

Supplement to Revelation Bible Study — Babylon



INTRODUCTION²

One matter which we should mention regarding the identification of the Harlot: **the tendency of unevenly emphasizing interpretive clues provided by the text.** Scripture gives us some clear and definite sign-posts to help guide us in our task of interpretation.

When we fail to heed those sign-posts, but drive right by them, we miss the main fork in the road leading in the proper direction and drive down the wrong road which takes us miles from the proper destination. It does not matter how many small back-alleys we investigate in the local neighborhood if we are already in the wrong city! Ignoring very clear and definite statements, interpreters often spend great effort analyzing other less-clear passages in attempting to identify her.

Babylon is a City.

In the case of the Harlot, several definitive statements are given to us about her identity. She is **explicitly said to be a city**.³ We are not left to wonder which city is meant, whether Jerusalem, the New Jerusalem, Babylon (or even Rome, New York, or Tokyo!). **It is *Babylon* which is explicitly identified with “the great harlot.”**

1. Babylon explicitly identified with *the great harlot*

Revelation 14:8 And there followed another angel, saying, ***Babylon*** is fallen, is fallen, that ***great city***, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

Revelation 16:19 And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and ***great Babylon*** came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. [***Babylon*** is referred to here as ***great Babylon***, and ***Jerusalem*** is described in the same passage as ***the great city***.]

Revelation 17:18 And the woman which thou sawest is that ***great city***, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

Revelation 18:10 Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that **great city** Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.

Revelation 18:16 And saying, Alas, alas, that **great city**, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!

Revelation 18:18 And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What *city* is like unto this **great city**! ¹⁹ And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that **great city**, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.

Revelation 18:21 And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast *it* into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that **great city** Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.

Revelation 19:2 For true and righteous *are* his judgments: for he hath judged the **great whore**, [referring to Babylon's destruction in Chapters 17 and 18] which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.

2. Jerusalem

Revelation 11:8 *And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the **great city**, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, **where also our Lord was crucified**.*

Revelation 16:19 *And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. [Jerusalem is referred to here as **the great city**, and **Babylon** is described in the same passage as **great Babylon**.]*

3. New Jerusalem

Revelation 21:10 *And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that **great city**, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,...*

Whatever else the Harlot denotes, **we must not lose sight of these simple, clear sign posts: she is a city and that city is Babylon.**⁴

Mystery, Babylon?

There is a great book with exactly that title as the subject, so I won't be able to cover the topic exhaustively in this short section.⁵ What I can do, though, is to lay some groundwork for some of the important things that we should understand and be watching for.

Her name being written on her forehead would have been understandable to those in the first century, because in Rome it was common for prostitutes to identify themselves. This prostitute has a name **written on her forehead**, either tattooed into the skin itself or, more likely, like the Roman harlots of that time, written on a headband.⁶

The question as to whether the word **mystery** is to be understood as describing what is related concerning the woman or whether it forms part of her title cannot be dogmatically settled by the underlying Greek. However, evidence is in favor of excluding **mystery** from her title.

That verse is best translated, "*And on her forehead a name was written, **a mystery**: 'Babylon the Great, the Mother of the Prostitutes and of the Abominations of the Earth.'*" Although some translations take "mystery" as part of the name (including the KJV, RV, ASV, NKJV, and the 1984 NIV), their attempt to alleviate this difficulty is by making the word μυστήριον, *mystērion* ("mystery") the **beginning of the prostitute's name**, which is **an extremely improbable interpretation**. Babylon the Great is never called "*Mystery*" elsewhere, as would be expected if this word were part of its name. The only other occurrence of μυστήριον, *mystērion* in Revelation 17:1–19:4 is in 17:7, in which the angel tells John that he will reveal "*the mystery of the woman, and of*

the beast that carries her.” Thus, it is the woman’s identity that is a mystery; mystery is not part of her character, as if she represents a mystery religion (i.e., a religion with occultic secrets). The woman’s name begins, as expected, with a proper noun, “**Babylon**,” as is demonstrated by every other reference to her.

Other commentators refer to the prostitute as “*mystery Babylon*,” by which they mean “*spiritual Babylon*,” which they then use as justification for their interpretation of the prostitute as a religious system.⁷ However, μυστήριον, **mystērion** is not an adjective, but a neuter noun, and therefore **does not modify the feminine noun** Βαβυλῶν, **Babylōn** **attributively**. Grammatically, it is best seen as an appositive to ὄνομα, **onoma**, **describing a characteristic of the name rather than a part of it**.

Although translators disagree, it seems best to understand the word **mystery** as describing what is related *about* the woman and *not being* part of her title.

If *mysterion* (“**mystery**”) should be interpreted as part of *onoma* (“**name**”), (the name written on her forehead), referring to part of her *name*, John would be saying that **the name** on the woman’s forehead is “Mystery Babylon the Great.” If it is **not part of her name**, John would be saying that the name “**Babylon the Great**” written upon the woman’s forehead is a mystery. . . . The repetition of the woman’s title as “Babylon the Great” (Revelation 14.8; 16.19; 18.2) rather than “*Mystery Babylon the Great*” favors the position that the name “**Babylon the Great**” written upon the woman’s forehead is the mystery.

Revelation 17.4-5 ⁴The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold, precious stones, and pearls, holding in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her sexual immorality, ⁵and on her forehead a name was written, a mystery: “BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.”

Revelation 17.4-5 (AMP) ⁴ The woman was robed in purple and scarlet and bedecked with gold, precious stones, and pearls, [and she was] holding in her hand a golden cup full of the accursed offenses and the filth of her lewdness and vice. ⁵ And on her forehead **there was inscribed a name of mystery [with a secret symbolic meaning]**: Babylon the great, the mother of prostitutes (idolatresses) and of the filth and atrocities and abominations of the earth.

Revelation 17.5 (AMP) *And on her forehead there was inscribed a name of mystery [with a secret symbolic meaning]: Babylon the great, the mother of prostitutes (idolatresses) and of the filth and atrocities and abominations of the earth.*

Revelation 17.5 (MSG) *A riddle-name was branded on her forehead: GREAT BABYLON, MOTHER OF WHORES AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.*

See Endnote ⁸ for further considerations on why the word *mystery* is **about** her name and not **part** of it.

One or Two Babylons?: The Dual Concept of *Babylon*

Babylon is fallen, is fallen is the [overriding] theme of Revelation 17 and 18. These chapters are an amplification of one of the main features of the Tribulation: the place, function, and final judgment of Babylon, **described in detail**. Seeing and understanding this **dual concept of Babylon** is the key to understanding chapters 17 and 18.⁹ We're looking at the **ultimate destruction of evil**:

- Chapter 17 is the destruction of **religious Babylon**, which will happen at the midpoint of the Tribulation when the beast is finished using her as a means to his rise to power. This is the destruction of all false religion.
- Chapter 18 is the destruction **of political (economic or commercial) Babylon** as it is embodied in the city of Babylon, the headquarters of the beast. which will happen at the end of the Tribulation, in conjunction with the seventh bowl and the Second Coming.¹⁰

Many conclude that the Harlot (Revelation 17) represents a religious system, whereas the city (Revelation 18) represents a commercial system. This view holds that what is said concerning the Harlot, and the very fact that she is said to be a *Harlot*, necessitates a “purely religious role” for her; while, conversely, the commercial emphasis of Revelation 18 speaks more of a commercial system and a city. **An unfortunate contributor to this separation into two parts is the chapter division between Revelation 17 and 18 which masks the unity of the entire passage.** Since chapter divisions are not part of the inspired text, we need to be cognizant of their placement and the implicit effects they have on our interpretation. In the case of Revelation 17 and 18, it is true that Revelation 17 speaks more of the spiritual aspects of the Harlot. Similarly, Revelation 18 emphasizes commercial aspects. But this is not the full story because both chapters emphasize both aspects and overlap to a much greater degree than many interpreters are willing to acknowledge. See Endnote ¹¹ for a chart on the Harlot and the City References dispelling the conclusion and confusion of two Babylons and reasons why Revelation Chapters 17 and 18 describe the same Babylon.

1. Revelation 17 — the Religious System of Babylon

Chapter 17 is in part an amplification of chapter 13 in that it shows us one of the ways the beast and his political system rise to power. He uses the religious influence and power of the woman, the religious system of Babylon. This system will have its tentacles in every part of the world where there is any kind of religion at all: **apostate Christendom** (the Roman Catholic Church, the Greek Orthodox Church, Protestant unbelieving churches), the Jewish religion, and the cults. These will all come together in one great ecumenical movement, a super world religion, and the beast will use this to extend his authority and power throughout Europe, parts of Africa and perhaps the Americas.¹²

The *wilderness* is a setting where God often shapes and refines His servants. For example, Moses was prepared in the *wilderness* (Exodus 3:1-2), and Jesus was led by the Spirit into the *wilderness* to be tested by the devil (Matthew 4:1). When John was ...*carried ... away in the spirit into the wilderness*:... by the angel (Revelation 17.3), his vision in the *wilderness* **grants a perspective of evil that lies behind the glittering façade of worldly power:** the first thing John sees is the instrument of the devil—a woman sitting on a scarlet beast.

The *scarlet beast* is described as having *seven heads and ten horns*. We saw this same image earlier in Revelation 13:1. *Scarlet* suggests wealth, power, and at times, the color of sin (Isaiah 1:18). The beast represents the antichrist, Satan’s false “son” in the unholy trinity of the dragon (Satan), the beast, and the false prophet, each mocking and counterfeiting the roles of Father, Son, and Spirit. The text stresses that this beast is *full of blasphemous names* (Revelation 17.3)—**pointing to rebellion against God.** Historically, Roman emperors often demanded divine worship. Notable examples include Emperor Domitian (AD 81-96), who inscribed “*Lord and God*” on official edicts. He would be one of many types of the *beast*, shadows and birth pangs leading up to what is to come—the ultimate fulfillment of the man of lawlessness, the *beast*.¹³

2. Revelation 18 — the Commercial System of Babylon

Chapter 18 is an amplification of the last bowl described in 16:17-21, quoted above.¹⁴

That Babylon/the *harlot* represents the world system of commerce is stated in Revelation 18:3, where the “*merchants of the earth have become rich by the wealth of her sensuality*” and Revelation 18:11-17 where “*the merchants of the earth weep and mourn*” after her destruction because “*no one buys their cargoes any more.*”

This economic system “*reigns over the kings of the earth*” (Revelation 17:18). Thus, **the economic system apparently has more power than the political system**, save for the power of the beast. It is likely due to this great power of the harlot that the beast and ten kings will hate her and decide to destroy her (Revelation 17:16).

It is always the case that economic systems intertwine with political powers. In this instance, it appears that there is sufficient separation such that the beast comes to a point of great jealousy against the economic/commercial system. It seems that it is not acceptable to the beast that the kings submit to the power of the economic system more than to him. **He is the instrument of Satan, who desires to [ascend to the] power of God.**

Isaiah 14:12-14 (AMP) *How have you fallen from heaven, O light-bringer and daystar, son of the morning! How you have been cut down to the ground, you who weakened and laid low the nations [O blasphemous, satanic king of Babylon!] ¹³And you said in your heart, I will ascend to heaven; I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit upon the mount of assembly in the uttermost north. ¹⁴I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.*

We are told in Revelation 17:16 that the “beast” and the ten leaders who give him their support “*will hate the harlot and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire.*” This is likely the beast, who is a political ruler, desiring to eliminate the power of private sector commercial interests because the beast desires all power to be unto himself.

In Revelation 18:9, 15, we will see the “*kings of the earth*” and the *earth’s* “*merchants*” both bemoaning **the destruction of the great harlot who is also Babylon**. We can presume that the beast and his ten supporting kings are not willing to allow any competitor to their complete domination of the earth, including commercial wealth.

Private wealth is a natural competitor to government. The more the private sector thrives the more independent it is from government. So, it makes sense that someone desiring to be a political dictator would want to eliminate competition for power from private sector commercial interests.

Perhaps, in this instance, the beast’s global government chooses to [close] down the economic system in order to give the beast complete dominion. **Part of the means to gain domination might be indicated in Revelation 13:17, where no one will be allowed to buy or sell unless they have taken the beast’s mark.** It could be that the beast uses this same lever and takes control of the economic system, claiming he is doing so for a moral good. Dictators always wrap themselves in an illusion of morality. Even Satan presents himself as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14).

It is ironic that *the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters* comes about through the beast himself. All authorities are ultimately instruments in God’s hand.

Romans 13:1 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

In this case, God uses the vilest of all rulers in all of history to do His bidding. **This is another reminder that God is on His throne and is in control of all things: both things that are and that will be.**

The *immorality* of the *harlot* extends to the *kings of the earth* as well as those who dwell on the earth. They are said to have been *made drunk with the wine of her immorality*. Apparently the immorality with which they were made drunk was addictive, for they will weep and mourn when the harlot who is Babylon falls (Revelation 18:9, 11).

We get an idea of the sort of *immorality* perpetrated by the *harlot* later in Chapter 18:

- Luxury goods (Revelation 18:11-14)
- Military equipment (“horses and chariots”, Revelation 18:13)
- “Slaves and human lives” that apparently pay the price for the luxury of others (Revelation 18:13)

The inference is that the luxury of the *kings* and *merchants* is being financed by the work of “slaves” and at the expense of “human lives.” There is no “love your neighbor” in practice. There is, in its place, **great partiality**. This appears to be the apex of the world system, **which is based on the opposite of a “love your neighbor” philosophy**. The world system is based on an ethic of “**the strong exploit the weak**.” The ancient pagan system of exploitation comes to full bloom. **And in its full bloom it is fully judged.**

We are told that the primary group who indulged in *immorality* with the *harlot* is the *kings of the earth*. These *kings* would likely set policies that allow the economic system (that is the harlot and Babylon) to provide its luxuries to the kings at the expense of “slaves” and “human lives.”

The intoxication of the *harlot*’s *immorality* spread to those who dwell on the earth, presumably the favored people who participate in the luxury enjoyed by the kings, rather than the slaves and human lives that will apparently fuel the luxury. It seems it is intoxication of luxury and power gained at the expense of others that gives the *harlot* reign over the *kings of the earth*. Her seduction controls them, and they appear to gladly comply.

The lavish adornments—*purple, scarlet, gold, and jewels*—underscore her outward display of wealth. *Purple* and *scarlet* dyes were extremely expensive in the ancient world, often associated with royalty and high status. This system provides the *kings* products/results described as “luxurious and splendid” (Revelation 18:14). But the *beast* will destroy it.

The colors of *purple, scarlet, gold, and jewels* also mimic and mock the furnishings and building of the Tabernacle:¹⁵

Exodus 25.1-7 *The LORD said to Moses, 'Tell the Israelites to bring Me an offering. You are to receive My offering from every man whose heart compels him. This is the offering you are to accept from them: gold, silver, and bronze; blue, purple, and scarlet yarn; fine linen and goat hair; ram skins dyed red and fine leather; acacia wood; olive oil for the light; spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense; and onyx stones and gemstones to be mounted on the ephod and breastpiece.'*

Purple— Color of Royalty. It is interesting to note that blue and scarlet make purple. Therefore, the son of God from heaven shedding his blood for our sins makes us royalty.

Scarlet—Reference to the blood of Christ.

Gold— Represents Deity (Highest value on earth)

Jewels—The dedication of jewels to the Tabernacle reflects the Israelites' devotion and willingness to offer their most valuable possessions for the service of God. This act of giving was not merely a physical contribution but a spiritual one, symbolizing the heart's

dedication to God. The use of jewels in the Tabernacle also points to the beauty and majesty of God's presence, as well as the richness of His covenant with Israel.¹⁶

Exodus 28.17-21 [describing the breastplate] *Place on it a setting of gemstones—four rows of stones: The first row shall be a ruby, a topaz, and an emerald; the second row shall be a turquoise, a sapphire, and a diamond; the third row shall be a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; and the fourth row shall be a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper. Mount these stones in gold filigree settings. The twelve stones are to correspond to the names of the sons of Israel, each engraved like a seal with the name of one of the twelve tribes.*

The external splendor hides inward corruption. The gold cup that the woman wields is full of abominations, suggesting that her true essence is found in idolatry and moral filth. This economic system—wealthy and attractive on the outside—apparently lures nations into materialism and self-serving indulgence. That Revelation 18:13 mentions “slaves and human lives” as part of what the woman markets, we can presume that human trafficking and exploitation is bought and sold like candy or beverages.

We can infer that this economic system has become so powerful that it manipulates leaders, even the beast. From Revelation 13:17, we can infer that this economic system plays a key role in persecuting those loyal to God, as those unwilling to take the beast’s mark are not able to buy or sell in the economic system.¹⁷

Believers this side of these dramatic end times can take note of the underlying principle. **The outward allure of riches can draw us away from faithful discipleship.** Jesus reminded us that “you cannot serve God and wealth” (Matthew 6:24). Thus, the woman’s luxurious clothing and gem-laden appearance stands in stark contrast to the Lamb’s bride, who is clothed in righteous deeds (Revelation 19:8).

By calling the woman *BABYLON THE GREAT*, Revelation connects this end-time economic system to the spirit of ancient Babylon: arrogance, idolatry, cruelty and exploitation. The phrase mother of harlots depicts her as the madam of a brothel that peddles its wares of global spiritual unfaithfulness and abominations.

