



The restoration was the goal of much Bible prophecy. Though the people had sinned, God promised to bring them back into His presence. Since the book of Revelation is the major prophetic book of the New Testament, one would expect to find hints of this theme within it. In this presentation, I'll be exploring how Jerusalem became Babylon and what that means for the fulfillment of this great book!

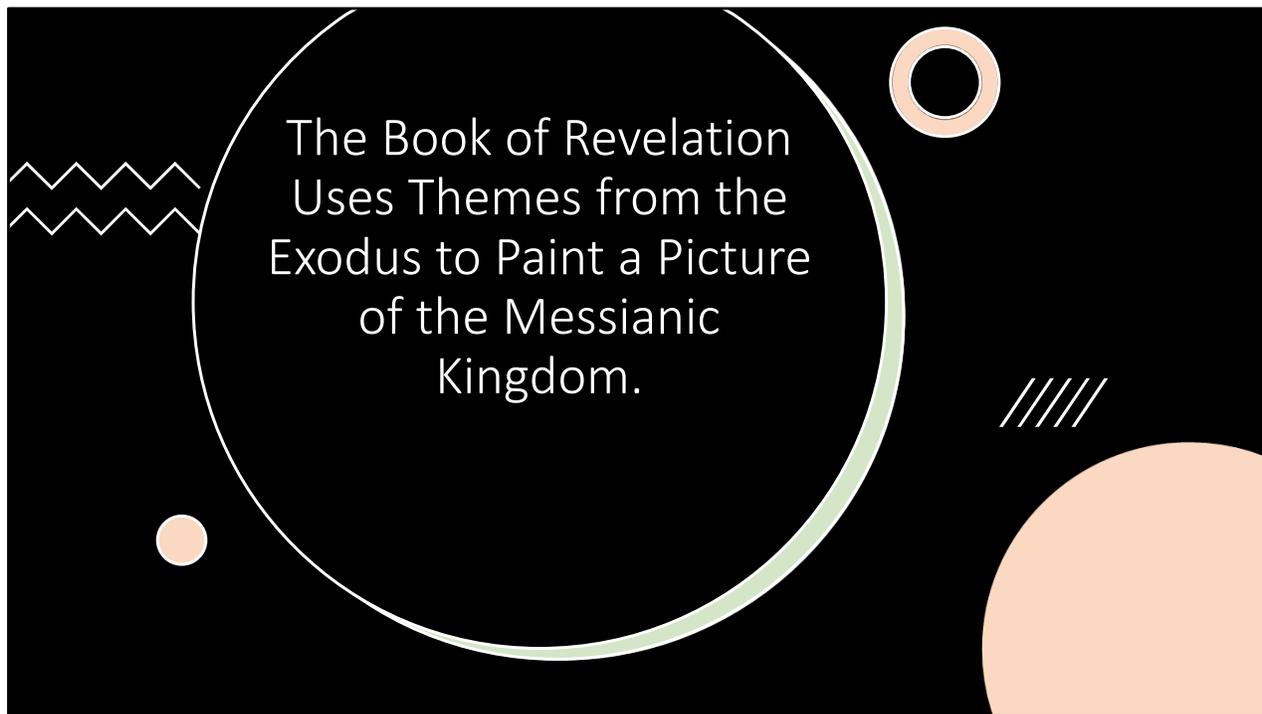


In the first three chapters of Luke, everyone we meet are looking for the restoration of Israel. John's priest father Zacharias, Simeon, and Anna all expect the Messiah to arrive during their day. After being under Gentile occupation for the better part of 600 years, it is no wonder they were getting anxious. Like Daniel who counted the 70 years of Jeremiah, these saints knew the kingdom would come during the time of the fourth kingdom. The Holy Spirit even revealed to some that they would not die before they would meet the Messiah (Luke 2:25-26).



