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ECHO LAKE STUDY WEEKEND - 2007

FROM EDEN LOST TO EDEN RESTORED

Speaker: Bro. Roger Lewis (NZ)

Study #2: The Mysterious Tale of Two Temples
(Why does the spirit of Nimrod roam St. John Lateran's?)

Well, thank you again, brother chairman, and welcome back!

So our study this morning then, this second session is entitled, the full title is, The Mysterious Tale of Two Temples and why does the spirit of Nimrod roam St. John Lateran's? I hope that's sufficiently enigmatic, to intrigue you and allow you to focus with intense concentration for this next hour.

By the way, this is perhaps a good illustration of why the framework of bible prophecy helps us in terms of dealing now with different views and alternate ideas. If you just come for a moment to 2 Thessalonians, which is where this story is going to head to, you'll remember the famous chapter in 2 Thessalonians, about the man of sin. Now let me just explain to you one of the alternate ideas which sometimes is promulgated concerning 2 Thessalonians 2, because what it says in verse 3 there, 'Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition. Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God'. What prompts this particular study is a view in the brotherhood that has suggested that the phrase 'the temple of God' here is clearly a reference to the temple in Jerusalem. The temple of God was always in Jerusalem, so what 2 Thessalonians is prophesying is that one day there will be another temple built by the Jews in Jerusalem, and the man of sin whoever he is, will come and sit in that temple in the age to come, in fulfilment of that prophecy. In fact, I even heard a brother suggest that the Pope himself will come and sit in the temple in Jerusalem, because that's where the temple of God is. There was never any other temple of God, you can't make St. Peter's the temple of God, because it isn't! The temple in Jerusalem is the temple of God and it's used that way in the New Testament. So it's got to be in Jerusalem so there's got to be another Jewish temple built.

So the question is, how would you handle that? even if you thought that was wrong, how would you deal with it? and the answer is, well, we come back to the framework of bible prophecy, and what you'll suddenly find, is the framework that we've now looked at, becomes such a powerful and helpful means by which we can test other prophetic suggestions. Once we're happy that that framework is true, the question is,

'do other things fit on that framework or not?' and by that means we can verify whether in fact, they're valid or not. So let's do some investigation then and see how we might fit that on the framework. So remember how we started our study in that first session, what's the great controversy?

It's the seed of the woman vs the seed of the serpent down through time. That was the controversy that began in Genesis and that would still be there at the time of the end. That controversy between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, you will remember was going to turn itself into Babylon vs Israel and there would be a phase I in the Old Testament of that controversy, and a phase II in the New Testament of that controversy, but it's all the same story down through time.

So, let's have a look then at how it might work its way through the two rival systems, in fact, in two rival temples. Well, come and have a look at Genesis 9, which is the ancient prophecy of Noah, and Noah's prophecies have a couple of interesting things about his boys. It says this in Genesis 9 and verse 25, 'And he said, Cursed be Canaan' (and Canaan, of course, is from the line of Ham), 'Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren (plural)'. I think there's something quite significant about that, that the children of Ham were going to become servants to Japheth and Shem but for two different reasons and with two different results. One would be servitude of oppression as history unfolded, and one would be a service that would lead to redemption in Christ. And

concerning Japheth it says in verse 27, 'God shall enlarge Japheth' and so He would because Japheth would be the son to explore the world and colonize the world. But do you notice what it says in verse 26 concerning Shem; it actually says in verse 26, 'Blessed be the LORD God of Shem', it doesn't say, blessed be Shem, did you notice that? It says, 'Cursed be Canaan' and 'God shall enlarge Japheth', but it doesn't say, 'blessed be Shem', it says, 'blessed be Yahweh Elohim of Shem', so presumably what we're being told is that

Shem is already in covenant relationship with God. By blessing God, one by association blessed Shem who clearly was in fellowship with God. Furthermore it says, verse 27, 'God shall enlarge Japheth', and yet for all that it says in verse 27, 'he shall dwell in the tents of Shem'. You know, b&s, we believe that what that's saying, is for the Japhethites, and for that matter for the Hamites, the only way to God was through the tent of Shem. That's where the line of the seed of the woman would be found for the true worship of God; that's where the priests would be found through whom God could be accessed; and any man of the line of Ham or of the line of Japheth, could not of themselves come to God unless it was through the administrations and the priestly facility of the tent of Shem.

