



southwaltonchurchofchrist.com

South Walton Church of Christ in Destin Florida sponsors the following presentation by Evangelist John Morris who serves under the Eldership of the Murray Road Church of Christ of Lee's Summit, Missouri.

Here is the first lesson in the series: **The Bible: Can It Be Trusted?** Part Six of Six

In Isaiah chapter 13 we have yet another prophecy concerning another great ancient city, the ancient city of Babylon. Isaiah chapter 13 beginning in verse 19 God makes some very specific predictions of the city of Babylon that had not yet even reached its pinnacle.

In Isaiah chapter 13 beginning in verse 19 God said this; "And Babylon, the glory of Kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldeans pride, will be as when God overthrew Sodom & Gomorrah. It will never be inhabited nor will it be settled from generation to generation, nor will the Arabian pitch tents there, nor will the shepherds make their sheepfolds there, but wild beasts of the desert will lie there and their houses will be full of owls. Ostriches will dwell there and wild goats will caper there. The hyenas will howl in their citadels and jackals in their pleasant places. Her time is near to come and her days will not be prolonged."

And in the 14th chapter verse 23, God goes on to say this; "I will also make it a possession for the porcupine and marshes of muddy water. I will sweep it with the broom of destruction says the Lord of Hosts."

Of the great city of Babylon which was yet to stand at the top of the ancient world, but which would, God said the day would come when her destruction would be as when He overthrew Sodom & Gomorrah, it would be total and complete.

He said in verse 20 of chapter 13 that that city would never be inhabited again after its destruction, that the Arabians who pitched their tents in so many places would not pitch their tents there.

That "sheepfolds" would not be there, that the beasts of the desert WOULD be there and that that city would become a possession of marshes of muddy water. This came to pass precisely as God said it would. When God overthrew Sodom & Gomorrah, Sodom & Gomorrah's memory passed almost entirely from the human mind. Were it not from the Bible for a long time there would have been no knowledge of Sodom & Gomorrah.

This is precisely what happened to Babylon. In Encyclopedia Britannica we read that until the 1800's the knowledge of Babylon was based on the Old Testament and a few Greek writers. In other words, were it not for the Bible and for the few Greek writers that we had, until the 19th century there was no knowledge of the city of Babylon, this great city.

And yet as we made archeological discoveries and the ancient Cuneiform Script was deciphered we began to learn the history of Babylon till we've come to know a great deal of it today, but for so long, for nearly over 2 millennia, the history of that city was almost entirely lost. God said that in that city "Beasts of the desert would lie."

LaRue, in his work; "Babylon and the Bible" writes; "In A.D. 363 the Emperor Julian engaged in war with the Sassanian Rulers of Persia and during one campaign destroyed the walls of Babylon which had been partially restored by the Sassanians who used the enclosed area as a hunting preserve." There most certainly were beasts there. Professor Kerman Kilprect in his book; "

Exploration in Bible Lands in the 19th Century" writes; "What a contrast between the ancient civilization and the modern degradation, wild animals, boars and hyenas, jackals and wolves and an occasional lion infest the jungle." God had said the city would never again be inhabited, that even Arabians would not pitch their tents there, that sheepfolds would not lie there.

In Hamilton's work "The Basis of Christian Faith" we read; "Travelers report that Babylon is totally uninhabited, even by Bedouins. There are various superstitions current among the Arabs that prevent them from pitching their tents there, while the character of the soil prevents the growth of vegetation suitable for the pasturage of flocks. Just exactly as God had said.

Finally, in Isaiah 14:23 the Lord had predicted that eventually Babylon would become the possession of marshes of muddy water.

The Encyclopedia Britannica again reads; "A large part of the old city is now buried under a deep bed of silt and remains to be found. And the Babylon of Hammurabi of which only the slenderest traces have been detected, now lies beneath the water table." Layard, in the work "Discoveries among the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylonia" writes; "the great part of the country below ancient Babylon has now been for centuries ONE GREAT SWAMP."

If this book is not from God how did that ever happen? How did Ezekiel, how did Isaiah see the fall of these great cities before its time? And how did they see it with such specific detail?

How is it that Jesus in Matthew chapter 11 verses 20 through 24 was able to predict that the cities of Capernaum, Chorazin and Bethsaida would be destroyed? And of course, in 400 A.D. because of a great earthquake that's precisely what happened. Why is it that the Bible which has been tested time and again, not only archeologically but historically, has been proven to be reliable?

In Genesis chapter 14 verse 8 the 5 cities of the plain are mentioned; Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim & Bela or Zoar. For a long time archeologists said; "We have found no proof of these cities, absence of proof is proof of absence, they never existed." And then the ancient Ebla Kingdom was unearthed, some 17,000 tablets have been unearthed and on those tablets we read of the 5 cities of the plain.

There is much more that we could go into but it is a true statement that down through the centuries; minimalists, skeptics, have tried to impugn the Bible's historical reliability only to find themselves silenced when a new discovery was made. It was true of the Assyrian Empire which they said never existed only to find that it did.

It was true of the Hittite Empire when they found that it in fact had been real. It's been true of many of Luke's claims in the book of Luke and Acts; he would use words that archeologists had never heard of.

He would claim official titles for people in the book of Acts and Luke that people said they'd never heard of, and then a discovery would be made confirming that it was real. The Bible is reliable historically, it's reliable archeologically, it is demonstrably reliable prophetically.

And from many standpoints it's unlike any other book that has ever existed. With all this in mind, is it not possible that this book is really what it claims to be; the word of God? We have as Peter says; "the prophetic word made more sure." With an open mind and an honest heart, when all the evidence is considered we must conclude that the Bible is precisely what it claims to be; the living word of the living God.

End of Lesson One

