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THE TWO GREAT CITIES OF SCRIPTURE

By Rev Ivan Foster

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I wish to state very clearly that I believe God has an eternal purpose. Of course, such a doctrine is not new amongst those who support the Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony. The Westminster Confession of Faith states in chapter 3, paragraph 1, "God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of His Own will freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass." The decree of God embraces all things that shall ever come to pass. Nothing comes as a surprise to God. Nothing ever happens that is outside His decreed will.

God has revealed to us in His Word those aspects of His eternal will that He would have us know. When we look at prophecy, let us see it as that which God has ordained to come to pass. It is fixed. It cannot be frustrated by men or by devils.

Nothing militates against this glorious truth of God's fixed purpose more than those foolish and presumptuous interpretations of prophecy that fly in the face of the plain statements of Scripture, and which time exposes all too quickly as fraudulent misinterpretations. Scripture is still its own best interpreter and we, in coming to God's Word, ought ever to bear in mind the absolute need we have of submitting to Scripture, and causing our conclusions ever to be in keeping with all of God's Word. We make fools of ourselves if we do not. Let us, by keeping to the principle of understanding God's Word by God's Word, thus avoid making fools of ourselves and bringing dishonour upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

As I come to this subject of the two great cities of Scripture, I am convinced that these cities, Jerusalem and Babylon, figure largely in God's eternal decree and furthermore, that the history of these two cities demonstrates that. It is not my purpose to deal with the history of the cities, but rather, what God has to say concerning them in the future. Let us bear in mind as we look at some of the Scriptures that what we read concerning Jerusalem and concerning Babylon, will most surely come to pass. How comforting it is to the believer (and this is one of the purposes of the study of prophecy) to know that God is upon the throne. One of the great tests that God set for the false prophets was to urge them to tell what shall come to pass. Of course, there was none who could. A great proof that our God is God is the fact that what He has revealed concerning the future will most assuredly come to pass.

Now I want to say first and foremost that God's purpose in the last days centres largely upon these two cities—Jerusalem and Babylon.

1. I want to consider Babylon first, because we come upon it first in Scripture.

The first mention of Babylon is in Genesis 10 and 11, and in this Scripture there is a foreshadowing of the last days. I have learned from Christian education that God is the great teacher, the model teacher. I do not look to some child psychologist to show me how to teach children. God is the One Who shows us how children learn. And He teaches His children by the old-fashioned method of repetition. He shows the same truth again and again throughout His Word. He enlarges upon it. He increases the scope of the subject as He develops that which He first said when the lesson began. And here in this first reference to Babylon you find incorporated much of what will actually happen in the last days concerning the city of Babylon.

Ruled by a Rebel

Notice that in this first reference to Babylon, we find it built and ruled over by a rebel. For in Genesis 10:9 we read concerning Nimrod, the architect and founder of Babylon, that his chief characteristic was that he



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was a "mighty hunter before the LORD." Those learned in the Hebrew tongue tell us that what is stated here is "a spirit of defiance." Nimrod lived a life-style that was against God, in defiance of the Almighty. The Hebrew word "before" means "against." What Nimrod did that was particularly in defiance of God I cannot say, except that it was most likely that everything he did was in defiance of God. We certainly find that he built this city of Babylon, or Babel, in defiance of God. The whole scheme was in defiance of God.

The migration of the people following upon the flood was taking place as directed by God. God had told the descendants of Noah that they were to go into the earth and repopulate it. But there arose amongst the people a desire to oppose God. I have no doubt that that which is referred to in Genesis 10:8-10 is further expounded upon in the next chapter. It is like Genesis 1 which gives a brief account of the creation and then there is a more detailed description in the next chapter. It is the same here. There is the reference to Nimrod being a mighty hunter before (or against) the LORD, a man of defiance then an example of that is given in the building of the city. That city was built deliberately to defy God's decree that men should go abroad on the face of the earth and repopulate the earth. They said, "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" (Genesis 11:4). The very thing that God had commanded they opposed, and resisted, and defied. The city was the outcome of that defiance.

