

**SUMERIAN BELIEFS:
A DEPARTURE FROM THE TRUE FAITH?**

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ABSTRACT

SUMERIAN BELIEFS: A Departure from the True Faith?

The parallels of the Sumerian (and Babylonian) religious system to that of the book of Genesis have perplexed scholars for centuries. In addition, the historical links between Noah and early civilizations seemed to be non-existent. There are strong indications that an early ruler was involved in the development of an apostate faith involving a "mother-goddess" that has permeated all the world.

It was not until this century that light was shed on this topic. Samuel Noah Kramer, doing extensive archeological work on the Sumerians, and Alexander Hislop, in his attempts to show the origins of apostasy, uncovered much information regarding these problems. This paper is based, in part, upon their findings as it attempts to show the early belief system and that the accounts of Dumuzi-Tammuz could be related to the Biblical person of Nimrod.

It is the conclusion of this writer that the Nimrod of Genesis 10 could in fact be the Dumuzi of the Second Dynasty after the Flood, as cited in the Sumerian King list. The work of Kramer, and others, point to this in the evidence relating to the names Tammuz and Dumuzi. It is clearly evidenced that these accounts were based upon a real person. Another primary consideration is the chronological and geographical placement of these events. The cities cited in the accounts concur with the Biblical references concerning Nimrod. Most importantly, the conclusion must preclude dogmatism; more evidence is needed to demonstrate the connection.

SUMERIAN BELIEFS:

A DEPARTURE FROM THE TRUE FAITH?

The Sumerian religious system strikes many parallels to the true faith depicted in the Bible. Some have accounted for this by declaring that Israel had diffused the Sumerian myths into their traditions.¹ What is more likely is that the Sumerians had the truth from Noah's descendants, but, had departed from it, developing their own system of corrupt and base thoughts that glorified men rather than the creator. The evidence, albeit scanty, does seem to indicate that they did indeed have a witness from the seed of Noah. Berossus possibly refers to this in his discussion on the Sages after the Flood when he is quoted as saying: "In the tenth generation after the Flood there was a man among the Chaldeans who was just, great and knowledgeable about heavenly phenomena." The translator who quotes Berossus then adds the following footnote: "This is the only surviving reference to one of the Post-Flood Apkallus. Josephus (Jewish Antiquities, 1.158) and the Hellenistic Jewish historian as Pseudo-Euphrolimes (FGrH,3C2,724Ff1-2) identified this figure with Abraham . . ."2 I find this not to be in disagreement with Genesis 11:10-27. This would support the concept of the righteous remnant. That Abraham was called out of Ur of

the Chaldeans raises several questions concerning what he knew of the true God. The geneological record of the line of Shem may, as is revealed in the geneological lists of Jesus, reveal God's sovereign control over human history through the preservation of the seed, and of the righteous remnant. That God called Abraham seems to indicate that the truth was available to men even in this early civilization. The religious ideas, then, of the Sumerians, and later the Babylonians, would seem to indicate a wandering from the light into the darkness. A closer examination of certain events will draw this into better focus.

The early cosmology of the Sumerians seems predicated upon the basis of creatio ex substantia. There has yet to be recovered any myth primarily concerned with the creation of the universe, apart from the concept of the primeval sea.³ This stands in direct opposition to the Biblical position of creatio ex nihilo. (The possible explanation for man's focus on matter as being eternal, as seen in today's humanistic evolutionism, will be addressed later.) Kramer cites the Sumerian order of creation as follows:

1. First was the primeval sea . . . nothing has been discovered of its origin. The early sages must have looked upon it as a kind of first cause and prime mover--never asking themselves what preceded it in time and space.
2. The primeval sea begat the cosmic mountain consisting of heaven and earth united . . .
3. Conceived as gods in human form, An (heaven) was the male and Ki (earth) was the female. From their union was begotten the air-god En-lil.
4. En-lil, the air-god separated heaven from earth . . .⁴