That's why what happens in the record becomes so interesting, because if you remember, if we look at Genesis 10 when we looked at it in the first study, it says concerning Nimrod, in verse 8, 'Cush begat Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before Yahweh; wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before Yahweh. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babylon...' Of course, you remember that here was the beginning of that great rival system of things.

In fact, do you know what Nimrod's name means? '**we will rebel**' (5248), and it was emblematic of the spirit of what Nimrod was about, we will rebel! and so he did! He rebelled from the seed of the woman, he rebelled from the system of worship that God had established; and said, 'no, no' we're going to establish something quite different in the land of Shinar in Babylon. We're going to establish a rival system. Well, so it is! just come over the page to Genesis 11, and this is what it says and this is the time of Nimrod, Genesis 11. It says, 'And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar: and they dwelt there. And they said, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven'. Oh, let me read verse 4, a little more carefully for you, and just feel the emphasis here: 'And they said, Go to, **let us build us** a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let **us** make **us** a name'. Now you'll probably know that in the Hebrew the word 'shem' (8034) actually means 'name', the word 'shem' means 'name' so when it said in Genesis 9 verse 26, 'blessed be the LORD God of Shem, it actually means, 'blessed be the LORD God of the name', He who will be manifested in the mighty ones of the name. But you see, what the seed of the serpent did in Shinar was to say, 'we don't want anything to do with Shem and the system of worship that belongs to him, so let us make our own 'shem' (name), let's make our own system of worship. And we don't want the tents of Shem, no, we will build our own temple, thank you'.

What verse 4 is talking about when it says, 'build a **tower**' (4026), ah, a tower, b&s, was the 'ziggurat' in Babylon. It was a religious tower, or it was a religious temple for the meeting place of worship for the seed of the serpent. So the seed of the serpent in the days of Nimrod said, 'we don't want the tent of Shem and that system of worship, we want our own name and our own temple'. The name of that temple which Nimrod began to build, right here in Genesis 11, we know historically that Nimrod was involved in the building of that very tower, and by the way, the remains of where it was, are visible even by satellite today. It was a mysterious place really, it was called 'etemenanki' that Nimrod built in Genesis 11, and it had 7 levels, and if you were to look at the length and breadth and height of that ziggurat, you'll find it was 92 metres by 92 metres by 92 metres, it was a set of mystical numbers; and those 7 levels, if you walked towards the ziggurat or the tower in Babylon that Nimrod established, at each level starting at the bottom, there were a set of gates and if your eye rose to the next level you'd see another set of gates over top of the first, and another and another. As you drew closer and closer and lifted your eyes higher and higher, you'd see a succession of sets of gates, as if, b&s, this was the gate to heaven. This was exactly what was intended, this is what the tower was about, it was like a staircase to heaven, in fact, the name 'etemenanki' means 'the house of the foundation of heaven on earth', and what Nimrod built was a system, you see, that would allow men to communicate with the gods. It was a rival system to the tents of Shem, begun in Babylon, you see!

That temple was dedicated to Marodach and his consort queen. At the very top was a shrine where only the king-priest could enter, and his wife, who we believe were,

Nimrod and Semiramis. So what we're being told here in the very early days, the early stage of things, in Genesis 11 is that by this stage, the seed of the serpent has already got a city and a tower, and in that ziggurat there was a priest; that Nimrod, founder of a rival system of worship and of the original rival temple. The first rival to the seed of the women!

It was the seed of the woman, well let's have a look at it; Genesis 14, do you see what it says concerning Melchizedek? It says in Melchizedek's day in Genesis 14 verse 18, it simply says, 'Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine, and he was the priest of the most high God. He blessed him saying, 'blessed be Abram, of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth'. You know it's a strange thing but chapter 14 doesn't say anything about a tower or a building; there's no great tower in Salem; there is a tower in Babylon, a magnificent temple of worship in Babylon already, b&s, but not so in Salem! What's in Salem? just a tent, just the tent of Shem! but in that tent, b&s, one could find God!

