Session 15 The Forerunner Message in Jeremiah 50-51 (Pt. 2)

1. Review
   1. Ten chapters in the Bible highlight the fall of Babylon with end-time implications (Isa. 13-14;   
      46-48; Jer. 50-51; Zech. 5; Rev. 17-18; cf. Isa. 21:1-10; 43:14-17; Jer. 25:12-14; Zech. 2:7).   
      These ten chapters describe the same end-time storyline from different perspectives and emphases.
   2. By learning the basic details of God’s end-time plan related to Babylon, we will be equipped to have a more informed conversation around these ten chapters, leading to increased understanding.
   3. There is so much prophetic Scripture on Babylon because of its significance—being dangerous   
      yet beneficial to God’s plan to purify the Church and bring Israel and many Gentiles to salvation.
   4. There is “mystery” related to God’s purpose for Babylon. To grow in our understanding will require *searching the Scripture* (these ten chapters), *watching current events*, *asking the Spirit* to shed more light progressively on those scriptures and events, and *discussing them with others.*

5And on her [the harlot’s] forehead a name was written: Mystery, Babylon The Great, The Mother Of Harlots And Of The Abominations Of The Earth 6I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints…I marveled with great amazement. (Rev. 17:5-6)

* 1. On her head is written a name: *Mystery, Babylon the Great* (as she is known to the nations) and *the Mother of Harlots and of the Abominations of the Earth* (as she is known in heaven).
  2. I seek to understand the precise relationship between three distinct entities—the *land of Babylon*, the *physical city* of Babylon, and the *“global city”* of Babylon that will include religious and financial networks. Is the harlot Babylon of Revelation 17 expressed equally in all three entities?
     1. ***Land of Babylon***: Jeremiah highlighted judgment coming on “the land of Chaldeans” and its cities (50:32; 51:43), thus on the nation, not just the city of Babylon (50:8, 18, 21, 25, 32, 45). The Chaldeans were the same people as the Babylonians.
     2. ***Physical city of Babylon***: I believe that the ancient city of Babylon (about 50 miles south of Baghdad) on the Euphrates River in Iraq will be rebuilt and connected to the harlot Babylon.
     3. ***Global city of Babylon***: The harlot reigns over the kings of the earth (Rev. 17:18). I believe that Babylon will function as or connect with a “global city” that influences the nations.

18The woman…is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth.” (Rev. 17:18)

* 1. ***Prophetic oracles describing Babylon’s judgment***:Revelation 17-18 draws from the prophetic oracles of Babylon’s sudden, total, and permanent destruction in Isaiah 13-14 and Jeremiah 50-51.
  2. ***The scope of Babylon’s influence***: Neither Rome, Jerusalem, nor any modern empire has ever possessed the kind of power and influence ascribed to the harlot Babylon in Revelation 17-18.
  3. ***The timing of Babylon’s fall***:The end-time judgment ofBabylon occurs immediately before Jesus’ return to deliver His people, destroy the Antichrist, and establish the millennial kingdom.