In our study of Revelation, **we see the power of the future worldwide domination [of false religion]** and at the same time it’s **certain destruction by the Lamb.** **[This is where we really need to keep our eyes and heart on the book of] Revelation in its larger sense.**

The theme of Revelation is the unveiling of Jesus Christ and His glorious Kingdom resulting in

- the everlasting destruction of His enemies and
- the everlasting blessing of His saints.

[Remember the] outline of Revelation, from Jesus’ Words to John:

Revelation 1.19 “*Therefore write the **things** which you have seen, and the **things** which are, and the **things** which will take place after **these things**.*”

- Chapter 1, you have the things which you have seen: the setting of Jesus’ prophecy, the vision of Jesus.
- Then in chapters 2 and 3, you have the things which are: the state of Jesus’s church.
- Then from chapter 4 through chapter 22 (the last chapter of Revelation) you have the things which will take place after the things which are.

These are the stages of the final triumph of Jesus.

THIS IS ALL ABOUT WORSHIP¹⁸

Revelation 17 and 18, in an over-arching sense, is about **worship**. Worship is the ultimate human priority. Every single human being, yourself included, was made to worship. See Endnote ¹⁹ for Scriptural references showing we are created to worship God eternally.

The eternal nature of worship is depicted as an unending response to God's holiness, majesty, and love.²⁰

Eternal Nature of Worship is Seen as the Ultimate Fulfillment of God's Redemptive Plan.

In the book of Revelation, John provides a vivid depiction of heavenly worship. Revelation 4:8 describes the four living creatures, who "*day and night never stop saying: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come!'*"

This passage underscores the ceaseless nature of worship in heaven, where God's holiness is eternally acknowledged.

Similarly, Revelation 7:9-10 portrays a great multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language standing before the throne and before the Lamb, crying out with a loud voice: "*Salvation to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!*"

This scene illustrates the universal and eternal scope of worship, transcending time and cultural boundaries.

Eternal praise and worship are not merely future realities but are also integral to the believer's present life. The Scriptures frequently exhort believers to **engage in continuous worship** (see Scriptural references in Endnote ¹⁹ referred to above).

Psalms 145:2 *"Every day I will bless You, and I will praise Your name forever and ever."* This verse emphasizes the ongoing nature of worship, which **begins in this life and extends into eternity.** Theologically, **eternal worship is a response to God's eternal attributes.**

The new heaven and new earth, as described in Revelation 21, will be **a place where God's presence is fully realized, and His people will worship Him without hindrance.**

Revelation 22:3-4 (AMP) *There shall no longer exist there anything that is accursed (detestable, foul, offensive, impure, hateful, or horrible). But the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall worship Him [pay divine honors to Him and do Him holy service].⁴ They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads.*

The eternal nature of this worship signifies the completion of God's purpose for creation, where all things are restored and brought into perfect harmony with His will.

For believers today, the concept of eternal praise and worship serves as both an inspiration and a call to action. It encourages a lifestyle of worship that permeates every aspect of life, **aligning one's heart and actions with the eternal truths of God's Word.** ...[E]ternal praise and worship are not confined to ... future expectations but are woven into the fabric of daily life, reflecting a heart that is continually turned toward God in adoration and gratitude.²¹

What Happens When God's Creation Do Not Worship Him.

Every person **having been made to worship** can respond in denial to that reality in different ways:

1. a person may deny that entirely; or
2. a person may seek to stay away from organized religion and say that they are not religious at all; or
3. a person can claim to be an agnostic or an atheist.

But what a human being can never do is change what he was hard-wired by God to do.

What happens then when a creature made to worship refuses to worship the true God? **The answer is he doesn't stop worshipping; instead, he becomes an idolater.**

The process is seen clearly in Scripture.

Romans 1.20-25 (AMP) *For ever since the creation of the world His invisible nature and attributes, that is, His eternal power and divinity, have been made intelligible and clearly discernible in and through the things that have been made (His handiworks). So [men] are without excuse [altogether without any defense or justification], ²¹Because when they knew and recognized Him as God, they did not honor and glorify Him as God or give Him thanks. But instead they became futile and godless in their thinking [with vain imaginings, foolish reasoning, and stupid speculations] and their senseless minds were darkened. ²²Claiming to be wise, they became fools [professing to be smart, they made simpletons of themselves]. ²³And by them the glory and majesty and excellence of the immortal God were exchanged for and represented by images, resembling mortal man and birds and beasts and reptiles. ²⁴Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their [own] hearts to sexual impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves [abandoning them to the degrading power of sin], ²⁵Because they exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, Who is blessed forever! Amen (so be it).*

That is what always happens when a human being made to worship refuses to worship and acknowledge the true God. Idolatry happens...

Idolatry in all of its forms ultimately has two compelling appeals:

1. **Self-centered gratification.** If [you could go] back through the gods of the Old Testament, or ...rehearse the gods of the New Testament era or the gods of our day, at the root of [every type of] idolatry is **self-centered gratification** usually centering on some combination of violence and brutality, sexual fulfillment, and financial prosperity. **That's the first appeal of idolatry.** Even with Baal worship, that's what it was all about. Those are the things that motivated people to become worshippers of Baal.
2. **Self-rule** is the other great appeal of idolatry, which is perhaps even a greater appeal. **Why do people choose the substitute over God Himself?** *Probably the most important reason is that it obviates accountability to God. We can meet idols on our own terms because they are our own creations. They are safe, predictable and controllable. They are, in Jeremiah's colorful language, "scarecrows in a cucumber field." They can be carried, and they are completely under the user's control.²² They offer nothing like the threat of a god who thunders from Sinai and whose providence in this world so often appears to us to be incomprehensible and dangerous. People who remain in the center of their lives and loyalties need face only themselves. This is the appeal of idolatry.*

You see, **false religion is not for those who are seeking God.** A lot of young and sadly even some "mature" Christians think that false religion deceives people who are really seeking the true God.

Nothing could be farther from the truth. It's not for those who are seeking God, but false religion is for those running away from the true God. That's why Paul says.

Romans 3:11-12 (AMP) *¹¹No one understands [no one intelligently discerns or comprehends]; no one seeks out God. ¹²All have turned aside; together they have gone wrong and have become unprofitable and worthless; no one does right, not even one!*

There aren't seekers except God Himself. He is the only seeker in the universe.

Luke 19:10 *For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*

When it comes to **false religion** Karl Marx was right: *It is the opium of the people. It's often used to control, and it makes people feel better about their difficult lives.* The source of all false religion is Satan, the father of lies, and he and his demons blind sinners, disguising themselves as angels of light, persuading people to believe the lies of false religion.

John 8:44 *Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.*

2Corinthians 4:4 *In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

2Corinthians 11:14 *And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.*

Because false religion is one of Satan's greatest weapons, it's power and influence will reach its height during the Great Tribulation. Under Antichrist and the false prophet, all religions of the world will unite into one final world religion during the first half of the Tribulation remaining apparently distinct in their own ways, but coming together as one great ecumenical force. That false religious system will play an essential role in Antichrist's final world empire.

During the Tribulation, people will desperately seek religion because of what will be happening in the world as the hammer blows of God's judgment devastate the earth and terrorize its inhabitants. People will turn in desperation to Antichrist as their savior. Aided by the false prophet and hordes of deceiving demons, Antichrist will establish a world-wide religion.²³

BABYLON IN THE BIBLE

Babylon is mentioned 260 times in Scripture, and is second in importance only to Jerusalem. Biblically it is viewed as the Devil's city while Jerusalem is viewed as God's city. They are always seen in opposition to each other. **Babylon is the result of apostasy against God's plan**, the first international, political and religious ecumenical movement in the history of man, and one which has never ceased to exist in one form or another. Jerusalem is the result of God's call of a man and a nation to perpetuate His plan of salvation for the world.

As you undoubtedly know, the city of ancient Babylon is in Iraq, about 50 miles south of Baghdad on the Euphrates river. What you may not know is that prior to Desert Storm and the conflict in Iraq, Saddam Hussein had for several years been working to uncover the ancient ruins of Babylon with a view to rebuilding the city and establishing himself as practically the incarnation of Nebuchadnezzar, the great Babylonian king who took Judah captive from 606 to 586 B.C. This captivity by Nebuchadnezzar began the times of the Gentiles (Luke 21:24), the period of Gentile domination over Jerusalem and Israel which has and will continue to keep all descendants of David from sitting on the throne of Israel until the return of the Lord Himself.²⁴

Babylon's Beginnings

Babylon comes from the Hebrew **Bab-el** which some say is a Hebrew form of the Assyrian **Bab-ili**, which meant “**Gate of God**,” and is used of the ancient city on the banks of the Euphrates River. However, in Hebrew **Bab-el** means “**confusion**.”

Babylon is first found in **Genesis 10** in the table of nations. Here Moses traces the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. We have the Japhethites, those least connected with Israel, then he traces the Hammites, those responsible for a great deal of sin and trouble in the world, and then the line of Shem, those who became Israelites. [Nimrod] was the son of Cush, the son of Ham.

When Moses traces the descendants of Ham (those responsible for a great deal of trouble for Israel throughout her history), Moses wrote the following about Nimrod, the powerful ruler who rejected God and the founder of Babel:

Genesis 10:8-12 Now Cush became the father of Nimrod; he became a mighty one on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord therefore it is said, “Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the Lord.” And the beginning of his kingdom was **Babel** and Erech and Accad and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. From that land he went to Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Calah and Resen between Nineveh and Calah (that is the principal city).²⁵

1Chronicles 1:10 [emphasis added] Cush became the father of Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one in the earth.

He was a Hamite upon which **no blessing was pronounced** in contrast to Shem and Japheth, the other two sons of Noah. This shows us that God recognized in the Hamites a greater proneness toward godlessness and rebellion. [Note: Canaan was another descendant of Ham who was cursed because of vile tendencies (Genesis 9:25-27).]

Babylon: First Organized System of Idolatrous False Religion and Disregard of God's Word.

Genesis 9:1 AND GOD pronounced a blessing upon Noah and his sons and said to them, Be fruitful and multiply (7235. רָבָה **rabah**, raw-baw = increase, enlarge) and fill (4390. מָלֵא **male'**, maw-lay = fill, replenish, have wholly) the earth.

Instead of obeying, humanity united in opposition. The Lord took notice of their intentions:

Genesis 11.1-4 ***1And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech.*** ²*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.*** ³ *And they said one to another, Go to, **let us make brick, and burn them throughly.** And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar.* ⁴ *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, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.*** (Which the Lord specifically commanded them to do.)

Different Language Groups: Thwarting Man's Schemes to Disobey

Genesis 11.5-6 ⁵*And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.* ⁶ *And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and **this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined** [#2161. זָמַם **zamam**, zaw-mam ' ; a primitive root; to plan, usually in a bad sense:—plot (A secret plan to accomplish a hostile or illegal purpose; a **scheme**), think (evil).] to do.*

This does not mean that God was threatened by human progress, but rather that unchecked rebellion would lead to even greater sin. As in the days before the flood, **humanity had once again turned toward wickedness**. This structure demonstrated **centralization in a way which ran**

counter to God's command following the flood: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth."²⁶ Reading between the lines, we can already see the seeds of rebellion. So, God acted:²⁷

Genesis 11:7-9 ⁷Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. ⁸ So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. ⁹ Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and **from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.**

This divine intervention was both judgment and mercy. **It halted humanity's rebellion before it could escalate further and ensured that God's command to spread across the earth was fulfilled.** [Back to Adam and Eve, the Abrahamic Covenant, the Noahic Covenant, the Mosaic Covenant, the Davidic Covenant, and even the New Covenant!: God accomplishes *both sides* of the covenants! 💖]

This initial centralization, followed by the global distribution, is the primary mechanism by which Babylon became the central influence in all cultures and civilizations which followed. This is how she came to sit on "*peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues.*"

Revelation 17:15 And he said to me, "*The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues.*").

The Spiritual Significance of Babel²⁸

In fact, this is the first mention of the concept of **kingdom** in Scripture. In a very real sense, Nimrod was the first king. In order to be a king, one needs to have subjects and a realm. It was Nimrod who established his kingdom at Babel and who is generally agreed was the primary force behind this rebellion. He united his subjects to directly oppose God's commands. They wanted to *make a name for themselves*, trusting in their own wisdom and power and elevating it to be comparable to God, which is the core definition of idolatry. Thus it was in Babel that the first organized system of idolatrous worship began (Genesis 11.1-9 above). In their pride they wanted to achieve greatness without relying on God. One thing led to another as the people began to build the tower of Babel, a ziggurat,²⁹ to facilitate their worship and as a symbol of their proud humanistic rebellion. And since that time, Babylon has been connected to and has been the center of false religion.

As the first king of Babylon, Nimrod had within him the nature and character that would exist in the Gentile nations throughout history and especially in its final form in the Tribulation—**tyranny and apostasy**.³⁰

Flavius Josephus,³¹ in *Josephus: The Complete Works* wrote: ***Now it was Nimrod who excited them to such an affront and contempt of God. He was the grandson of Ham, the son of Noah, a bold man, and of great strength of hand. He persuaded them not to ascribe it to God, as if it was through his means they were happy, but to believe that it was their own courage which procured that happiness. He also gradually changed the government into tyranny, seeing no other way of turning men from the fear of God, but to bring them into a constant dependence on his power. He also said he would be revenged on God, if he should have a mind to drown the world again; for that he would build a tower too high for the waters to be able to reach! and that he would avenge himself on God for destroying their forefathers.***³²

The Tower of Babel is not just an ancient story; it is a warning against pride and self-sufficiency apart from God. Babel was the birthplace of human-centered religion, false

unity, and defiance against the Most High. **Babylon** became a kind of metaphor for human pride, pagan worship, and for a city and an empire in rebellion against God. In the record of Babel, ...we see the first human king and kingdom in direct rebellion to the commands of God resulting in judgment.

This theme continues throughout Scripture.

Isaiah 14:12-15 speaks of Lucifer's fall and his desire to "ascend above the heights of the clouds"—the same spirit that drove the people at Babel.

Revelation 18:2 describes the final judgment of Babylon, calling it "*the habitation of demons.*"

Acts 2:4-11 presents the reversal of Babel, when at Pentecost the Holy Spirit enabled people to understand the Gospel in various languages, uniting them in Christ rather than scattering them in judgment.

Historically we see three things about Babylon:

- (1) It begins as the place of man's rebellion through tyranny and a united world effort which God judged by the confusion of languages.
- (2) It is the instrument that seeks to take away the land promised by God to His people, the Israelites, (see Endnote ³³ for a fascinating in-depth Bible study on this).
- (3) And it is the kingdom that ...at least disrupts God's kingdom here on earth and starts the times of the Gentiles, the time of Gentile domination.³⁴

Where Babel brought confusion, the Gospel brings clarity. Where Babel divided, Christ unites. The only true kingdom that will stand is the one established by Jesus.

A Timeless Warning

The Tower of Babel stands as a timeless warning against the dangers of human pride and rebellion. Nimrod and his people sought to make a name for themselves, but in the end, their efforts were scattered to the winds. **No kingdom built in defiance of God will ever stand.**

But the Gospel calls us to something greater.

Jesus is the true King, and His kingdom is not built on human ambition, but on the unshakable foundation of His righteousness.

If we examine our own lives, we must ask: Are we building **our own towers of Babel** (seeking to glorify ourselves, striving for success apart from God, relying on our own strength)? Or are we submitting to the Lord, trusting in His wisdom, and following His commands? The choice remains the same today as it was in Babel. **Either we build in obedience to God, or we labor in vain.**

Babylon's Connection with Satan/Lucifer

1. Origin of Babylon Religion

Ancient records indicate that Nimrod had a wife named Semiramis who was the founder and first high priestess of the Babylonian mystery religion. She gave birth to a son named Tammuz, whom she claimed was conceived miraculously. This son was considered savior of his people and in effect was **the first false Messiah—a counterfeit of Genesis 3:15 and God's promise of a Savior.** The son was to have been killed by a wild beast, but brought back to life.

The religious system of Semiramis had many secret rites in the worship of its idols. These were called mysteries (secrets) into which new members had to be initiated. These rites involved sordid perverse immorality in connection with its idolatrous worship, both physical and spiritual.

The rites incorporated the worship of the mother (who was called “the queen of heaven”) and the child. While the rites varied, and the idol images often varied from country to country as the cult spread from one location to another, they all contained one central feature, the worship of the goddess mother and her child. Often the names changed, but no matter where you went, pictures and images of a mother with a child in her arms were found.

The religious system which began in Babel (or Babylon), became the mother, the source of all pagan religions of the world. This is the reason she is called “*Mother of Harlots*” in Revelation 17:5.