And that's so, because if you have a look at this next passage here, you'll find in Psalm 76 verse 2, we're given the only other time actually in the bible, that the word 'Salem' is used; it's found in Genesis in the story of Melchizedek and it's found only one other place in Psalm 76. It says this there in verse 1, set in the days of Hezekiah, 'In Judah is God known, His name is great in Israel. In Salem also is his tent (tabernacle)', says Psalm 76. And you see, that's the whole point, is that there was a king-priest that revealed himself in that place, but he wasn't in the temple, not yet, he was in a tent; but it just happened to be the tent of meeting in which God would be found, by the administrations of the king-priest in that place.

So now we've got two king-priests, and two rival cities; one in a temple and one in a tabernacle, and the same controversy going on between those two places of meeting and worship, as of course, we know, in fact, the one temple, as it were, excited the enmity of the worshippers of the other, and it would be so down through time. Come and have a look at 2 Chronicles 36, because later on in the history of the nation we're told this in the days of the giving up of Israel into captivity, the record puts it this way, and somehow when you read these words and think about this rivalry, well, it suddenly becomes very clear in the framework of prophecy and what's going on here. Verse 14, 'moreover all the chief of the priests, and the people, transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen; and polluted the house of Yahweh which He had hallowed in Jerusalem. God sent messengers to them, but they mocked the messengers of God'.

Then finally verse 17 says, 'Therefore He brought upon them the king of the Chaldees'; the king of the Chaldees (that's the rival place, isn't it?) that's Babylon! And what did he do? 'he slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man nor maiden, old man or him that stooped for age: he gave them all into his hand. And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of Yahweh, and the treasures of the king, and of his

princes: all these he brought to Babylon. And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof'. So what happens is, Nebuchadnezzar comes down, b&s, as the champion of the temple of Babylon, and burns the temple in Salem! can you feel that controversy? He comes down as the champion of the temple of Babylon and burns the temple in Salem. So what does he do? verse 19, 'he takes the vessels of God's house, so where did he take them to? Well, we're told in Daniel 1, come and have a look at Daniel 1, we're told what happened when Nebuchadnezzar returned to the land of Shinar. It says this in Daniel 1 -just feel this sense of controversy between the two temples - verse 1, 'But in the 3rd year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it. And the LORD gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God; which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god: and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god'. Can you see the two temples there? he brought the vessels from the house of God in Jerusalem and he brought them into the house of his god. That's the other god, that's the other system in Babylon, but they didn't say Babylon, they said the land of Shinar! so where does that take us back to, b&s? You see, that phrase 'land of Shinar' transports us all the way back to Genesis 11; 'in the land of Shinar they built a tower - this is the old Nimrodian temple - this is Nimrod's temple all the way back in Genesis 11, and what we're being told in Daniel 1 is, it's still a rival temple in Shinar; there, b&s, is the same building. The very temple that Nebuchadnezzar worshipped in was the very building begun by Nimrod. There's a continuance of the story of the seed of the serpent, and that rival temple that still existed not only in Nimrod's time at the start of the story, but now we've come even to Nebuchadnezzar and he brings the vessels of God back into that very temple of Babylon back in the land of Shinar, says the record. You see, the Spirit would bid us hear a bible echo that takes us all the way back to the story of Genesis 11, with the use of that phrase.

Come to Daniel 5, and do you remember this, the feast of Belshazzar? Now just read these words and think about this in the context of the great controversy that we've been looking at. In Daniel 5 verse 1 it says, 'Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand. Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father (actually his grandfather) Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein. Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them. They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone'. What we're being told here is that the drinking of those vessels symbolized the triumph of one temple over the other. He called for vessels to be brought forth, that the triumph of his temple in Babylon might be seen over the temple in Jerusalem.

