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The Renewal of the Near East

A Lecture given at Mildmay Conference Centre By B. W Newton

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My object is to show that both these chapters (Isaiah 13 and 14) in their completeness have not yet been fulfilled! It is generally assumed that they have been; therefore, it is important to know the grounds for the assertion that they are unfulfilled.

You will observe that in chapter 13, **A City** — Babylon — is chiefly considered. In chapter 14, **A Person** — Antichrist — the king of that City.

He is called an Assyrian and king of Babylon. Sometimes, the king of Nineveh is mentioned as king of Assyria; but here Babylon is regarded as the head of Assyria and the king is called "the Assyrian" (see also chapter 10:5).

Now, if the career of this Assyrian be future, it involves of course the Restoration of Assyria.

The person who is the head of Assyria here, is for the time, you may say, lord of the whole earth!

But it will be a restoration to curse not to blessing — a rising for judgment; for desolation; for sorrow; for calamity — a condition arousing the indignation of God more than anything that has ever yet appeared in this earth throughout all its history!

Assyria is to rise in the power of SATAN; and I wish to press it upon your consciences and hearts, especially at this time when we see the East opening up and anxiety manifested as to what will be the result. Well, the reply is, "these eastern countries will be the platform on which Antichrist and Antichristianism will rise and be developed. Jerusalem will be the ecclesiastical; Babylon the secular centre; and there is a history of woe before those countries, which they who have not considered the subject have no power to appreciate!"

That Assyria must arise is plain from these and other Scriptures, for the eastern countries up to the Euphrates were the Greek or eastern branch of the Roman Empire. There was a Greek or eastern as well as a Latin or western branch; and the Romans always considered their Greek branch infinitely the more important because when they conquered it, it was full of light, civilisation, of everything that Man gloried in; while all these western countries, where they introduced the Latin language, were barbarous. So it was the eastern branch the Romans valued. But God chastened it because it was sunk in iniquity; and men have forgotten it till late years. Now we see it rising! Well, what will be its condition in the end? Why, that the symbolic Image of Nebuchadnezzar, which stood in its lordly spirit to represent the Gentile power controlling the whole earth, will be broken! No one denies that that Image represents the Roman Empire, divided into two parts and then subdivided into ten; having five toes on each foot in parallel strength and equal might!

Now that is what the Roman Empire will be. It will, in that full supremacy and strength, be lord over the whole of this part of the earth, to tread it down till "the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

For proof of this, let me turn you for a moment to Daniel 11, which comprises the whole subject and is one of the most detailed historic descriptions of Antichrist that the Scriptures contain. It is, however, to the closing verses I now refer, where you find that in the very height of "the King's" (verse 36) power, certain countries shall "escape out of his hand"; viz. Edom, Moab, and Ammon (verse 41)!

The Antichrist and Babylon

Is not that remarkable? How desolate has Edom been — a hissing and a desolation — but you see that when Antichrist shall be in the very zenith of his power, it shall be strong enough to "escape out of his hand!"



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There, I say, is another proof of the revival of those ruined countries; and surely, if they are to be revived, it must be by miraculous action on the part of God. So, if they and Jerusalem revive, is it likely that contiguous Babylon will not; especially when you remember that the Euphrates is just as needful to Palestine as the Nile is to Egypt? God might of course say it shall not revive; but we would require a very definite declaration in that case. From the Word of God, therefore, we should say that it will revive.

That this passage (Daniel 11:41-42) is future you will not doubt. All those countries will be grasped by the mighty hand of Antichrist; even the land of Egypt shall not escape him! And — going on to verse 43 — “he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt, and the Libyans and the Ethiopians (Abyssinians) shall be at his steps . . . and he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain (Mt Zion),” where he shall blaspheme God; “yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him!”

“And at that time” — going on to chapter 12 — “shall Michael stand up, the great Prince who standeth for the children of thy people, i.e. Israel; and “it” (not there) “shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation . . . and at that time thy people shall be delivered”; i.e. the elect remnant of Israel (see Zech. 13:8, 9). So that will be the time of Israel’s forgiveness and the time of the Assyrian’s (Antichrist’s) fall! Thus you see how these two things are connected. You will always find the fall of this mighty Head of the earth connected in Scripture with “the forgiveness and blessing of Israel.” And the connection between this personage mentioned in Daniel and the Assyrian in Isaiah is proved by the peculiar words in Isaiah 10:23 applied to the Assyrian, and which Daniel quotes (chapter 9:27) in reference to the personage of whom he speaks; viz. Antichrist.

His Idol in the Temple

Then respecting the “idolatrous pinnacle” evidently a prominent position in the Temple — on it shall be “the idol of the Desolator!” That is the name given here to Antichrist. His image shall stand there — will be worshipped there — that image which it is said (Revelation 13:15) shall both speak and cause that whosoever will not worship it shall be killed!” And within the sphere of his power, they who have not his mark upon them shall not be allowed to buy or sell (verse 17)! But God has also spoken concerning this, and said that “they that worship the beast and his image or receive the mark of his name shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb (14:9-11)!” So the idol shall be there “until the consummation, and that which is determined is poured on the Desolator” (Daniel 9:27). This is the meaning of the words quoted from Isaiah 10:23.

And in Isaiah 13, 14 you find precisely the same thing.