It was to be a centre of new religion also. There is reference to a building of a religious nature—the tower that reached unto heaven. I know there are various interpretations but it was a tower by which they intended to reach heaven, not physically, because they were not daft. They did not anticipate building something that was high enough to reach heaven, but rather a temple by which they might find another way to God. There has always been conspiracy by the devil to launch his rival gospel, his rival way to heaven. In this city that was built defying God's decree, there was a religion springing up that was in defiance of the revelation of God. Notice that this city is to be built in order that they might make them a name. That was the purpose of it. Let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name.

That is a reference to the curse that was pronounced by Noah upon the descendants of Ham. A dreadful sin was committed by Ham and the curse that followed that sin was levelled against his descendant, centred in Canaan. "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant" (Genesis 9:25-26). Nimrod was of the descendants of Canaan, and I have no doubt that that curse that had been pronounced upon them to be servants of the other races was ringing loud in their ears, and when they said, "Let us make us a name," was it not an attempt to overthrow the curse that rested upon them, that they should not be what God had said they would be?

The Divine Spark

Man has ever fought the station in which God has placed him. Man has ever fought the curse that has fallen upon him because of his sin. The whole ideology, philosophy, the modern theology of man today is one in which he refuses to believe that he is a creature cursed of God. Men do not want to believe in total depravity, or that in us there is no good thing. They want to believe that we have the potential for every good, the Divine spark within us. It means that with the right environment, and the right encouragement we will climb to great heights. Modern man says that there is no curse.

That is exactly what Nimrod was endeavouring. That gathering together of the people, the building of the city, the refusing to spread abroad was all "let us make us a name,"—let us overturn the curse that God has pronounced upon us. The whole conspiracy was marked by a remarkable unity, not of language merely, but a unity of mind that was most unusual.

You will know that one of the features of the last days will be this dreadful unity. It is not just to be seen in ecumenism, because members of this movement fight like cat and dog. But there is a unity coming that will transcend even that which we have seen so far—a unity that was seen at Calvary, when Herod and Pilate were made one in their opposition to Christ. In Psalm 2, a reference is made to nations coming together,



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those that have fought and slaughtered one another and filled the fields of battle with one another's blood, coming together, bonded together. They come in hatred of Christ.

Whatever differences England or France may have had with Germany, and whatever differences other countries in Europe (now being pressed together) may have had, these are disappearing because there is an invisible, dreadful force drawing them together. That unity existed in Genesis 11 welding the people together.

God Watches

Notice that it was judged by God when at its height. One thing I like about this—it reminds me that God watches all that is going on. It was not happening in secret. "And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the children of men were building. And the LORD said, Behold the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do" (Genesis 11:5-6). God distinguishes this unity from that of language. It was more than that. It was a unity of purpose, and mind, and a unity in evil. The Lord said, "The people is one, and they have all one language and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down and there confound their language." God's intervention came when the unity was at its peak, when the plan was at its peak, when things were going forward for this evil scheme.

This foreshadows what is to take place in the last days. I repeat that it does comfort us to know that God is watching. In these times it is frustrating to encounter God's people who have no interest in the events that are taking place in the world. It seems so difficult to encourage them to observe the significance of this or that. But it is good to know that God misses nothing. There might have been many about in that day who would have looked upon this city being built and would have said, "Well, what harm will it do? It is not a great threat." But God knew what was involved and He intervened.

The conclusion of the incident was a temporary cessation of the plan. The Bible says, "And they left off to build the city" (Genesis 11:8). That is what you do when closing time comes in your place of employment. You leave off doing what you are doing and take it up again on the morrow. When the devil ceased tempting the Lord in the wilderness, it says something very similar to this—"he departed from Him for a season." It did not mean that he was not coming back, that he would never attack the Saviour again. That is not the case. And there was a leaving off of this plan to build Babylon, but it was not abandoned. It was merely postponed.

As we know, many centuries passed and finally this city became one of great fame. So we read in Daniel 4:30 that in the days of Nebuchadnezzar it had become "this great Babylon." It was not an empty building site any longer. It had become a great city.

But subsequent to that, the Babylonian Empire fell at the hands of the Persians. The destruction that took place at the fall of Babylon about 600 B.C. does not measure up to the description in certain Scriptures regarding the judgment that God is to pour upon Babylon. Babylon was overtaken by a great defeat. It was ravished by its enemies but as I look at God's Word—and God has been pleased to give very explicit details of the judgments that are to overtake Babylon—I see that the judgment that took place many centuries ago, and that of which God speaks, do not coincide. They do not agree one with the other. Therefore, it is a simple act of logic to conclude that there is yet a judgment to fall upon a city called Babylon that far exceeds anything that fell on the Babylon of old.

