

# PROPHECY UNCUT

## *The 3 Angels' Messages: Babylon is Fallen*

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### INTRODUCTION

The first angel's message is a package that encapsulates the entire everlasting gospel in seed form. Studied in the light of the rest of Scripture, this power-packed gospel message unravels into a positive and clarion invitation to all who will listen to give their supreme loyalty, love and devotion to the true Creator God who alone is worthy of humanity's worship.

Yet, God's message for final preparation does not end with this divine appeal. It continues into a most earnest warning that outlines the end time danger and provides gracious instruction in exactly how to deal with this danger. This is the purpose of the second angel's message.

### WHAT IS 'BABYLON' AS REFERRED TO IN REVELATION 14:8?

#### Revelation 14:8

The Babylon referred to in Revelation 14:8 cannot refer to the literal city of Babylon as this city had been lying in ruins for many years by the time this prophecy was given.

The principle at work in this passage is that of typology. Typology involves a type and an anti-type. The type is usually a localised literal event, person, or place. The anti-type is a corresponding application of the type at a different time in history on a much larger, universal scale. The anti-type is a spiritual fulfillment of the literal localised type. The principle of typology applies to 'Babylon' in the following way:

#### Genesis 11:1-9; Daniel 4:30; Isaiah 14:4, 12

#### Type:

The literal city of Babylon, capital of the Babylonian empire, was situated in the far east, in what was known as the fertile crescent. This civilisation was known for its idolatry and its opposition to Israel – the people of God. There were numerous occasions when Babylon made war against Israel. Not only was Babylon characterised by opposition toward God and His people, but it was a city whose monarchs were noted for their pride and arrogance (Dan 4:30). Babylon became the icon of everything that was opposed to God and the true religion. In fact, the Bible reveals that the true king of Babylon was Lucifer himself – working through human instrumentalities (Is 14:4, 12).

The mighty apostate empire of Babylon grew out of rebellious beginnings in the form of the tower of Babel (Gen 11:1-9). The construction of the tower of Babel is a symbol of human beings attempting to save and preserve themselves through their own efforts while distrusting the promises of God (Gen 8:21).



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In fact, in Assyrian, the name Babel (*Bab-il*) literally means “the gate of god.”<sup>1</sup> However, in the Hebrew language the name ‘Babel’ came to signify confusion as a result of God’s act of confusing the languages while the tower of Babel was being built (Gen 11:9). Prior to this time there was only one universal language which all people spoke (Gen 11:1).

**Revelation 17:1-17;  
18:2-3; 1 Peter 5:13**

*Anti-type:*

With this literal historical background in mind, it becomes apparent that Babylon is a fitting prophetic image for the great end-time alliance between various entities that oppose God and His true followers. “Babylon is a religious-political power opposing God and oppressing His people”<sup>2</sup> (Rev 17:6).

The end-time application is of universal and spiritual application (Rev 17:18; Rev 18:3), including any entity that opposes God through the rejection of true Biblical teaching and sets forth a man-made system of finding favour with God. Spiritual Babylon is a system of religious confusion and spiritual pride in refusing to submit to God (Rev 17:4-5; Rev 18:2).

This spiritual system allies itself with the political powers of this earth to control the conscience of all (Rev 17:12-13). Just as with literal Babylon it is Lucifer who reigns through this spiritual opposition to God and his loyal followers. Babylon “occurs as a symbol of demonic world power”<sup>3</sup> (Rev 18:2).

It is for this reason that in the New Testament Rome was symbolically portrayed as being Babylon (1 Pet 5:13) for it too allied itself against God – even being responsible for crucifying the Messiah.

### **IN LIGHT OF THE FACT THAT PETER REFERS TO PAGAN ROME AS ‘BABYLON’, WHAT EVIDENCE IS THERE THAT ‘BABYLON’ INCLUDES MORE THAN SIMPLY ANCIENT PAGAN ROME?**

**Daniel 8:14;  
Revelation 14:7**

In the context of the book of Revelation ‘Babylon’ does not simply refer to ancient pagan Rome which was in power at the time when John wrote the book of Revelation. Babylon has a far broader end-time apocalyptic significance.

This is evidenced by the fact that the second angel’s

<sup>1</sup> J. H. Thayer, *The New Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1981), 92.

<sup>2</sup> R. Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ: Commentary on the Book of Revelation*, (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2002), 446.

<sup>3</sup> J. P. Louw & E. A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, Vol. 1, (Roggebaai, Cape Town: Bible society of South Africa, 1989), 834.



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announcement that Babylon the Great is fallen follows and accompanies the first angel's message, which in part, was an announcement that the judgment hour had already begun (Rev 14:7).

