Intro: Jeremiah’s prophecy comes true in Daniel Chapter 5, “And now I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant; and the beasts of the field I have also given him to serve him. So all nations shall serve him and his son and his son's son, until the time of his land comes; and then many nations and great kings shall make him serve them.” (Jeremiah 27:6-7)

> BABYLON – PAST – PRESENT – FUTURE!

- The Founding of Babylon - The Bible’s first mention of Babylon comes in Genesis 10. This chapter is referred to as the table of nations as it traces the descendants of Noah’s three sons. In the genealogy of Ham, “Cush was the father of Nimrod, who grew to be a mighty warrior on the earth” (Genesis 10:8). Nimrod founded a kingdom that included a place called “Babylon” in Shinar (Genesis 10:10).

- The Tower of Babel - The Tower of Babel is found in Genesis 11. In English it is easy enough to make the connection between “Babel” and “Babylon,” but in Hebrew it is the same word. This chapter cements Babylon’s reputation as a city of rebellion against God. From then on, the biblical writers consistently use Babylon as a symbol of evil and defiance (see 1 Peter 5:13 and Revelation 17:5).

- Babylon’s Early Growth - Near the time of Abraham, Babylon became an independent city-state ruled by the Amorites. The first Babylonian dynasty included Hammurabi, the sixth king, known for his code of laws. Hammurabi expanded the kingdom, and the area around Babylon became known as Babylonia. During the second dynasty, Babylon was in communication with Egypt and entered a 600-year struggle with Assyria. After a time of subjugation to the Elamite Empire, a fourth dynasty of Babylonian kings thrived under Nebuchadnezzar I. Then Babylon fell under the shadow of Assyria.

- Babylon’s Ascendancy - By 851 B.C., Babylon was only nominally independent, requiring Assyrian “protection” and facing many internal upheavals. Finally, the Assyrian Tiglath-pileser III took the throne. The Assyrians and Merodach-baladan, a Chaldean, traded power more than once. During one of his times of advantage, Merodach-baladan sent emissaries to threaten Hezekiah, king of Judah (2 Kings 20:12-19; Isaiah 39). When the Chaldean chief Nabopolassar took control of Babylon in 626 B.C., he proceeded to sack Nineveh, the capital of Assyria.

- Nebuchadnezzar II’s Conquest of Judah - Under the Chaldean dynasty, and, arguably, throughout the rest of history, no king surpassed the glory and absolute power of Nebuchadnezzar II’s reign. As the crown prince (son of Nabopolassar), he defeated Pharaoh Necho II, who had come to the aid of the Assyrian army, winning for Babylonia the former Assyrian lands, including Israel. After being crowned king, Nebuchadnezzar forced King Jehoiakim of Judah to “become his vassal for three years. But then [Jehoiakim] changed his mind and rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar” (2 Kings 24:1). The king of Babylon, who did not take kindly to being rebelled against, captured Jerusalem and took the king and other leaders, military men and artisans as prisoners to Babylon (2 Kings 24:12-16). This deportation marked the beginning of the Babylonian exile of the Jews. Nebuchadnezzar appointed Zedekiah to rule Judah. However, Zedekiah, against the prophet Jeremiah’s counsel, joined the Egyptians in a revolt in 589 B.C. This resulted in Nebuchadnezzar’s return. The remaining Jews were deported, Jerusalem was burned, and the temple was destroyed in August of 587 B.C. (Jeremiah 52:1-30).

- The Prophet Daniel and the Fall of Babylon - Babylon is the setting for the ministry of the prophets Ezekiel and Daniel, who were both deportees from Judah. Daniel became a leader and royal advisor to the Babylonian and Persian Empires. He had been captured after the battle of Carchemish in 605 B.C. (Jeremiah 46:2-12). The book of Daniel records Daniel’s interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream (Daniel 2) and foretells the fall of Babylon to the Medes and the Persians (Daniel 5). Earlier, the prophet Isaiah had also foretold the fall of Babylon (Isaiah 46:1-2).

- Conclusion - In the Bible, Babylon is mentioned from Genesis to Revelation, as it rises from its rebellious beginnings to become a symbol of the Antichrist’s evil world system. When God’s people required discipline, God used the Babylonian Empire to accomplish it, but He limited Judah’s captivity to 70 years (Jeremiah 25:11). Then, God promised to “punish the king of Babylon and his nation” (Jeremiah 25:12) “for all the wrong they have done in Zion” (Jeremiah 51:24). Ultimately, all evil will be judged, as symbolized by Babylon’s demise in Revelation 18:21: “The great city of Babylon will be thrown down, never to be found again.”
THREE LESSONS FROM DANIEL:

LESSON #1 – DON’T PARTY AT “CLUB JUDGMENT!” (v1-9)
(Date: Approximately B.C. 539)
(v1) Who is BELSHAZZAR? His name means Bel, protect the king. The Babylonian god Bel (Isaiah 46:1; Jeremiah 50:2; 51:44) is the same as Marduk, the chief Babylonian god. The Babylonian god Merodach (Jeremiah 50:2), an alternate spelling of Marduk, was the god of war and the patron deity of the city of Babylon. Belshazzar is the oldest son of Nabonidus and the last king of the Neo-Babylonian Empire (Daniel 5:1-2; 7:1; 8:1); his grandfather was Nebuchadnezzar, it was common to call a patriarch of the family or nation “father,” which we’ll read of reference to Nebuchadnezzar in regards to Belshazzur.

(v2-4) Three STRIKES you’re out:
- STRIKE 1 – Drunkenness and Immorality
- STRIKE 2 – Sacrilege
- STRIKE 3 – Blasphemy

(v5-9) God’s judgment: “The handwriting is on the wall” and in the books (Rev. 20:11-15)
- R.E.M. song - It's the end of the world as we know it (I had some time alone)
  It's the end of the world as we know it (I had some time alone)
  It's the end of the world as we know it, and I feel fine (It's time I had some time alone)
  I feel fine (I feel fine)

LESSON #2 – MAINTAIN YOUR TESTIMONY! (Daniel’s Testimony) (v10-17)
(v11a) The Spirit of the Holy God was found in him!
(v11b) Light, understanding and wisdom was found in him!
(v11c) He was a leader!
(v12) An excellent spirit, knowledge, understanding, interpreting dreams, solving riddles, and explaining enigmas!
(v13-17) He was not interested in the things of the world, only God’s Kingdom and the eternal rewards!

LESSON #3 – ALWAYS WITNESS THE WORD OF GOD! (v18-31)
(v18-21) Daniel’s history lesson (same sin/different man). (Proverbs 1:7-33)
(v22-24) Daniel pronounces the sin of Belshazzar: Pride—Sacrilege—blasphemy!
(v25-29) Daniel reveals God’s judgment:
- “MENE” (declared twice) – “God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it”
- “TEKEL” – “You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting”
- “PERES” – “Your kingdom has been divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.”
(“Peres” means to divide; “Upharsin” – u is Aramaic for and; “Persians” comes from paras, this is written as prediction.)

(v30-31) Belshazzar’s last party, the king was slain! BABYLON IS JUDGED! DANIEL IS SAVED!

1 Daniel, The Key to Prophetic Revelation by John Walvoord