Revelation 17:2-5 *With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. ³ So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. ⁴ And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: ⁵ And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.*³⁵

This system spread to Greece, Egypt, Italy, Phoenicia, Israel, India, Asia Minor and Europe. Canaan was full of this iniquity and is one of the reasons God commanded Israel to destroy its inhabitants. Their failure to do so led to Israel’s own downfall and involvement with the Babylonian system.³⁶

In the founding of Babel was the foundation for what would later be Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar which would figure highly in the events of Scripture, especially in the book of Daniel which we have seen is key to understanding much of the book of Revelation. (We studied that more particularly when we studied the **Supplement to Book of Revelation Bible Study Chapter 13—Daniel.**)

2. The Close Association of the Beast with the Dragon and Babylon.

Another negative connotation concerning Babel may be seen in the proverb taken up by Isaiah concerning the king of Babylon. The close association of the Beast with the Dragon and Babylon is seen in the passage from Isaiah which begins as a proverb against the king of *Babylon*, but contains elements which go far beyond any mortal man to identify the power behind the king—**Satan**:

Isaiah 14:4, 12-16 *Take up this proverb against the king of Babylon . . . How you are fallen from heaven, **O Lucifer, son of the morning!** How you are cut down to the ground, **you who weakened the nations!** For you have said in your heart: ‘**I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.**’ Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit. Those who see you will gaze at you, and consider you, saying: ‘Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms?’*

The connection between Satan (here *Lucifer*) and Babylon is seen in this proverb which begins with the human king in view, but soon goes far beyond what could be said of the human king **to identify the spiritual power motivating the king**:

Ezekiel 28:12-19 *Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. ¹³ **Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God;** every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the*

emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. ¹⁴ *Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.* ¹⁵ *Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.* ¹⁶ **By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.** ¹⁷ **Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.** ¹⁸ *Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.* ¹⁹ *All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.*

Since Satan has been active in the affairs of the world since the creation of mankind, it is no surprise to find his influence in the realm of corrupt kings and kingdoms extending far back in history.

Babylon the Great, the Final Babylon

As seen in Revelation, Antichrist's future kingdom is called *Babylon the great*. **It is the final Babylon.**

Isaiah reflects the satanic spirit of self-deification to appear in fullest development in the last king of Babylon, the Antichrist, when he asks, *“Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms”* (Isaiah 14.16 quoted above), which appears to better refer to the ultimate king of Babylon at the time of the end, the Antichrist. We see the **impact** of his reach in Revelation 13.8:

Revelation 13:8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, [the last king of Babylon, the Antichrist, the ‘beast’] whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

This verse is a warning about what's coming, but with **yet another implied invitation to repent.**

In the record of Babel we looked at the first human king and kingdom in direct rebellion to the commands of God resulting in judgment.

In Babylon of the end, we will see the last human king and kingdom in ultimate rebellion to the commands of God resulting in the final judgment of all human kingdoms to be replaced by the Millennial Kingdom ruled by Messiah.

POSTULATIONS AND REFLECTIONS

Babylon the Great [is] another mystery to watch for, but with a very open mind. First, we are warned [in Revelation 17.5: ⁵*...and on her forehead a name was written, a **mystery**: “BABYLON THE GREAT,...”*] that her name contains... (drumroll please) ... a **“mystery”**!³⁷ What [we] can do, though, is to lay some groundwork for some of the important things that we should understand and be watching for.³⁸ We will be looking at Babylon extensively in Revelation Chapters 17 and 18, but we will consider here what exactly *Babylon the great* in the book of Revelation represents. There are several common yet varied interpretations. The first few don't seem to hold water, and the last ones seem to be the most viable options. Let's skip through a few of the more nonplausible options first.

Postulations of What Babylon Represents.

Notice her name is a “**mystery**.” If you have studied the New Testament, you know that the noun “*mystery*” is used in the New Testament to describe something that has not been revealed in the past, and something that would never have been known apart from divine revelation, but which now has been revealed by God. [Some feel that since] Babylon the Great is called a “*mystery*” [it] implies that in this context we are not talking about the ancient city of Babylon, ...because that wouldn’t be a *mystery*. Here this false religious system is called “Babylon the Great.” Babylon—[referring to] the ancient symbol of false religion and rebellion against God. And the “great” because of its massive world-wide power and influence. Yes, a *mystery*. So, who is or what could “Babylon the Great” be? Hopefully, this discussion about Babylon the Great gives you some direction and a broader context for understanding it. **Time will reveal the full mystery of how all these things will be fulfilled; until then, we should watch and pray for the wisdom to recognize it when God does bring these things to pass.**³⁹

1. A “code name” for Jerusalem. There are some, a few, who say that Babylon is actually a “code name” for *Jerusalem*. The only ones who really hold this view believe that John wrote Revelation before the destruction of the temple in 70 AD. Because of that, he was forced to use a “code name” so that he could avoid being hunted down by the temple guard. There's no valid evidence for that date of writing and there's no valid evidence for this view. **So, let's just mark that one off the list.**

2. America.⁴⁰ Those who identify the United States as Babylon see parallels between the US and the details of Revelation chapters 17 and 18:

- The US is renowned for blending many cultures and people groups; it touches both the world’s two major oceans (Revelation 17:1, 15).
- Many world governments and leaders have cooperated with the United States, and their people have embraced American cultural norms. Nations have followed America’s lead in many ways (Revelation 17:2).
- Many countries are deeply dependent on American influence, both culturally and economically. This can be compared to an addiction or altered state of mind (Revelation 17:2; 18:3, 9).
- The United States is extremely prosperous compared to other nations. It takes pride in celebrating its own luxury, as well as many things that God has called sin (Revelation 17:4; 18:7, 14, 16).
- The USA is a dominant economic and military superpower with tremendous influence (Revelation 17:18).
- Despite, or maybe because of, America’s power and influence, many nations resent the US. It is not hard to imagine such nations working together against US interests or even its existence. Excessive interference from America in the end times could trigger worldwide backlash (Revelation 17:16).
- The modern United States has a global reputation for excesses, sins, and ungodly attitudes of all sorts. These vices are often viewed within the US as signs of progress (Revelation 18:2)
- America is by far the largest component of the global economy and the largest importer of goods (Revelation 18:3).
- The thought of a rapid US collapse is more realistic than it was in prior generations. Along with dependence on imports, the USA holds a mind-boggling level of national debt and is experiencing escalating cultural division. A breaking point in any or all of these could trigger catastrophic change (Revelation 18:8, 10, 19).

- A sudden fall by the United States would trigger massive economic consequences for the entire world (Revelation 18:9, 11, 15, 19).

At the same time, certain statements within those same passages are difficult to match with the United States. The mentions of seven hills (Revelation 17:9) and a succession of kings (Revelation 17:10) do not seem to fit the U.S. As of this writing, the USA is not “drunk with the blood of” Christian martyrs (Revelation 17:9), especially compared to other nations. **Identifying America as Babylon would mean shifting other end-times interpretations that consider Babylon a literal city, a religion, or a world system.**

So, is the United States described in Revelation? Perhaps, **but perhaps not**. Comments on Babylon’s identity include two of Revelation’s four uses of the word *mystery* (Revelation 17:5, 7). Maybe this “great prostitute” is the end-times condition of the United States. Maybe these passages refer to something else, and the USA is simply not alluded to in Scripture. As with all end-times discussions, speculation is fine so long as it doesn’t lead to division among believers. **Especially when stating opinions unsubstantiated in the Word of God itself and trying to name something that just isn’t named in Scripture.** Remember, the Scriptures are **perspicuous: Clearly expressed or presented; easy to understand; Expressing oneself clearly and effectively.**

Revelation 17:1–19:4 prophesies of a time at the end of history in which a single cultural superpower imposes a wicked value system on the cultures of all the other nations of the world. Few Christians would dispute that the world’s culture is being corrupted today, and that this corruption represents the continuation of a long process of moral decay extending from the postwar era, having accelerated (in the West) since the fall of the Soviet Union. **Yet no one would claim that either Iraq, the city of Rome, or the Roman Catholic Church, is the great driving force behind the corruption of the world’s culture today.** Most people in the world would say that the United States is responsible, and that all the nations of the world are becoming “*Americanized*.” Further, America’s cultural power is without parallel in the history of the world, since it is only in the Information Age, within the context of world trade and economic liberalism, that a single country can readily export its culture to all the others. In addition, English is the world’s first truly universal language since Babel, and a common language is both a prerequisite and a proof of cultural unity. **But to come to the conclusion that Babylon = America is unsubstantiated.** It makes more sense to know that the same fate awaiting Babylon for the reasons **we do know from Scripture**, particularly Jeremiah 25.15-38, would also apply to the *souls of men* that bought into her ideology and identify with her. **The spirit of Babylon the Great is as the spirit of Egypt representing a world built apart from God.** In this manner, some of the judgments on those spirits antagonistic to God and the gospel will be fulfilled in the United States of America.⁴¹ Again, let’s focus on what we **do know** rather on trying to support our own feelings and ideas and programs about what we **don’t know from Scripture**.

3. **The city of Rome.** The belief that Babylon represents the city of Rome is fairly common. Tertullian in the late second century was apparently the first church father to use the label “Babylon” for Rome. Because of other clues in this text, like the “seven hills” in verse 9 and the reference to a “great city” in verse 18, many have argued that the spiritual harlot in this chapter is, in fact, Rome and the Roman Catholic Church. And I am not here to say that that is impossible. Clearly, it is apostate; clearly it is a false religious system; clearly it is, if not the most powerful and certainly one of the most powerful false religious systems on the planet today. It will undoubtedly be a part of this final ecumenical religious system. But I think the language of these chapters makes it include more

than the Roman Catholic church. It's all false religion brought under one head or one system. There is still a mysterious element to this system of the future.

In extra-biblical writings, Rome is described as Babylon [in] several Sibylline oracles and other extra-biblical writings. We can't be absolutely certain, but many believe that Paul used the name Babylon to mean Rome in 1 Peter 5:13, when he writes, "*She who is in **Babylon**, chosen together with you, sends you greetings, and so does my son, Mark.*" Many think he was actually referring there to Rome in that passage. In light of that, some argue that John must mean Rome here as well. (See problems with this premise below #3.)

4. **The Roman papacy.** Some believe that *Babylon* represents the Roman papacy itself. That's too narrow a meaning to fit the description that we're going to read and study in chapters 17 and 18.

Succinctly, a few problems with saying the city of Rome or the Roman papacy *represent* Babylon follow.⁴² There is a large following of the ideas of Rome or the Roman papacy representing Babylon because of the widespread circulation of books, films and schools of thought promoting both of these options. It is a good idea to go through the Scriptures and study a few of the reasons why we shouldn't automatically assume that these options have Scriptural basis without examining it for ourselves rather than accepting widespread and populated ideas.

(a) The **Rome/papacy** position must hold that the prophecy was entirely fulfilled in the first century and doesn't have any actual last-days application. This prophecy [actually] concerns the last days and not ancient history. Because many prophecy teachers do not follow a futuristic view of Revelation 4-22, [believing that this prophecy is already fulfilled] adds to the confusion about identifying *Babylon the Great*.

(b) The most conspicuous problem is the fact that the city of Rome never fell suddenly, dramatically, or completely, as the prophecy clearly describes. Instead, after many years of *gradual decline and decay*, the city of Rome finally "fell" in AD 476 when the Germanic hordes overthrew the last of the Roman emperors. The historical fall of Rome simply does not align whatsoever with the abrupt and eternal annihilation of Babylon as described in the prophecy.

(c) [To believe (b) above], would require one to say that the Germanic and Gothic tribes who much later attacked and sacked Rome were part of the kings [of Revelation 17:12], [which isn't a fit at all].

(d) The prophecy clearly states that *in one hour... will Babylon, the great city, be thrown down with violence, and will not be found any longer* (18:19, 21). The fall of the great harlot city is plainly described as being sudden, swift, complete, and permanent. There is simply no amount of squeezing, shoving, or shoe-horning that will allow us to force the very long, slow, historical decline and eventual fall of Rome into this prophecy. On this point alone, the historical (preterist) interpretation fails miserably.

(e) Although Rome was indeed the satanic stronghold capital of the first century, the Roman Empire is no longer a reigning beast empire. Neither Rome nor the Vatican city seem to wield the level of power that is described in the prophecy. It's also rather difficult to say that the city of Rome is a great importer of slaves and human lives (see Revelation 18.11-13). Rome was the sixth empire, but the prophecy is clear that another empire would come after Rome. Looking to Rome today is no more relevant than looking to ancient Nineveh. These were the capitals of their respective empires and the satanic stronghold cities of their days – but they are no longer. In identifying the fulfillment of the Revelation prophecy, we must look to the capital of the **seventh** beast empire, not to the previous empires that ruled the region thousands of years ago.

[Rome] is simply no longer a reigning beast. It is difficult to see it as the economic powerhouse that controls the kings of the earth. This isn't to say the Catholic Church has no economic power or sway whatsoever. Certainly it does, but it doesn't seem to wield the level of power that is described in Revelation. If the Vatican were destroyed today, it is doubtful that merchants and manufacturers throughout the earth would lament the end of some great source of commerce. It's also rather difficult to say that the city of Rome is a great importer of slaves and human lives (Revelation 18.11-13).⁴³

(f) To sidestep the problem in (d), preterists must claim that, rather than pointing to seven historical empires, the seven heads of the beast in Revelation 17 point to seven historical Roman emperors. It is slightly humorous to note that none who hold this position can ever agree on which emperors the text has in mind.

(g) The attempt to identify the seven kings with particular respective world empires may be more successful, since it is more in keeping with the "seven heads" in Daniel 7.3-7, which represent four specific empires. The first five kings, who "have fallen," are [mostly] identified with Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia and Greece; Rome is the one who "is," followed by a yet unknown kingdom to come.

(h) Also, neither Rome (nor the Vatican City) sit in a desert. (Revelation 17.3, *wilderness* = 2048. **ἐρήμος** *eremos*, er'-ay-mos; of uncertain affinity; lonesome, i.e. (by implication) waste (usually as a noun, 5561 being implied): — **desert**, desolate, solitary, wilderness.

(i) There isn't any Christian or Jewish blood being shed in Rome or the Vatican today. ...we do not see calls for violence. Instead, we see apologies and public repentance. this is a far cry from what is described in the book of Revelation, where we read of a city that is actually drunk on the blood of God's holy people.

(j) The ancient cities of Babylon and Rome were historical foreshadows of that which is to come: a much greater, last-days harlot city. There are an empire and some cities that *would contribute to the larger discussion concerning the great harlot*. We have looked at a few of them and will continue to do so as we head towards Revelation chapters 17 and 18. To be clear, this is not to say that another option, a new city entirely, could not emerge in the future.

(k) Revelation also points to a coming invasion against Israel by a coalition of nations in the last days (Ezekiel 30:2-5). Consistently, the Hebrew prophets depict these aggressors as arising from regions that do not align with Roman Catholic strongholds.⁴⁴ Instead, the nations listed include various Middle Eastern and North African territories, which, according to Scripture, unite in an end-time effort to oppose the people of God. Rome does not wield decisive spiritual authority over these lands, making it unlikely to be the harlot that convenes or governs such a coalition. Additionally, unless they hired mercenaries, they do not have a modern army through which force could be wielded.⁴⁵

(l) Traditionally pretribulationists have held one of two major views of the identity of the political Babylon the Great, which all acknowledge is described at least in Revelation 18. [One of] these is the proposal that Babylon the Great is Rome and the other that it is old city of Babylon in Iraq. **The identification of Babylon the Great as Rome was originally developed by Protestant Reformers who saw the Roman Catholic Church as the primary source of evil in the world; now, its major proponents are critical (liberal) scholars and other preterists who believe that John was describing the politics of his own day, rather than prophesying [since Rome doesn't seem to present itself as the primary source of evil in the world any more].** If one believes that John was prophesying of an eschatological [futuristic] entity, and that the Roman Catholic Church is not the

primary source of evil in the world, then **there is virtually no basis whatsoever for the identification of Babylon the Great with Rome**; thus, few pretribulational dispensationalists presently hold this view.

5. **Mecca/Saudi Arabia**

Today, the largest false religion on earth would almost indisputably be Islam, so it's hard to not imagine it playing a major role in end times events, but atheism, paganism, and apostate Christianity could all also be in view.⁴⁶

Isaiah 21

In Revelation 18.2, when the angel cried *mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great has fallen, is fallen*, it is a direct quote:

Isaiah 21:9 *And, behold, here cometh a chariot of men, with a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground.*

When Jesus hung upon the cross and was about to die, he cried out with a loud voice:

Matthew 27:46b ... *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

Psalms 22:1a *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?...*

Precedence in Scripture

As well as uttering a genuine cry of anguish, Jesus was pointing to his death as a fulfilment not just of Psalm 22:1, but of Psalm 22 as a whole. (Quoting a single line or verse of a prophecy points to the fulfilment of the prophecy as a whole.)

End-time Babylon — *Desert by the Sea* Interpretation⁴⁷

Isaiah 21 is the passage which most clearly identifies end-time 'Babylon' with Saudi Arabia, and with 'Kedar' (Mecca).

It is introduced in Isaiah 21:1 as an oracle about the '*Desert by the Sea*.' This is a reference to the Arabian Peninsula that is surrounded on three sides by the waters of the Persian Gulf, the Indian Ocean, and the Red Sea. Three of the places named in Isaiah 21 are Dumah, Tema, and Kedar, which according to the genealogy of 1 Chronicles 1:29-30, Dumah, Tema and Kedar were three of the sons of Ishmael.

