

# **A Tale of Two Cities**

*Two Kingdoms Theology: Heaven & Hell*

*Matlock Bobechko*

## **Sermon Outline**

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## **Introduction**

*Happy Holidays Everyone! Hope you all had a wonderful Christmas.*

*I called this “A Tale of Two Cities” from Charles Dickens festive classics. Though not explicitly about Christmas... “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times...”*

You are in a cosmic war. We all are.

In fact, the Christmas Story is about this cosmic war between two kingdoms.

The Christmas Story is about the Author of Life becoming part of His narrative,

Ex. knight of pure white coming to save his bride from a great dragon — the devil and His demonic forces — we have been ensnared by him.

Explain: fantasy (as a genre) is not pure fiction; it is truth-telling (moral of the story); You can convey the truth clearly through symbols, imagery, etc.

**So—How are we, the Church, participating in this Christmas story?**

*Church is the continuation of the incarnation + not coming but being the church*

**Revelation 12** — <sup>1</sup> And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. <sup>2</sup> She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth. <sup>3</sup> And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems. <sup>4</sup> His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. **And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it.** <sup>5</sup> **She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne,** <sup>6</sup> and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days.

<sup>7</sup> Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, <sup>8</sup> but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. <sup>9</sup> And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. <sup>10</sup> And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “**Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come,** for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. <sup>11</sup> And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. <sup>12</sup> Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!”

<sup>13</sup> And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. <sup>14</sup> But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time. <sup>15</sup> The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away with a flood. <sup>16</sup> But the earth came to the help of the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon had poured from his mouth. <sup>17</sup> **Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.** And he stood on the sand of the sea.

## 1. Two Kingdoms: The Cosmic War

There are two kingdoms:

Kingdom of Heaven + Kingdom of Hell

Each kingdom goes by many names:

- Kingdom of Heaven (or the Kingdom of God) includes:  
Israel, Jerusalem, City of David, City of God, the Church, New Jerusalem
- Kingdom of Hell (Hades / Sheol) includes:  
City of Satan, Synagogue of Satan, Babylon (the Anti-Jerusalem)

All in all — Light v. Darkness + Truth v. Lies + Life v. Death + Love v. Want

These Kingdoms, of course, are not cosmic principalities.

Jerusalem and Babylon are normal cities.

They are terrestrial. Not celestial. It is where we live.

But working behind the physical curtain is a spiritual war.

Physical representations pointing to a Spiritual reality

**I just want to focus on the physical representations for now:**

**Babylon + Jerusalem**

## 2. Brief History of Babylon

After Cain murders Abel, he builds a **city Enoch**, which means “dedicated” in land of Nod, which means “wandering”

— translation: “the city dedicated to wandering in the land”

**The city of Babel**, builds a tower for the exact same reason as Cain,

**Genesis 11:4** — “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.” (Full Account: v.1-9)

In Akkadian *Bāb-ilim*, means “the gate of the God or gods”

In Hebrew *Bāw-lal*, means to “confuse” or “jumble” — it is the city of confusion!

**Genesis 11:8-9** — So the Lord dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth. And from there the Lord dispersed them over the face of all the earth.

Babel would later become **Babylon** – the central city of the Babylonian Empire.

**Babylon** would later destroy Jerusalem. But then later be destroyed by Persia, never to be rebuilt again. Not yet anyway.

Because Babylon is more than a physical location, it is a spiritual place, as well, that is why Peter refers to the woman in Babylon it in **1 Peter 5:13** even though Babylon does not exist as a physical kingdom or city at this point in Peter’s lifetime. It is spiritually real.

### **Babylon would become the emblem of the great kingdom city of the world**

**Rev.17:5-6,18** — “And on her forehead was written a name of mystery: “Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth's abominations.” And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.”... And the woman that you saw is the great city that has dominion over the kings of the earth.”

This is Communion language. A reversal of the Lord’s Supper. Consuming those conforming to the image of Christ through His blood sacrifice.