Just stop and think about Daniel 5, b&s. You know, Babylon had conquered many

nations! Babylon had unbelievable treasures from all over the world, from the empire that Babylon had amassed under its control and under its jurisdiction. They had unbelievable treasures from all different parts, yet the one thing that Belshazzar asked for, from all the things in his realm that might be brought forth on the day of that feast, was the vessels of God's house in Jerusalem! Oh now, isn't that interesting? the one thing, and the drinking out of those vessels marked the doom of that king, that he should do such a thing. In fact, have a look at this, Ezra 5, and see how that story is worked out in the chronicles of the return of the Jewish people. He asked for those vessels and that's the only thing he asked for, and he drank out of them to symbolize the supremacy of his temple over God's temple. But it wasn't to be! Ezra 5 says, in verse 12 for connection, it says, 'But after that our fathers had provoked the God of heaven unto wrath, He gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this house and carried the people away into Babylon. But in the first year of Cyrus the king of Babylon the same king Cyrus made a decree to build this house of God. And the vessels also of gold and silver of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took out of the temple that was in Jerusalem, and brought them into the temple of Babylon, these did Cyrus the king take out of the temple of Babylon, and they were delivered unto one, whose name was Sheshbazzar, whom he had made governor; And said unto him, Take these vessels, go, carry them into the temple that is in Jerusalem, and let the house of God be builded in his place.' Oh, we've got to read the bible carefully, b&s, did you see the rivalry there? What Ezra says is the vessels of gold and silver of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar **took out of the temple that was in Jerusalem, and brought them into the temple of Babylon.** Now Cyrus asks for those same vessels to be taken out of the temple of Babylon, and he delivers them to Sheshbazzar, that he might take them into the temple that is in Jerusalem. See the rivalry there? the one temple vs the other temple, the one priest vs the other priest, one champion vs the other champion, one system vs the other system. The story of the rivalry of the temples, b&s, is all part of the ancient conflict down through time; even the temples are rivals as Ezra would bid us see!

In fact, have a look at this, Jeremiah 51, so much so that the rivalry extends even to the places of worship that were built by the two seeds, that the bible says this in verse 11, 'Make bright the arrows; gather the shields: Yahweh hath raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes: for His device is against Babylon, to destroy it; because it is the vengeance of Yahweh, **the vengeance of His temple**', it says. The vengeance of His temple! this controversy is God's temple, it says, this controversy between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. So what Jeremiah 51 is telling us is that God takes everything into account! and when Nebuchadnezzar burnt God's temple with fire, God wasn't unmindful of what he had done, and when the vessels of God were taken into the temple in the land of Shinar, God wasn't unmindful of what had been done, and everything would be visited back on the temple of Nimrod, by means of the judgments of God in due course, until finally the very temple of Nimrod, that temple called 'etemenanki', would finally be destroyed in the purpose of God.

That really brings us to Zechariah 5 which was alluded to in our last study. We're just

going to have a little look at this because it's quite an interesting little prophecy. It says this in Zechariah 5, and I just want you to be aware of some key words as we go through this prophecy. Verse 5, 'Then the angel that talked with me went forth, and said unto me, Lift up now thine eyes, and see what is this that goeth forth. And I said, What is it? And he said, This is an ephah that goeth forth. He said moreover, This is their resemblance through all the earth'. Now by the way, that word 'resemblance' (5869) the RSV translates as 'iniquity' through all the earth', and the RSV is following the Septuagint translation which actually translates the word as 'sin', their sin through all the earth. I want you to make a note of that word, 'this is their iniquity through all the earth', says the RSV. Verse 7. 'And behold, there was lifted up a talent of lead; and this is a woman that sitteth in the midst of the ephah'. Oh, did you notice that word 'sitteth', this is a woman who sitteth in the midst of the ephah; so the word in verse 6, 'resemblance' and the word in verse 7 'sitteth'. Then verse 8, here's another key word, 'And he said, This is 'wickedness' (so this is a wicked woman) 'So he cast her into the midst of the ephah; and he cast the weight of lead upon the mouth thereof. Then lifted I up mine eyes, and looked, and behold, there came out two women, and the wind was in their wings; for they had wings like the wings of a stork, and they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heaven. Then said I to the angel that talked with me, Whither do these bear the ephah? And he said unto me, To build her a house' (now let me read that more carefully, verse 11, reading from the RV) 'to build her a house in the land of Shinar, and she shall be established and set there upon her own base'. So where is this woman flying? well, she's flying to another place, says the prophet, to have a house built for her in the land of Shinar.