In addition, the Babylonian account, "Enûma

Elish," closely parallels Genesis 1:1-2:3 as illustrated in the following table:

TABLE 1

Enûma elish	Genesis
Divine spirit and cosmic matter are coexistent and coeternal	Divine spirit creates cosmic matter independently of it
Primeval chaos; Ti'âmat enveloped in darkness	The earth a desolate waste, with darkness covering the deep (têhôm)
Light emanating from the gods	Light created
The creation of dry land	The creation of dry land
The creation of the luminaries	The creation of the luminaries
The creation of man	The creation of man
The gods rest and celebrate	God rests and sanctifies the seventh day

Alexander Heidel, The Babylonian Genesis, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951) p. 128.

This similarity again reveals that the Hebrew story may have been current in some form or another many centuries before its present form.⁵

The Sumerians divide the creation itself into three parts: earth (Ki), heaven (An), and the atmosphere (Lil).⁶ The characteristics and nature of this last division seems to be related to Genesis 1:2. (Both the Sumerians and the Babylonians seem to overlook Genesis 1:1, again this is predicated upon the idea of eternal matter.) This idea of a

three way division may be based on some knowledge of the triune god, as they did not entirely limit themselves to that scenario in their later structures. In the later Babylonian system there is still a reference to a three way arrangement, but it is less dominant. King explains:

At the head of the company of the gods may be set the great triad of deities Anu, Bel, and Ea, whose sphere of influences together embraced the entire universe. Anu was the god of heaven, Bel the god of earth and of mankind and Ea the god of the abyss of water beneath the earth.⁷

Regarding the differences in their versions, King has this to say:

Even during the Semitic period the Babylonian company of the gods underwent considerable changes. The assimilation of the Sumerian deities was not a sudden process, and the meeting of the two systems did not produce uniform results throughout the country.⁸

The changes introduced into the system were the result of the basic ideology of the Sumerian theologians. Kramer states the case as follows:

Operating, directing, and supervising this universe, the Sumerian theologian assumed, was a pantheon consisting of a group of living beings, manlike in form but superhuman and controlled the cosmos in accordance with well-laid plans and duly prescribed laws.⁹

Heidel states the basis for the problem well: "In Genesis man is created in the image of God: but the Babylonians created their gods in the image of man."¹⁰

Kramer also notes regarding the processes of creation: "As for the technique of creation attributed to these deities, our Sumerian philosophers developed a doctrine

which became dogma throughout the Near East, the doctrine of the creative power of the divine word."¹¹ Kramer bases this on the analogical inference that a human king could achieve almost all that he wanted by command. But, there is a close parallel drawn to the Genesis account of creation, in that God said something, and it came into existence. (Genesis 1:3,6,9,11,) It is quite doubtful that the philosophers could have developed this idea without a seed of some sort external to their environment. The evidence for this may be found in the history of other literature, where the same concepts have been found, quite possibly received from the Sumerians, who quite possibly received it from their Post-diluvian relatives. This flow of information would also explain the many similarities between the world's religious systems.

It is important to note the suspected origin of the Sumerians. Hooke says:

They appear to have come into the delta from the mountainous region to the north-east of Mesopotamia, and their myths show that they came from a different kind of country from which they found in their new home.¹²

It is apparent from this that they could easily have come from the area where the ark had rested. To date, this is the earliest known civilization. It reveals a striking similarity in its accounts of creation, the flood and other early events to the Biblical record. It is quite possible that they were of the earliest descendants of Noah and had migrated into this area. This would account for the closeness of the earliest Sumerian doctrine to the Genesis accounts,

while also explaining the divergence of the later Babylonian accounts. The further away from the Noahic event, the more abstract the doctrines became. This could also be based on the problems associated with the confusion of tongues at Babel. The seemingly perpetual state of flux that languages exist in would account for several changes in dogma. If we assume that the Sumerians had the correct doctrine initially, but had departed from it only through subtle changes in terminology, then we would have difficulty explaining many of the myths associated with DUMUZI, INANNA and others. Rather, we should assume that sinful man, perhaps influenced directly or indirectly by Satan, would have desired to twist the meanings of words to develop a system of religion that glorified himself rather than the true creator. This again argues strongly in favor of a common tradition. Finegan deals with this issue precisely as he cites evidence for this view:

In their conceptions of early happenings, the Sumerians encompassed the creation of the universe and of human beings, the development of civilization, the displeasure of the gods with humankind, the flood, and the confusion of tongues, together with lists of kings both before and after the flood. Many parts of the same scheme of events are also found in the Akkadian literature: notably, the creation, the development of civilization and the disturbance of the gods by humankind, and the flood, in the Epic of Atrahasis; the creation in the epic of Marduk; and the flood in the Epic of Gilgamesh. The same literary pattern appears in the first eleven chapters of the book of Genesis, where there are both specific similarities (eg, in the account of the flood) and fundamental differences (eg, in the account of creation), so that the suggestion of a common ancient tradition, at least in part, seems likely.¹³

Whitcomb and Morris also support this view. They say:

Thus, the early chapters of Genesis imply that there was at least a small pocket of civilization in the Near East linking the civilization of Babel with that of the Sumerians and the Babylonians (cf. Gen. 10:6-14). The memory of the "golden age" which preceded the confusion of tongues and the scattering of the peoples at Babel must have lingered long afterwards in the minds of men, providing fertile seed for the rise of a new civilization in the fourth millennium B.C. . . .¹⁴

In examining the Sumerian religious system with this historical perspective in mind we find, then, an interesting problem.

The origins of the Sumerian people have perplexed the scholar who has sought to find a civilization before them. It has also perplexed the Biblical scholar who has sought to tie it in with the early chapters of Genesis that reveal the post-diluvial peoples. Archeological evidence does not, in itself, provide absolute proof for or against either theory. It only provides the raw data, undeveloped, not analyzed and not synthesized with present knowledge.¹⁵

In the early part of this century, Alexander Hislop attempted to prove that the Papal worship is actually the worship of Nimrod and his wife. He builds his foundation on several assumptions that attempt to equate Nimrod and the person of Tammuz. If this can be accomplished, then we would have the answers to many questions regarding the origin of the Sumerian beliefs, and also to many of the world's religion's beliefs. He states:

Thus, then, Nimrod, or Ninus, was the builder of Nivevah; and the origin of the name of that city as the "the habitation of Ninus," is accounted for, and light is thereby, at the same time, cast on the

fact, that the name of the chief part of the ruins of Nineveh is Nimrod at this day.

Now assuming that Ninus is Nimrod, the way in which that assumption explains what is otherwise inexplicable in the statements of ancient history greatly confirms the truth of that assumption itself. Ninus is said to have been the son of Belus or Bel, and Bel is said to have been the founder of Babylon. If . . . Ninus was in reality the first king of Babylon, how could Belus or Bel, his father, be said to be the founder of it? Both might very well be, as will appear if we consider who was Bel, and what we can trace of his doings. If Ninus was Nimrod, who was the historical Bel? He must have been Cush; for "Cush begat Nimrod" (Gen. X.8); and Cush is generally represented as having been a ring-leader in the great apostacy.¹⁶

The connections between Nimrod and Tammuz, or any other name associated with Tammuz, such as Dumuzi or Adonis, are at best tenable. Explicit data connecting these names has not been found during the research for this work. But, there was significant inferences in both scripture and in the ancient literature to cast a glimmer of light on this area.

In Genesis 10:6-12, there is a great deal said about Nimrod; that he became a mighty one on the earth. Several cities are listed as being in his kingdom. In the genealogical list from Adam to David in 1 Chron. 1:10, he again is stated as being the son of Cush, and that he began to be a mighty one in the earth. And, in Micah 5:6, the land of Assyria is considered to be the land of Nimrod.

