words are applied to the Man of Sin in 2 Thessalonians 2:8. In Isaiah 14 we have a scripture which very clearly connects the Antichrist with Babylon. The opening verses (which really form a parenthesis) tell of the coming restoration of Israel to Jehovah's favor, and then in Isaiah 14:4 they are bidden to take up "a taunting speech (marginal rendering) against the King of Babylon." The taunting speech begins thus: "How hath the Oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased! the Lord hath broken the staff of the Wicked" (Isa. 14:4, 5). As to who is in view here there is surely no room for doubt. He is Israel's Oppressor in the End-time; he is the Wicked One. In the verses which follow there are many marks by which he may be positively identified. In Isaiah 14:6 this "King of Babylon" is said to be "He who smote the people (i.e. Israel) in wrath with a continual stroke." In Isaiah 14:12 he is called "Lucifer (Day-star), Son of the morning," a title which marks him out as none other than the Son of Perdition. Whatever backward reference to the fall of Satan there may be in this verse and the ones that follow, it is clear that they describe the blasphemous arrogance of the Antichrist. In 5:13 we read, "For thou hast said

in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north." Then, in Isaiah 14:15 and 16 we are told, "Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the Pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms? Clearly it is the Man of Sin that is here in view. In Isaiah 30 we have another scripture which links Antichrist with Babylonia. Beginning at Isaiah 30:27 we read: "Behold, the name of the Lord cometh from afar, burning with His anger, and the burning thereof is heavy: his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire: And his breath, as an over-flowing stream, shall reach to the midst of the neck, to sift the nations with the sieve of vanity: and there shall be a bridle in the jaws of the people, causing them to err. Ye shall have a song, as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the mighty One of Israel." Clearly it is the very end of the Tribulation period which is here in view. The reference is to the return of the Lord to earth in great power and glory, when He shall overthrow those who are gathered together against Him, and put an end to the awful career of the Antichrist. Continuing, we find this passage in Isaiah 30 closes as follows: "For through the voice of the Lord shall the Assyrian be beaten down, which, smote with a rod. And in every place where the grounded staff shall pass, which the Lord shall lay upon him, it shall be with tabrets and harps: and in battles of shaking will he fight with it. For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the King it is prepared; He hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it"— cf. "the breath of the Lord" here with Isaiah 11:4. For further references to Antichrist and Assyria see Isaiah 7:17-20; 8:7, etc. The next two chapters will be devoted to a consideration of Babylon in the New Testament, when Revelation 17 and 18 will come before us. May the Lord in His grace give us the wisdom we so sorely need, and preserve the writer and reader from all error.

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