By the way, within this prophecy concerning the woman and the storks, which was given to Zechariah around BC.510; the actual city of Babylon had fallen to Cyrus about 20 years before this, in BC.539. About 200 years after this prophecy of BC.510, you'll remember that Alexander came into Babylon and what he was intending to do was to rebuild the tower of Nimrod. But he said, before we start, we'll clear the site before we build; so under the orders of Alexander, they took the ziggurat (or what was left of it) they took it to pieces, stone by stone and brick by brick, and they cleared the whole of the building site, about 200 years after this prophecy. They literally took the temple of Nimrod, the tower of Babel apart, stone by stone and brick by brick, until there was nothing left but just the bare platform. The trouble was that at that crucible moment, Alexander died, and they never did build the temple again in the land of Nimrod, the tower of Shinar. It's never been rebuilt since, there's never been another building on that spot ever again; you can actually see a satellite photo that will show you the empty site. Yet the prophecy says that the woman was being taken somewhere to have a new house built for her. Of course, this prophecy is about the building of a new house, another temple in the mystical land of Shinar. The house of verse 11 is going to be the house or the temple where the woman lives whose name is 'wickedness'. The old temple was going to be superseded, but another place would be provided for the woman to sit and a house for her to dwell in, in another land of Shinar. It wasn't Babylon, the literal, but it was somewhere else. Now that brings us to 2 Thessalonians 2.

Now that was a long-winded introduction to 2 Thessalonians, but back to the prophecy we started with and the alternate view as to what it might mean as to where the temple is, that the man of sin sits in. I hope what we've seen as we've come down through the study so far, is to realize that the story of the two seeds is the answer to the puzzle. There has always been two seeds but there has actually always been two temples since the days of Nimrod. Now I want you to notice some key words here, in 2 Thessalonians 2 verse 3, and it says, 'Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come except there come a falling away first'. Now some of you might know that the words 'falling away' (646) is the word for 'apostasy'. There's going to be an apostasy, an apostasy from the truth into a different form of religion; and the interesting point about 'apostasy' used here in 2 Thessalonians is that in other Greek manuscripts outside the bible, that word is used for a 'rebellion', a rebellion lead by a rebel. But you remember what Nimrod's name meant? 'we will rebel', so who was the first rebel? Nimrod, and who do you think the last rebel is going to be? why the man of sin, says 2 Thessalonians, he's Nimrod's successor!

There are some key words here in verse 4, 'He opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth - 'sitteth' - now where did that come from? 'and behold, a woman sitting' it said, you remember that in the book of Zechariah 5, a woman sitting, now here's a man, not a woman, a man sitting in the temple of God, he sits there and apparently it's important that we know this! Why should we know that he sits? well, we shall know by and by, how important it is, that it be drawn to our attention. Not only that but verse 7 goes on to say, 'for the mystery of iniquity doth already work', but you see, when the woman in the ephah was first seen, Zechariah said, 'this is their iniquity through all the earth', and now Thessalonians says 'the mystery of iniquity already works'. You remember when he first saw the woman in the ephah, what did the man say to Zechariah? he said, 'oh, this is wickedness!' and you see what Thessalonians says in verse 8, 'Then shall that wicked be revealed'. Oh, yes, I think what we're being told, b&s, is that 2 Thessalonians 2 is a companion prophecy to Zechariah 5, this is the man sitting in the mysterious house that will be built for the woman in the land of Shinar, and he's going to exalt himself as a king and sit in a temple as a priest. He's a king and he's a priest after the order of Nimrod in Old Testament times.

Now one of the interesting things about the **man of sin** is this; verse 7 says, that the mystery of iniquity that will usher in the man of sin, is already at work, 'only he who now withholds or letteth or restrains will continue to do so until he is taken out of the way, 'then shall that Wicked be revealed whom the Lord shall consume'. You know the strange thing about Thessalonians it says this, b&s, (look at my hands) it says the man of sin is going to appear shortly after the apostles' day, the mystery of iniquity is already at work, the man of sin soon shall appear; but the funny thing about Thessalonians is, it says that when the Lord comes He will destroy the man of sin!' So how long was this man going to live for? this man who was to appear shortly after the days of the apostles and could still be alive when the Lord comes to be destroyed? The man of sin must live

for centuries! and of course, the answer is that no ordinary man could live that long, but a succession of men could, who all sit in the same temple, and who all claim to be the man of sin, and who all rival the systems of the Nimrodian-Babylonian system of religious worship. A succession of men who all succeed one after the other to the same office of king-priest, well, let me show you what happened because it's simply marvellous, b&s!