1Chronicles 1:29 *These are their descendants: The firstborn of Ishmael, Nebaioth; **Kedar**, Adbeel, Mibsam, ³⁰Mishma, **Dumah**, Massa, Hadad, **Tema**,...*

Genesis 25:13 (AMP) *These are the names of the sons of Ishmael, named in the order of their births: Nebaioth, the firstborn of Ishmael, and Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam,*

Song 1:5 (AMP) *I am so black; but [you are] lovely and pleasant [the ladies assured her]. O you daughters of Jerusalem, [I am as dark] as the tents of [the Bedouin tribe] Kedar, like the [beautiful] curtains of Solomon!*

Jeremiah 2:10 (AMP) *For cross over to the coasts of Cyprus [to the west] and see, send also to Kedar [to the east] and carefully consider; and see whether there has been such a thing as this:*

Ezekiel 27:21 (AMP) *Arabia and all the princes of Kedar, they were the merchants in lambs, rams, and goats favored by you; in these they traded with you.*

Isaiah 21:16-17 (AMP) *For the Lord has said this to me, Within a year, according to the years of a hireling [who will work no longer than was agreed], all the glory of Kedar [an Arabian tribe] will fail. ¹⁷ And the remainder of the number of archers and their bows, the mighty men of the sons of Kedar, will be diminished and few; for the Lord, the God of Israel, has spoken it.*

Jeremiah 49:28 (AMP) Concerning Kedar [a tribe of nomad Arabs] and concerning the kingdoms of Hazor, which Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon shall smite: Thus says the Lord [to him]: Arise, go up against Kedar and destroy the sons of the east.

Isaiah 60:7(AMP) All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered to you [as the eastern pastoral tribes join the trading tribes], the rams of Nebaioth shall minister to you; they shall come up with acceptance on My altar, and My glorious house I will glorify.

Psalms 120:5 (AMP) Woe is me that I sojourn with Meshech, that I dwell beside the tents of Kedar [as if among notoriously barbarous people]!

So the prophecy, "Babylon is fallen, fallen" (Isaiah 21:9), sits within context of a prophecy about the Elamites and Medes (Iranian people groups) invading the Arabian Peninsula (Isaiah 21:1-2), a resulting refugee crisis among the Ishmaelite (Arab) tribes of Arabia (Isaiah 21:13-15), and the 'glory of Kedar' being destroyed after exactly one year (Isaiah 21:16). [This teaching believes it] is reasonable to equate Babylon and the 'glory of Kedar' as one and the same.

Isaiah 13:20-22 (AMP) [Babylon] shall never be inhabited or dwelt in from generation to generation; neither shall the Arab pitch his tent there, nor shall the shepherds make their sheepfolds there. ²¹But wild beasts of the desert will lie down there, and the people's houses will be full of dolefully howling creatures; and ostriches will dwell there, and wild goats [like demons] will dance there. ²²And wolves and howling creatures will cry and answer in the deserted castles, and jackals in the pleasant palaces. And [Babylon's] time has nearly come, and her days will not be prolonged.

Isaiah 34:11 (AMP) But the pelican and the porcupine will possess it; the owl and the bittern and the raven will dwell in it. And He will stretch over it [Edom] the measuring line of confusion and the plummet stones of chaos [over its nobles].

Isaiah 21:1 (AMP) **THE MOURNFUL**, inspired prediction (a burden to be lifted up) concerning the **Desert of the Sea** [which was Babylon after great dams were raised to control the waters of the Euphrates River which overflowed it like a sea—and would do so again]: As whirlwinds in the South (the Negeb) sweep through, **so it [the judgment of God by hostile armies] comes from the desert, from a terrible land.** ² A hard and grievous vision is declared to me: the treacherous dealer deals treacherously, and the destroyer destroys. Go up, O **Elam!** Besiege, O **Media!** All the sighing [caused by Babylon's ruthless oppressions] I will cause to cease [says the Lord]. ³ Therefore are my [Isaiah's] loins filled with anguish, pangs have seized me like the pangs of a woman in childbirth; I am bent and pained so that I cannot hear, I am dismayed so that I cannot see. ⁴ My mind reels and wanders, horror terrifies me. **[In my mind's eye I am at the feast of Belshazzar. I see the defilement of the golden vessels taken from God's temple, I watch the handwriting appear on the wall—I know that Babylon's great king is to be slain.]** The twilight I looked forward to with pleasure has been turned into fear and trembling for me. ⁵ They prepare the table, they spread the rugs, [and having] set the watchers [the revelers take no other precaution], they eat, they drink. Arise, you princes, and oil your shields [for your deadly foe is at the gates]! ⁶ For thus has the Lord said to me: Go, set [yourself as] a watchman, let him declare what he sees. ⁷ And when he sees a troop, horsemen in pairs, a troop of donkeys, and a troop of camels, he shall listen diligently, very diligently. ⁸ And [the watchman] cried like a lion, O Lord, I stand continually on the watchtower in the daytime, and I am set in my station every night. ⁹ And see! Here comes a troop of men and chariots, horsemen in pairs! **And he [the watchman] tells [what it foretells]: Babylon has fallen, has fallen! And all the graven images of her gods lie**

shattered on the ground [in my vision]! ¹⁰ O you my threshed and winnowed ones [my own people the Jews, who must be trodden down by Babylon], that which I have heard from the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, I have [joyfully] announced to you [Babylon is to fall]! ¹¹ The mournful, inspired prediction (a burden to be lifted up) concerning Dumah (Edom): One calls to me from Seir (Edom), Watchman, what of the night? [How far is it spent? How long till morning?] Guardian, what of the night? ¹² The watchman said, The morning comes, but also the night. [Another time, if Edom earnestly wishes to know] if you will inquire [of me], inquire; return, come again. ¹³ The mournful, inspired prediction (a burden to be lifted up) concerning Arabia: In the forests and thickets of Arabia you shall lodge, O you caravans of Dedanites [from northern Arabia]. ¹⁴ To the thirsty [Dedanites] bring water, O inhabitants of the land of Tema [in Arabia]; meet the fugitive with bread [suitable] for him. ¹⁵ For they have fled from the swords, from the drawn sword, from the bent bow, and from the grievousness of war [the press of battle]. ¹⁶ For the Lord has said this to me, Within a year, according to the years of a hireling [who will work no longer than was agreed], all the glory of Kedar [an Arabian tribe] will fail. ¹⁷ And the remainder of the number of archers and their bows, the mighty men of the sons of Kedar, will be diminished and few; for the Lord, the God of Israel, has spoken it.

This chapter contains three prophetic oracles concerning Arabia, described in Isaiah 21.1 as 'the Desert by the Sea'. The Arabian Peninsula is surrounded by sea on three sides, the Persian Gulf on the east, the Indian Ocean to the south and the Red Sea to the west. The first oracle (v1-10) describes Arabia's invasion by the Medes and Persians, corresponding to modern-day Iran. Surprisingly, when this region falls, the announcement is "Babylon has fallen, fallen! All the idols of her gods lie shattered on the ground" (v9)! Clearly this is not a description of the ancient city of Babylon which lay inland between two rivers, the Euphrates and the Tigris, but not by the sea. Revelation 17-18 describes the fall of a city that is cryptically [referred to as] Mystery: Babylon. In Revelation 18:2 the announcement of its fall is "Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great!". So Isaiah 21 is an important clue that [the] Babylon [in Revelation 17-18] refers to a city in Arabia, not in Mesopotamia. And the announcement, "All the images of its gods lie shattered on the ground!" (v9) further identifies this city as a centre of religious worship. The obvious conclusion is that Isaiah 21 and Revelation 17-18 are talking about the same thing, namely an invasion of the Arabian Peninsula by Iran, followed by the sudden destruction of an Arabian city that is a centre of religious worship. [Note: It may seem strange that the Bible figuratively refers to a city in Arabia as Babylon. However, Babylon's last king, Nabonidus, extended the Babylonian empire into northern Arabia, as far south as Yathrib (Medina). In fact, he spent most of his reign in his Arabian colony in Tema (v14), known today as Tayma. He left his son Belshazzar to rule Babylon as regent (described as the king of Babylon in Daniel 5:30). Nabonidus was a worshipper of the Babylonian moon-god Sin, rather than the primary Babylonian god Marduk, and he may have preferred to live in Arabia where the worship of Sin was long-established (Exodus 16:1). Whether or not one identifies Allah as an evolved form of this moon-god, it is significant that in the 7th century AD, the crescent moon symbol of Sin was adopted as the symbol of Islam.]

Verse 2 tells us, "The deceiver deceives, the destroyer destroys", and it goes on to describe the attack by Iran. The deceiver likely refers to the Antichrist, of whom Daniel 8:25 says, "By his treachery he will succeed through deceit. He will have an arrogant attitude, and he will destroy many who are unaware of his schemes." Ezekiel 38 tells us that Gog (another name for the

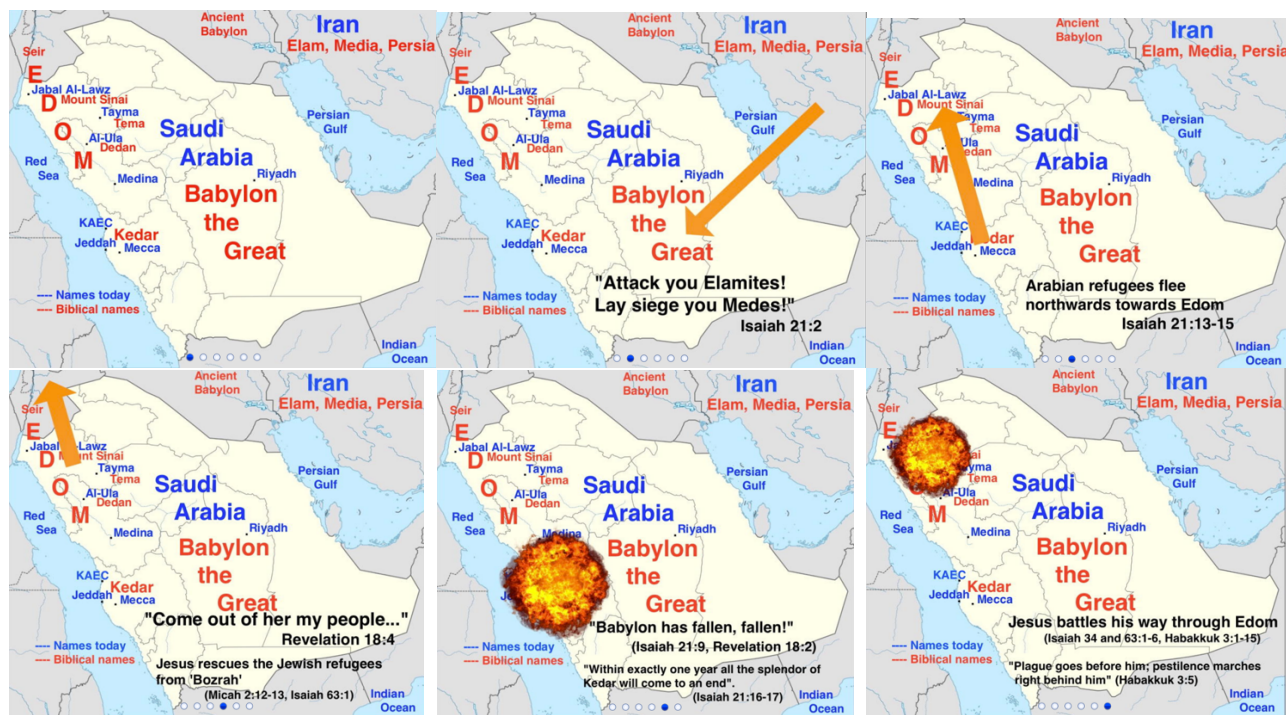
Antichrist) is 'the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal', indicating that he is a ruler of modern-day Turkey. It also identifies Persia (Iran) as one of his allies. Psalm 120 also describes his deceitfulness, and makes a connection between Meshech (Turkey) and Kedar (Arabia). Perhaps Saudi Arabia will form an alliance with Turkey, but Turkey will deceive Saudi and make its own alliance with Iran, Saudi's arch-enemy. Saudi trusts Turkey, but Turkey betrays Saudi and gives Iran the green light to attack.

In verse 3, as Isaiah sees this vision of Iran invading Arabia, he experiences stomach cramps like a woman's labor pains. Similarly, Micah pictures the inhabitants of end-time Jerusalem like a woman screaming in the agonies of labor when Jerusalem falls to the Antichrist (Micah 4:9-10, 5:3). In Matthew 24:8, Jesus described several pre-tribulation events as the beginning of birth pains because they point to the coming fall of Jerusalem at the beginning of the Great Tribulation. In Revelation 12:1-2, Israel is portrayed metaphorically as a woman in labor, and the second coming as the arrival of her baby. So here in verse 3 we see the beginning of the 'labor metaphor' and its association with end-time events.

The identification of 'the Desert by the Sea' as the Arabian Peninsula is further confirmed by the next two oracles. The second oracle (v11-12) concerns Dumah, which is known today as Dumah Al-Jandal and is in northern Saudi Arabia, close to the border with Jordan. Both of the first two oracles portray a watchman, watching for an approaching messenger who might bring news. In other words, the fall of these locations is anticipated, but the replies of the watchmen suggest in each case that the fulfilment of these oracles is delayed. This may imply that these oracles would have a distant fulfilment in the end-times, not a near-fulfilment in Isaiah's day. In the second oracle, someone from Seir asks the watchman for news. Seir is in southern Jordan, but Seir is also used in the bible as a synonym for Edom because the hill country of Seir, between modern-day Aqaba and the bottom of the Dead Sea, was given to the descendants of Esau (Joshua 24:4). In Ezekiel 25, the territory of Edom is seen to stretch beyond Seir, down into Arabia as far as Dedan.

The third oracle is said to concern Arabia, and it prophesies the fall of 'the splendour of Kedar'. The Dedanites who lived in western Arabia (Dedan is modern-day Al-Ula in Saudi Arabia), and those who live in Tema (modern day Tayma in Saudi Arabia), are called to provide food and water for refugees from Kedar (v15-16). In Isaiah 42:11 and Jeremiah 49:29, the people of Kedar are described as nomads of the eastern desert (Arabia) who live in tents and keep sheep and camels. As in Genesis 25:6, the Israelites thought of Arabia as being to the east, because to get there from Israel you first travelled east across the Jordan, before turning south. It is likely that Kedar represents central Arabia, as opposed to northern Arabia where Dedan and Tema were located. The people of Kedar were descended from Kedar, the second son of Ishmael (Genesis 25:13). Mohammed, the so-called prophet of Islam, claimed to be descended from Ishmael, and is understood to have descended through Kedar. So Kedar may cover a wide area of Arabia, including the region of Mecca in central western Arabia. Verse 16 says, "Within exactly one year all the splendor of Kedar will come to an end". This seems to predict war in Saudi Arabia that will last one calendar year. It appears to start with an invasion by Elam and Media (Iran) (v2), and ends with the destruction of the splendour of Kedar. This most likely describes the destruction of one or more major cities in Arabia, possibly Mecca, Riyadh, Jedda, or Medina, or possibly Dubai or Abu Dhabi if we include the UAE. Given the identification of the city as a religious centre in verse 9, it most likely refers to Mecca or Medina, or both. Similarly, Revelation 17-18 prophesies the sudden catastrophic fall of the city that is cryptically called 'Mystery Babylon'.

Although this chapter contains three oracles, because they all concern the same general area of Saudi Arabia and the Arabian Peninsula, it is better to understand them as three parts of the same oracle, describing a chain of events set off by the invasion of Iran. Furthermore, according to the genealogy of 1 Chronicles 1:29-30, Dumah, Tema and Kedar were three of the sons of Ishmael. So this whole chapter is a prophecy about the Ishmaelites of Arabia.



See Endnote ⁴⁸ for source and to connect with more studies on this.

Linking Psalm 137 to Help Identify End Time Babylon with Arabia⁴⁹

This psalm contains an end-time prophecy of the destruction of Edom, figuratively called the Daughter of Babylon. The first part of this psalm (v1-6) is a lament by the Jewish exiles during the time of the Babylonian exile in the 6th century BC. They remember Zion (Jerusalem), and lament its fall.

Verses 7 to 9 are an important end-time prophecy of the fall of Edom, referred to as the 'Daughter of Babylon'. The 'Daughter of Babylon' is Edom in Arabia, and not Ancient Babylon which is in modern-day Iraq. Edom is referred to as the Daughter of Babylon because in the latter part of the Babylonian Empire, Nabonidus, its last king, extended the Babylonian empire to include Edom and Arabia as far south as Yathrib (now Medina in Saudi Arabia). Nabonidus spent most of his reign in his Arabian colony at Tema (now Tayma in western Saudi Arabia), leaving his son Belshazzar to rule Babylon as regent (Daniel 5:30).

Being the descendants of Esau, the Edomites and the Israelites were relatives. But in 586 BC, when the Babylonians conquered Judah, Obadiah 1:10-14 records that the Edomites joined in the slaughter and behaved as though they were in league with the Babylonians. They entered the city, joined in the looting, and slaughtered those who were trying to escape. Because of this great act of betrayal, the bible contains more prophecies of condemnation and judgment against Edom than

against any other nation (Psalm 137:7-9, Isaiah 11:14, 21:11-12, 34:5-17, 63:1-6, Jeremiah 9:25-26, 25:17-26, 49:7-12, Lamentations 4:21-22, Ezekiel 25:12-14, 35:1-15, Joel 3:19, Amos 1:11-12, 9:11-12, Obadiah, Malachi 1:4).