This does not provide much to work with until one considers the events of the tower of Babel, which are specifically cited as occurring in one of the cities of Nimrod; and, that this is cited in almost the immediate

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Hislop provides more information that may provide the necessary limits:

How Nimrod died, Scripture is entirely silent. There was an ancient tradition that he came to a violent end . . . then, in regard to the death of Ninus, profane history speaks darkly and mysteriously, although one account tells of his having met a violent death similiar to that of Pentheus, Lycurgus, and Orpheus, who were said to have been torn in pieces. The identity of Nimrod, however, and the Egyptian Osiris, having been established, we have thereby light as to Nimrod's death. Osiris met with a violent death, and that violent death of Osiris was the central theme of the whole idolatry of Egypt. If Osiris was Nimrod, as we have seen, that violent death which the Egyptians so pathetically deplored in their annual festivals was just the death of Nimrod. The accounts in regard to the death of the god worshipped in the several mysteries of the different countries are all to the same affect.¹⁷

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At this point it must be noted that there is evidence of borrowing from the Sumerians by the Egyptians, as noted by Wilson:

But in the religious area is above?

If Egypt did thus borrow the idea of writing from Babylonia, it brought her abruptly into literacy and was a powerful factor in the construction of history.

We have, then, certain clear and definite borrowings from Mesopotamia and other borrowing which look entirely possible. On the other hand, archeology has thus far found no indications of Babylonian borrowing from Egypt.¹⁸

Hislop then proceeds to the coup-de-grace as he claims:

into text

A statement of Plato seems to show, that in his day the Egyptian Osiris was regarded as identical with Tammuz; and Tammuz is well known to have been the same as Adonis, the famous Huntsman, for whose death Venus is fabled to have made such bitter lamentations. As the women of Egypt wept for Osiris, as the Phenician and Assyrian women wept for Tammuz, so

in Greece and Rome the women wept for Bacchus, who's name, as we have seen, means "the bewailed," or "lamented one."¹⁹

Hislop continues discussing other linguistic and cultural connections of Tammuz, until he draws a conclusion, that reveals a connection to the mother-goddess of Babylon. He will then continue this theme in an effort to show that the Catholic Church is directly involved in the worship of Nimrod. The concept of this mother goddess finds its way into the Sumerian system after the pantheon had become more developed. Kramer states: "of all these hundreds of deities the four most important were the heaven-god, An, the air-god, Enlil, the water-god, Enki, and great mother-goddess, Nunhussag."²⁰ Unfortunately the scope of this report prohibits the examination of this mother-goddess concept. Hislop attempts to show that this is related to Nimrod's wife, Seimiris.

The reason for the weeping for Tammuz (Ezek. 8:14) may best be explained by Hislop. He states:

Here, then, we have large and consenting evidence, all leading to one conclusion, that the death of Nimrod, the child worshipped in the arms of the mother-goddess of Babylon, was a death of violence.

Now, when this mighty hero, in the midst of his career of glory, was suddenly cut off by a violent death, great seems to have been the shock that the catastrophe occasioned. When the news spread abroad, the devotees of pleasure felt as if the best benefactor of mankind were gone, and the gaiety of nations eclipsed. Loud was the wail that everywhere ascended to heaven among the apostates from the primeval faith for so dire a catastrophe. Then began the weeping for Tammuz . . .²¹

Dr. Fineberg, in his commentary on Ezekiel adds

additional light:

Whereas the idolatries of the mysterious cult were of the Egyptian type, the worship of Tammuz came from Babylon through the Phoenicians (Canaanites) and then the Greeks. Tammuz, mentioned nowhere else in Scripture, was the Babylonian Dumuzi, beloved of Ishtar, and is to be identified with the Greek Adonis. He was the God of spring vegetation, who died and was revived after the scorching . . . summer heat. Women joined Ishtar in mourning a dead lover in the intense drought during our months of June and July, so that vegetation might be assured. The fourth month of the Hebrew calendar still bears the name Tammuz. With the worship of this god in ancient times, were connected the basest immoralities. . . .²²