God’s Mercy upon Israel

Observe the connection between them. Chapter 13 concludes by declaring that “Babylon’s time is near to come and her day shall not be prolonged” and chapter 14 begins with “For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel and set them in their own land, etc.” It is universally thus stated throughout the Scriptures. I beg you to note, that wherever the final desolation of Edom or Moab or Damascus or Nineveh or Babylon is spoken of you will always find it connected with “the forgiveness of Israel.” These nations will all revive and be the bitter, bitter, bitter enemies of Israel, because they hate them; inasmuch as a certain savour of the name of God will still cling to them. Therefore, when Babylon is the great aggressor of Israel, those who have the opportunity to screen them refuse (see Obadiah)! In fact, they are the instigators of Babylon’s attack on Jerusalem! It is they who entertain the thought of “blotting out the name of Israel that it be no more in remembrance” (Psalm 83:2-8). But then God will arise. It will be the last act Man will be allowed to perform against the Lord. He will be patient; but when they attempt that, He will hasten. “He will bow the heavens and come down” as we read in Psalm 18:9, “to deliver His people!”

There is nothing more touching in the whole .of Scripture, than the description of the way in which the heart of God yearns over Israel when the time of her deliverance comes. Then will be the time of Babylon’s over-



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throw and of "the purpose that is purposed over the whole earth (chapter 14:26)!"

That will be the climax!

The Mediterranean powers

How little we remember, I fear, that God works for His own glory. The danger of Gentile Christians is, in thinking only of themselves or their service or something in which they are individually interested, as if they alone were the object of God's thoughts. But God ever works for His own glory, which in other words is for our blessing; because in that is ever His own glory. We cannot always explain this. God's hand is often involved in mystery; but everything that He does is perfectly good because He does it. Now that is a matter of faith; something we can never understand. Well, He will raise up the Ten Nations of the Roman world, and the power that regulates "the whole prophetic earth" shall not pass outside the compass of those Nations. A wonderful thing! When God took away the power from Jerusalem as Daniel prophesied, He did not give it to all the Gentile nations but to selected ones; and they are those extending from Britain to the Euphrates — the fringe of the Mediterranean as it were. It is there the determining power of the earth is. Over all that portion Antichrist will reign in a dark, blasphemous rejection of God; and we are now arrived at the moment when the East is to be filled with a certain energy, which will work rapidly to that end! God is permitting these eastern nations to be raised up, and under Antichrist they will be raised to a pinnacle of glory that he may be glorified.

Read Habakkuk 2 for a full description of the Moral Character of the Antichrist.

It might be summed up in the thought, which I believe was manufactured in the Jesuit schools and forms one of their maxims: **"Take care to go on kissing the hand of an enemy until thou hast power to cut it off!"** Now I say, that is what we are to see. Kissing the hand — pretended love — but only until there is power to cut it off! That will be the character of Antichristianism! Exactly the opposite to that which characterised Christ and which the earth and Israel have rejected in Him!

He said "I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive"; for Israel will receive Antichrist; but then God will stretch forth His hand against him and bring in all the glory of Christ! The continual tenor of Scripture is to contrast these two periods. In Isaiah chapter 10 the world is seen under the power of Antichrist; and in chapter 11 under the power of Christ, "the lion and the lamb dwelling together, etc."

Again, in Revelation 13, the world is groaning under the power of the Beast. and in chapter 14, you have the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, as Lord of the whole earth, "surrounded by ten thousand saints!"

What a contrast between the two centres, when the earth is under the one and when it is under the other; the harlot city as described in Revelation 18 and the Holy city as described in Isaiah 60!

These contrasts are put forcibly before us that we may contemplate the glory that is coming and be encouraged; and also see what the evil is from which we are not only to separate ourselves but against which it is our honour to bear testimony.

Soldiers of Christ Arise!

How often we miss the thought of soldiership; but it is what God now wishes to bring before the minds of His people, that as this last great step in human progress towards evil and Antichristianism is being taken, Christians may be more than ever arrayed against it; wisely to bear witness and testify against it as the soldiers of Christ. That is what God expects of His people — a practical circumcision and He is effecting it. Slowly it may be; but making them feel the blessedness of taking up a distinct place of testimony. A painful place it is. We may perhaps repine and murmur. Nevertheless, before the end comes, God will make His people bow, so that those blessed words in the Revelation will be true of them, "overcoming by the Blood of the Lamb and by the Word of their testimony; loving not their lives unto the death" (12:11)!



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There is a striking description of the extreme desolation that shall come upon Babylon in Isaiah 13:20-22, which persons have commonly supposed to have been completely fulfilled. There certainly has been a great foreshadowing of the vast desolation predicted, but these verses have not been fulfilled; for there has never been a period at which there has not been a city (Hillah), containing at its lowest declension 4,000 inhabitants, upon the site of Babylon! General Chesney and Sir Henry Rawlinson give authentic corroboration of this, which serves as an answer to the statements that infidels may make; because you know, we must meet the statements of infidels as to these things, when they say "such extreme desolation Scripture depicts is not the case." Of course we must admit the fact, but that it is a future desolation that is spoken of. The notion that these places have been finally destroyed is utterly untrue. But, when the Millennial Day dawns, there will be two great standing witnesses of the desolation. As in this dispensation Sodom and Gomorrah stand out as the abiding witnesses of what God's hand has done, so will, not merely Babylon and the land Edom be in the Millennium! Men will still need to be warned; to be instructed; still require a memorial of what God's hand is able to do against His enemies! Therefore, how important that our minds should be set right as to the facts of the case. The final blow will not be until Israel is forgiven.