In verse 8 the Jewish exiles in Ancient Babylon refer to Edom's coming destruction. This is probably based on the prophecy of Jeremiah 49 which was given before the exile. Jeremiah 49:18 prophesies that Edom will be destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah, and that no-one will live there afterwards. Revelation 18:2 links the destruction of Mystery Babylon to the prophecy in Isaiah 34 of Edom's judgment. So it is reasonable to understand that verse 8 refers to the still-future destruction of Edom as part of Mystery Babylon.

Linking Isaiah 34 to Help Identify End Time Babylon with Arabia

The study is so comprehensive we can't include it here, although after this lesson, you will be able to go to Endnote ⁵⁰ directly and see how the pieces fit undeniably together as a totally viable contribution to understanding *Mystery: Babylon* lining up with Arabia as time progresses and these sealed mysteries begin to come to light. The author tells us *it is important to follow the pointers that Revelation 17-18 gives us to the prophecies of Isaiah 13, 21, 34, 47, Jeremiah 49, 50-51. All of these are ultimately prophecies about the fall of Mystery Babylon in modern-day Saudi Arabia.*⁵¹

[One such contribution there is that] Isaiah 34:9-10 tells us that Edom's streams will be turned to pitch and the land will become blazing pitch. Given that it is talking about a region within Saudi Arabia, this is surely a reference to burning oil fields. The streams are not streams of water but oil wells which are set alight. In the First Gulf War, Saddam Hussein set alight to Kuwait's oil fields, as shown in the photo below:



Key Characteristics

Certain key characteristics point convincingly toward Mecca in Saudi Arabia as the most plausible fulfillment of Babylon.

(a) First, the prophecy specifies that Babylon is a **literal city** (Revelation 17:18). Obviously, Mecca is a very real and tangible city and not merely some vague concept, such as the “world system” or “global apostasy.” If we consider the broader kingdom of which Mecca is the spiritual heart, then no doubt, it would be the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In an even broader sense, Mecca is the spiritual capital of the entire Muslim world.⁵² This city also exercises pervasive **religious** and **economic** influence over nations, a distinction many modern financial hubs fail to meet. Mecca, by contrast, stands at the heart of Islam, a faith practiced by nearly two billion adherents worldwide.⁵³ Five times daily, observant Muslims around the globe turn toward Mecca in prayer, reinforcing its position as a religious capital unmatched by cities associated merely with commerce or politics.

The Great City. Remember, the greatness of “Babylon the great” doesn’t so much rest in how many tall buildings she has or the square miles she covers. Rather, the prophecy seems to focus more on her far-reaching and vast influence over kings, peoples, nations and tribes.

The largest false religion on earth would almost indisputably be Islam, so it's hard to not imagine it playing a major role in end times events, but atheism, paganism, and apostate Christianity could all also be in view.⁵⁴

The Womb and Heart of Islam. ...the city of Mecca is the very womb from which the relation of Islam was birthed. It was in Mecca that Muhammad was born, grew up, launched his early “prophetic” career, and began preaching his new religion, and it is where Islam eventually experienced its greatest success. Saudi Arabia is the home of both Mecca and Medina, the two cities where Muhammad spent most of his life; ...they are the two most sacred cities to Muslims worldwide. ...One of the most critical descriptions of the harlot that we identified is as the most significant center of global idolatry that ever existed. Today Mecca (“archetypal epicenter”) serves as the spiritual center for 1.6 billion Muslims. It is the spiritual capital of the world’s second-largest religion, ruling over and controlling every single nation that surrounds Israel.

The Womb and Heart of Radical Wahhabi Islam. Wahhabism/Salafism is essentially a Sunni Muslim reformation movement with the goal of returning to the practices of earlier Muslims. ...Saudi Arabia is the very womb and heart of the vilest and most ...radical Islam the world has ever known.

The Clash of Two Cities. ...the book of Revelation is largely a tale of two great cities. It is a tale of the clash between the harlot and the bride, the city of Satan and the city of the great King. ...to both Jews and Christians, Jerusalem is the pinnacle of all religious expectation, longing and hope. It is the city of peace—the city of Yahweh. On the other hand, Muslims have an entirely different city that they look to as the spiritual center of the world. This city is Mecca—the city of Allah. While Islamic prophecies do indeed look toward a day when Muslims will rule over Jerusalem, it is to them the ultimate “holy” city. This position is held by Mecca. Jerusalem ranks only as the third holiest city in Islam.

The spirit of contention that rests on Mecca specifically toward Jerusalem is transparent... To understand the spiritual conflict in the Middle East, one must understand the Muslim mind-set particularly regarding Israel and Jerusalem. We have two important principles working together. One is the unbending, monochromatic fashion in which the more puritanical forms of Islamic thorough function—in strict black and whites. The second is the incontestable idea that Islam has a divine right to rule the world. As such, it is unbearable to the radical Islamic mind that there exists in the Middle East another city that claims to be the religious or spiritual center of the world. ...The Muslim world cannot rest until the throbbing pain caused by Jerusalem is silenced. As the prophet Zechariah made clear, in the last days, Jerusalem will be as a cup of strong drink that causes the surrounding nations to become drunk with a spirit of jealousy and rage.

Zechariah 12.2-3 ² *Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem.* ³ *And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.*

This drunken rage is evident in the endless inflammatory rhetoric such as the following from comments by Hamas: “We are announcing a war against the sons of apes and pigs, which will not end until the flag of Islam is raised in Jerusalem” or when Safwat Hagazy said on Egyptian TV during the height of the first Egyptian Revolution, “Our capital... shall be Jerusalem with Allah’s will. Our chant will be ‘Millions of martyrs will march toward Jerusalem!’” What other religion on earth causes its followers to become so drunk with jealousy toward Jerusalem, with such a demonic lust to

possess the land of Israel, and a hatred of the Jewish people? There is no other religion in the world that comes even close.

The story of Jerusalem someday becoming the joy of the whole world, and the city of the great King (Psalm 48:2) is the ultimate focal point of hope and expectation throughout the entire Bible. In terms of a city that represents a deliberate and concerted demonic effort to thwart those very plans, Mecca is unparalleled.⁵⁵

(b) Second, Revelation frames Babylon as a site of **profound idolatry** or spiritual adultery (Revelation 17:2–5). Within Biblical language, harlotry often symbolizes devotion directed away from the God of the Bible.⁵⁶ From a Christian perspective, any alternative form of worship can be deemed idolatrous. Given the scale and focus of Islamic rites in Mecca—particularly surrounding the Kaaba—it stands out as a global epicenter of worship not aligned with biblical Christianity. No other locale commands such unified, daily veneration by so many followers.

(c) Third, the prophecy speaks of a power that seduces “*the kings of the earth*” through both **wealth** and **religion** (Revelation 18:3). Saudi Arabia’s global influence has long been magnified by its oil wealth and strategic spending, including funding for religious centers worldwide.⁵⁷ Across numerous regions, lavish investments extend beyond commerce, shaping political alliances and religious infrastructures. This phenomenon mirrors the Revelation narrative more closely than does a purely commercial city that lacks a unifying worldwide faith dimension.

(d) Fourth, the Biblical portrait includes specific geographical clues. According to Revelation 17:3, the figure John sees is situated in a “*wilderness*” or “*desert*,” a descriptor fitting the Arabian Peninsula. Unlike temperate or coastal European cities commonly proposed, Mecca thrives within a predominantly desert region.⁵⁸ Moreover, the text describes Babylon as a **consuming power**, importing luxury goods from around the globe without substantial export mention (Revelation 18:11–13). Saudi Arabia’s high consumption patterns, financed by vast oil revenues, dovetail with this depiction. A city and state that consumes goods, but produces idolatry and false religion.

(e) Fifth, Revelation highlights an entity “*drunk with the blood of the saints*” (Revelation 17:6), suggesting an engine of persecution. Modern analyses consistently reveal that many of the worst environments for Christian communities are found in predominantly Islamic nations.⁵⁹ Although not all persecution arises from a single place, Saudi Arabia’s history of fostering or funding radical ideologies underscores the region’s association with such opposition. This pattern supports a reading of Mecca’s religious centrality as deeply involved in end-time conflicts described in Revelation.

Finally, the text portrays a **temporary alliance** between Babylon and the “*beast*,” ending in betrayal (Revelation 17:16). Geopolitically, turmoil within radical Islamist movements reveals how even their financial or ideological sponsors can become targets. Shifts in leadership and regional power struggles indicate how alliances in this sphere could dissolve abruptly, consistent with Biblical predictions. Thus, from worship rites to political intrigue, Mecca offers a coherent alignment with Revelation’s end-time imagery.

In sum, the case for Mecca (and by extension Saudi Arabia) as Babylon emerges from several interwoven factors: desert geography, unparalleled religious devotion, profound economic clout, and historical connections with severe persecution. Although debates around these interpretations continue, the convergence of Biblical criteria offers a compelling reason to see Mecca as the strongest present-day candidate for Babylon’s identity.⁶⁰

Two Additional Considerations About Babylon from Scripture.

1. Babylon is actually the place always known as Babylon. Many believe that a likely candidate of who *Babylon the great* represents is simply **Babylon**. And that is, **it is the capital city and the empire of antichrist**. At times it stands for the city where his kingdom/empire is based. Other times, it stands for the entire empire. This view fits what we're going to discover [in] chapters 17 and 18. See Endnote ⁶¹ for in-depth Scripture study on why Babylon seems to be **actually Babylon**.

2. An entity that did not exist and was wholly unknown at the time the book was penned. Because the view that Babylon is actually the place of Babylon is based almost exclusively on the use of the name "**Babylon**," many doubt that believing that Babylon refers to a rebuilt city of Babylon in Iraq because that reasoning seems to fall apart quickly upon analysis for the following reasons:

(a) If Babylon the Great were a reference to the rebuilt city of Babylon in Iraq, its name would be no "**mystery**."⁶² Instead, Revelation 17:5 [seems to] indicate that the name refers to some future entity whose identity was entirely unknown in AD 96, which was therefore represented symbolically—as with other eschatological entities in the book of Revelation. The characterization of the name "Babylon the Great" as a "mystery" shows that the name is referring to something other than a rebuilt city of Babylon in Iraq.

(b) Virtually all writers refer to Babylon the Great as "**Babylon**," which tends to leave the impression that Babylon the Great ["must refer to"] the old city of Babylon, rebuilt. However, an examination of the occurrences of this name in Revelation reveals that John never refers to Babylon as simply "Babylon." In the book of Revelation, John calls this entity "Babylon the Great," "the great city, Babylon," and "Babylon, the great city," but never "Babylon" absolutely, alone and without modifiers (Revelation 14.8; 16.19; 17.5; 18.2, 10, 21). Four times, it is simply called "the great city," **without** the use of the name "Babylon" (Revelation 17:18; 18:16, 18-19). Conversely, in the Old Testament, Babylon is only called "great Babylon" (= "Babylon the Great") once, in Daniel 4:30, and there in a speech by a pagan king. It is never called "the great city, Babylon," "Babylon, the great city," or even "the great city." If a rebuilt city of Babylon were in view in Revelation, it ought to be called "**Babylon**" without modifiers at least once, if for no other reason than to make it clear that Babylon the Great is indeed the old city of Babylon, rebuilt. Instead, the consistent use of the descriptive adjective "great" accompanied by the definite article indicates that a different entity is in view in the book of Revelation. Following Biblical terminology, ... "Babylon the Great" is used for the eschatological entity in Revelation 17:1–19:4.

[Thus it would seem to this group of Bible scholars that] [t]he primary reason that the book of Revelation calls the prostitute "Babylon the Great" is that she represents an entity that did not exist and was wholly unknown at the time the book was penned. Hence, the Revelator chose to use a metaphor and state that the real name was a "mystery" (Revelation 17:5). ...The name "Babylon the Great" was chosen, rather than some other name, to show that the entity it represents is the pinnacle of the glory, wealth, power, and wickedness of the kingdoms of man.

BABYLON'S ENDINGS: BABYLON IN REVELATION

Babylon is mentioned six times by name in the book of Revelation, with Revelation 14.8, the second angel's message, being the first time.

Revelation 14:8 *And there followed another angel, saying, **Babylon** is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.*

[Note: In addition to being a means of emphasis, note that the repetition of the word "**fallen**" may refer to the fall of Babylon in its twofold existence—its fall religiously (Revelation 17) and its fall politically and commercially (Revelation 18).]

Revelation 16:19 *And the great city [Jerusalem: see Revelation 11.8] was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and **great Babylon** came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.*

Revelation 17:5 *And upon her forehead was a name written, **MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.***

Revelation 18:2 *And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, **Babylon the great** is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.*

Revelation 18:10 *Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, **that great city Babylon**, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.*

Revelation 18:21 *And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall **that great city Babylon** be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.*

[Whether Babylon is the *rebuilt* City of Babylon, or an entity yet to be known does not change what the Lord is letting us **definitely know**, so don't get distracted by that.]

Deuteronomy 29.29 *The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.*

Amos 3.7 *Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.*

Babylon plays a significant role in the events prior to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. As with almost all other aspects of the book of Revelation, in order to understand what Babylon *is* and *what it is not*, it is important to recognize and remember that the book of **Revelation is the capstone of many streams of prophecy which find their source elsewhere in Scripture, and especially in the Old Testament.** In a similar way that Genesis and Revelation serve as bookends around God's written revelation, Babylon also has great significance both in the beginning and end of God's plan in history.⁶³

Revelation 14.8 *"Fallen, fallen is **Babylon the great.**"*

The reason the angel says it has fallen already is to underscore that its fall is imminent and that it is certain. Can you imagine when suddenly there is an angel flying the the midst of heaven proclaiming that antichrist's empire is soon to be destroyed. And proclaiming it in such certain terms, it's as if it's already fallen. That news will be shocking to the inhabitants of the earth because they will have already witnessed the apparent invincibility of antichrist. They will be convinced that he is their hero, he is their warrior champion, the invincible one.

Notice what he says: "**Fallen, fallen.**" Its destruction is described as if it's already happened, but it doesn't actually happen until the seventh bowl judgment, recorded in chapter 16. This shaking of the earth and kingdoms refers to the activities of the ultimate *king/empire of Babylon, the Beast, and his close unity and empowerment with Satan, the Dragon.*

Revelation 16:17 *"[Then] the seventh angel poured out his bowl upon the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne saying, 'It is done.'" And then **verse 19:** "The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. *Babylon the great* was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath."*

People will have yielded their allegiance to the Beast based on their confidence in him. But now this angel announces that the **worldwide powerful empire of antichrist, the most powerful ruler and world empire in human history, is about to be absolutely destroyed.**

The **reason** Christ will destroy antichrist's empire is:

Revelation 14:8 *"She who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality."* That same reason is repeated again:

Revelation 18:3 *"For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality."*

In this expression, John is combining two thoughts.

1. He's picturing a cup of wine that a prostitute gives to someone she's about to seduce.

Revelation 17:2 *"With whom the kings of the earth committed acts of immorality, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality."*

Revelation 17:4 *"The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality."* Antichrist's kingdom is pictured as a prostitute who seduces the nations of the world with every kind of excess in order to entice them, to seduce them, to become involved with her. That's the first picture.

2. But there's another picture: it's the picture of the cup of God's wrath that He gives to those He punishes.

Revelation 14:10 *"He also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb."*

So, you have these two metaphors: One, a cup of wine that's used by antichrist's empire, posing like a prostitute to seduce the nations, to get involved with him and his kingdom. And then you have the cup of God's wrath that He gives to those He punishes. The point of these mixed metaphors is that the people of this world will willingly drink the wine of Babylon and engage in spiritual immorality with her. **But God will turn that cup into the cup of the wine of His wrath.**

But this brings up a larger question. Why would Christ proclaim to the entire world through His angel the imminent collapse of antichrist's kingdom and reign? It really follows up on the first angel who was proclaiming the gospel. It's yet another gracious warning. It's another call to turn and to trust in the living God, to fear Him, to give Him glory, to worship Him. Because everything they put their trust in, everything they put their confidence in, the one they worship, will soon be destroyed. Again, you see the grace of Jesus Christ.⁶⁴

The Destruction of Babylon

In Revelation chapters 17 and 18, we learn in detail of the destruction of Antichrist's false religious system, his political empire, and his capital city as we look at the final judgment of **Babylon**. Chapters 17 and 18 step away from the chronology **to describe in detail the total destruction of Babylon the Great**. These two chapters step away from the chronological flow the events of the end of the tribulation to enlarge on the theme that was summarized in Revelation 16:19.

These two chapters do not follow the seven bowls. In fact, nothing follows the seven bowls except the return of the Lord Jesus Christ and the judgments associated with His return.

In Revelation 16:17, when the seventh angel poured out his bowl. John had only mentioned in passing, the summary of what happens in the **seventh bowl** as it was poured out:

Revelation 16:19 *And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.*

The **great city** is Jerusalem as we discovered in Chapter 11:

Revelation 11.8 *And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.*

Then the cities of the nations fell, and then “**Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath**” (16.19 above). Accordingly, as the seventh bowl of judgment is poured out on the earth, part of the destruction of that final bowl (the destruction of *religious Babylon*) occurs at the midpoint of the Great Tribulation, and the other part of the destruction of that final bowl [the destruction of the political (*economic/commercial*) Babylon as seen in Revelation 18] occurs near the end of the Tribulation period.