1. The identity of the city of Babylon
   1. There are various suggestions as to the identity of Babylon in end-time prophetic Scripture. They include the rebuilt city of Babylon on the Euphrates, Mecca, Rome, the Catholic Church, Jerusalem, New York City, apostate Christendom, or a type of hostile powers resisting God’s purpose.
   2. The rebuilt city of Babylon is the most straight-forward and literal interpretation of Scripture.
      1. She would need to be rebuilt in a way that *far surpasses* her glory under Nebuchadnezzar. This is necessary for her to have unprecedented world influence as seen in Revelation 17-18.
      2. Babylon must be rebuilt in order to be suddenly, totally, and permanently destroyed as prophesied in Isaiah 13-14, Jeremiah, and Revelation 17-18.
      3. The clear context of Isaiah 13-14 and Jeremiah 50-51 is eschatological as confirmed especially by the events happening at the time of Israel’s national salvation (50:4-5, 20).
      4. Isaiah wrote of the “day of the Lord” (13:6). There are a few occasions in Scripture where the term the “day of the Lord” refers to an unusual intervention of God in ancient history (Ezek. 13:5); the overwhelming usage of this term refers to the end of the age.
      5. The end-time narrative described in Revelation 17-18 draws heavily from the prophecies in Isaiah 13-14 and Jeremiah 50-51.
   3. There is a big difference between what Jeremiah prophesied and what actually occurred in history.
      1. Jeremiah prophesied Babylon would never be rebuilt, yet it has been rebuilt many times.
      2. Jeremiah prophesied that the walls of Babylon would suddenly fall (51:8) and be utterly broken and her gates would be burned (51:58). None of this happened. Rather, her walls have slowly deteriorated over centuries.
      3. He prophesied the desolation of Babylon (50:3, 13, 21-23, 26, 45; 51:2-3, 26, 29, 41, 62).   
         Yet the Persians armies entered the city by rerouting the Euphrates River that ran under the wall (providing fresh water to the city) and crept into the city at night, with no desolation.
      4. Revelation 17-18 draws heavily from Isaiah 13-14 and Jeremiah 50-51, suggesting that it makes reference to these Old Testament prophecies having fulfillment in the end times.
      5. Jeremiah prophesied that that the sea will “come up over Babylon,” flooding her (51:42).
   4. It is common for the prophets to speak about events in their near future while also describing events in the distant future or end times. It is best to interpret Isaiah 13-14 and Jeremiah 50-51 as speaking of both the historical fall of Babylon (539 BC) and the end-time judgment on Babylon.
   5. The prophecies in Isaiah 13-14 and Jeremiah 50-51 had partial fulfillment in 539 BC with complete fulfillment in the end times.
   6. In both passages, Babylon said to be conquered by the Medes (Isa. 13:17; Jer. 51:11, 28). The Medes were involved in the fall of ancient Babylon. Darius the Mede received the city (Dan. 5:31).
2. The harlot as a global city
   1. The harlot as a “global city” will be the combination of two vast, global institutions, which overlap and operate simultaneous religious and economic networks.
      1. They may be based in different cities, working together closely to deceive the earth.
      2. They will have a complicated inter-connection with each other, with the physical city of Babylon, and with the land of Babylon.
   2. Revelation 17 highlights spiritual harlotry with religious and financial implications. Revelation 18 focuses on the economic aspects of Babylon. Thus, the precise identification of harlot Babylon   
      and how she operates and how and when God judges her challenges students of Bible prophecy.
   3. Isaiah described God’s judgment on this global city. There are eight references in Isaiah 24-27 (often referred to as the “little apocalypse”) to this city without mentioning its name as Babylon.
   4. The judged city is described as broken down (24:10), joyless (24:11), desolate (24:12; 27:10), destroyed (24:12), ruined (25:2), laid low, brought down (26:5), left like a wilderness (27:10).
   5. Isaiah used five names indicating its characteristics—the city of confusion (24:10), a fortified city (25:2; 27:2), a palace of foreigners (25:2), the city of the terrible nations (25:3), and the lofty city (26:5).
      1. It will be a city of confusion (24:10), or a city promoting deception and spiritual confusion.

10The city of confusion is broken down; every house is shut up, so that none may go in. 11There is a cry for wine in the streets, all joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone. 12In the city desolation is left, and the gate is stricken with destruction. (Isa. 24:10-12)

* + 1. It will be a palace of foreigners (25:2), or an opulent city of luxury inhabited by many foreigners with varying ethnic backgrounds. It will be a city of the terrible nations (25:3) or global city that connects the wicked and cruel leaders of various nations.

2For You have made a city a ruin, a fortified city a ruin, a palace of foreigners to be a city no more; it will never be rebuilt. 3Therefore the strong people will glorify You; the city of the terrible nations will fear You. (Isa. 25:2-3)

* + 1. It will be a lofty city (26:5), or a city anchored in arrogance against God.

5For He brings down those who dwell on high, the lofty city; He lays it low, He lays it low to the ground, He brings it down to the dust. (Isa. 26:5)

* + 1. It will be a fortified city (25:2; 27:2), or strong and powerful city.

