



Magnolia Bible Church Men's Group (5-week Series)

Perspectives of God | Educating our Minds | Warnings for Life

Lesson #3: Exploring world history considering the Biblical ancient empires

Series taught by Chris Alexander | February 22, 2024

Series Overview

Life today is changing at a breakneck pace. Never before have we seen so many different technologies and the impact they're having on how we think, act, and make decisions. In our hands and pockets, we have devices that literally allow us to track family members, see and talk to anyone in the world at any time, and obtain information in seconds on every subject imaginable. Even though we have access to practically unlimited information and knowledge, never has Biblical illiteracy been so high. The average American can't recount Bible stories like Creation, The Fall, Noah, and the Tower of Babel that were practically known to every school child in the 1950s. We all realize this is part of Satan's overall plan to move the hearts of men away from the mind of God. Satan has distracted Believers, especially men, to stop being the leaders God we've been called to be at home, in our neighborhoods, the office, and church.

The 5-week **Life in the Pew** series is sure to change your perspectives on the world around us and challenge us to study with greater intensity Biblical prophecy and truths, using the lens of Scripture to view current events and technologies in a new way. The goal of this series is to help us better understand God's plan for our lives and the urgency for sharing the Gospel of Jesus with a nation and world that desperately needs Him.

Series Schedule

Provided below is the schedule for the 5-week **Life in the Pew** series.

- Lesson #1 on February 8: Biblical overview and understanding the Prophetic Timeline
- Lesson #2 on February 15: Satanic activity and his impact on directing the nations
- **Lesson #3 on February 22: Exploring world history considering the Biblical ancient empires**
- Lesson #4 on February 29: Technology advancement in preparation for the rise of the Antichrist
- Lesson #5 on March 7: Living with new perspectives built on the power of God

Lesson #3 Overview

I think most of us would admit we did not love history in school. I'm not sure why, but at least for me most teachers never made it very exciting. I can only remember two teachers in all my years in school who made history interesting. That's a shame because today the vast majority of what I read today deals in some capacity with history. At the heart of any lesson in history are three things: people, places, and periods (time). **We'll call these our Three Ps.**

In this lesson we're going to study the ancient empires and their interactions with the people of God. As we discussed last week in the lesson on Satan and the demons, God allows spiritual forces to shape the world around us. As in ancient times, we see the same forces at work. Things that seem to make no sense from a logical standpoint, make complete sense considering God's plan for mankind and the power He has afforded Satan.

Provided below is the outline for today's lesson.

1. How it all started with the Tower of Babel and the Table of Nations.
2. Time of the patriarchs.
3. Rise of the nations: Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and Rome.
4. Expectations for the future.

Provided on pages 4 through 6 are a series of maps. I apologize for draining the ink on your color printer! Remembering our 3Ps, maps play a central role in helping us understand how God worked in positioning the nations to occupy new land. God used the early dynasties to discipline His people, including the Israelites and early Church. I'll spend more time during my lecture going through the significance of these empires, their leaders, and how they point to a future time. In preparation for the lecture, please read the Biblical texts referenced in the Questions for Discussion. We'll also revisit our Lesson #1 timelines and look at the impact of Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and Rome.

For most of my adult life I have been a student of Biblical prophecy (much of the credit for this goes to Joe Wall). My study of Scripture has fueled a deep interest in history and has helped me better understand our times. I graduated from A&M when we were in the middle of Desert Storm. Much of the reading I did in the early and mid-1990s focused on what was taking place in the Middel East. For more than 2,000 years global activities have been centered on the national Israel (either directly or indirectly). Since the late 1940s the nations of the Middle East have wished for an eradication of Israel (and likely the United States). This is reflected in a 1978 quote from Hafez al Assad, Syria's uncrowned sovereign (*The Blood of the Moon* by George Grant, page 34).