Jesus knew that Gentiles were not exempt from the promises, but that even they would sit at the table with the saints in the kingdom of Heaven. In Matthew 8, Jesus makes this bold claim while, at the same time, saying that the “sons of the kingdom” would be cast out.

This all was according to God’s plan as seen in Genesis 12. Abraham was chosen, not to the exclusion of the other families of the earth, but so that they could be included.



From the very first chapter, Revelation calls Jesus the firstborn, a reference to the tenth plague. Jesus is also depicted as the Passover lamb in chapter 5. The entire book is filled with this kind of imagery with well over 500 references, allusions, and citations to the Hebrew Scriptures.



Israel Became the New Egypt.

In order to understand the exodus imagery in Revelation, we have to go back to where it all went wrong: when Israel became the New Egypt.

Samuel had warned what would happen if Israel asked for a king. He would take their belonging, their land, and their sons and daughters. Israel proceeded with their request, and God gave them over to their desires.

The second king, David, was a great man and was after God's own heart, but even he was not allowed to build God a house because of the mass amounts of blood He shed. His son Solomon was allowed to build the temple to fulfill God's promises to David, but it paled in comparison to what Jesus would do.



Solomon in his search for wisdom, glory, and honor became the new pharaoh.

He fell to idolatry, greed, and did not walk as David did.



Solomon Married Pharaoh's Daughter,
Bought and Sold Chariots, and Used
Slave Labor to Build Up Jerusalem.



Going against clear commands in the Law, Solomon married someone of another nation, but not just any nation; he married Pharaoh's daughter. Instead of trusting in God, he put his trust in chariots. And since he and the kings before him failed to keep many of the laws which were designed to remind them of where they came from, such as the land sabbath, he forced thousands of people to build up his house and the house of God.



Solomon Brought in 666 Talents of Gold.



The income from one year was 666 talents of gold. This is obviously an important number in the book of Revelation. I believe this number signifies the zealots who also put their trust in chariots, not God, and in doing so brought the wrath of Rome upon themselves. They, like those in Jeremiah's time, said "the temple of the Lord!" without realizing that one greater than Solomon had arrived.



Jeroboam Plays the Part of Moses.



In the narrative, after Solomon dies, Jeroboam comes to ask for relief from the new king. After making the burden even heavier, the ten northern tribes split and the kingdom is fractured.

This division in God's people leads to years of wars, jealousy, and further departure from the Law.



Under the failed leadership of the kings, Israel was back in bondage. Sometimes they were under the control of one nation or another, but their main taskmaster was sin.

Idolatry plagued the kingdoms, and along with it came all of the sins associated with the other nations. This led the prophets to compare Israel and Judah to all their old enemies.



Sin is a Culpable Disturbance of Shalom.



Sin is anything that disrupts the way God intended the world to work. Asking for a king, therefore, is sin. Putting one's trust in chariots or carnal weapons is sin. Not loving your neighbor is sin. Sin is anything that divides, belittles, excludes, or harms others. The opposite of sin is summed up in several words: peace, love, and unity.

Idolatry, greed, oppression, etc. were all ways that Israel fell short of their divine calling to be a light to the world.



The Desire for an Earthly Kingdom, Like Solomon, is Sin.



Instead of God being their king, Israel chose to be like the other nations. The zealots in the first century who rejected the kingdom Jesus offered followed in his footsteps. This led to untold horrors, violence, and bloodshed.

Jesus' way is a way of peace. It is the way of shalom. It is the restoration of all things.



This is Part of the Bondage of
the World Below from which
Jesus Saves Humanity.



Jesus' way of peace saved whoever was willing to accept it. Instead of participating in the conflict between the temporary Roman empire and the temporary Jerusalem below, Jesus called the people to move beyond their nations, tribes, and languages and live as one human family in the kingdom of God.



The Cross serves as the symbol of the rejection of the flesh. Jesus could have called legions of angels to fight against the legions of Rome. His own disciples were willing to fight the temple servants. The people were ready to make Him king. Yet, He chose a more excellent way.