**Revelation 18:2-3** — “And he called out with a mighty voice,  
“Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great!

She has become a dwelling place for demons,  
a haunt for every unclean spirit,  
a haunt for every unclean bird,  
a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast.

For all nations have drunk  
the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality,  
and the kings of the earth have committed immorality with her,  
and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her  
luxurious living.”

**Babylon has taken over the whole world — through the power of the dragon, the beast, the false prophet, the image of the beast.**

**So—Who is king of this Babylon?**

**Luke 4:5-7** — And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and said to him, “To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.”

**John 12:31-32** — “Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” (cf. **John 14:30-31**)

**2 Corinthians 4:4** — In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

**The original ringleader of the cosmic rebellion that first took place in Eden, continues to attack mankind to devour them in darkness.**

### 3. Brief History of Jerusalem

Abram called to make a nation, meets the Priest-King Melchizedek of Salem, which means “peace” (foreshadowing Christ and Communion in proto-Jerusalem)

Around 1000 BC, King David captures the city, then known as Jebus, and makes it his capital, establishing Israelite rule in Jerusalem, as we know it today. That is why it is also called the City of David.

Babylon would later come and destroy Jerusalem in 586 BC. But Jerusalem would rebuild itself by God’s ordination, when they returned from Exile. Babylon would not. Not yet anyway.

Who is the king of Jerusalem? The Son of David, Jesus Christ

**Matthew 22:41-45** — Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying, “What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?” They said to him, “The son of David.” He said to them, “How is it then that David, in the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying,

“The Lord said to my Lord,

“Sit at my right hand,

until I put your enemies under your feet””? (Psalm 110:1)

If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son?”

Jerusalem is the rightful city of the one true king.

But physical Jerusalem is still around.

And Christ is going to return to reclaim His holy city, Jerusalem.

Yet there is a New Jerusalem to come?!

**Revelation 21:2** — And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

What exactly is going on here?

#### 4. City of Babelsaalem

Well, at the time of Christ and some point before His return, these two cities seem to merge — throughout the book of Revelation, Babylon is called the “great city”:

**Rev.17:18** — “And the woman that you saw [“Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth's abominations.” (v.5)] is the **great city** that has dominion over the kings of the earth.”

**Rev.18:5** — Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, “So will **Babylon the great city** be thrown down with violence, and will be found no more”

Babylon is called the great city 7 times. The only other time the title “great city” is used in Revelation is for another place is Jerusalem, specifically, in an evil context:

**Revelation 11:7-9** — And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them, and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the **great city** that symbolically is called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified.

The two become one... the Whore of Babylon — the great harlot!

Marital symbology is applied between these cities (**1 Cor. 6:15-20**)

I'll call it the **City of Babel-salem**, meaning “confused peace”

**Revelation 11:9-10** — For three and a half days some from the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb, and those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to those who dwell on the earth.

Things seem nice, happy, peaceful. But it is a lie. It is under false pretenses. It's for the wrong reasons. The heart is all wrong. “Others should die so I may live the way I want!” Entitled, embittered, resentful, self-absorbed, prideful.

This façade of joy and peace is maintained by the mark of the beast, instituted by the great demonic empire — people self-justify their peace by worshipping the beast through buying and selling stuff to make themselves happy and full (**Rev.13:15-17**).

## 5. Brood of Babylon

This is why I called Babylon the Anti-Jerusalem earlier.

There are folk who appear to be of God, who claim to be of God, but they are not of God. They use the same words but have different dictionaries. New doctrines of men that have come about today: **“Love! Joy! Peace!”** But they don’t mean the same thing, because they don’t worship God. To understand this, let’s go back to:

**Genesis 3:15** — “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring”

Who are the serpent’s offspring? Both John the Baptist and Jesus identify some:

**Matthew 3:7-10** — But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to [John’s] baptism, he said to them, **“You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit in keeping with repentance.** And do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father,’ for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

**Matthew 12:33-37** — “Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit. **You brood of vipers!** How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil. I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

These people do not even realize that their propagating lies for the devil. They are unwittingly fighting for the devil.