The announcement of the fall of Babylon in chapter 18 which comes immediately after the destruction of the harlot in chapter 17, causes many to think that these are one and the same event. However, there are several things which show they are two different events, though described in similar terms. We have here the fall of religious Babylon followed later by the fall of political and commercial Babylon.

(1) The woman of chapter 17 is made desolate, naked, and burned with fire by the beast with the ten horns, whereas the fall of chapter 18 is accomplished directly by God at the end of the Tribulation.

Revelation 16:17-21 *And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. ¹⁸And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. ¹⁹And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. ²⁰And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. ²¹And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.*

The fall of religious Babylon (chapter 17) occurs when the beast assumes his religious role in the middle of the Tribulation and assumes world political power. The world apostate ecumenical system is destroyed in favor of the new world religion which worships the political dictator of chapter 13 whose capitol city will be in rebuilt Babylon (the beast).

The destruction of Babylon in chapter 18 should be compared with the preceding announcement in 16:19 above, where the great city is divided and the cities of the Gentiles fall. This event comes late in the great Tribulation, just prior to the second coming of Christ, in contrast to the destruction of the harlot of chapter 17 which seems to precede the great Tribulation and paves the way for the worship of the beast (13:8).

(2) The context of chapter 18 with its many references to the kings and merchants and commerce shows that, in this setting, Babylon is viewed in her political, economic, and commercial character, rather than in her religious role (see Revelation 18.11-19⁶⁵).

The kings of the earth as well as the merchants will all mourn the passing of the Babylon of

Revelation 18:9-10 *And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, ¹⁰Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.*

There is apparently no mourning connected with the destruction of the woman in chapter 17.⁶⁶

The Destruction of Babylon According to Two Schools of Interpretation

A point of disagreement concerning the interpretation of Scripture involves how to handle passages which predict events and circumstances which **evidently have not come to pass**. For those who uphold the inerrancy and inspiration of Scripture, there are only two alternatives:

1. **Dramatic Hyperbole**⁶⁷ - Prophetic passages must be understood to employ extensive use of figures of speech such as hyperbole for dramatic effect. They should not be understood in a literal way but must be seen as a form of dramatic exaggeration emphasizing the harshness with which God views sin and its related judgment. They were “*fulfilled in an approximate way*” [in other words, “good enough”] by events of the past or are statements of spiritual “*principles*.”
2. **Literal Prediction** - Unfulfilled prophetic passages make limited use of hyperbole, but in such a way that it is obvious where it occurs (e.g., 1 Samuel 5:12 where *the cry of the city ‘went up to heaven’*). **In the main, prophetic passages are accurate predictions of catastrophic judgments which have not yet occurred.**

Depending upon which of these two views one holds when reading the Old Testament, unfulfilled passages will either be loosely applied to the immediate circumstances or they will be seen as extending beyond the immediate circumstances and speaking to an ultimate fulfillment in the distant future. Futurist interpreters are of this latter persuasion because they understand previously fulfilled prophecy to indicate a pattern of literal fulfillment. See Endnote ⁶⁸ for further study in hermeneutics, *The Art and Science of Interpretation*.

This is of great importance when we come to the matter of Babylon in Scripture because **all interpreters are aware that extensive prophecies concerning Babylon, and especially the manner of her destruction, have never been fulfilled as they were stated**. Those who favor “*dramatic hyperbole*” as an explanation tend to believe the passages were fulfilled in an approximate, but suitable way. Those who favor literal prediction believe these passages have never been fulfilled, even approximately, and continue to speak of the future destruction of Babylon at the time of the end. We are in this latter group.

Babylon’s Historic Fall Was Never Destruction at the Hands of Catastrophic Attack

Babylon has never been *destroyed* at the hands of a catastrophic attack as prophesied in the Old Testament (see Endnote ⁶⁹ for all Scriptures that must be fulfilled to qualify for *Babylon’s Predicted Destruction*).

- When one examines the historical record concerning the fall of the city of Babylon in 539 B.C. to Persia (Daniel 5:30-31⁷⁰), it is clear that the term “*destruction*” is much too strong a word to describe what actually transpired. On the night that Belshazzar, king of the Chaldeans, was slain and the city came under the control of Darius the Mede, it “*fell*” politically, but not physically. There was no large-scale attack upon the city. In fact, many within the city were not even aware for quite some time afterwards that the city had been taken. The city was taken by diverting the waters of the Euphrates. This allowed armed forces to wade under her defenses without much of a fight:

The city fell by complete surprise. Half of the metropolis was captured before the rest of it was “*aware*” of the fact, according to Herodotus. Cyrus diverted the waters of the Euphrates and by night entered the city through the dried up channel.⁷¹

Rather than being physically overthrown, as predicted by Isaiah (Isaiah 13, 14, 47) and Jeremiah (Jeremiah 50, 51), the city and its occupants were treated with considerable respect.

On . . . Oct. 29, 539 B.C., sixteen days after the capitulation, Cyrus himself entered the city amid much public acclaim, ending the Chaldean dynasty as predicted by the Hebrew prophets (Isaiah 13:21; Jeremiah 50). Cyrus treated the city with great respect, returning to their own shrines

the statues of the deities brought in from other cities. The Jews were sent home with compensatory assistance. He appointed new governors, so ensuring peace and stable conditions essential to the proper maintenance of the religious centers.⁷²

Babylon generally flourished under the Persians, although there is record of a revolt against Xerxes I which resulted in a harsh response:

Under the Persians, Babylon retained most of its institutions, became capital of the richest satrapy in the empire, and, according to Herodotus, the world's most splendid city. A revolt against Xerxes I (482) led to destruction of its fortifications and temples and the melting down of the golden image of Marduk.⁷³

In subsequent campaigns which took control of Babylon, rather than being violently overthrown, the city slowly decayed due to competition and neglect:

- On October 12, 539 B.C., Babylon fell to Cyrus of Persia, and from that time on the decay of the city began. Xerxes plundered it. Alexander the Great thought to restore its great temple, in ruins in his day, but was deterred by the prohibitive cost. During the period of Alexander's successors the area decayed rapidly and soon became a desert. From the days of Seleucus Nicator (312-280 B.C.), who built the rival city of Seleucia on the Tigris, queenly Babylon never revived.⁷⁴

See Endnote ⁷⁵ for more examples of Babylon under siege yet not politically nor physically destroyed as the prophecies concerning Babylon go. See Endnote ⁷⁶ for Scriptures describing the prophecies of the destruction of Babylon.

More Facts and Postulations About Destruction of Babylon Not Yet Fulfilled

The Word of God is true and [many believe] the prophecies [about the destruction of Babylon] still await a future fulfillment. ⁷⁷

Although the city still stood when Roman emperor Trajan entered it in A.D. 115, by about A.D. 200 the site of the city was deserted. Thereafter, the city was mostly forgotten until the 1800s when archaeological expeditions began to investigate the site.

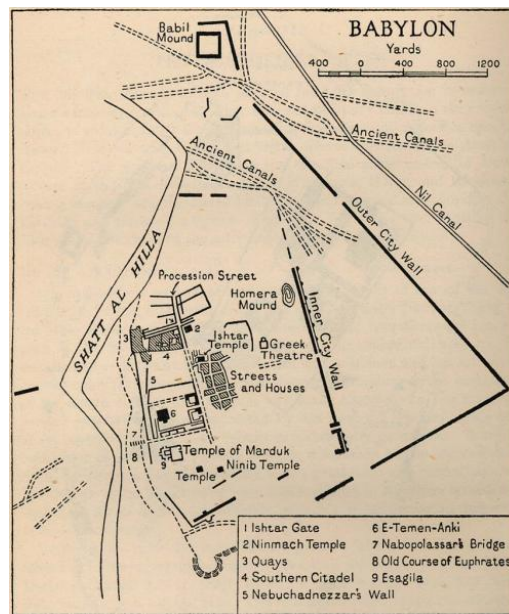
In the mid-1960s, the Iraqi Department of Antiquities carried out further work at the site. "The Ishtar gateway . . . was partially restored together with the Procession Way . . . The *Ninmah* temple was reconstructed, and a museum and rest house built on the site, which is also partially covered by the village of Jumjummah."

When the Medes and Persians conquered the city they came suddenly and gained immediate control, but they did not destroy the city. **Instead Cyrus the Mede beautified the city in 540 B.C.** Hundreds of years later many Jews still lived at Babylon and a Jewish Talmud actually originated from there. In the twelfth century A.D. Babylon had grown and several mosques had been erected. Later a city by the name of Hillah was built there and in 1900 it had a population of ten thousand. The land around Babylon is fertile today and dates are grown in abundance (Isaiah 13:21).

Other cities around the area of Babylon were built from the ruins of ancient Babylon; in fact the city of Hillah was built entirely from the ruins of Babylon. Bricks with the word "Babylon" stamped on them have been found as far away as Bagdad.

It is obvious from this historical information that the city was not destroyed suddenly nor completely. Instead, it continued to be inhabited after it was conquered and the land around her did not become desolate, but continued to be populated and fertile. This is a fact of history. Her ruins were used in building other cities and there was no disturbance in the sun or moon, nor did universal peace follow.

Plan of Restoration of Babylon (1944)



18

In more recent times, Saddam Hussein (from Iraq) built himself a palace on a man-made hill beside the footprint of the original city. Then, in 1987, he ordered construction of a replica of Nebuchadnezzar's vast palace on the original site. Museums were also built. But since his fall from power in 2003, his private palace was ransacked by mobs and two museums at the site were looted. During almost this entire time, there have been people occupying the site or living nearby—in stark contrast to the predictions of Scripture concerning the uninhabitable wasteland it is predicted to one day become.⁷⁸

Zechariah Chapter 5 and the Land of Shinar

Another passage which is often overlooked in establishing the identification of Babylon is the puzzling passage which occupies the last half of Zechariah chapter 5.

Summary: An angel shows Zechariah a basket containing a woman covered with a lead disk. The angel identifies the woman: "...*this is Wickedness!*" (Zechariah 5.8). The basket is then transported away by two winged figures (Zechariah 5.9 *they had wings like the wings of a stork*: [an unclean bird]). When Zechariah asks where the basket is bound, the angel responds, "*To build a house for it in the land of Shinar; when it is ready, the basket will be set there on its base.*" (Zechariah 5.11)

1. First, the prophet sees as "ephah" (or bath) which was the largest measure for dry goods among the Jews. It would, therefore, be the natural symbol for Commerce. (Zechariah 5.6)
2. Next, we note that twice over it is said that the ephah "goeth forth" (Zechariah 5:5, 6). As the whole of the preceding visions concern Jerusalem and her people, this can only mean that the center of Jewish commerce is to be transferred from Palestine elsewhere.
3. Next, we are told that there was a "woman" is concealed in the midst of the ephah (**Zechariah 5:5-6** *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. 6 And I said, What is it? "Concealed,"* for in Zechariah 5.5-6, the "woman" is not seen — the leaden cover had to be lifted before she could be seen. (Zechariah 5.7-8 AMP *And behold, a round, flat weight of lead was lifted and there sat a woman in the midst of the ephah[-sized vessel]. 8 And he said, This is lawlessness (wickedness)! And he thrust her back into the ephah[-sized vessel] and he cast the weight of lead upon the mouth of it!*) The writer is satisfied that this hidden woman in the ephah is "*the Woman*" which is fully revealed in Revelation 17 and 18.

4. Next, we are told that “wickedness” (lawlessness) was cast into the ephah, before its cover was closed again.
5. Then, in what follows, we are shown this ephah, with the “woman” and “wickedness” shut up therein, being rapidly conveyed from Palestine to “*the land of Shinar*” (Zechariah 5:11 *And he said unto me, To build it an house **in the land of Shinar**: and it shall be established, and set there upon her own base.*). The purpose for this is stated to be, “to build a house,” i.e. a settled habitation. One of the helpful aspects of this passage is the mention made of the destination: “**the land of Shinar.**” This locale is mentioned only a handful of times (Genesis 10:10; 11:2; 14:1, 9; Isaiah 11:11; Daniel 1:2; Zechariah 5:11) and is clearly established as the region of Babel and Babylon. It points to the geographical location of Babel and, later, Babylon.⁷⁹
We believe the transport of “Wickedness!” back to the **land of Shinar** is another piece of evidence that Babylon of the end is a rebuilt literal city in the same geographic location as Babel, the site of man’s original rebellious city ruled by Nimrod. **The history of man is to be brought full circle: in the same place where the first king rebelled against God, so too will the last king rule before his demise and the institution of the Millennial Kingdom.**
6. Finally, we are assured, “*it shall be established, and set there (in the land of Shinar) upon her own base.*” This vision or prophecy contains the beginnings of which is afterwards expanded and developed in such detail in Revelation 17 and 18, where it is shown that “*the house*” which is established for this system of commerce is “*Babylon the great.*”⁸⁰
7. When the woman attempts to escape, she is thrown back into the ephah, which becomes, so to say, the chariot in which she is carried away **as something which is defiled and defiling, from the land in which God shall dwell**; and the talent with which she carries on her unrighteous trace becomes the heavy weight by which she is held down till she is landed safely “in her own place,” where, after a season of lawless liberty in which she will allure men to their own destruction by her seductive attractiveness and luxury, she will be judged and destroyed, together with him who is pre-eminently styled “The Wicked One,” by the brightness of the Lord’s *parousia* (*coming*) (2 Thessalonians 2.8).⁸¹

It shows from actual facts and events which are before us the very strong probability that “**the land of Shinar**”—which in the past was so “***prominent in connection with the manifestation of evil on the part of man, and of judgment on the part of God, that it stands peculiarly as a memorial of proud ungodliness met by the visitation of righteous vengeance from above***”—will yet, as Scripture forecasts, play a very important part in the consummation of human “**wickedness**” in the final anti-Christian apostasy, in which a godless Judaism and a corrupt, unbelieving Christianity will be united for the sake of the false peace, and pomp, and luxury, and a humanitarianism dissociated from God and the truth, which the system, outwardly symbolized by the ephah, will for a time minister to them, but which, as Scripture also warns us, will end in the most terrible judgment which has yet befallen man upon the earth.⁸²

There are significant similarities between the woman in the basket and what John sees concerning Babylon in Revelation 17 and 18. We believe these similarities are intentional and that the two are to be connected. The transport of the basket to the land of Shinar establishes the location of end-time Babylon. She will be right where God said! The correlation between Zechariah’s vision and that of John is more than uncanny.

Zechariah 5 and Revelation 17-18

Zechariah 5:5-11	Revelation 17-18 ⁸³
Woman sitting in a basket.	Woman sitting on the beast, seven mountains, and many waters (Revelation 17.3, 17.9, 17.15.)
Emphasis on commerce (a basket for measuring grain).	Emphasis on commerce.
Woman's name is wickedness.	Woman's name is Babylon the Great, Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth.
Focus on false worship (a temple is built for the woman).	Focus on false worship (Revelation 17.5).
Woman is taken to Babylon.	Woman is called Babylon.

It is our view that the only obstacle to taking Babylon in the book of Revelation as the literal city on the banks of the Euphrates River is one of timing and faith. Obviously, if Babylon is the literal city, then the events of the book of Revelation are still some distance off from the time of our writing. It will take time for events to conspire such that the city will be rebuilt to become a global hub for world trade. This is really the only obstacle between the Scriptural passages before us and a literal fulfillment. Fortunately, the One Who wrote the predictions also has all the time in the world and is faithful to keep His word!

And the LORD answered me, and said, write the vision, and make *it* plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. **For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.** (Habukkuk 2.2-3) [emphasis added]

Read ***Babylon Rising Handout*** to see what is going on in Babylon right now.

Right now—not in some hazy prophetic future, but this year—the Iraqi government is pouring \$17 billion into one of the most ambitious infrastructure projects on the planet. And at the ruins of Babylon itself? A four-thousand-year-old temple to a pagan goddess is being lovingly restored—with American funding—for weddings and festivals. It reopens this autumn. The prophetic stage is being set. And almost nobody is talking about it.

¹ Image courtesy of the *Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection*, University of Texas at Austin. [www.lib.utexas.edu/maps]

² This Introduction is repeated in both Revelation 17 and 18, and also in the ***Supplement to Revelation Bible Study—Babylon***.

³ **Babylon is Explicitly Said to be a City**. If Scripture speaks for itself, the Harlot is seen to be one-and-the-same as the city Babylon. Just as Tyre and Jerusalem are described as harlots, so too is Babylon. If the Harlot is a city (Revelation 17:18) and the city is a harlot (Revelation 19:2) and their characteristics overlap as we've shown above, then there is little room for making the Harlot a separate ecclesiastical system.

It is indeed surprising how any mistake could have been made in the identification of this woman. For **the Holy Spirit first shows us her very name upon her forehead. Then in [Revelation 17:18], He tells us as plainly as words can tell anything that “the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth”; and [Revelation 16:19 {referred to as *great Babylon*, where *Jerusalem* is described in the same passage as *the great***

city]], as well as [Revelation 17:5] identifies this city with Babylon. God says it is a “city.” He does not say a **system** or a **religion**, but a “CITY.”

