

THE 2ND ANGEL'S MESSAGE

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Take a minute to pray for God to guide you as you study...

The three angel's messages of Revelation 14 are powerful messages for us today. In this lesson, we'll take a look at the message that the 2nd angel brings. Here's what the angels says:

Revelation 14:8: "And another angel, a second, followed, saying, 'Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality.'"

Babylon? Wasn't that kingdom destroyed a long time ago? Why would this second angel be proclaiming a fallen kingdom right before the second coming of Christ if this kingdom was destroyed more than a century before the first coming of Christ? A good rule for reading the Bible is to take what the Bible says literally unless context tells us otherwise. We know from the third verse of Revelation that this book contains prophecy, and prophecy often uses symbolism to convey its idea. So one can confidently conclude that the Babylon in Revelation 14 is a symbolic Babylon. But what does Babylon mean? And what could it's fall include?

The Bible gives us several "Babylons" that can help us understand. The first is the tower of Babel which is a kingdom established by Nimrod shortly after the flood. Babel is in direct opposition to God's promise to never bring a flood upon the earth again. Then there is Nebuchadnezzar and the "neo Babylon" that we see in Daniel. The apostle Peter mentions Babylon (1 Peter 5:13) when speaking about Rome and finally Revelation speaks of Babylon twice, making several different "Babylons".

Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon

The Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar is referred to by historians as the "neo-Babylon" meaning "new-Babylon". This kingdom was established by Nabopolassar, Nebuchadnezzar's father in 626 B.C. Nabopolassar had accomplished something amazing and had

unified several disorganized communities into a powerful kingdom. However, it was how powerful they thought their kingdom was that eventually led to their downfall. Nebuchadnezzar said, "Is not this great Babylon, which I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty?" (Daniel 4:30). Pride began to set in and the rulers of this Babylon started to believe no one could conquer their kingdom. This is why the last ruler of Babylon, Belshazzar, called together banquet even though another kingdom was outside it's walls seeking to capture it. The prophet Isaiah was told to "take up this taunt against the king of Babylon" and says,

"How you are fallen from heaven,
O Lucifer, son of the morning!
How you are cut down to the ground,
You who weakened the nations!
For you have said in your heart:
'I will ascend into heaven,
I will exalt my throne above the stars of God;
I will also sit on the mount of the congregation
On the farthest sides of the north;
I will ascend above the heights of the clouds,
I will be like the Most High.' (Isaiah 14:12-14).

This kingdom mirrors someone else other than just the kingdom of Babylon. The characteristic of pride is also what led to Lucifer's rebellion in heaven. Here we see that the Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar shares similar characteristics as Satan's kingdom.

The Babylon of Rome

"She who is at _____, who is likewise chosen, send you greetings and so does Mark, my son." (1 Peter 5:13)

Here we see the apostle Peter use Babylon instead of the real name of the city he is speaking about. He couldn't be referring to the Babylon of Nimrod, or Nebuchadnezzar and so it only makes sense that he would be speaking about the prevailing kingdom of his day, Rome. The Roman empire shortly after the death of Christ began persecuting Christians. Christianity grew and Christians refused to bow their knee to Roman emperors, instead choosing to only worship Jesus. This led to Christians being thrown to lions in the colosseum or being killed in various other ways. A big kingdom principle from this Babylon is the attempt to force worship. The persecutions came about because

Christians refused to worship other gods. This "Babylon" also shares similar characteristics with Satan's kingdom.

Fallen, Fallen is Babylon

Now that we've seen several types of "Babylon" in the Bible and how they point us to Satan's kingdom, what does it mean that it will fall?

When a kingdom falls, what does that mean? It means that the kingdom has lost its hold and no longer has power. This kingdom is known for making other nations "drink wine," and through this, they go off into rebellion, signified by "her sexual immorality." So what could this wine be?

The Bible speaks a lot about wine and the natural outcome that happens when you drink it.

Ephesians 5:18: "And do not get drunk on _____, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the _____..."

Proverbs 23:29-35: "Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who tarry long over wine; those who go to try mixed wine. Do not look at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup and goes down smoothly. In the end it bites like a serpent and stings like an adder. Your eyes will see strange things, and your heart utter perverse things..."

Wine is something that the bible shows leads to heartache and debauchery. It confuses individuals and steals their alertness to what is happening around them. This end-time Babylon has caused the nations to become intoxicated (drunk), but that still doesn't tell us what the substance of this wine could be.

BASIC POINT

The 2nd Angel's Message is a warning to stay true to God even while Satan tries to deceive.

Genesis has a clue to help us know what “wine” the second angel is talking about. It’s a conversation between Eve and Satan in the Garden of Eden.

Genesis 3:1-7: “Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, ‘Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’ The woman said to the serpent, ‘We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’ ‘You will not certainly die,’ the serpent said to the woman. ‘For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.’ When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.”

The serpent, Satan, brings confusion into Eve’s relationship with God, and this causes Adam and her to sin. Earlier in our study we learned that consistently through the Bible the “Babylons” have had characteristics of Satan’s kingdom, and Satan’s main goal is to lead people away from the Truth about God. So, we can confidently know that the “wine” of end-time Babylon is wrong teachings about God and His kingdom. Satan’s kingdom has sought to lead the world astray through confusion. This is why the second angel says Babylon has made all the nations drink wine. It is through this process of confusion that the end-time Babylon has caused individuals to become unfaithful in their relationship. In

Take a moment to read Revelation 17, and we will be able to further see the identity of this end-time Babylon and how God’s people are to announce its end.

Write down what John sees:

Some key notes:

A woman in the Bible is often a reference for God’s missional people. (Rev 21:2; Ezekiel 16:6-14).

The beast of Revelation is often referred to as agent for Satan or Satan himself. (Rev 12:7-9).

On this woman’s head is written the name “Babylon.”

Ultimately everything they do and all their power is handed over to the beast (Satan’ himself).

This chapter of the Bible shows the fall of Babylon as an end to a period of confusion about God, a restoration of the truths given to His missional people and a call to leave this kingdom of confusion and enter into the kingdom of Jesus (Revelation 18:4).

While the second angel shouts a warning, the message points forward to victory for the people of God that remain faithful to Him.

FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS

1. What is your reaction to this second angel’s message?
2. What were you unclear about?
3. What does this message mean to you and your life?

LESSON 9: THE SECOND ANGEL’S MESSAGE



Ecclesia
— finding your place in His mission —