The Overthrow Prophesied is Utter and Complete

Isaiah 13 commences "The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see." This is a message concerning Babylon. Then we read in verse 9 (and the Lord is here describing a coming day), "Behold, the day of the LORD cometh." One of the features of the day of the LORD is in verses 19-22, "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; neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But the wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance



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there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces; and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged.”

Now let me remind you that God does not waste words. God does not use superfluous terminology. God does not repeat Himself for the sake of repetition. So when you find in God’s Word a close and detailed description of events and places, then we should take note of these close and detailed descriptions. If anything is set forth here it is, that when God is finished with Babylon then it is going to be a most desolate place indeed. It is to be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation. I need not expound these terms, for they are very simple. We do not need a dictionary to understand what God is saying. I do not believe (in the light of this description) that whatever judgment has fallen on Babylon in the past, it was this judgment.

Babylon - Alive and Well

During the Gulf war, I read an interesting account given by one of the national newspapers representatives out in Kuwait. A photographer wearing army fatigues (as is the habit of those who go out on war correspondence) was out with his camera. There were a number of Iraqi soldiers so anxious to get out of this war that they surrendered to him, thinking he was a soldier even though he had no gun. They preferred to surrender to a camera. So he took photographs of them advancing with their hands in the air, only too glad to get out of it. And they told the photographer where they lived and how their home town had suffered. The address they gave was Babylon. That is where they had come from—Babylon.

When God has finished with Babylon, there will be nobody living there. Therefore, God has not finished with Babylon yet, because He has prophesied an utter and a complete overthrow. Turn to Jeremiah 50 where again we read in verse 1 that the word of the LORD is concerning “Babylon and against the land of the Chaldeans.” Verse 3 says, “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.”

Verse 35 adds, “A sword is upon the Chaldeans, saith the LORD, and upon the inhabitants of Babylon, and upon her princes, and upon her wise men. A sword is upon the liars; and they shall dote: a sword is upon her mighty men; and they shall be dismayed. A sword is upon their horses, and upon their chariots, and upon all the mingled people that are in the midst of her; and they shall become as women: a sword is upon her treasures; and they shall be robbed. A drought is upon her waters; and they shall be dried up: for it is the land of graven images, and they are mad upon their idols. Therefore the wild beasts of the desert with the wild beasts of the islands shall dwell there, and the owls shall dwell therein: and it shall be no more inhabited for ever; neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation. As God overthrew Sodom” (Jeremiah 50:35-40).

Almost 100 years after Isaiah had said this, God says it again. He tells another generation the same thing as He had said at a previous time by Isaiah. He repeated it. He put it on record a second time. When He deals with Babylon, it will be a repeat of Sodom and Gomorrah. There is to be nothing left. My dear friends, I have too much respect for God’s honesty to try and explain this away or look for anything less in fulfilment of this prophecy. God has precisely said, “As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour cities thereof, saith the LORD; so shall no man abide there, neither shall any son of man dwell therein” (verse 40). There can be no doubt about this. This is language most explicit, language which would satisfy any lawyer (who would like to make sure that there is no method by which his objective in a document could be missed). God does the same. God takes pains to indicate that when He has finished with Babylon there will be nothing left.

No man shall dwell there— and that has not yet taken place. It cannot have taken place. People dwell there at this moment. It is not a desolate region. The U.S. air force found targets to bomb in a place called Babylon. They found there that which was of strategic value for them to bomb. You do not bomb a desolate place. You do not waste your ammunition on that which has nothing there to be destroyed.

Notice that this overthrow of Babylon that God spoke about is going to have world-wide repercussions.



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"At the noise of the taking of Babylon the earth is moved, and the cry is heard among the nations" (Jeremiah 50:46). When God deals with Babylon, the world will sit up and listen. There is at present a vast number of people in this world who know nothing at all about Babylon. But when God does what He says He will do there, the world will take note. "The earth is moved." It will shake people.

Angelic Announcement

The degree of the shaking is set forth in the book of the Revelation. It is worth your time to study carefully the repercussions of God's judgments upon Babylon, An angel "cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird" (Revelation 18:2).