One of the great things about Thessalonians is it says (and we've got to work this out). Verse 6, 'And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time' - there was something holding back the man of sin appearing. Now the burning question of 2 Thessalonians is what was holding him back? Well, I know what the early believers believed, b&s, 'he who now letteth', what did they think that was? By the way, any proper interpretation of Thessalonians has to explain that, 'he who now letteth', 'he who restrains', whenever he's gone, whoever that is, then the man of sin should appear; so we want to know, who is that who letteth or restraineth or withheld the man of sin from appearing? Well, here's the testimony of the early writers - Irenaeus was a disciple of Polycarp who was a disciple of John, so AD.185, when did John receive the Revelation? AD.96 - yes, I go for that date, and so this is less than 100 years later after John and this is what he said: 'Daniel too, looking forward to the last kingdom, the ten kings who should then arise, amongst whom the kingdom of those men shall be partitioned, and upon whom the son of perdition should come'. You see, that phrase 'son of perdition' is from 2 Thessalonians 2, isn't it? verse 3, so when should the son of perdition come? when the ten kings arise on the Roman beast of Daniel 7 then we shall see the son of perdition', that's what they believed, once the 10 kingdoms had come. Again, Julian writing in AD.190 says, 'only let him hold fast who now rules until he's out of the way', who can only be the Roman state breaking apart among 10 kings will produce the anti-Christ and then will the Evil or Wicked one be revealed'. So when did the early believers, b&s, think that the man of sin would be revealed? when the Roman state was taken out of the way! - the pagan Roman state, by the way!

Now here's some more early writers - Julian says again, 'there's another great necessity of praying for the emperors, even for the stability of the entire empire and for the affairs of the Roman state, because the greatest force threatening the whole world and threatening horrible calamities at the end of the age, we know to be delayed by the continued existence of the Roman empire. Therefore, we are unwilling to put it to the test, which is why we pray for the delay of the anti-Christ by favouring the permanence of the Romans'. Shall I just translate that for you? just stop and think about how powerful that is! Do you know that the early believers were persecuted by pagan Rome! but what we're being told here is that those same believers prayed that pagan Rome might stay, that pagan Rome might continue even though they were persecuted by pagan Rome, because they believed that the moment pagan Rome was gone, something more horrible was going to turn up, **the man of sin**. That was the one thing they didn't want - they said they'd rather continue to be persecuted by pagan Rome than for the man of sin to appear'. They would pray for pagan Rome to continue! They believed that was the great power or influence that was restraining the influence and

manifestation of the man of sin, being held back by none other than paganism.

Again, Cyril of Jerusalem says, 'Moreover the anti-Christ was prophesied to come when the times of the Roman empire had been completed'. And lastly, John Chrysostoma said, 'He who now letteth will let until he be taken away', that is, when the Roman empire is taken out of the way, then he shall come, and naturally as long as the fear of this empire lasts, no one will with revelry exalt himself (oh! that's 2 Thessalonians 2) so when the Roman empire is dissolved he will attack the anarchy and endeavour to seize upon the government both of men and of God'. So a question, b&s, an historical question, who destroyed pagan Rome and when did he do it? any thoughts? Constantine, you're quite right, definitely Constantine and it was a famous date? one of the great battles of Constantine? so let me give you that!

So you see, one of the questions is, where is the temple of the man of sin? Let's just summarize what we've said: the man of sin is part of the continuing of the rival power of the seed of the serpent since Nimrod had a rival temple and also the man of sin is a development of the prophecy of the woman called 'wickedness' who had a house built for her in the land of Shinar, says Zechariah 5; the man of sin is parallel to the 'little horn' of Daniel 7 and the 'false prophet' of Revelation 19 and both those chaps live in Europe. So if they both live in Europe then we would expect the 'man of sin' to have his basilica somewhere in Europe because that's where they are!

So let me show you how remarkably that turned out in terms of history of the times. The man of sin was going to be revealed when the restraining power was removed, and it would be removed by Constantine, we believe. So this question of taking his seat in the temple of God, isn't going to happen at some mysterious time in the future when the Jews rebuild another temple. If the man of sin has been alive for centuries, then he's already been in the temple, hasn't he? because Thessalonians says, that as soon as the man of sin is revealed he'll be seen in the temple, that's how you'll know he's the man of sin. You'll see him in the temple as soon as the restraining power has been removed. So let me show you dramatically how 2 Thessalonians 2 was fulfilled in history at the time. Well, it was AD.312 at the battle of Milvian Bridge and pagan Rome was overthrown by Constantine and 'he who now letteth' (pagan Rome) was taken out of the way. Of course, Constantine had a dream, didn't he? remember he dreamed a dream, he saw a vision 'in the sign of the cross, thou shalt conquer', and he marched forth to battle and won signal victory. By the way, he was fighting against the Roman emperor of the day, whose name was Maxentius. Maxentius went forth to battle against Constantine, but Constantine won. That's the year that 'he who now letteth' was taken out of the way! What did Thessalonians say? 'as soon as he who lets is taken out of the way, who would we see? - the man of sin; where? - sitting in his temple'.