The Cross is an invitation for us to take up our Cross as well and find true life, peace, liberty, and happiness.



Jesus, Unlike Solomon, Fulfilled the Expectations of the Role of David's Son.



One greater than Solomon in here!

Jesus is the cornerstone of the new temple.

Jesus has one bride: the church.

Jesus did not give in to the extravagance available to Him as the Son of David.

Jesus trusted in spiritual weapons, not carnal.

Jesus is the king of a heavenly kingdom.

Jesus liberates, not enslaves.



As the Lion of the Tribe of
Judah, Jesus Humbled Himself
and Was Reborn of the Spirit.



Jesus was a descendant of David according to the flesh, but He was resurrected according to the Spirit (Romans 1:3-4). Instead of trusting in His lineage, something the people wanted and expected Him to do, He became king on different terms: death and resurrection.

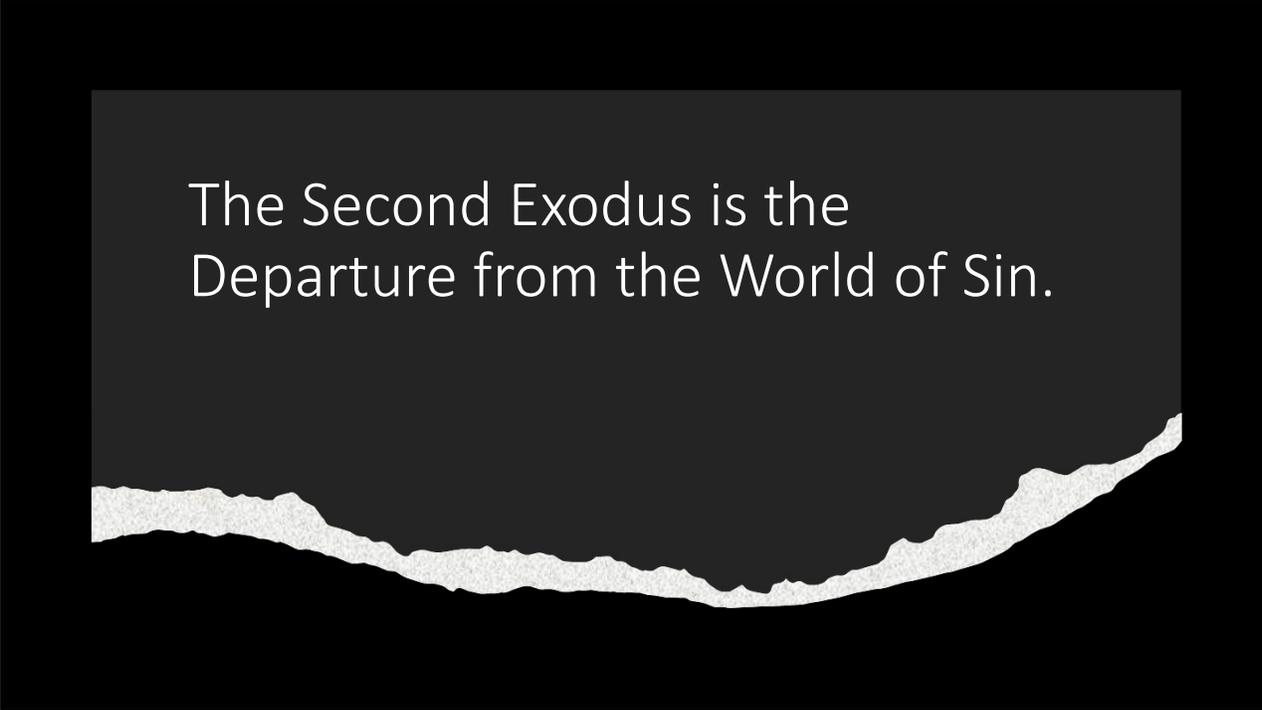
The Lion of the tribe of Judah is not king because of His lineage; He is king because of what He did.