That is a repetition in essence of what Isaiah and Jeremiah have already told us. Remember we are looking for the world-wide repercussions. "The kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come. And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more" (Revelation 18:9-11). If you go on in the passage, you will find that the merchants are mentioned again and again; and the seamen are mentioned—shipmasters and sailors. It is the great world—wide business community, and they are shaken, frightened, and fearful as a result of the judgment that God pours out upon Babylon. This world has never been shaken by any judgment of God on Babylon in the past as it will be then.

This judgment is to be accompanied by phenomena in the heavens.

Turn back to Isaiah 13. I remind you that verse 1 gives you the address an the letter—"the burden of Babylon." Verse 5 says, "They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, even the LORD and the weapons of His indignation, to destroy the whole land." Then verse 9 says. "Behold the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate." When God's judgment falls it is not only upon a city (a territory of comparatively small acreage) but upon a whole land. It will not only be an Babylon (the city) but on Iraq, occupied as at present.

But listen "He shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations 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." Men try to explain these things away, and say that when God said the sun He meant something else. I have discovered as a believer that when God says something, He means what He says. If God does not mean what He says, then it is time for us to close our Bibles because we do not know what God is talking about. If that is the case, that confusion of languages at Babel affected God also for He cannot communicate with us, using terms that we understand. There is no communication between God and us, and there never can be. We never can find out what God is talking about if when He says the sun, He means something else. But when God says the sun, He means the sun; when God speaks of the stars, He means the stars; when God speaks of the moon, He means the moon. And in the day God judges Babylon, there will be events in the skies above that will indicate that the event is something dreadful and terrible.

The same phraseology is employed by the Lord Jesus Christ. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn. And they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matthew 24:29-30). Here are events that are most unusual!

Getting the World's Attention

As a sinner, I discovered that when God wants the attention of a person He can get it. When God wanted my attention, He had it. My mother tried to gain my attention. My father did the same. So did Sunday School teachers. An old lady round the street used to give out gospel tracts and she tried to gain my attention.



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They all utterly failed, and so did every other human instrument. But when God's time came, He secured my attention. We are talking about a God, Who when He wants this world to sit up and listen, He can make it do so.

Now I come from the troubled land of Ulster but I would rather have my troubles than those of England or London—a vast concourse of people with not the slightest interest in the things of God. Oh that God would make this land to listen. He might yet do it in grace, that there might be a turning to the Saviour, and sinners hear the Lord, but there is a day coming when in judgment God will get the attention of men. These tremendous things that will happen in the heavens above us will take place when God executes His judgment upon Babylon. This will happen. It has never yet happened. It is yet future.

God's Word indicates that the time of Babylon's destruction is also the time of Israel's spiritual restitution and restoration.

Israel is still in darkness, and therefore this day of destruction on Babylon has not come. None of these things that we have been talking about has come to pass and therefore we can rightly conclude that they have yet to take place. Babylon has to rise again from its present lowly condition and become a city of pomp and glory as it is set forth in Isaiah 13:19—"Babylon, the glory of the kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency." That is what it will be when God comes to deal with it. She is called "the golden city" (Isaiah 14:4). That day will come, out there in the desert where at this moment few consider that anything will take place, there will arise a golden city. God has said it and it will surely come to pass.

2. Jerusalem too figures in the great end time purpose of God.

Jerusalem is the city eternally favoured of God. In the reign of Solomon the temple was built. When the work was finished we read that the LORD appeared to Solomon . . . and the LORD said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house which thou hast built, to put My Name there for ever; and Mine eyes and Mine heart shall be there perpetually' (1 Kings 9:2-3). Perpetually—there is no divorce with God. When He says this in terms most resolute, then we can be sure that there is still a place in the heart of God for Jerusalem. Even in this day of Israel's desolation, God has not forgotten Jerusalem or His ancient people.

I received a document from America as a result of a sermon I printed some time ago in "The Burning Bush." I do not know how my paper arrived in Texas—it is a long way from Ulster but "The Burning Bush" arrived there and someone sent me a few publications that would not share our view on what the Bible has to say about the last days. I was urged to read these wonderful(?) expositions of God's truth. In the opening sentence of the first of these great treasures(?) was the statement "God has finished with the Jew." I thought that I had surely better things to do than wade through this, although it is necessary to read these things at times to be acquainted with what is being said.