10Yet the fortified city will be desolate, the habitation forsaken and left like a wilderness; there the calf will feed, and there it will lie down and consume its branches. (Isa. 27:10)

* 1. Isaiah also described end-time harlot Babylon as “The Lady of Kingdoms” (Isa. 47:5).

5“Sit in silence [after judgment]… for you shall no longer be called The Lady of Kingdoms.   
(Isa. 47:5)

1. Harlot Babylon and the Antichrist
   1. The harlot will *depend* on the Antichrist, who will *carry her* (provide resources and protection). There is a mysterious relationship between Babylon and her relationship with the Antichrist.

3I saw a woman [harlot] sitting on a Beast [Antichrist] which was full of names of blasphemy…  
7I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her…16The…[ten kings] will hate the harlot, make her desolate and…burn her with fire. (Rev. 17:3, 7, 16)

* 1. Part of the Babylon system will always be deeply connected to the Antichrist. The Antichrist supports the harlot, yet the ten kings under his authority destroy part of the harlot system.
  2. Why would these ten kings destroy part of the harlot system? My assumption is that they destroy the religious network while continuing to work closely with the economic leaders.
  3. Antichrist worship will be so deeply connected to global economic systems of the merchants that no one will be able to buy or sell anything without taking the mark of the Beast. Thus, the economic networks of the harlot will continue to thrive under the authority of the Antichrist.

1. significant end-time activity related to the Euphrates river
   1. Four demonic beings who are bound at the Euphrates river (that flows in Iraq, Syria, and Turkey) will be released to lead a large demonic cavalry to kill 1/3 of the human race (Rev. 9:13-21).   
      They are demons especially “prepared” for a specific work of judgment in the end times.   
      The four demonic angels give leadership over the demonic army of 200 million horsemen.

13…I heard a voice…14saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.” 15So the four angels, who had been prepared…  
were released to kill a third of mankind. 16Now the number of the army of the horsemen was   
two hundred million…17I saw the horses in the vision: those who sat on them had breastplates   
of fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow; and the heads of the horses were like the heads   
of lions; and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone. (Rev. 9:13-17)

* 1. Babylon is mentioned in context to the Armageddon military conflict (Rev. 16:19). The armies of the nations are gathering by demons to Megiddo in northern Israel to prepare for the great battle around Jerusalem. Then we are told of the Lord’s fury on the city of Babylon that might be over 500 miles from Jerusalem. The Lord will remember and keep His word to destroy Babylon.

12The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up,   
so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared…14For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth…to gather them to the battle…” 16And they gathered them together to…Armageddon. 17Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl… 18And there was a great earthquake…19And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. 20Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. 21And great hail from heaven fell upon men… (Rev. 16:12-21)

* 1. God destroys Babylon with hailstones (Rev. 16:21)*.* The Antichrist armies will include Babylonian armies. It is possible that the armies of the kings of east will be mobilized at Babylon (Rev. 16:12).

1. summary: characteristics of end-time Babylon
   1. ***Physical city***: Babylon is referred to eight times as a “city.” (Rev. 17:18; 18:10, 16, 18, 19, 21).

18“And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth.”   
(Rev. 17:18)

* 1. ***Great city***: Babylon is a “great city” (Rev. 17:18; 18:10, 18, 19, 21). Her greatness implies her global dominance over kings and wealthy merchants. She is a city-state with a global network.
  2. ***Seductive city***: The woman is seductive because of her use of sensuality and wealth (Rev. 18:3, 9).

3For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury…9The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning… (Rev. 18:3, 9)

* + 1. Merchants and kings grow rich with her. She seduces through her economic attractiveness. Peoples will be seduced by Babylon’s great wealth so many will eagerly pursue her.
    2. She serves the nations strong drink or “inflaming wine” that makes them insane (Jer. 51:7-8).

7Babylon was a golden cup in the Lord’s hand that made all the earth drunk. The nations drank her wine; therefore the nations are deranged. 8Babylon has suddenly fallen…   
(Jer. 51:7-8)

* + 1. Paul called this the “strong delusion” coming on those who do not love the truth.