One may well ask whether Scripture elsewhere reveals any judgment hour yet to come. Indeed it does – in Daniel 8:14. According to the time prophecy calculation<sup>4</sup> this heavenly judgment hour would convene in the year 1844 AD – more than 2000 years after the time of Daniel.

When this chronology is understood it becomes apparent that the three angels' messages of Revelation 14 are of particular relevance in the time period after 1844 AD. Babylon, therefore, cannot be limited only to pagan Rome as existent in the time of John, the author of Revelation.

### **Revelation 17**

In addition to this, the language used to describe Babylon's activities, reign, and final destruction in Revelation 17 definitely lends itself more easily to a great end-time, universal interpretation rather than the limited literal fulfillment of pagan Rome in the time of John.

### **WHAT WILL ULTIMATELY BECOME OF SPIRITUAL BABYLON?**

#### **Revelation 17:16; 18:9-10, 20-21**

Just as Nebuchadnezzar's prideful boasting about Babylon the Great which he had built up was met with God's judgment, so too the end-time spiritual Babylon's pride will bring judgment upon itself (Rev 17:14).

Revelation pictures a turn of events whereby the very supporters of Babylon turn on it to bring about its downfall (Rev 17:16). Moreover, Jesus Himself will take up the fight against Babylon (Rev 17:14) and cause its downfall and final destruction. Babylon will be thoroughly annihilated (Rev 18:21).

This act of God's judgment is good news for the saints and results in rejoicing (Rev 18:2). The time will surely come when Babylon – the one who became drunk on the blood of the saints and martyrs (Rev 17:6) – will suffer the fate of death and destruction. In the same way that ancient Babylon ultimately fell, so too spiritual Babylon at the end of time will meet its demise.

<sup>4</sup> For a detailed analysis and calculation of the time element involved in Daniel 8:14 see the study entitled '2300 Evenings & Mornings-Understanding the Timing'.



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### **WHAT IS THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TERM 'FORNICATION'?**

**Hosea 1:2; 3:1; 4:12;  
9:1; Ezekiel 16:31-32;  
Jeremiah 3:6, 9, 20;  
James 4:4**

Consistently throughout the Old Testament the concept of spiritual unfaithfulness is illustrated by marital unfaithfulness or adultery (Hos 1:2). This metaphor is used also in the New Testament (James 4:4). Fornication is simply one form of marital unfaithfulness.

The image of fornication is a metaphor for Babylon's spiritual prostitution, or apostasy. In fact, in Revelation 17 her title includes 'the mother of harlots' (Rev 17:5). In other words, Babylon is the great icon and source of all spiritual unfaithfulness.

**Revelation 14:8; 17:2,  
15**

Babylon is in a state of spiritual apostasy. Moreover, she uses her influence to reproduce her character of spiritual unfaithfulness in all who will listen to her (Rev 17:2). This apostasy and spiritual unfaithfulness pictured by the second angel is on a worldwide scale, for all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of Babylon's fornication (Rev 14:8).

This is in direct contrast to the first angel's plea for worldwide loyalty and repentance toward the true Creator God (Rev 14:6). Babylon's spiritual fornication is exercised by a great multitude that support her (compare Rev 17:1 with Rev 17:15).

In the message of the first and second angel combined it is apparent that there is a true gospel – the everlasting gospel – and a counterfeit gospel. God's desire is that even those who have somehow been drawn into the counterfeit gospel will turn to become loyal to the Creator God.

### **WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CLOTHING WORN BY BABYLON THE HARLOT IN REVELATION 17**

**Revelation 17:4; 18:16;  
Exodus 28:5, 15, 23**

The harlot woman named as Babylon in Revelation 17 wears clothing of almost the same colour scheme as that which was to be worn by the Old Testament High Priest (Ex 28:5, 15, 23). The difference between the Old Testament priestly garments and that worn by the harlot in Revelation is the lack of the colour blue in the harlot's dress.

**Numbers 15:37-40**

Blue was a colourful symbol of obedience to God's commandments (Num 15:37-40). It is interesting to note that the blue tassels spoken of in the book of Numbers are connected not only with obedience in the positive sense but also with avoiding spiritual harlotry in the negative sense.

Babylon in Revelation 17 is both not wearing blue – the symbol



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of obedience to God's commandments – and is also specifically described as a harlot.

It is interesting to note that the false religious system portrayed in Revelation 17 is devoid of a spirit of obedience toward God while Revelation describes the true followers of God as those “who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus” (Rev 14:12).