The woman is identified as the great city (Revelation 17:18) whose fall is described in chapter 18. **From internal evidence, the identity of Babylon the woman (chapter 17) with Babylon the great city (chapter 18) is so unmistakable that it would be inappropriate to make them different entities.**

We believe a better solution is to recognize the essential unity concerning all that is related about Babylon. The Harlot and the city are one. But the city has two aspects: both a religious aspect and a commercial aspect. Both of these date back to the time of Nimrod and the tower of Babel (Genesis 11:4). These streams of influence have spanned both history and geography: she “sits on many waters” which are “peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues” (Revelation 17:1, 15). Therefore, what Scripture relates concerning her harlotry we should expect, and indeed do see, in any number of the centers of civilization of our age. In that sense, there is some truth and overlap between the views that *Babylon is the World* and *Babylon is Babylon!*

⁴ **A City and NOT An End-Time Religious System**

Although the Harlot includes both commercial and religious aspects, many have minimized her commercial aspects and placed greater emphasis on her religious aspects. **The Harlot is then seen *solely* to be the end-time religious system which precedes the rise of the Beast as sole object of worship. This is errant, since Scripture declares plainly that she is a City.**

What is found in these verses is the final form of religious apostasy, ending in a one-world super-church. It is the final form of the woman Jezebel cast into the Great Tribulation (Revelation 2:20-22) and united with the *lukewarm Laodicean Church*. This is the counterfeit bride of messiah, presented as a prostitute, in contrast with the true Bride of Messiah, presented as a pure virgin (2Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:25-27; Revelation 19:6-8).

During the Tribulation, all the world’s diverse false religions will be reunited into one great world religion. **That ultimate expression of false religion will be an essential element of Antichrist’s final world empire, in holding together his military, economic, and political structure.** Only religion can unite the world in the most compelling way. **As plausible sounding as such a scenario might be, the Scriptures themselves provide precious little detail to support such ideas.**

To explore this, ...the current trend of **ecumenical liberalism, which places unity and relationship above doctrinal distinctions**, is seen as evolving into a one-world super church. This global system of unified worship is suggested as the source from which the False Prophet arises (Revelation 13:11 — *coming out of the land, with horns like a lamb but roaring like a Dragon...*).

It could be that [t]he modern ecumenical movement, active first among apostate Protestant churches in the first half of the twentieth century, then essentially combining (or at least fellowshipping) with the Catholic and Orthodox churches in the second half of the twentieth century, will eventually amalgamate with all other world religions, especially after the departure of all true churches to be with Christ. The second beast, or false prophet, will most likely emerge as the patriarch (or pope, or ayatollah, or guru or, **more likely, simply “prophet”) of this universal religion. At a critical juncture, probably the revival of the Beast from the dead, the one-world “worship-what-you-will” system of religion is thought to be put down in order to direct all worship to the Beast (Revelation 13:15). The Beast, elevating himself over all that is called god (2Thessalonians 2:4) and empowered by the worship-hungry dragon, will not allow competition so the worldwide ecumenical movement which rode him as the Harlot will then be viciously turned upon and destroyed** (Revelation 17:16-18).

Having used the false religious system to help him gain control of the world, Antichrist will discard it. In his rampant megalomania, he will want the world to worship only him. He will also no doubt covet the vast wealth of the false religious system. Thus, he will turn on the harlot.

Thus, the religious state of the end-time is thought to be characterized by two phases.

1. **During the first phase, ecumenical globalism is pervasive.**
2. **During the second phase, only the Antichrist is worshiped.**

Just as there will be two political systems during the Tribulation, one during the first half (the ten kings) and one during the second half (the Antichrist), there will also be two religious systems, one for each half of the Tribulation. This passage describes the religious system of the first half of the Tribulation. Again, **as plausible sounding as such a scenario might be, the Scriptures themselves provide precious little detail to support such ideas.**

It is certainly possible that an ecumenical one-world religion will unite the people of the world prior to the rise of Antichrist. Such a movement would be a valuable tool for the forces of globalism which will prevail prior to the ten-horn kingdom out of which the little horn eventually arises. **Although Scripture does not preclude such a**

development, *neither does it predict it*. For it is equally possible that a single repressive faith, such as Islam, could gain ascendancy and bring a forced unity by the sword—Scripture simply does not say.

What is most important to recognize is what we DO SEE: the dual aspect of Babylon of the end, that it will unite both commercial and religious aspects into a powerful force which has always proven too great a temptation in the hands of fallen men:

Various astute rulers in the long history of human government, rightly estimating the tremendous power of religion over the minds of men, have been greatly intrigued with the idea of some kind of union between church and state, in which the government would establish and support some widely accepted religion and this religion in turn would lend its influence to the state. **All such alliances thus humanly originated have been based on selfish motives and opportunist policies on both sides, and hence must always break down in the end.** Since each side pays a price for the unnatural union, and the price is ever increasing, the break becomes inevitable (cf. Revelation 17:1-18). **A union between church and state is safe only when inaugurated and controlled by the one true God in a kingdom of His own.**

Zechariah 14:9 And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one.

Zechariah 14:20 In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD'S house shall be like the bowls before the altar. ²¹ Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the LORD of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts.

This is why Scripture relates that only when Messiah comes will the function of both *priest* and *king* be safely united in a single person as predicted by Zechariah:

Zechariah 6:11-13 [emphasis added] Then take silver and gold, and **make crowns**, and set *them* upon the head of Joshua the son of Josedech, 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: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and **shall sit and rule upon his throne**; and he **shall be a priest upon his throne**: and **the counsel of peace shall be between them both** [the two crowns or roles].

The American policy of complete separation of church and state, which most sensible men fully approve under present conditions, is not however the ideal policy. **It is rather a policy of precaution in a sinful world, where political and ecclesiastical power too often get into the wrong hands, and the result is intolerable oppression. But under the personal rule of the Messianic King the union of church and state will not only be safe; it will also be the highest possible good.**

https://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/topics/babylon.html#88560E

⁵ Joel Richardson. *Mystery Babylon: Unlocking the Bible's Greatest Prophetic Mystery* (WND Books, 2017).

⁶ <https://countrysidebible.org/sermons/20230618p-173314>

⁷ See, e.g., Pentecost, *Things to Come*, 365-367, as cited in <https://truthonlybible.com/2021/07/29/the-case-for-identifying-babylon-the-great-with-the-united-states-of-america/>

⁸ **Further considerations on why the word *mystery* is about her name and not part of her name.**

By printing (on its own authority) the word "*mystery*" in large capital letters, the KJV has made it appear as part of the name. The Revisers have followed this example, printing the name in small capitals instead of large. But they have, in the margin, said "*or, a mystery, BABYLON THE GREAT,*" as though the word "*mystery*" did not form part of the title. We believe this to be the case.

We also observe that **in the immediate context**, the angel offers to tell John "***the mystery of the woman and of the beast which carries her***" (Revelation 17.7). This provides further evidence **against** taking *mystery* as her title for the mystery pertains to understanding the vision, not her character. Moreover, the mystery extends beyond the woman herself to include the seven-headed beast with ten horns. In fact, an examination of the remainder of the chapter will show that the angel spends more time discussing the mystery of the heads and horns (Revelation 17:8-14) than the woman (Revelation 17:15-18). Although the Beast predominates in the explanation of the mystery, he has no such title.

Thus, we disagree with the terminology “**Mystery Babylon**,” which is often used to define a *second Babylon* of sorts which bears little, if any, relationship to the city. This we believe is a misreading of the text and an unfortunate side-effect of how several translations have chosen to render Revelation 17:5 .

https://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/topics/babylon.html#86688

⁹ <https://bible.org/seriespage/babylon-seen-scripture-introduction-rev-17-18>

¹⁰ <https://countrysidebible.org/sermons/20230618p-173314>

¹¹ **Chart on the Harlot and the City References dispelling the conclusion of two *Babylons* and reasons why Revelation Chapters 17 and 18 describe the same Babylon.**

The Harlot versus The City

Attribute	The Harlot (Revelation 17)	The City (Revelation 18, 19)
Named “Babylon the Great.”	Revelation 17:5	Revelation 18:2
Called “The Great Harlot.”	Revelation 17:1	Revelation 19:2
Holding a cup.	Revelation 17:4	Revelation 18:6
Fornicating with kings.	Revelation 17:2	Revelation 18:3
Drunk with wine of immorality.	Revelation 17:2	Revelation 18:3
Persecuting believers.	Revelation 17:6	Revelation 18:20, 24; 19:2
Destroyed by fire.	Revelation 17:16	Revelation 18:8, 18
Destroyed by God.	Revelation 17:17	Revelation 18:5, 8
Clothed with purple, scarlet, gold, precious stones, pearls.	Revelation 17:4	Revelation 18:16
Wealthy.	Revelation 17:4	Revelation 18:3, 7, 12-14
Sitting.	Revelation 17:1, 7, 15	Revelation 18:7
Global influence.	Revelation 17:12, 15, 18	Revelation 18:3, 9, 11, 19:2
Spiritual wickedness.	Revelation 17:5	Revelation 18:23

Revelation 17, while speaking of her harlotry, abominations, and being drunk with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, **also relates her great commercial wealth**: “arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup” (Revelation 17:4).

Revelation 18 **speaks of her spiritual aspects**: “For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her” (Revelation 18:3a) and “for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth” (Revelation 18:24). When the *city* of Babylon is finally overthrown, as predicted by the angel (Revelation 18:21),

it is said, “He has judged **the great harlot** who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her” [emphasis added] (Revelation 19:2).

The question is, how different from the Babylon of chapter 17 is the Babylon of chapter 18? Undoubtedly the **city is the same in both instances**. Both have the name “Babylon the great” (Revelation 17:5; 18:2). Both are guilty of fornication (Revelation 17:1, 2, 4, 5, 16; 18:3) and of causing the kings of the earth and the earth-dwellers to imbibe of the wine (of the anger) of the city’s fornication (Revelation 17:2; 18:3). The destiny of both is to be burned with fire (Revelation 17:16; 18:8, 9, 18) and to become an utter desolation (Revelation 17:16; 18:17, 19). In both chapters Babylon is “the great city” (Revelation 17:18; 18:10, 16, 18, 19, 21) and wears the apparel and adornment of a harlot (Revelation 17:4; 18:16). Both are responsible for the martyrdom of the faithful (Revelation 17:6; 18:20, 24 [cf. 19:2]).

We also note that in the prediction of Babylon’s demise by the flying angel there is not the slightest intimation of two systems or two destructions. Moreover, in the angel’s description of Babylon, he calls it a “great city” (commercial) which is guilty of “fornication” (spiritual idolatry) (Revelation 14:8). There **the self-same Babylon is described using both commercial and spiritual attributes**. This unity is also evidenced under the seventh bowl where “Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath” (Revelation 16:19). **Only one Babylon is in view and its destruction is associated with a single judgment—the pouring forth of the last bowl of the wrath of God.** We see **no evidence of a separate judgment for the Harlot and a subsequent judgment of the city—as if they were two different entities.**

Another factor favoring the unity of Revelation 17 and 18 is the announced mission of the angel sent to John: “I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters” (Revelation 17:1). This angel is with John from Revelation 17:1 throughout both chapters and speaks to him again in Revelation 19:19. The act of showing John *the judgment* (singular) of *the great harlot* (singular) **spans Revelation 17:1 through Revelation 19:4. The same event is in view the entire time. The angel gives not the slightest indication that John is being shown two entities and two destructions.**

If we look at these two chapters carefully [Revelation 17 and 18], we fail to find the distinction so persistently contended by some. Someone states a thing as a fact; and then others think they see it. There is no such thing as “**Mystic Babylon**.” The Babylon mentioned in chapter 17 is the same as that in chapter 18. It is the “**Woman**” which is a secret symbol or sign. But that means only that we are not to take it literally as a woman, but as “that great city,” as is explained in [Revelation 17:18].

The idea that the Harlot is something other than the city of Babylon is difficult to maintain if Scripture alone is our guide. The Harlot is called a city (Revelation 17:18) while the city is described as a harlot (Revelation 18:3, 9, 23-24) and called “the great harlot” (Revelation 19:2). The Harlot is that great city Babylon!

¹² <https://bible.org/seriespage/babylon-seen-scripture-introduction-rev-17-18>

¹³ <https://thebiblesays.com/en/commentary/rev+17:1>

¹⁴ <https://bible.org/seriespage/babylon-seen-scripture-introduction-rev-17-18>

¹⁵ <https://my3bc.com/the-old-testament-tabernacle-lesson-1-the-pattern-and-materials/>

¹⁶ https://biblehub.com/topical/naves/j/jewels--dedicated_to_the_tabernacle.htm

¹⁷ <https://thebiblesays.com/en/commentary/rev+17:1>

¹⁸ <https://countrysidebible.org/sermons/20230618p-173314>

¹⁹ **Isaiah 43:21** This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise.

John 4:23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

Psalms 95:6 O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker.

Psalms 99:5 Exalt ye the LORD our God, and worship at his footstool; for he is holy.

1Peter 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

John 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

Psalms 66:4 All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee; they shall sing to thy name. Selah.

Matthew 4:10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

John 4:21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. ²² Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. ²³ But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. ²⁴ God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.

Philippians 3:3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

Revelation 14:7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

Psalms 29:2 Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

Revelation 15:4 Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for *thou* only *art* holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.

2Chronicles 7:3 And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped, and praised the LORD, *saying*, For *he* is good; for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

Psalms 132:7 We will go into his tabernacles: we will worship at his footstool.

Luke 4:8 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Luke 24:52 And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy:

Psalms 86:9 All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name.

Revelation 11:1 And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.

²⁰ https://biblehub.com/topical/e/eternal_praise_and_worship.htm

²¹ https://biblehub.com/topical/e/eternal_praise_and_worship.htm

²² **Jeremiah 10:1 (AMP)** HEAR THE word which the Lord speaks to you, O house of Israel. ² Thus says the Lord: Learn not the way of the [heathen] nations and be not dismayed at the signs of the heavens, though they are dismayed at them, ³ For the customs *and* ordinances of the peoples are false, empty, *and* futile; it is but a tree which one cuts out of the forest [to make for himself a god], the work of the hands of the craftsman with the ax *or* other tool. ⁴ They deck [the idol] with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers so it will not fall apart *or* move around. ⁵ [Their idols] are like pillars of turned work [as upright and stationary and immobile as a palm tree], like scarecrows in a cucumber field; they cannot speak; they have to be carried, for they cannot walk. Do not be afraid of them, for they cannot do evil, neither is it possible for them to do good [and it is not in them].

²³ John Macarthur, as cited in <https://countrysidebible.org/sermons/20230514p-168902>

²⁴ <https://bible.org/seriespage/babylon-seen-scripture-introduction-rev-17-18>

²⁵ <https://bible.org/seriespage/babylon-seen-scripture-introduction-rev-17-18> Translations differ as to whether Nimrod established Nineveh: “From that land Asshur went forth and built Nineveh. . . .” [*Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures: A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures According to the Traditional Hebrew Text* (Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society, 1997, c1985), Gen. 10:11-12], [Scherman, ed., *Tanach* (New York, NY: Mesorah Publications, Ltd., 2001), Gen. 10:11]. If “the land of Nimrod” means “Assyria” in Micah 5:5-6, then that would lend support for the view that Nimrod established Nineveh.

²⁶ Genesis 9:1, 7, Genesis 1:22, 28.

²⁷ <https://unforsaken.org/bible-studies/studies-by-theme/a-complete-bible-study-on-the-tower-of-babel/>

²⁸ <https://unforsaken.org/bible-studies/studies-by-theme/a-complete-bible-study-on-the-tower-of-babel/>

²⁹ A ziggurat is a significant architectural structure from ancient Mesopotamia, characterized by its stepped pyramid design and made primarily from mud brick. These monumental temples were typically located at the centers of cities and were dedicated to local deities, reflecting the cultural and religious practices of various Mesopotamian civilizations, including the Sumerians, Akkadians, Babylonians, and Assyrians, over nearly four millennia. The term "ziggurat" comes from the Akkadian word meaning "to rise high," which resonates with their purpose of elevating worshippers closer to the heavens. <https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/architecture/ziggurat>

³⁰ <https://bible.org/seriespage/babylon-seen-scripture-introduction-rev-17-18>

³¹ Flavius Josephus was a first-century Jewish historian who provided external information on some people and events found in the New Testament. Josephus was a general in Galilee, which is where Jesus ministered and people who knew him still lived; he dwelled near Jesus's hometown of Nazareth for a time, and kept contact with groups such as the Sanhedrin and Ananus II who were involved in the trials of Jesus and his brother James. His knowledge of Galilee was notable since he wrote much about that region and its inhabitants in his autobiography *The Life of Flavius Josephus* which was an appendix to *Antiquities of the Jews*, where the references to Jesus are located. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josephus_on_Jesus

³² <https://ccel.org/ccel/josephus/complete.ii.ii.iv.html>

³³ Babylon disappears briefly from Scripture, but appears again in Genesis 14. Here is one of those accounts we have generally missed, but it is a very important account in the overall teaching of the Bible about Babylon.