Entering Christ Means Entering His Transforming Death and Resurrection.



When we enter the body of Christ, we are called to enter His death and resurrection. It means leaving behind all the things that divide and becoming part of a new creation. On the banks of the water of life, all nations, tongues, and peoples are represented.



The Second Exodus is the
Departure from the World of Sin.

The first Exodus was a departure from Egypt. The second Exodus is redemption from the world dominated by sin. This is also called the world below, the flesh, and the kingdom of darkness. Sometimes it's referred to as the present evil world, the first heavens and earth, and this age.



She Made a Covenant with Death and Hades.

Through bowing down to idols, Israel forsook her covenant with God and made a covenant with death and Hades. In Revelation, Jesus appears with the keys to death and Hades indicating that He has the authority over both and the power to eliminate the covenant.



Death and Hades are Common Themes Depicting Exile.



In Ezekiel 37, one of the few Old Testament sources for the doctrine of resurrection, Ezekiel sees a vision of dry bones. These bones represent Israel in exile. The New Testament cites from this text and others to teach that Jesus is the fulfillment of these expectations.

In Hosea 13, another resurrection passage which is the source of Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 15, death and Hades are the enemies.



Returning from Exile is a Type of Resurrection.



If exile is depicted as death, then a return from exile is a type of resurrection. Besides Ezekiel 37, this is most popularly seen in the Parable of the Prodigal Sons. In that parable the father exclaims, “My son was dead but has come to life again!”

One could even view this parable as the story of the stubborn, slow-to-forgive, self-righteous Judah compared to the exiled northern tribes.



Though Judah Returned from Babylon, the Two Nations Were Not Yet United.



The return from Babylon was an important and necessary event in Biblical history, but it alone cannot bear the weight of Ezekiel 37 and similar passages. The norther tribes were swallowed up by the Gentiles, and the only way to bring them back to the fold is through inviting the Gentiles into the covenant community.

Thus, Egypt, Assyria, and “all families of the earth” find restoration alongside and through the blessings promised to all Israel.



John the Baptist Paves the Way for Restoration.

There was much excitement around the birth of John just as there was surrounding the birth of Jesus. His parents were told that he was to be a forerunner for the Messiah. The two major passages which are cited to define John's ministry are Isaiah 40 and Malachi 3-4.



The Voice Crying in the Wilderness Begins Every Gospel Account.



Isaiah 40:3 is cited at the beginning of every gospel account: Matthew 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:4-6; John 1:23. It is a passage about redemption, forgiveness, justice, and judgement.

This chapter is a popular source of quotations and language in the New Testament. In the book of Revelation, for instance, it is referenced several times. One major citation comes from Isaiah 40:10 and is found in Revelation 22:12.

“Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done. Revelation 22:12

John’s call for the people to repent in view of a soon-to-come kingdom is linked to the soon arrival of Jesus in Revelation 22.



John the Baptist Also Fulfills the Role of Elijah.



The great day of the wrath of God which follows the ministry of Elijah, as discussed in Malachi 3:2, comes at the end of the vision in Revelation 6. Again, this is no coincidence. John is not just the forerunner to Jesus' first coming; he precedes and announces the second coming of Jesus.

Of course, there isn't such a distinction between the first and second coming in the Old Testament. The space between the two events was given as a period of long suffering. Hence the use of the words "delay" and "long time" in Matthew 25. There is one great "day" of the Lord and the Cross and the Parousia fall on the same "day" – the end of the age.



John and Jesus Work Together to Restore All Things.



And He answered and said, “Elijah is coming and will restore all things; but I say to you that Elijah already came, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they wished. So also the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands.” Then the disciples understood that He had spoken to them about John the Baptist. Matthew 17:11–13

The people expected Elijah to come to “restore all things.” Jesus points out that this was John the Baptist. Now, did John actually restore all things? No. But he paved the way for Jesus to do just that.

“Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you, whom heaven must receive until the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time.” Acts 3:19–21



Peter Ushers the People Beyond the Jordan.

Peter was the apostle to the circumcision. As such, he aided the church in completing their exodus journey from the Old Jerusalem to the New Jerusalem.

In 1 Peter, for instance, he says to “gird up the loins of your mind” or as the NASB says, “Prepare your minds for action” (1 Peter 1:13). It is clear from reading the epistle that they were living on the edge of something big. In fact, Peter said that Jesus was ready to judge the living and the dead, that the end of all things was at hand, and that the time had come for judgement to begin (1 Peter 4:5, 7, 17).



Peter Writes at the Beginning of the “Fiery Trial.”



Peter wrote at the beginning of a “necessary” period of suffering that would last for “a little while” (1 Peter 1 :6). This is the same suffering and little while of Revelation 6:11. It is the suffering brought about because of Satan being loosed (Revelation 12:12; 20:3; cf. 1 Peter 5:8-10).



Peter's Goal is to Encourage the Church to Not Accept the Gospel of the Zealots.



Peter encourages his readers to respect authorities and to submit themselves to every human institution. He encourages them to live in this way so that the thing they were being accused of would come to nothing. One of the tactics of the persecutors was to charge Christians with treason. Jesus and Paul faced similar accusations, and both were found innocent by the Gentile leaders.

The zealots, who taught the opposite message, are condemned multiple times in 1 and 2 Peter as they are in Revelation.

“If anyone is destined for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints.”
Revelation 13:10



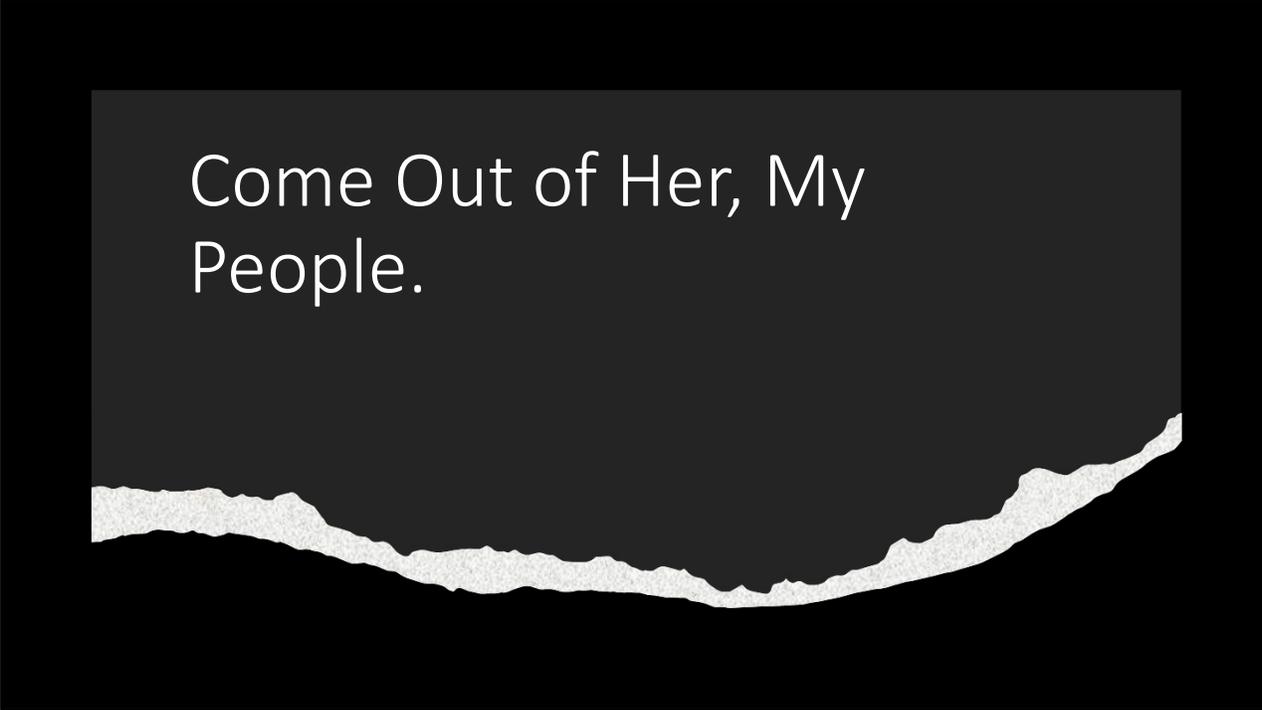
Peter's Epistles were Written to
the Post-Millennial Church Shortly
After the Loosing of Satan.



“Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.” 1 Peter 5:8–10

The devil is obviously not bound in this passage. He had already been loosed for a little while as Revelation 20 says. Peter was living in that “short time” when the “end of all things” was at hand. At one time Peter had taken on the role of Satan by suggesting that Jesus didn't have to die if He would just take up the sword. Now, there are thousands of people who had bought into the message Peter once believed.

Peter's job was to encourage the saints to press on through this conflict and go to their reward and not give in to the easy and conventional way of dealing with one's adversaries.



Come Out of Her, My
People.

The book of Revelation is about the revelation of who the Christ really is. Is the root of Jesse, the lion of the tribe of Judah, and the Star of Jacob the zealots who claimed the kingdom of God as their own and violently pressed into it or the humble, crucified man from Nazareth?

Revelation 18 is a call for the people to leave the old “great city” of Babylon to inhabit the new “great city” – the New Jerusalem.



The Great City Goes by Many Names.

The great city in Revelation goes by many names and descriptions: Egypt, Sodom, the city where the Lord was crucified, the harlot, and Babylon.

Specifically, the names are those of Israel's old enemies and the "bad guys" in her literature.



Jerusalem had Become Spiritual Sodom.



Israel was likened unto Sodom a few times in the Hebrew Scriptures (e.g. Deuteronomy 32:32 and Isaiah 1:9-10). The New Testament, like the Old, condemns the rich for their treatment of the poor (James 5:1ff). The prophets compared Israel's treatment of the poor to that of Sodom, but they said that Israel did worse.

“Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had arrogance, abundant food and careless ease, but she did not help the poor and needy.” Ezekiel 16:49

Nevertheless, God promised restoration, even for Sodom.

“Nevertheless, I will restore their captivity, the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, and along with them your own captivity, in order that you may bear your humiliation and feel ashamed for all that you have done when you become a consolation to them. Your sisters, Sodom with her daughters and Samaria with her daughters, will return to their former state, and you with your daughters will also return to your former state.” Ezekiel 16:53–55



Jerusalem had Become Spiritual Egypt.



Egypt was one of Israel's chief enemies, and as we saw in our study of Solomon, he had in many ways become the new pharaoh. They had forgotten where they came from, and because of that they became like their old captors.

In the New Testament, Jesus and his family fled Herod when he sought to kill the young boy much like Moses' family hid him in the ark among the reeds. Jesus, in this way, plays the role of the new Moses who liberates His people from the real bondage: sin.

Paul compared Jerusalem to the Egyptian Hagar in Galatians 4 when he said that Jerusalem was in bondage with her children and would soon be cast out.

Egypt, despite its flaws, was also promised restoration.

“Thus the Lord will make Himself known to Egypt, and the Egyptians will know the Lord in that day. They will even worship with sacrifice and offering, and will make a vow to the Lord and perform it. The Lord will strike Egypt, striking but healing; so they will return to the Lord, and He will respond to them and will heal them.” Isaiah 19:21–22



Jerusalem had Become Spiritual Babylon.