God has not finished with the Jew. If God has finished with the Jew, I tremble for He might just as easily decide to finish with me. I have a nature which is every bit as corrupt as the Jews ever had. Peter belonged to the Lord but he denied the Lord. And even into his apostolic career, there were times when Peter came close to doing the same thing again. And Paul nearly did the same. On that occasion in Jerusalem toward the end of his ministry, he was going into the temple having shaved his head and was about to make a vow. The crowd, the mob, laid hold of him otherwise Paul, seeking to placate the Judaizers may well have entered into a vow in the temple. I do not believe Paul would have ever done such a thing in his earlier days. God intervened and stopped Paul and maintained his testimony. So there is the potential within us all to go back and fail the Lord. I am glad that there is no chance of God failing or abandoning me. I cannot understand the Lord ever choosing me but even less could I understand God dropping me once He has entered into a solemn covenant in Christ to keep me.

Romans 11 begins, "I say then, hath God cast away His people? God forbid." The idea was a thing astonish-



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ing to Paul's mind. It brought forth the exclamation from him, "God forbid" —it cannot be. And throughout that chapter the theme continues. Verse 2 says, "God hath not cast away His people which He foreknew." He has not cast His people away. There is still a place in His heart for them and for their great city, Jerusalem.

A. Notice firstly, that God's faithfulness requires a future for Jerusalem and for Israel.

God has promised it. When He entered into the covenant with Abraham, He promised that He would give the land to his descendants. And no one can frustrate that promise. Nothing will change God's mind. God's faithfulness is bound up with again bringing Jerusalem to a place of prominence and glory in the earth.

B. We learn from Scripture that Jerusalem shall flourish for a time before God restores her by His power.

The city that rejected Christ will welcome antichrist. The Lord Jesus said in John 5:43 that there would come another and they will welcome him. And I do believe He was referring to antichrist. The Bible tells us that the city of Jerusalem will be linked with antichrist in the day of his power and his earthly glory. He will be seen in his glory in Jerusalem, even as Jerusalem will also see his destruction.

Isaiah 14 indicates this clearly to us. It is the song sung by triumphant Israel and they make reference to antichrist, saying, "How art thou fallen from the heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! 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: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High" (Isaiah 14:12-14). Jerusalem will be chosen by the antichrist because he knows that it is the city of God, and he will defy God in His Own city. The song of triumph is sung by Israel after God has dealt with antichrist. "You said, you would be as God. Where are you now? Taking the titles of Christ, assuming that you would ascend to the heights of Christ, but where are you? Hell hath opened up her mouth to receive thee." Jerusalem has a future and it will be raised again in the providence of God. It will see great things. It will see antichrist in his power and glory, but it will also see antichrist in his ruin.

C. The regathering of Israel to their land and city in unbelief is for judgment.

God will see that Jerusalem will become the centre of the crucible in which He will work His final judgment upon His erring people. The Bible makes that clear. Antichrist will be the chief instrument of that judgment. He is spoken of as such, "O Assyrian (one of the titles of antichrist), the rod of Mine anger" (Isaiah 10:5). God's instrument—the rod of Mine anger.

Another thing I have learned from school—God believes in corporal punishment. Parents ought to as well. One of our ministers was enrolling his child in a school, and he thought it one of the most important things to discover what form of punishment there was in the school. Unfortunately he was not careful enough with his words. Upon meeting the principal of the school he asked, "Do you believe in capital punishment?" The headmaster looked at him for a moment and said, "I am sure you mean corporal punishment." Well, capital punishment would be taking the matter just a little too far but God believes in the rod. He is going to use the rod on Israel. The rod brings results. Did it not do you good? God will use antichrist as a rod and it will bring results. The nation of Israel in that great city will be brought to repentance. Ezekiel 22:19-22 deals with that matter, as does Zechariah 14:1-3.

D. The intervention of Christ at His return will signal the beginning of Israel's prosperity and the day when Jerusalem will enter upon her glorious time.

It will be the capital of the great kingdom of peace and righteousness. How sweet it is to read those words in Isaiah. What a comfort it is to consider the plan of God and the scenes that this earth shall witness. "The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains" (Isaiah 2:2).