You see this pattern also in **Ezekiel 28** with the King of Tyre.

In Revelation, John refers to these people as the:

**Rev.2:9, 3:9** — “the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie—”

Synagogue of Satan = linguistically means 'assembly or 'church' of Satan

Christ says,

**John 5:39-42** — You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. I do not receive glory from people. But I know that you do not have the love of God within you.

Christ again:

**Matthew 23:33-36** — **You serpents, you brood of vipers**, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell? Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, **so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar.** Truly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

Christ, here, identifies Abel, the first martyr, with the kingdom of God.

The brood of Babylon, the seeds of the serpent, have been killing citizens of God's kingdom from the very beginning.

**Why?**

They don't worship God. But they claim too.

They worship themselves, which is the exact same way Satan worships.

They follow in their father's footsteps.

**John 8:43-44,47** — Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. **You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires.** He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies....Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God.

## 6. Church: A Heavenly Fortress

Augustine writes, in his magnum opus, “The City of God”, Book 15<sup>1</sup>:

Chapter 15: “Abel, whom the elder brother slew, and who was the first to show by a kind of foreshadowing of the sojourning city of God, what iniquitous persecutions that city would suffer at the hands of wicked and, as it were, earth-born men, who love their earthly origin, and delight in the earthly happiness of the earthly city.”

Chapter 1: “Accordingly, it is recorded of Cain that he built a city, but Abel, being a sojourner, built none. For the city of the saints is above, although here below it begets citizens, in whom it sojourns till the time of its reign arrives, when it shall gather together all in the day of the resurrection; and then shall the promised kingdom be given to them, in which they shall reign with their Prince, the King of the ages, time without end.”

What is the kingdom? Christ said the kingdom of God is here—now.

**Luke 17:20-21** — Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he answered them, “The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed, nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There!’ for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you [it is within you].”

**Church is where the Kingdom of God assemble, on Earth as it is in Heaven.**

Last Sunday: *Stop coming to church. Start being the church.*

**What is the role of the Church in this cosmic battle?**

Church is a garrison and hospital for spiritual soldiers to rest and heal, to be refreshed and equipped for ongoing battle. We are stationed here, in Orangeville, to take it back for the Lord.

Local churches (parishes) are heavenly fortresses or outposts in enemy territory.

Elders/pastors, then, are like generals/captains in the Lord’s army.

Christ is the Commander.

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<sup>1</sup> Augustine, The City of God (Book XV): <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/120115.htm>

**Romans 16:20** — The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.  
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

The world was occupied by Satan, we are progressively taking it back for the glory of the King! That is, Christ in and through us.

And the gates of hades will not prevail:

**Matthew 16:18** — And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my **church**, and the **gates of hell [or hades]** shall not prevail against it.

Cities have gates. Gates are a defensive structure.

We, the Church, are now on the spiritual offensive because of Christ!

*More on our offensive duties next time.*

**If the Church is on the offensive against the enemy city, what does that mean?**

***It means you're either in the Kingdom of Heaven right now —or— you're in the Kingdom of Hell right now.***

Consider it; if the kingdom of heaven can be had and experienced at this moment, what does that tell you about the kingdom of hell?

**1 John 3:14** — “We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. **Whoever does not love abides in death.**”

If you abide in death right now, you are participating inside the city gates of hades, the Kingdom of Hell, this very moment. You are abiding in death.

**C.S. Lewis** “Mere Christianity” — “There is no neutral ground in the universe. Every square inch, every split second, is claimed by God and counterclaimed by Satan.”

We are partaking in this cosmic battle. No man's land does not exist — there is no gray area.

**Mark 1:15** — “Repent [defect], and believe the gospel [**switch allegiances**], the Kingdom of God is at hand!”

## 7. Behind Enemy Lines

This also means your friends and family who do not believe are behind enemy lines, within the gates of hades, too. They are in danger!