### **2 Thessalonians 2:3-4**

Through the description of the clothing worn by the harlot, Babylon, of Revelation 17 the characteristic of lack of obedience is underscored as the specific manner in which this system demonstrates its spiritual unfaithfulness (fornication).

Revelation “warns of a counterfeit religious system with a leader who will pose as the world's spiritual high priest, but without a commitment to the commandments of God.”<sup>5</sup>

It is interesting to note that elsewhere in the New Testament this same concept of disobedience – or lawlessness – is clearly associated with the apostasy and a falling away from truth and righteousness inspired by an anti-Christ spirit (2 Thess 2:3-4). It is safe to conclude that any religious organisation that teaches that God does not require obedience to His commandments (whether only one commandment or all of them) would be a part of the system of Babylon described in Revelation 17.

### **WHAT IS THE 'WINE OF WRATH' THAT BABYLON GIVES TO ALL NATIONS TO DRINK?**

#### **Jeremiah 25:15-16; Revelation 14:8; 14:19**

In the Old Testament the metaphor of a cup of wine is used in the context of God's act of judgment. The idea is that just as wine makes a person unable to stand up straight and walk normally, so too the effect of God's judgment will bring down to the ground those who are judged. They will not be able to stand spiritually in the moment when God pours out His anger upon them (Jer 25:15-16).

In the light of this it would seem that the fornication or spiritual unfaithfulness of Babylon results in God pouring out His judgment upon the nations who have allied themselves with the spiritual sentiments and philosophies of Babylon. In influencing the nations of earth to spiritual apostasy, Babylon essentially hands them the wine of the wrath of God (Rev 14:8).

This sentiment is again mentioned and elaborated on under the third angel's message (Rev 14:9). The wine is a metaphor for the wrath

<sup>5</sup> S. MacCarty, *In Granite or Ingrained?: What the Old and New Covenants Reveal About the Gospel, the Law, and the Sabbath*, (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2007), 203.



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of God incurred by spiritual unfaithfulness and compromise. This concept seems to be substantiated by the fact that in the judgment the wicked are pictured as grapes thrown into the great winepress of the wrath of God (Rev 14:19).

### **WHAT IS GOD'S APPEAL TO THOSE WHO ARE A PART OF SPIRITUAL BABYLON?**

#### **Revelation 18:4; John 10:16**

It is of utmost importance that one take into consideration the fact that there are those who form part of Spiritual Babylon who God regards as His children (Rev 18:4). The very fact that the second angel is sent with the announcement that Babylon is fallen is an indication that God is reaching out in mercy to warn those who are involved in this system of spiritual compromise.

All God's warnings are acts of loving mercy designed to save those who may be living in some sort of error but who in heart long to know and serve the true God.

However, God does not instruct His people to stay in Babylon and attempt an internal reform. God's appeal is for His people to come out and separate themselves from Babylon's sins and unfaithfulness.

This end-time final appeal is the equivalent of what Jesus said in John 10:16 where He indicated that some of His sheep were not yet a part of the true flock but that they would hear his voice calling and would come out and join with His true flock.

#### **Jeremiah 51:6-9**

The prophet Jeremiah reveals that God earnestly sought to heal spiritual Babylon. It was God's desire to draw her back into a relationship of spiritual purity and faithfulness. Yet she refused to be healed (Jer 51:6-9). Many people who hear the second angel's message choose not to come out of Babylon in the hope that they can effect her healing and restoration through internal reformation. The great religious systems of the world that comprise Babylon will not change. Thus God has given up Babylon as a system. He has turned His attention towards calling out individuals who are His true followers (Jer 51:9).

God's desire, instruction, and appeal is crystal clear in Revelation 18:4. All who have desired to follow the Creator God with their whole heart but who find themselves worshipping within a religious orientation of compromise toward God's revealed truths as found in the Scriptures are called to separate themselves from these entities and religious persuasions and take a stand on Biblical principle and truth. No one who hears God's voice calling them to come out from Babylon but who chooses to remain there will be excused. The



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third angel's message makes this fact clear (Rev 14:9-10).

There may be nothing one can do about past mistakes and ignorance, but a lot can be done about changing one's future.

### **APPEAL**

**Psalm 95:7-8;  
Revelation 14:12**

Has the Holy Spirit brought conviction to your heart regarding the need to come out of spiritual Babylon? Have you heard the voice of God calling and urging you to take a stand on the side of truth and spiritual clarity by separating from past false beliefs and compromise? If you have, now is the time to act. Today, if you hear His voice, yield to God's leading (Ps 95:7-8).

Why not take your stand with those who gain the victory over Babylon? Why not make the choice today to join that group described in Revelation 14:12 as those who keep God's commandments and have the faith of Jesus?



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