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Jerusalem now lives under constant threat. Her people do not know when the next alarm will sound. But there is a day coming when she will be established. None shall move or threaten her then. She "shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it, and many people shall go and say, Come ye. and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isaiah 2:2-3). What an age that will be!

On sabbath mornings as we make our way to a place of worship, we meet crowds of people who have no interest whatsoever in joining us. But here we read of nations wanting to go to the house of the Lord. And this will come about. It is the purpose of God. Every word shall be fulfilled. This is not a reference to a revival in the past although it can be applied. God has been pleased to give us foreshadowings of this great day, but the prophecy has not been fulfilled by whatever revivals God has been pleased to give in the past. There is a glorious fulfilment yet to come. Oh happy day! In that day Jerusalem will be sovereign over the earth. Her sovereignty shall be restored. The end of the time of the Gentiles will have come. God will in glorious fashion restore sovereignty to Israel.

3. These two cities, Babylon and Jerusalem, will provide the child of God with an accurate indicator of the approach of Christ's return.

Those who have the Bible can look at it and then survey the scene. Two places on the earth will provide an accurate indicator on how things stand with regard to the fulfilment of prophecy.

A. Events in Jerusalem and Babylon will settle the question of prophetic interpretation.

What are folk going to say when they start building the city of Babylon? It will settle the matter. We need not be contentious or argumentative about this. Time is on our side. We can be patient. We can bear the reproach of believing that when God speaks, He speaks the truth. We can bear with the reproach of being accused of foolishness for taking God at His word. We can bear with that because God will keep His word. Babylon will rise, and Jerusalem will witness the things of which we have spoken. The child of God will be able to say, 'See, it is happening.'

B. When God gives us information of this nature, it is in order that we might work.

There were those in the kingdom of David "that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do" (1 Chronicles 12:32). In this Testimony, there is a people who have understanding of the times. But more than that, we ought to know what ought to be done. We ought to be the leaders of action. We ought to be the people leading in prayer. What we know from God's Word will guide us in praying. Daniel understood by books, and took himself to prayer. An understanding of God's Word, fires our souls and makes us act. When God gives knowledge we dare not sit on it.

Andrew heard John the Baptist say, "Behold the Lamb of God," and, possessed of this knowledge, he immediately went and told Peter, "We have found Him." The knowledge made him act. I believe that much of the stagnation and deadness that there is upon God's people today results from a lack of knowledge. Another portion of God's Word, speaking of the day of the antichrist, says, "The people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits."

I have heard people say, "God has said it so it is going to happen; there is nothing I can do about it." And they sit down. They have not come to an understanding of God's Word, no matter what they may think, for an understanding of Truth causes us to be strong and do exploits. Let the Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony be known as a people of action, of vision, of power, of going forth. It vexes my soul when I hear folk who adhere to a post-millennial view say that we folk have no vision for revival or for souls. Believing as I do that their views are wrong, I cannot see how a lie can promote the winning of souls. It is truth that will promote a furthering of God's cause. We claim to have the truth. I believe the exposition of Scripture that is



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espoused by the Sovereign Grace Advent Testimony is correct. Let it be seen to be so, by our being an fire.

C. Our feelings for these two cities are different.

Psalm 122 says, "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem." When Abraham had revealed to him what Israel would go through in Egypt, he was broken. When Daniel had revealed to him what Israel would go through in the latter days, he was broken. Likewise, there should be an agony of soul in us. We see what the ancient people of God have yet to face, and it should drive us to our knees, that God, in wrath would remember mercy.

But for Babylon, we should pray as they pray in heaven, "How long Lord before Thou dost judge her?" I see Babylon in embryo all around me. I see her blood letting all around my country. I long for the day when the Lord will proclaim to the saints in heaven and to saints an earth that the judgment has come. "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you an her" (Revelation 18:20). Some folk find it difficult to comprehend statements that rejoice in the destruction and damnation of evil. There are evangelicals today, particularly those who have an emphasis an the "jelly," and they have a difficulty with this. Those in heaven do not seem to have any problem rejoicing over Babylon's damnation. Neither does the Lord have any trouble, as He stirs them up to rejoice. He calls upon them to shout. If we know anything of the workings of Babylon we will share the sentiments of heaven. May the Lord help us in these days to fulfil our calling in Christ.