More recent evidence ^{- footnote} has shown that the revival of Tammuz never occurred, that this was a misunderstanding of the myths. This provides ever greater support for the concept of a Nimrod version of the Dumuzi story. Oates states this of Dumuzi: "Originally Dumuzi seems to have been an Early Dynastic king of Uruk (or perhaps Bad-tibika) who, like Gilgamesh, became the subject of much later legend."²³ Hallo and Simpson place Dumuzi as a ruler in the Early Dynastic II period of the fourth generation; which, interestingly, is the same position that they place Gilgamesh.²⁴

Roux addresses the same basic issue that Hislop did, and also provides additional information that corrects the misunderstanding of earlier literature as stated by Fineberg. This will provide a more solid base for a Nimrod fulfillment of the Tammuz-Dumuzi accounts. Roux states:

To the same category belonged Nunurta, the warrior-god, Ninhursag, the "mother-goddess" and the great goddess of love and procreation Inanna-better known to the public under her Semitic name Ishtar-together with her husband Dumuzi.

Dumuzi (the Tammuz of the Semites) deserves special mention because it was for a long time believed that he was a vegetation-god who died and revived every year, symbolizing the disappearance of grass and grain in the summer and their reappearance in the spring. This belief was founded upon a series of Babylonian texts known as "Tammuz Lamentations" which deplore in poetic style the death of the god, upon a misunderstanding of the Sumerian-Akkadian myth of "Inanna's (or Ishtar's) descent to the Netherworld," and upon what is known from late sources of the cult of Adonis-Tammuz as practised by the Phoenicians towards the end of the first millennium B.C.. Subsequently, however, an improved reading of the Sumerian epic tales and a thorough revision of all the material available have led such eminent scholars as Kramer, Jacobsen and Falkenstein to the conclusion that Dumuzi was never revived at all, that he was not released from the Netherworld by Inanna but taken there by force in order to take her place and prevented from returning to the earth.

The Sacred Marriage between Dumuzi and Inanna was a very old annual rite designed to ensure "the productivity of the land and fruitfulness of the womb of man and beast," in which the king played the part of the god and a priestess that of the goddess. It originated in Uruk at the beginning of the third millennium B.C., if not earlier . . .²⁵

Kramer states that:

Early in the third millennium B.C. Dumuzi was a prominent ruler of the important Sumerian city-state of Erech, and his life and deeds made a deep impression upon his own and future generations.

He continues discussing the possible evolution of the marriage rite and states that:

. . . the honor of the first mortal ruler to have become the husband of Inanna, Erech's most revered deity, not unnaturally fell to Dumuzi, the Erech ruler who over the centuries had become a memorable figure in Sumerian legend and lore.²⁶

The legends of Dumuzi can be broken down into four major stories. (1) The conflict of the shepherd Dumuzi with the farmer Enkimdu.²⁷ (2) Dumuzi comes to Inanna's house.²⁸ (3) Inanna's descent into the underworld.²⁹ (4)

The death of Dumuzi.³⁰

All of these epics would seem to give credence to the possibility of a connection with Nimrod. The genealogical setting of Nimrod, contrasted with the chronological setting of Dumuzi, would seem to indicate that there is a strong possibility that they are the same person. But, to date, no evidence can be given to dogmatically state that they are the same person. Hislop develops his ideas in a broader sense, not being limited to the proof of one connection. We have bits and pieces, as Ringgren states:

We are in a significantly poorer position as regards the religion of the oldest period. For this we are almost completely thrown back on the evidences of archeology. For the pre-Sumerian period almost all that we have is female figurines of a type that is found all over large parts of the world, and is assumed to represent a mother-goddess. In the earliest Sumerian period it can be observed that in the southern parts of the land the temples are located in groups of two. This suggests that a pair of deities were worshipped, probably the mother-goddess and her consort, later known under the names of Inanna and Dumuzi.³¹

What is lacking is a solid connection between the Biblical Nimrod and the Biblical Tammuz. The evidence thus far examined seems to fit the picture, but without all the data it would be improper to "tie the knot on the package."