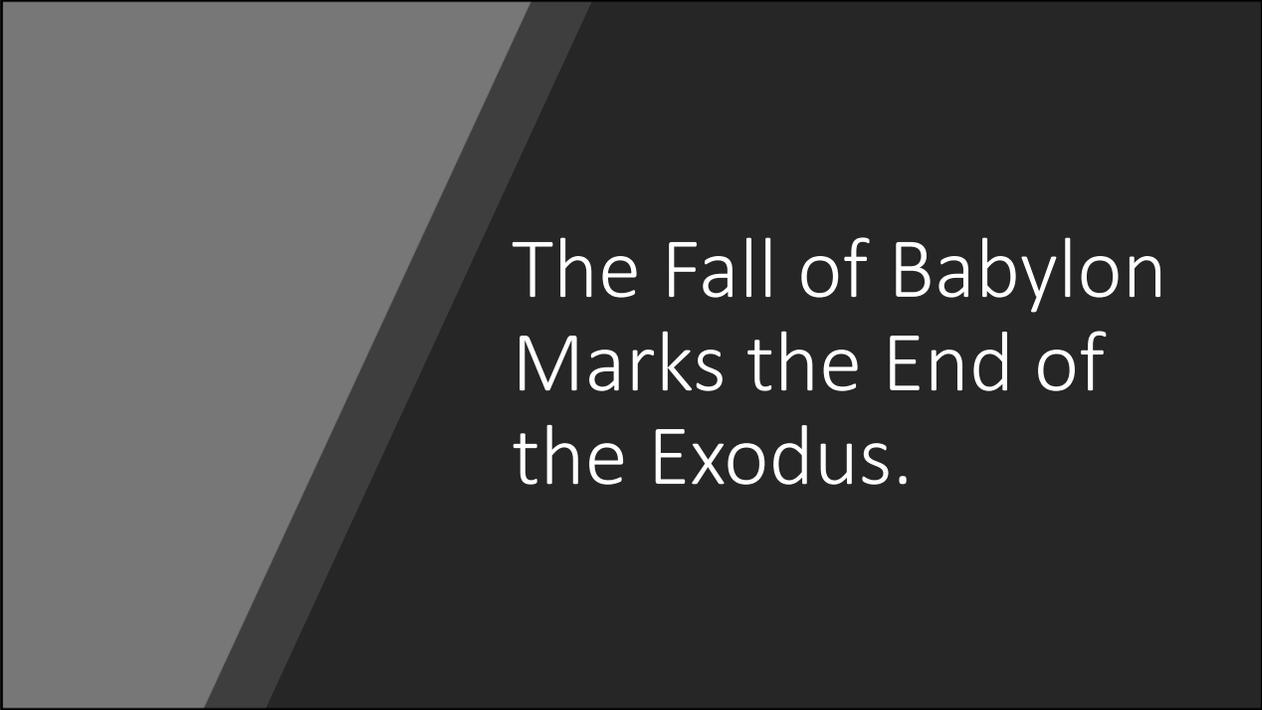


Babylon was unlike Egypt and Sodom in that no restoration was promised for her.

“And as soon as you finish reading this scroll, you will tie a stone to it and throw it into the middle of the Euphrates, and say, ‘Just so shall Babylon sink down and not rise again because of the calamity that I am going to bring upon her; and they will become exhausted.’ Thus far are the words of Jeremiah.” Jeremiah 51:63–64

There was opportunity for restoration prior to the fall of the city, but as Revelation 9 says, “The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk; and they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts.” Revelation 9:20–21

When Jerusalem became Babylon, the time for repentance was over. The city was going to fall, and all those who continued to reject the way of peace would discover the sad end result of their sin.



The Fall of Babylon Marks the End of the Exodus.

Peter, in his first epistle, said that he was writing from Babylon. This was undoubtedly a reference to Jerusalem. While I believe he was familiar with Revelation, at the very least this shows that the moniker Babylon was in use prior to the fall of Jerusalem.

The fall of Babylon means the completion of the mystery of God (Revelation 10:7). It meant the fulfillment of all Israel's promises including restoration, resurrection, and reconciliation.