10…because they did not receive the love of the truth…11And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie… (2 Thes. 2:10-11)

* 1. ***Arrogant city***: Babylon will see herself as invincible (Rev.18:7). John quoted from Isaiah 47:7-10. In pride, she is deceived, thinking that her exalted status makes her immune from being dethroned. She believes that no one is aware of her excessive murders, sorceries, and perversions (47:10).

7“…she says in her heart, ‘I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow” (Rev. 18:7)

7And you [Babylon] said, ‘I shall be a lady forever,’ …8“Therefore hear this now, you who are given to pleasures, who dwell securely, who say in your heart, ‘…I shall not sit as a widow, nor shall I know the loss of children’; 9But…in one day: the loss of children, and widowhood…shall come upon you in their fullness…10“You have said, ‘No one sees me’… (Isa. 47:7-10)

* 1. ***Trade city***: The Bible describes the city as successful in international sea trade. After the destruction of the city, those who mourn are shipmasters, those who travel by ship, sailors, and traders.

17…Every shipmaster, all who travel by ship, sailors, and as many as trade on the sea, stood   
at a distance 18and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning…19“They threw dust on their heads and cried out, weeping and wailing, and saying, ‘Alas, alas, that great city, in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth! (Rev. 18:17-19)

* 1. ***Sudden destruction***: The city of Babylon will be destroyed suddenly “in one hour” or “in one day” (Rev. 18:8, 10, 17, 19; cf. Isa. 47:8, 11; Jer. 51:8).

8Therefore her plagues will come in one day—death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire…9“The kings of the earth…10standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, ‘Alas, alas, that great city Babylon…For in one hour your judgment has come.’” (Rev. 18:8-10)

* 1. ***Permanent destruction***: Never again will the sound of music be heard in Babylon, nor will her workers ever rebuild her. The sound of tradesman will never be heard in her again. All agriculture and production of food will cease. There will be no marriage, no weddings.
  2. A mighty angel declared a message to the nations, “Babylon the Great is fallen” (Rev. 18:1-2). This expresses the utter desolation that has come to one of the wealthiest cities in history.

1…I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. 2And he cried mightily…saying, “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! (Rev. 18:1-2)

* + 1. Demons dwell there, and evil spirits are imprisoned there.
    2. The angelic messenger used language from Isaiah 13-14 and 21 in Babylon’s funeral dirge.

9…Then he answered and said, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen! (Isa. 21:9)

20It [Babylon] will never be inhabited…21But wild beasts of the desert will lie there, and their houses will be full of owls; ostriches will dwell there, and wild goats will caper there. 22The hyenas will howl in their citadels….” (Isa. 13:20-22)

* 1. ***Flee Babylon***: The Lord called His people to flee Babylon (50:4-5, 8, 16, 20, 28; 51:5-6, 9, 10, 45, 50; cf. Isa. 48:20; 52:11; Zech. 2:6-7, Rev. 18:4).

4…another voice from heaven saying, “Come out of her, My people, lest you share in her sins. (Rev. 18:4)

6Flee from the midst of Babylon, and every one save his life! (Jer. 51:6)

1. video references
   1. ***NEOM***: This is Saudi Arabia’s new mega city-state that will be a 10,000-square-mile utopian metropolis with state-of-the-art Artificial Intelligence, robotics, drones, nanobiology labs, solar panels, etc. This “civilizational leap forward for humanity” is the vision of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and bolstered by a $500 billion investment with billions more from foreign investors. The first phase is expected by 2025.<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CUfDMCZhWF8>
   2. ***Bride of the Gulf****:* A vertical tower-city in Basra, Iraq. It will be nearly 17,000,000 sq. ft., rising to a world record height of 3,800 ft with 230 stories. It will have neighborhoods, schools, clinics, hotels, restaurants, shops, shaded parks, gardens, commercial offices, a rail network, and shuttles. <https://vimeo.com/146138563>