What has been shown is that the early Sumerians had early origins in the same region as the probable setting of Noah's Ark. This would reveal that they had a level of understanding of the true God. This would also show how they had departed further from the truth as time progressed. What also may be the case is that Nimrod, or Dumuzi, caused

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some form of apostacy that resulted in his death. This death became a symbol of their apostate faith. This may be related to the events of Genesis 11; but again caution must be exercised, as no solid archeological evidence has yet been found.

It is my belief that the events in the epics reveal actual human incidents, possibly as Hislop reveals it, that caused a major shakeup within the known world. This resulted in a series of events and stories that would be no different than rumors that are developed today.

It must also be remembered that Satan could be directly involved in the development of these stories in order to confuse men and draw them away from the living God. The fact that men love darkness rather than light would give a solid basis for the apostate faith's development. Certainly the fertility concepts involved in the Inanna and Dumuzi marriage rite would incite the hearts of men to lust and thus be drawn away from the less popular truth.

That this fake religious system could spread throughout the world is not without evidence, as already cited.

It is beyond all doubt that European civilization is connected with that of Ancient Mesopotamia by an almost unbroken chain of tradition.

Nevertheless, the Old Testament is one of the channels by which the themes from the Assyro-Babylonian culture have reached us. This is as far as we can go in any such statements, for the very parts of the Old Testament in which these themes are most clearly visible are characterized by the way in which they differ from the Mesopotomian myths of creation and mortality, and offer an

entirely new interpretation of the Deluge and the tower of Babel.³²

Man's emphasis on matter as being eternal, as seen in today's humanistic evolution, as well as in the Sumerian and Babylonian accounts, could be based on the influence of Satan. Satan is a created being who is known to have access to man (Gen. 3; Job 1). The fact that he is a created being possibly created after the heavens and the earth (Gen. 1:2 or later) would seem to cause him to look no further back than his creation. This could account for the concept of the primeval waters and the emphasis on eternal matter as seen today. It is only through God's divine revelation that man can know the truth. Archeology can help us to fill in the gaps, as it were, in the divine record, but, cannot be the sole force of our message. As already noted, evidence and theories based on archeological data must be broad enough in scope to show the historical flow, if it is to be used apologetically. God's righteous remnant can be traced throughout all of human history, giving us encouragement because of His faithfulness. In order to further validate the claims of the Bible, we must continue to seek out the historical and archeological data that gives the evidence of Biblical veracity so that men are given every opportunity that we can afford to see the Creator's grace and plan.

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32. Beck, p. 147.

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THE JUDGMENT OF BABYLON: A DOUBLE REFERENCE?

Isaiah XIII -XIV v. 23

Submitted to

Dr. Carl Laney

Western Conservative Baptist Seminary

Portland, Oregon

In Partial Fulfillment

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BL 523

Isaiah

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Box #302

January 19, 1983

Very fine paper, John!
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THE JUDGMENT OF BABYLON: A DOUBLE REFERENCE?

The oracle concerning Babylon which Isaiah, the son of Amoz, revealed in the thirteenth chapter of his book presents a difficult problem for the interpreter. (Comparable difficulties can be found in Ezekiel 28:1-19). The problem concerns the interpretation of prophecy. From New Testament revelation, we are aware that many prophecies, while being fulfilled literally, often have double references. One that comes to this writer's mind is one of the prophecies partially fulfilled on the day of Pentecost (cf. Acts 2:1-36 with Joel 2:28-32). A close examination of these references reveal that a complete fulfillment has not yet occurred, but will at some future point in time. The question we must ask then is whether a double reference is in view of this passage of Isaiah, or if this passage pertains only to the Babylonian kingdom and its mortal ruler. I intend to show that the former presents the soundest answer to the enigma.