Now just watch this, b&s! Oh, this is remarkable! So what happened was this - what Constantine did immediately after that battle was he donated that Lateran palace on Monte de Celio and the adjoining land of the imperial horse guard known as Castra Praetoria to the bishop of Rome, Miltiades; who took possession of the palace basilica.

It all happened like this, there was a palace called the Lateran, and as soon as the battle was over, Constantine went to the bishop of Rome and asked him if he would like this little palace, 'it's got a little church, a little temple, and a little basilica, would you like to sit here?' And Miltiades said, 'thank you very much!' But by the way, what happened was that right next door to that little temple, that basilica was a big piece of land that was the actual barracks of the imperial horse guard, as it says there. Now the imperial horse guard was 2,000 of the most fierce soldiers of the Roman empire; they were great warriors but they made a bad mistake, because in this particular battle unfortunately they decided to support Maxentius instead of Constantine, and Constantine won! So the first thing he did was he gave the Lateran palace with its little temple, its little basilica to the bishop of Rome and he said, would you like this block of land next door? because what I'm about to do is I'm going to destroy the barracks of the imperial horse guard as a punishment for not supporting me! and that's what he did! he demolished the lot! Then he said, 'oh, there's a good piece of land here, now you might like to do something with this land', he said to the bishop of Rome. In the very next year, Constantine issued the edict of Milan to grant freedom of religion to Christianity. You see, 'he who restrains' had been taken out of the way, Christianity was about to become State religion, within a year of the battle, but at that stage there already was a 'man of sin' sitting in a little temple, you see. In fact, what we're told is that in the very next year the church synod convened for the first time in the Lateran palace to resolve the problem of what was called the Donatist schism, (I'm not sure what you call a gathering of cardinals - you have a pride of lions and a gaggle of geese, so maybe a cluster of cardinals) So the cluster of cardinals met for the first time in the Lateran palace to debate a church matter re: 'peace' which Constantine had given them just the year before in the battle of Milvian Bridge.

Now what's interesting about that palace is this, that palace became the official seat and residence for the Popes for the next 1,000 years. For a 1,000 years they lived in that house! Oh well, what about the land next door? well, that was quite useful because when they began to construct a new basilica on the Castra Praetoria next to the Lateran palace, and it wasn't very long after, it took only 12 years when they got the land in AD.324, that the new basilica was completed and dedicated by the next bishop of Rome whose name was Sylvester; and when he dedicated it, he declared both the basilica and the palace to be 'Domus Dei' (the temple of God) 'so he as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God'. Within 12 years of the removal of pagan Rome, there was a man of sin sitting in a brand new temple, right in that spot of St. Lateran's. That was the beginning of that church.

Not a lot know about St. John Lateran's, let me just tell you one or two facts about St. John Lateran's; we tend to focus on St. Peters, but I think the key to the secret is St. John Lateran's because you see, that basilica was the cathedral of the Roman diocese and is therefore the Pope's own cathedral; when the Pope was appointed and elected in 2,005 shortly after his election, it was reported that 'he was gone to take possession of his own cathedral' which wasn't St. Peters but St. Lateran's. It's the oldest Christian temple and therefore ranks first among the 5 basilicas of Rome. St. Lateran's ranks

above St. Peter's in terms of its primacy and importance amongst the temples of Rome -the temples of Babylon in Rome we might call them now. If you were to go into that temple, the bronze central doors were at the opening of the church taken from the Roman forum where the Senate met. So if you ever want to think about whether the Catholic church as a continuum of the Roman system, here it is: we've got the doors of the Senate on the front of the church, as if to say, well, this is where the empire used to make their decisions, but now they're made here in this temple, thank you very much, we even have the same doors, you see! If you go into the middle of that St. John Lateran's, the very central point is called the 'cathedra' and it's from that seat where the Roman pontiff makes his pronouncements; in fact, let me show you that, it's quite interesting! So here it is, see that chair right at the back, that's the seat of the Pontiff, you rise up 6 steps there right at the back of St. John Lateran's, and that's where the Pope would, quote, 'take his seat'; that's exactly what Thessalonians says, 'he takes his seat in the temple'. The reason that's so significant is that when the Pope sat on that seat, he would make from the chair infallible pronouncements on behalf of the church. That seat or chair was the very symbol of his authority over the whole of the system of Rome and of Babylon, when he sat on that seat at the back of St. John Lateran's!

