

THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God*

IN CHRIST JESUS.

(Philippians 3.13-14 NASB)

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BABYLON, THE GREAT CITY #2

“Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! For in one hour your judgment has come.” (Revelation 18.10 NASB)

As stated in a previous issue [#02-0875, July 31, 2008], the expression *the great city* appears twelve times in the Bible, and its use in all cases gives a clear indication of the character of what is identified as *the great city*. The phrase *the great city* is identified with Nineveh, the wicked city founded by Nimrod, the conquering warrior who was in rebellion against God. In fact, Nimrod was the first one to build a kingdom that, we could say, was in direct opposition to God. Following the principle of first mention, the expression *the great city* establishes its meaning throughout Scripture. This is borne out by looking at all twelve verses in which it appears. In every case, at the heart of what is called *the great city* is wickedness, immorality, and rebellion, as well as a counterfeit or rival to God’s kingdom and His heavenly Jerusalem, the one, true city of God. The one name that sums up the great city is Babel or Babylon, which, depending on the source, means “confusion,” “mixture,” or “gate of god.” The gate of god is traced back to Nimrod and his clan when they attempted to build a tower to heaven in defiance of God, which led to God confusing their language so that they would scatter across the earth.

Article #9, May 2008, titled *A Mystery, The Great City Babylon*, provides more detail on this most important and timely subject.

Now, eight of the twelve references to *the great city* are discovered in *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Revelation 11.8; 16.19; 17.18; 18.10, 16, 18, 19, 21). Interestingly, the first mention in Revelation of *the great city* mystically identifies it with Sodom, Egypt, and Jerusalem.

And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. (Revelation 11.8 NASB)

Mystically means that this is not a reference to physical locations called Sodom and Egypt but to what these places signify in the spiritual or figurative sense. *Sodom* signifies immorality of the highest order, and *Egypt* signifies bondage under a world system of the highest order. Lot and his family were called out of Sodom before its destruction, and the sons of Israel were called out of Egypt and the bondage of Pharaoh. Need we be reminded that the latter calling out required the shedding of blood? The coming out of Lot and Israel signifies coming out of the kingdom of the world and into the kingdom of God where there is forgiveness of sin.

However, take note that *the great city* is the place where our Lord Jesus was crucified, which refers to only one place, and that is Jerusalem, and it is mystically called Sodom and Egypt. So, the great city, Jerusalem, not only signifies immorality and world bondage of the highest order but also murder of the highest order. One cannot go any higher in rebellion against God than killing the only begotten Son of God.

This might leave many who hold to Dualism Theology, that is, the teaching that the Jews and the state of Israel, **according to the flesh**, are the chosen people of God just because of their bloodline, scratching their heads, perplexed as to how God could call the apple of His eye both Sodom and

Egypt. The answer is simple; the earthly Jerusalem is no longer the apple of God's eye and, in fact, is part of and representative of mystery Babylon, *the great city*. In other words, Jerusalem is part of the mystery and will be judged in concert with all that Babylon represents. Mystically speaking, Jerusalem is part of *the great city* Babylon. In fact, it is arguable that the apostate, rebellious Jerusalem signifies *the great city* Babylon. Another way of stating this is that Jerusalem embodies all the character of Babylon.

Consider Jeremiah's words as he lamented over the earthly Jerusalem.

How lonely sits the city that was full of people! She has become like a widow who was once great among the nations! ... She weeps bitterly in the night and her tears are on her cheeks; she has none to comfort her among all her lovers. All her friends have dealt treacherously with her; they have become her enemies. (Lamentations 1.1-2 NASB)

Jerusalem sinned greatly, therefore she has become an unclean thing. All who honored her despise her because they have seen her nakedness; even she herself groans and turns away. Her uncleanness was in her skirts; she did not consider her future. Therefore she has fallen astonishingly; she has no comforter." (Lamentations 1.8-9 NASB)

Now, compare these verses to Revelation 18, which speaks of mystery Babylon, *the great city*. In particular, take note of the following verses.

For she says in her heart, 'I SIT as A QUEEN AND I AM NOT A WIDOW, and will never see mourning.' (Revelation 18.7 NASB)

And he cried out with a mighty voice, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird." (Revelation 18.2 NASB)

"And the kings of the earth, who committed acts of immorality and lived sensuously with her, will weep and lament over her when they see the smoke of her burning...." (Revelation 18.9 NASB)

"And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who have been slain on the earth." (Revelation 18.24 NASB)

This last verse should bring to mind the Lord Jesus' lament over Jerusalem: **Upon you may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah.... O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her!** (Matthew 23.35, 37 NASB).

In defiance of God, the great city refuses to accept any thought that she will become a widow. After all, in her pride and arrogance, she sits on the many waters, the multitudes on earth. But God has the final say in the matter, and Paul reveals to us what it is. In his epistle to the Galatians, speaking allegorically about the two sons of Abraham and their mothers, Paul contrasted the present old Jerusalem, that is, the earthly city, with New Jerusalem that is above, that is, the celestial or heavenly city.

The old Jerusalem and her children are in bondage, and New Jerusalem and her children are free (see Galatians 4.21-31). Now, here is the key; Paul declared that the old city called Jerusalem has been cast out. In other words, the Jerusalem on earth is no longer God's city. If this isn't enough proof for you, then prayerfully read Jeremiah 19.10-12 and 23.14, 39-40. The earthly Jerusalem has never been totally cast down so that it cannot be repaired. It has continued to exist in some form, and in our modern day is a thriving city in the midst of the modern state of Israel.

If we are to take Jeremiah's prophecy seriously, one day, Jerusalem will be totally destroyed, never to rise again, and it will happen as Babylon, *the great city*, falls. Consequently, whatever happens to the Babylonian system will happen to the literal Jerusalem as well.