According to Kaiser, the term *maššā'* can be nothing less than God's "sentence." He claims that the Jerusalem Bible has correctly translated the term, while modern versions miss the aspect of "verdict" or "sentence" when they translate the term as "utterance" or "oracle".¹ The King James Version uses the term "burden." The Living Bible uses the term "vision" Luther's German translation is similar to the

¹Walter C. Kaiers, Jr., Toward an Old Testament Theology (Grand Rapids: Zondewan, 1978), p. 226

KJV, "last."² The idea then that is thrust forward is one of judgment. We must also bear in mind that the theme of the book is that of the coming Messiah.³

Reading through the passage, I find my mind focussing on the end times as I approach the tenth verse. The idea of a double reference becomes apparent to me as I read on to verse sixteen. In Gleason Archer's commentary on Isaiah, he states regarding verses six through eleven:

"6. Here the day of Jehovah (ASV) is clearly not eschatological, but refers to the events of 539 B.C. Yet this fall of Babylon is prophetically typical of the overthrow of latter-day Babylon (Rev 14:8), to which the fearful meteoric phenomena of 13:10 more particularly apply (cf Mt 24:29). This is brought out by the reference fo the world (tēbēl) in 13:11, rather than to the Chaldean Empire alone."⁴

As Archer has states, verse eleven seems to confirm that the end times are in view. Calvin presents the opposite view when he stated:

"Here the Prophet does not speak of the whole world; but as Babylon was the seat of the most powerful of all monarchies, he gives to it on that account the name of the world, and he does so emphatically, (ēmphtatikōs) for Babylon was a kind of world, because it appeared to occupy nearly the whole earth."⁵

The scriptual support for the interpretation of double references has already been demonstrated. That caution and wisdom must be exercised cannot be overstated, lest we mishandle the Word of God. Fineberg necessarily discusses some of the guidelines of prophetic

²Die Heilige Schrift, trans. Martin Luther (Philadelphia: The National Bible Press, 1967), p. 636.

³Gerald H. Twombly, An Analytical Survey of the Bible (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1978), p. 83

⁴Gleason L. Archer, Jr., Isaiah; Wycliffe Bible Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), p. 621

⁵John Calvin, Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, Vol. I (Grand Rapids; Eerdmans, 1948), p. 419, trans. William Pangle, 4 vol.

interpretation when he states:

"A second rule in the interpretation of prophecy is that due attention must be paid to perspective. Certain events of the future are seen grouped together in one circumscribed area of vision, although they are really at different distances. That is particularly true of the predictions of the so-called major prophets, where many times prophecies concerning the Babylonian captivity, the events of the Day of the Lord, the return from Babylon, the world wide dispersion of Israel, and their future regathering from all corners of the earth are grouped together seemingly almost indiscriminately."⁶

Pentecost also claims that events which bear some relationship to one another, so that there is a double reference, may be brought into one prophecy even though separated widely in fulfillment.⁷ According to Dr. Tan, a double reference is said to contain both a near and a far view. "That is, these prophecies are given for two audiences separated in time." Dr. Tan goes on to say, "It is also customary for many pre-millennial interpreters to find Satan's career pictured in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28, which describe the kings of Babylon and of Tyre respectively."⁸

The term double fulfillment is used by Dr. Ironside as he comments on chapters thirteen and fourteen:

"As we read these chapters it is easy to see that back of the literal rulers of Babylon, there was a sinister spirit-personality denominated as Lucifer, the son of the morning. That this evil angel is identical with Satan himself seems to be perfectly clear. We note, then, the first part of the prophecy, which will have a double fulfillment: first, Babylon's destruction by the armies of Cyrus and Cyaxares (who is probably the same as the Darius of Daniel 5), and then the final