Now, b&s, can you see right at the very top of the dome, can you see a face? Of course, and by the way, this building has been burnt down, destroyed and rebuilt 5 times since the time of Constantine. When you go to St. John Lateran's today it isn't the actual building that was built in the days of Constantine; but if you go to the top of the picture, do you see that face? splendid! that face is a mosaic of Christ, and what is interesting about that face is that mosaic goes right back to the days of Constantine, when that temple was first dedicated in AD.324, and it's been there ever since, b&s, even though that building's been rebuilt, that mosaic has always been preserved. If you stop and think about it, it's almost spooky! because that mosaic, that face, has looked down upon every man of sin who's ever sat upon that seat from the time of Constantine onwards. That's what Thessalonians said, 'the mystery of iniquity is already at work and will still be there when Christ comes to destroy it at the time of the end'. There will be a succession of men of sin, and that mosaic has looked down on every one of them, watched the lot of them as they've taken their seat in that place!

Here's another interesting thing, that next to the basilica is a place called the 'Scala Sancta' also known as the 'Scala Platea' (the 'holy staircase') and it's called 'holy' because it's said, that Constantine's mother shipped the whole of Pilate's staircase, from the Praetorium guard in Jerusalem, stone by stone and rebuilt it there! When you go up those stairs, you're not allowed to tread on your feet, you have to go up on your knees, you can only shuffle on your knees because it's considered a holy staircase. When you get to the top, b&s, you just see a great grail and beyond the grail, a murky mysterious dark place beyond, and over the top of that grail it says in Latin, 'there was no place holier than this', and this is called the Sancta Sanctorum, 'the holy of holies', it's the most venerated place in Rome, the Pope's private chapel where he alone can go and pray. I've got a booklet on St. John Lateran's collected at St. John Lateran's which says, when you go into that most holy place where the Pope prays alone, there are

ancient relics there, in fact, do you know what the booklet said? 'the ancient relics there are just as they were in the temple of Solomon in Jerusalem' says the booklet; it's a rival system to God's temple, and always has been. Like the priest in Israel could only go into the Holy Place once a year, so the temple of Babylon as a holy place where only the priest could go in once a year, alone! Do you know who the first priest was that could go in alone into the room on top of the tower? Why, Nimrod, b&s, in Genesis 11, there was a room where he only could go as king-priest of the mysteries. It's all come down through time! The spirit of Nimrod, I declare, roams St. John Lateran's today, b&s. It's an amazing way in which that prophecy was fulfilled which started so long ago.

That really brings us to Zechariah 6, because Zechariah 6 says there's going to be another temple to replace the one in Jerusalem, is there not? Verse 11 of Zechariah 6 says, 'Take silver and gold, and make crowns, and set them upon the head of Joshua the son of Josedeck, the high priest; And speak unto him saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The Branch and He shall grow up out of His place, and He shall build the temple of the LORD'. There it is, b&s, it's not the Jews that will rebuild it, it's not the man of sin that's going to rebuild it, **The Branch rebuilds the temple in Jerusalem**, and at the end and in the future. Verse 13 says, 'Even He shall build the temple of the LORD, and He shall bear the glory, and shall **sit and reign** upon His throne; and He shall be a **priest** upon His throne; and the counsel of (Salem, shalom) peace shall be between them both'. When that temple is built, b&s, the true king-priest will be back on the earth and a true system of worship will be established. That building in Jerusalem will be the centre of the world! You know, across the front of St. John Lateran's is incised these words in the stone, being translated from the Latin: 'Most holy Lateran church of all churches in the city and in the world, the nave and the head'. But the true temple, b&s, that will be the head of all the worship of the world, will be this one in Jerusalem that we see here prophesied in Zechariah 6.

So let's end the story for the purposes of our study now, and notice that our framework of bible prophecy enables us to see the wisdom and the balance of how that story has outworked in keeping with God's framework.