That means when Jude says, “save others by snatching them out of the fire” (v.23), he means that quite literally!

How so?

Their conscience is being **seared** or **scorched** by hellfire every single day!!

And it may mean you trapped in enemy territory like Lot, or succumbing to bestial or fleshly tendencies like Rahab to survive.

Though some are walking in the flesh, they are not of the flesh — they are of the light, they just don’t know it yet. They need the gospel to enliven their souls.

This is the attitude we need to have when it comes to evangelism and engaging unbelievers. God designed humanity to be good... **EXPLAIN**.

When the earth dissolves by fire, according to **2 Peter 3:10-13**, the question is:

**Which city will you be in?**

**2 Peter 3:10-13** — But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

## 8. The Battlefield

**But if there is no neutral ground, then where is the battlefield??**

**You!** You are the battlefield — your flesh, your soul, your spirit — all of you.

**1 Peter 5:8** — Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

The Devil has been cast down. He is face-to-face with you.

**What is his goal?**

For you to worship yourself. Your **WHOLE SELF**.

And in so doing, you will worship him, unwittingly or deliberately.

That is why Satan wants you to worship anything or anyone but God — **because if you choose who to worship, it always points back to you!**

**You don't choose who to worship, you worship whom must be worshiped: God**

**Worship includes ALL OF YOU!**

**Romans 12:1-2** — I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to **present your bodies as a living sacrifice**, holy and acceptable to God, which is your **spiritual worship**.

**1 Thessalonians 5:23** — Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you **completely**, and may your whole **spirit** and **soul** and **body** be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Abel was murdered by Cain for **worshipping God according to God's will, not his own will.**

**Go's will be done, one earth as it is in heaven.**

### **Deuteronomy 32:17-18**

They sacrificed to demons that were not God,  
to gods they had never known,  
to new gods that had come recently,  
whom your fathers had never dreaded.  
You were unmindful of the Rock that bore you,  
and you forgot the God who gave you birth.

**Revelation 13:4,6-8,16-16** — And they worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?” .... It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven. **Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation, and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain....** And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast might even speak and might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain. Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name.

## 9. What Must We Do? — Application

Our church is the last Godfearing church in the centre of Orangeville. Many churches have abandoned the gospel all around us.

- Be **truthful**. Painfully honest. Straightshooters.

**John 4:23-24** — But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. **God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.**”

Majority Rule determines truth — ‘if more people believe my opinion, then my opinion becomes more true, more real’. It’s your truth. This is a lie.

- Be a **Godfearing family, not man-fearing**. Don’t let social status or peer pressure get in the way of worshipping your Heavenly Father. Water is thicker than blood.

**James 2:1-7** — My brothers, **show no partiality** as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your **assembly**, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, “You sit here in a good place,” while you say to the poor man, “You stand over there,” or, “Sit down at my feet,” have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him?

- Bring **Good tidings**, a cheerful almsgiver: help the poor, sick, and needy, the orphans and widows. The enemy wants you to depend on a system, not each other. To rely on the government, not God. He wants you to worship the world, to buy and sell to put all your stock into the world.

**Matthew 5:14-16** — “You are the light of the world. **A city set on a hill cannot be hidden**. Nor do people light a lamp [candle] and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, **so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.**

This is why the saints altogether are New Jerusalem in the book of Revelation:

**Revelation 19:6-8** — Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out,

“Hallelujah!  
For the Lord our God  
the Almighty reigns.  
Let us rejoice and exult  
and give him the glory,  
for the marriage of the Lamb has come,  
and his Bride has made herself ready;  
it was granted her to clothe herself  
with fine linen, bright and pure”—

for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints....

**Revelation 21:1-4,9-11** — When I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”... Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, “Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.” And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.

**The Kingdom of God is within you and in your midst!**

**The King of Kings dwells in the heart of the city!**

**New Jerusalem is coming quickly. It is now, but not yet.**