⁶Charles L. Fineberg, Millennialism: 3rd Ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), p. 40

⁷J. Dwight Pentecost, Things to Come (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), p. 62

⁸Paul Lee Tan, The Interpretation of Prophecy (Rockville, MD: Assurance Publishers, 1981), p. 178

destruction of the Assyrian in the last days."⁹

In the second verse of chapter fourteen, the statement is made that the house of Jacob will take their captors captive, and will rule over their oppressors. Calvin makes an absurd comment that the Apostles, being Jews, subdued foreign nations by the Word of God.¹⁰ I feel that this passage is awaiting a literal fulfillment in the last days, as there is no historical evidence to adequately show its past fulfillment.

The last portion that is to be examined is the one that is often assigned to Satan. (There are indications of support for this view in the verses preceding the main passage, but are beyond the scope of this work.) Verses twelve through fourteen refer to one who has fallen from heaven; whether the description is figurative, metaphoric, or literal cannot adequately be determined in the given context. The question is not so much whether this passage refers to a mortal man or Satan, but, rather, what is the evidence for departing from the literal interpretation. That this could be ascribed to a mortal man is not without foundation. The present day humanist has approached this level of arrogance; surely, one such as Nebachadnezzar was capable of such claims found in verse thirteen (cf. Daniel 4:10-37). Nonetheless, the implications are that this is a double reference. Certainly the doctrine of Satan as revealed throughout scripture (e.g. Genesis 3:15, I Timothy 3:6, etc) supports the use of this passage in applications to the person of

⁹H.A. Ironside, Isaiah
(New York: Loizeaux Bros., 1961), p. 83

¹⁰John Calvin, Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, Vo. I
(Grand Rapids; Eerdmans, 1948), p. 436

Satan.¹¹ It is interesting to note that the term "Lucifer" is only mentioned once in scripture. I found the term in the King James Version, The Living Bible, and Calvin's Latin translation¹² but did not find this term used in the New American Standard Bible, the New International Version, or Luther's Die Heilige Schrift.¹³ The term according to Unger means "bright star."¹⁴ From the German "du schöner Morgenstern!" the term means "beautiful" or "handsome," "morning star."¹⁵ Archer makes this statement regarding the term "Lucifer":

"This title is addressed to the king of Babylon, not so much as a specific human individual...but as a representative... of Satan, who is regarded as the power behind the king's throne."¹⁶

Alexander Hishop adds another possibility to this term when he states:

"The Babylonian king pretended to be a representative of Nimrod or Phaëthon; and the prophet, in these words, informs him, that, as certainly as the god in whom he glorified had been cast down from his high estate, so certainly should he."¹⁷

That a double reference was intended by the inspirational source of Isaiah seems adequately clear. It is important to note that the prophets

¹¹Charles C. Ryrie, A Survey of Bible Doctrine (Chicago: Moody Press, 1981), pp. 92-95

¹²Calvin, Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, Vol. I (Grand Rapids; Eerdmans, 1948), p. 431

¹³Martin Luther, "Wie bist du vom Himmel gefallen, du schoener Morgenstern!" p. 638

¹⁴Merrill F. Unger, Unger's Bible Dictionary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), p. 670

¹⁵Langenscheidts Universal - Woerterbuch; English - Deutsch (Muenchen: Langenscheidt, 1980), pp. 453, 485, 497

¹⁶Gleason L. Archer, Jr., Isaiah; Wycliffe Bible Commentary (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1978), p. 622

¹⁷Alexander Hishop, The Two Babylons (Neptune NJ: Loizeaux Bros., 1959), p. 234

did not always understand the message revealed to them (cf. Dan. 12:8-9). I find then that the contextual and historical evidence allows the use of this sound hermeneutical principle, referred to in this work, in the interpretation of this difficult passage.

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