We are the heirs of Sennacherib and Shalmaneser-the greatest heroes of our nation. We have inherited their glory. We have inherited their wisdom. We have inherited their valor. But most of all, we have inherited their cause. Assyria must once again unite the Arab world against the imperialism of the Infidel, the interloping of the West, and the encroachment of the Jew. Assyria must arise and conquer. Nothing must be able to stand in our path. Indeed nothing can stand in our path. The world is once again divided between Dar al Islam- the abode of faith-and Dar al Harb-the abode of war. Like Sennacherib, we shall sweep aside every obstacle. Like him, we shall prevail. Ji'had. Insh'allah. (Arabic for Holy War "if God wills" or "God willing")

Questions for Discussion

1. Read Genesis 11, specifically verses 1 through 9. Consider what happened at the Tower of Babel.
 - a. What were people trying to do that God recognized as a problem?
 - b. The Tower of Babel provides a clear explanation as to how we have multiple languages. For people who do not believe the Bible, or accept the first 11 chapters of Genesis as truth, how can they explain the existence of people groups having unique dialects, customs, and languages?
 - c. In looking at what is occurring around the world today, in what ways do you see similarities among today's nations compared to what happened at the Tower of Babel? Provide some specific examples (i.e., think of today's technologies and how they are transforming commerce and communication).
2. In reviewing the maps, address how God used the respective empires to impact His people.
 - a. Table of Nations (Genesis 10), map shown on page 4. How did God use the sons of Noah to populate the earth and what people groups were descended from each son?
 - i. Shem _____
 - ii. Ham _____
 - iii. Japeth _____
 - b. Assyria (fall of Israel (Northern Tribes) in 2 Kings 14-20 in 721 B.C.), map shown on page 5. Read 2 Kings 17:7-20 about the fall of Israel. For what reasons did they fall to Assyria?
 - c. About 135 years after the fall of Israel, Judah fell to Babylon. On page 5 see the map of Babylon. Read Daniel 1:1-7. Based on this passage, how was this occupation different from what we see with Assyria?
 - d. After the Babylonians, came the Persians, then Greece, and eventually the massive Romans empire that by 300 A.D. had even occupied Britian (map on page 6). How did God use the Roman Empire to spread the Gospel?
3. As we look at events around the world today, what do we see in terms of geopolitical activities that are aligning the nations? Think in terms of Middle East activities, Russia, China, Europe, and the United States.

Genesis 11

¹ Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. ² As people moved eastward,^[a] they found a plain in Shinar and settled there.

³ They said to each other, "Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly." They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. ⁴ Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth."

⁵ But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower the people were building. ⁶ The LORD said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. ⁷ Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other."

⁸ So the LORD scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. ⁹ That is why it was called Babel—because there the LORD confused the language of the whole world. From there the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth.

2 Kings 17:7-20

⁷ All this took place because the Israelites had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up out of Egypt from under the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. They worshiped other gods ⁸ and followed the practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before them, as well as the practices that the kings of Israel had introduced. ⁹ The Israelites secretly did things against the LORD their God that were not right. From watchtower to fortified city they built themselves high places in all their towns. ¹⁰ They set up sacred stones and Asherah poles on every high hill and under every spreading tree. ¹¹ At every high place they burned incense, as the nations whom the LORD had driven out before them had done. They did wicked things that aroused the LORD's anger. ¹² They worshiped idols, though the LORD had said, "You shall not do this."^[b] ¹³ The LORD warned Israel and Judah through all his prophets and seers: "Turn from your evil ways. Observe my commands and decrees, in accordance with the entire Law that I commanded your ancestors to obey and that I delivered to you through my servants the prophets."

¹⁴ But they would not listen and were as stiff-necked as their ancestors, who did not trust in the LORD their God. ¹⁵ They rejected his decrees and the covenant he had made with their ancestors and the statutes he had warned them to keep. They followed worthless idols and themselves became worthless. They imitated the nations around them although the LORD had ordered them, "Do not do as they do."

¹⁶ They forsook all the commands of the LORD their God and made for themselves two idols cast in the shape of calves, and an Asherah pole. They bowed down to all the starry hosts, and they worshiped Baal. ¹⁷ They sacrificed their sons and daughters in the fire. They practiced divination and sought omens and sold themselves to do evil in the eyes of the LORD, arousing his anger.

¹⁸ So the LORD was very angry with Israel and removed them from his presence. Only the tribe of Judah was left, ¹⁹ and even Judah did not keep the commands of the LORD their God. They followed the practices Israel had introduced. ²⁰ Therefore the LORD rejected all the people of Israel; he afflicted them and gave them into the hands of plunderers, until he thrust them from his presence.

Daniel 1:1-7

¹ In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. ² And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God. These he carried off to the temple of his god in Babylonia^[a] and put in the treasure house of his god.

³ Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring into the king's service some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility— ⁴ young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians.^[b] ⁵ The king assigned them a daily amount of food and wine from the king's table. They were to be trained for three years, and after that they were to enter the king's service.

⁶ Among those who were chosen were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. ⁷ The chief official gave them new names: to Daniel, the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego.





