

# **The Power of Identity**

## **5) Heavenly Citizens**

**Paul contrasts those who are citizens of  
heaven with those who are enemies of  
the cross**

*'For many walk, of whom I have told  
you often, and now tell you even  
weeping, that they are the enemies of  
the cross of Christ: whose end is  
destruction, whose god is their belly,  
and whose glory is in their shame—who  
set their mind on earthly things. For our  
citizenship is in heaven, from which we  
also eagerly wait for the Savior, the  
Lord Jesus Christ'*

**(Phil.3:18-20)**

- ✓ **This stark contrast is depicted throughout the Bible in the study of two cities – Babylon and Jerusalem**
- ✓ **The conflict between Babylon and Jerusalem is the story of the whole Bible - apostasy and salvation**
- ✓ **They are the two most mentioned cities in the Bible**
- ✓ **Both appear in Genesis and in Revelation**
- ✓ **They are literal cities, yet represent two spiritual communities**

## God wants us to understand these cities:

*'Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication"... And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH'*

**(Rev.17:1,2,5)**

***'Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God...'***

***(Rev.21:9-10)***

**At Babel the inhabitants of the world,  
led by Nimrod ('let us rebel'),  
attempted to become independent of  
God. They did this:**

**1) Politically (a city)**

***'And they said, "Come, let us build  
ourselves a city, and a tower whose  
top is in the heavens; let us make  
a name for ourselves, lest we be  
scattered abroad over the face of the  
whole earth"'***

**(Gen.11:4)**

## **2) Religiously (a tower)**

**A clever system of planetary worship developed using astrology and the zodiac with its many constellations**

**Sun worship was central to this system**

**The counterfeit religious system commenced by Nimrod and his wife Semiramis at Babel is the fountain-head of all man-made religions which spread across the earth, including pantheism, polytheism, etc. This is the reason she is called 'Mother of Harlots' (Rev. 17:5)**

**Both Israel and the Church became defiled with these pagan beliefs and practices**

**This rebellion was in defiance of God's  
command to fill the earth**

**'Let's build up, not out'**

**God dealt with it by confounding the  
language of the people**

**Babel in Assyrian means 'gate of God',  
but in Hebrew means 'confusion'**

**They now had to assemble into language  
groupings. Thus, the nations were  
formed and the earth was populated**



## Jerusalem

**Abram, a Babylonian, was told to leave his country and go to a land God would show him. He would make of Abram a great nation**

**He entered into a covenant with God, believing He was the true God. He is the first man called a 'Hebrew' (one who crosses over). He left a doomed city and was born again to a living hope**

**He lived in tents as a pilgrim in search of a city with foundations**

**He was renamed 'Abraham', father of a multitude; father of all who believe**

**\*The first mention of Jerusalem is in Gen 14 when Babylon was at war with God's people for the first time and took captives**

**\*Abraham rescued the captives and was met by Melchizedek, king of Salem, a type of Jesus**

### **Fast forward**

**\*Canaan was full of idol worship and pagan practices with Babylonian origins. Israel were told to destroy them, but they allowed some to remain and idol worship crept into their own lives**

**\*Eventually the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and the Israelites were carried into captivity**

**\*Babylon is seen as the great enemy who seeks to oppose God, attack His people and infiltrate and disrupt His kingdom**

**\*Times of the Gentiles. Nebuchadnezzar's image**

**\*The day of Pentecost, the birth of the Church**  
**\*The apostles laid the foundations of the eternal city. *Ekklessia* = called out, i.e. of a doomed city**  
**\*God gave different tongues again. This time it was not for confusion but for the spread of the gospel to every nation (Acts 2:5-12)**

**\*God has a purpose for the nations. His plan is for the evangelization of the world, nation by nation (Matt.24:14; Matt.28:18-20; Rev.7:9-10; Psa.2:8)**

**\*The Greek word for 'nation' is *ethnos*. This refers to any group of people who have their own culture, language or customs. Whilst there are over 250 nations as we know them today, there are approximately 12,000 ethnic groups**

**\*Missiologists are strategizing to reach these groups. This is one of the reasons God has purposed that the world be divided into nations**  
*'And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us'* **(Acts 17:26-27)**

**\*'Go...' 'Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria...' How we measure progress by nations**

**\*Jerusalem was the first mega church, but not for long**

**\*Out, not up - Make disciples**

**The fall of Babylon. Babylon's hatred for Jerusalem reaches its climax in Revelation. Many saints are martyred by both religious Babylon and political/commercial Babylon.**

**Religious: 'I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement' (Rev.17:6) 'She is rich beyond measure and is getting richer by the minute'. Even John is carried away by the spectacle of this great whore. So much so that John is confronted by the angel 'But the angel said to me, "Why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her..." (Rev.17:7)**

**Political:** *'And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth'* (Rev.18:24)

**But these same chapters foretell the end of both Babylon systems. First, religious Babylon, which precedes political Babylon, is destroyed by the latter when the Beast comes to power**

**Then, political Babylon led by the Beast, who seeks to form a one-world government, is destroyed in one day 'Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore"' (Rev.18:21)**

**Followed by Armageddon**

*'Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband'*  
**(Rev.21:2)**

**The following contrasts between the two cities are seen:**

***'The light of a lamp shall not shine in you anymore, and the voice of bridegroom and bride shall not be heard in you anymore. For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived' (Rev.18:23) with***

***'The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light' (Rev.21:23), and***

***'Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God' (Rev.21:9-10)***



*'The merchants of these things, who became rich by her, will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing' (Rev.18:15), with 'And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away' (Rev.21:4)*

*'The fruit that your soul longed for has gone from you, and all the things which are rich and splendid have gone from you, and you shall find them no more at all' (Rev.18:14), with 'In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month' (Rev.22:2)*