The Plagues of Egypt are Repeated in Revelation.



In Revelation 16, water is turned to blood, sores appear on the people, and darkness covers the earth. These plagues transport one back to the first Exodus when God judged the gods of Egypt (Exodus 12:12). Placed near the end of the book, they precede the climatic fall of Babylon and the exclamation, “Come out of her, my people!” (Revelation 18:4).



The Saints Sing the Song of Moses to Celebrate the Victory of God.



“Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels who had seven plagues, which are the last, because in them the wrath of God is finished. And I saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, holding harps of God. And they sang the song of Moses, the bond-servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, ‘Great and marvelous are Your works, O Lord God, the Almighty; Righteous and true are Your ways, King of the nations! Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy; For all the nations will come and worship before You, For Your righteous acts have been revealed.’” (Revelation 15:1–4)

The song of Moses is a reference to the song the children of Israel sang after crossing the red sea. This marked the wrath of God being finished (from the root *telos*; cf. Revelation 10:7).



The Tabernacle of God is Opened.



Following the plagues, the judgement of Babylon, and the celebration of the people of God, the tabernacle of God is opened. Just as entrance into the Promise Land marked the time when Israel came alive, the fall of Babylon is the climax of the Book of Revelation. It is the time when the dead are raised, the prophets receive their reward, the martyrs are vindicated, and the New Jerusalem comes down from Heaven. The first tabernacle was a copy of the true, and its revelation meant a face to face relationship with God.



The New Jerusalem is the Promise Land.

Israel travelled towards the land of Canaan. The New Testament saints were on their way to the New Jerusalem. The New Jerusalem, also pictured as a New Heavens and New Earth, is the subject of much Bible prophecy. It is hinted at in the Sermon on the Mount, it is the city which Abraham desired, it is the real holy city, and it is the fulfillment of the land promises of the prophets such as Isaiah and Ezekiel.



Just as Jesus is the True Son of
David, the New Jerusalem is
the Real “Great” City.



Babylon/ Jerusalem is called the “holy city” and “great” in Revelation, among other places. In Revelation 21, the New Jerusalem is called the “holy city” (Revelation 21:2). This transference of title from the trampled city (Revelation 11:1-2) to the city which comes from above and cannot be trampled is a good summary of the entire book. The city below, filled with “violent ones among your people” (Daniel 11:14), falls while the city above, filled with those who refuse to take up the sword, is established.



The New Jerusalem is the City which Abraham Desired.



Hebrews 11 says that Abraham was looking for a heavenly city. Had he been solely interested in an earthly city, then he would have been content with the land which God gave him and his people. Returning to the faith of Abraham is returning to those heavenly expectations, the things above.

Hebrews 12 teaches that the saints had arrived at this holy mountain, the new Jerusalem. Though they had no current city, they were seeking the one which was about to come.



The New Jerusalem is the Fulfillment of the Land Promises.



Ezekiel 37 has its fulfillment in the arrival of the New Jerusalem. The land promises, and therefore the restoration of Israel, are the background behind Revelation 7, 14 and 21. These chapters, especially 21, are the fulfillment of everything Abraham desired. They are the answers to Israel's, and the world's, deepest desires.

Themes of “no tears” and “living water” are all callbacks to the great Exodus passages of the prophets such as Isaiah 65-66 and Zechariah 14. They have their roots in God drying the tears of the captives in the original Exodus story and guiding the people to the Promise Land.



Revelation has been fulfilled. Israel hasn't been replaced; she's been restored. We aren't marching towards Zion; we are living in that great, holy city.

Now, it is up to us to bring healing to the nations through letting the light of Jesus be seen in us and through spreading the gospel of the new creation. By sharing this fruit which is always available and abundant, we are able to bring about positive, radical change to the world through the love of God.

Revelation isn't just an end. It is a beginning. Eschatology is the new protology!



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