Sodom and Gomorra were attacked and defeated by a confederation of kings and taken captive. This included Lot, the nephew of Abraham. Two things are particularly significant here:

First, Sodom and Gomorra were located in the land of Canaan or Palestine probably at a spot that is now under the southern end of the Dead Sea. But where is this? It is a part of the land God had promised to Abraham in the Abrahamic covenant which had its beginnings in Genesis 12:1, recorded for us, significantly so, right after the account of the tower of Babel.

Second, in the beginning of the chapter the kings are described for us. Dr. Charles Dyer points out that historically, the leader of these kings that came in against the land, a land that God had promised to Abraham, was a man by the name of Chedorlaomer, king of Elam. But note who Moses lists first. Amraphel king of Shinar which is the land Babylon. The NIV has a notation in the margin regarding the name "Shinar," "that is Babylonia."

It seems that by mentioning this king first, we see who Moses viewed as the real leader of this confederacy. Here is God's perspective on this invasion.

What's interesting after Abram defeats these kings is what happened when coming back into the land. He stopped at a place called Salem which later came to be known as Jerusalem. There Abram received a blessing from Melchizedek, King of Salem. Melchizedek means "king of righteousness" and in the Bible, he is a type of Christ (Heb. 7:1).

Historically, we can summarize Babylon's early history in Genesis with the following:

First, we have the rise of the city of the ungodly, Shinar or Babylon which had its beginnings not only in rebellion against God, but in an attempt to be like God.

Second, we see this city intruding on the land which God had promised to Abraham through whom the Messiah would come.

And third, suddenly brought into this narrative is the city of Salem, later to become Jerusalem, with a king who is a type of Christ, whose name means king of righteousness, and who meets Abraham and gives him a blessing.

Fourth, right after this, we have God Himself appearing to Abraham to reinforce His covenant with Abraham with specific boundaries given in connection with the land of promise and victory over the inhabitants of the land (cf. Genesis 15:1, 18-21).

Babylon then disappears from the book of Genesis and the next place we find her mentioned in an historic way is in Isaiah 36-37. Here Hezekiah King of Judah is faced with invasion and is threatened by Sennacherib King of Assyria. In this passage we find Hezekiah reading the terms of surrender from Sennacherib, but Hezekiah turned the matter over to the Lord and was delivered.

However, in chapters 38-39 we have a lapse of faith by Hezekiah. Because of this, Isaiah the prophet predicted that all he had stored would be taken to Babylon where some of the King's sons would become officials of the palace of the King of Babylon. This was a prophecy of the Babylonian captivity which took place about 100 years later.

Hezekiah's descendants represented the Davidic kingdom and the line of Messiah. Their city, Jerusalem, was the place of the temple with the Shekinah glory. This represented the presence of God and was the place of God's worship. All of this represented God's reign and kingdom on earth. What does this mean?

(1) Through the Babylonian captivity, Nebuchadnezzar invaded the land, destroyed the city of Jerusalem and the temple, and deported Judah's king.

(2) This was a product of God's judgment against Israel for her continued disobedience as He had predicted through the prophets, but nevertheless, the first kingdom that man had started, Babylon, literally attacked and destroyed the kingdom of God on earth. From this point in history, there has not been a king from the line of David sitting on the throne of David in Jerusalem.

In a sense, though temporary, this is the triumph of mankind over God's kingdom. The book of Daniel pictures this in the statue with King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon as the head of gold. This statue as described for us in Daniel 2 represents what our Lord referred to as "the times of the Gentiles" spoken of earlier.

So historically we see three things about Babylon:

(1) It begins as the place of man's rebellion through tyranny and a united world effort which God judged by the confusion of languages.

(2) It's also the instrument that seeks to take away the land promised by God to His people, the Israelites,

(3) and it is the kingdom that destroys or at least disrupts God's kingdom here on earth and starts the times of the Gentiles, the time of Gentile domination.

<https://bible.org/seriespage/babylon-seen-scripture-introduction-rev-17-18>

³⁴ Supra.

³⁵ <https://bible.org/seriespage/babylon-seen-scripture-introduction-rev-17-18>

³⁶ <https://bible.org/seriespage/babylon-seen-scripture-introduction-rev-17-18>

³⁷ There is a great book, with exactly that title as the subject, *Mystery, Babylon, Unlocking the Bible's Greatest Prophetic Mystery*, by Joel Richardson, ISBN 978-1-944229-31-3; eBook ISBN 978-1-944229-32-0, WND Books. This topic simply cannot be considered exhaustively in this short section.

³⁸ John Price. *The End of America: The Role of Islam in the End Times and Biblical Warnings to Flee America* (Christian House Publishers, 2009): 41-86.

³⁹ John Price. *The End of America: The Role of Islam in the End Times and Biblical Warnings to Flee America* (Christian House Publishers, 2009): 41-86.

⁴⁰ <https://www.gotquestions.org/United-States-Babylon.html>

⁴¹ **Excursus: The Identification of Babylon the Great with the United States of America**, Steven D. Anderson, p. 26, <https://www.bible.truthonly.com/>

⁴² Much of the following reasons are taken from *Mystery, Babylon, Unlocking the Bible's Greatest Prophetic Mystery*, by Joel Richardson, ISBN 978-1-944229-31-3; eBook ISBN 978-1-944229-32-0, WND Books.

⁴³ Supra, Chapter 12, Rome.

⁴⁴ Osborne, 2002

⁴⁵ <https://thescriptureretreat.com/2025/03/28/tribulation-timeline-part-4-mystery-babylon/>

⁴⁶ John Price. *The End of America: The Role of Islam in the End Times and Biblical Warnings to Flee America* (Christian House Publishers, 2009): 41-86.

⁴⁷ This riveting study comes from Paul Macisker, *The End Time Bible Commentary*.
<https://endtimebible.com/commentary/isaiah21/>

⁴⁸ Supra.

⁴⁹ <https://endtimebible.com/commentary/psalm137/>

⁵⁰ <https://endtimebible.com/commentary/revelation18/>

⁵¹ Paul Macisker, <https://endtimebible.com/commentary/revelation18/>

⁵² *Mystery, Babylon, Unlocking the Bible's Greatest Prophetic Mystery*, by Joel Richardson, ISBN 978-1-944229-31-3; eBook ISBN 978-1-944229-32-0, WND Books.

⁵³ (Pew Research Center, 2015)

⁵⁴ John Price. *The End of America: The Role of Islam in the End Times and Biblical Warnings to Flee America* (Christian House Publishers, 2009): 41-86.

See also, <https://endtimebible.com/commentary/revelation13/>

⁵⁵ *Mystery, Babylon, Unlocking the Bible's Greatest Prophetic Mystery*, by Joel Richardson, ISBN 978-1-944229-31-3; eBook ISBN 978-1-944229-32-0, WND Books.

⁵⁶ (Osborne, 2002)

⁵⁷ (Jones, 2012)

⁵⁸ (Freedman, 1992)

⁵⁹ (Open Doors, 2023)

⁶⁰ Taken from <https://thescriptureretreat.com/2025/03/28/tribulation-timeline-part-4-mystery-babylon/> and *Mystery, Babylon, Unlocking the Bible's Greatest Prophetic Mystery*, by Joel Richardson, ISBN 978-1-944229-31-3; eBook ISBN 978-1-944229-32-0, WND Books.

Joel Richardson in a conclusion to his writing of *Mystery Babylon, Unlocking the Bible's Greatest Prophetic Mystery*, 2017, wrote:

After having both carefully assessed the prophecy and considered the primary interpretations that have been offered, I believe I have sufficiently demonstrated that Mecca Saudi Arabia seems to fulfill all of the scriptural requirements of the harlot Babylon. To be clear, this is not to say that another option, a new city entirely,, could not emerge in the future. For now, however, the view that Mecca is the last-days Babylon is not only a very legitimate view, but it would also seem to be the best option.

⁶¹ **Scripture study on why Babylon seems to be Actually Babylon.**

https://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/topics/babylon.html#4.1.4.2

Beyond the interpretive issue mentioned above, which we feel is conclusive, there are many other reasons for taking Babylon in the book of Revelation to denote the literal city. One such reason is the mention of the Euphrates River in conjunction with what is said concerning Babylon.

The best solution is to assign Babylon its literal significance of the city on the Euphrates by that name. Mentions of the Euphrates River at other points (Revelation 9:14; 16:12) corroborate this which is the natural way to understand it. Place names have their literal significance in Revelation 1:9; 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14 and the writer is very clear to point it out when he intends a figurative meaning as in Revelation 11:8. A reference to a literal city does not exclude further implications regarding political and religious systems connected with the city (Walvoord).

If Babylon in the book of Revelation is to denote something other than the literal city, we should expect to see significant differences in what is said concerning her. But we do not. Both OT and NT speak in concert on the matter of Babylon. It would seem these passages are in agreement concerning their subject—the literal city on the Euphrates:

The imagery of many waters (Revelation 17:1, 15) is reminiscent of the waters of Babylon (Ps. 137:1; Jeremiah 51:13). . . . The boast of Babylon, “I sit as queen and am no widow, and will not see sorrow” (Revelation 18:7) echoes that of ancient Babylon (Isaiah 47:7-9). John also employs imagery from the Tower of Babel. When Revelation 18:5 says, “her sins have piled up as high as heaven,” the allusion is possibly to the use of bricks in building the Tower of Babel. . . . Revelation 17 -18 also repeatedly draws imagery from the description of Babylon and its destruction given in Jeremiah 50-51. For example, both passages describe Babylon as holding a golden cup (Jeremiah 51:7; Revelation 17:3-4; 18:6), dwelling on many waters (Jeremiah 51:13; Revelation 17:1), involved with the nations (Jeremiah 51:7; Revelation 17:2), and having the same name (Jeremiah 50:1; Revelation 17:5; 18:10). Moreover, both passages illustrate Babylon’s destruction the same way (Jeremiah 51:63-64; Revelation 18:21) and depict Babylon’s destruction as sudden (Jeremiah 51:8; Revelation 18:8), caused by fire (Jeremiah 51:30; Revelation 17:16 ;18:8), final (Jeremiah 50:39; Revelation 18:21), and deserved (Jeremiah 51:63-64; Revelation 18:21). Furthermore, both passages describe the response to Babylon’s destruction in terms of God’s people fleeing (Jeremiah 51:6, 45; Revelation 18:4) and heaven rejoicing (Jeremiah 51:48; Revelation 18:20). Other commentators have also noticed how frequently John in Revelation 17 -19 draws from the imagery of Jeremiah 50-51. For example, Thomas observes ten parallels between the two sections of Scripture. Aune also observes at least ten parallels between Jeremiah 50-51 and Revelation 18 .

Another piece of evidence in favor of a literal Babylon is a literal Israel. ...the OT passages dealing with the destruction of Babylon compare and contrast her with Jerusalem. **This was one reason why Babylon cannot be Jerusalem.** It also provides strong evidence that Babylon is to be taken as the literal city because Jerusalem is taken that way in the same passages. The restoration of the literal, earthly city of Jerusalem (Isaiah 62) and the future rule of Messiah from her midst (Jeremiah 3:17; Zechariah 14:16) are as sure as God’s word. **If Babylon is consistently contrasted with Jerusalem in OT passages, then it is inconsistent to take Jerusalem literally, but Babylon figuratively. If Jerusalem is the literal city on Mount Moriah, then Babylon cannot be said to be New York or merely a commercial or religious system.**

Without any spirit of dogmatism, and without entering into the question of the identity and significance of the Babylon in the Revelation—whether mystical or actual—we would express our conviction that there are Scriptures [e.g., Zechariah 5] which cannot, according to our judgment, be satisfactorily explained except on the supposition of a revival and yet future judgment of literal Babylon, which for a time will be the centre and embodiment of all the elements of our godless Western “civilization,” and which especially will become the chief *entrepôt* of commerce in the world, . . . To this conviction we are led chiefly by the fact that there are prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the literal Babylon which have never in the past been exhaustively fulfilled, and that Scripture usually connects the final overthrow of Babylon with the yet future restoration and blessing of Israel.

One reason some reject a literal interpretation is the picture of “mystery” and harlotry associated with Babylon in the book of Revelation (Revelation 17:5). As we shall see ...the “mystery” is not related to the identification of the city, but her relationship with the beast upon which she rides. The angel who explains the mystery to John devotes most of the passage talking about her relationship with the seven-headed beast with ten horns (Revelation 17:7-14) and relatively little to the Harlot herself (Revelation 17:15-18). Even then, he concludes by saying, “And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth” (Revelation 17:18). He makes sure John understands that the Harlot is a city—the literal city of Babylon. The use of harlot imagery does not preclude a related literal meaning, for the angel is showing John that she is both a city and a worldwide polluting influence:

The Old Testament uses harlot imagery to depict the Gentile cities of Tyre (Isa. 23:16-17) and Nineveh (Nahum 3:4) while never hinting that these cities are not meant to be understood literally. . . . The same sort of harlot imagery that describes the city in chapter 17 is also employed in chapter 18 (Revelation 18:3, 9). Yet, despite these similarities, [some] interpret the city in Revelation 17 non-literally while simultaneously interpreting the city in Revelation 18 literally.

First, [Babylon] signifies a literal city, which shall yet be built in the Land of Shinar, on the banks of the Euphrates. ...Six times (significant number!) is ‘Babylon’ referred to in the Apocalypse, and nowhere is there a hint that the name is **not to be understood literally**. In the second place, the ‘great city’ (unnamed) signifies an idolatrous system - ‘mother of harlots’ a system of idolatry which originated in the Babylon of Nimrod’s day, and a system which is to culminate and terminate in another Babylon in a day soon to come.

Another reason in favor of taking Babylon as a literal city rather than a symbol or figure is found in its representation as the Harlot: “The Whore represents a City. . . . Babylon, must therefore be understood literally, otherwise we should have the anomaly of a figure representing a figure.”

The literal view of Babylon has numerous proponents and was held well in advance of the circumstances of our own time (the Gulf War and the overthrow of Iraq by the United States). **The literal view is not a reaction to these events, as if an attempt to pour prophecy into the politics of our day. In fact, the literal view has just the opposite characteristic: it is far less susceptible to reinterpretation as the movements and situations of history change with time:**

The Babylon view has been criticized as being the product of reading current events regarding the present Iraqi crisis back into the text rather than being the product of sound exegetical principles. . . . **However, this accusation seems unfair in light of the fact that numerous interpreters held the view long before Saddam Hussein rose to power.** Such commentators include Newell (1935), Jennings (1937), Cooper (1942), and Lang (1948). Other commentators held the view even before Iraq became a nation in 1932. Such commentators include Seiss (1909) and Larkin (1919). It is true that Dyer released his book advocating the literal Babylon view on the eve of the Gulf War and recently on the eve of the present war with Iraq. However, it should also be noted that the content of these books is based upon Dyer’s master’s thesis that was completed in May of 1979 long before Hussein’s rise to power and escalating tensions between America and Iraq.

In my limited library, I have found a number of men who taught a future [literal] Babylon from Revelation 17:1-18 and 18 . They include the following: B. W. Newton (1853), G. H. Pember (1888), J. A. Seiss (1900), Clarence Larkin (1918), Robert Govett (1920), E. W. Bullinger (1930), William R. Newell (1935), F. C. Jennings (1937), David L. Cooper (1942), G. H. Lang (1945). I am sure that more could be added to the list.

Further evidence for taking Babylon as the literal city is found in the way in which her destruction is illustrated by an angel in the book of Revelation. The angel takes up a stone and throws it into the sea, saying, “Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore” (Revelation 18:21). This is an intentional allusion to a similar prophetic enactment found in Jeremiah:

The word which Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraiah the son of Neriah, the son of Mahseiah, **when he went with Zedekiah the king of Judah to Babylon** in the fourth year of his reign. And Seraiah was the quartermaster. So Jeremiah wrote in a book all the evil that would come upon Babylon, all these words that are written against Babylon. And Jeremiah said to Seraiah, **“When you arrive in Babylon and see it, and read all these words, then you shall say, ‘O LORD, You have spoken against this place to cut it off, so that none shall remain in it, neither man nor beast, but it shall be desolate forever.’** Now it shall be, when you have finished reading this book, that you shall **tie a stone to it and throw it out into the Euphrates.** Then you shall say, **‘Thus Babylon shall sink and not rise from the catastrophe that I will bring upon her.** And they shall be weary.’ ” Thus far are the words of Jeremiah. (Jeremiah 51:59-64) [emphasis added]

The angel virtually duplicates the pronouncement and activity of Seraiah in Jeremiah’s day. Of particular import is the fact that Jeremiah sent Seraiah with Zedekiah *to Babylon* in order to make his pronouncement of judgment. This is similar to how Jonah was sent to Nineveh. In both cases, the pronounced judgment **concerned a specific geographic location which God would judge.** Moreover, the pronouncement by Seraiah was **that of a permanent destruction where neither man nor beast would ever remain there.** As we have seen, **the historical record of literal Babylon does not match the seriousness of this prophecy.**

The question proponents of a non-literal Babylon must answer is why did Jeremiah go to the trouble of instructing Seraiah to make such a pronouncement at the specific geographical location of literal Babylon if the fulfillment is to be found somewhere else? Either at a different city (e.g., Rome, New York) or in the destruction of a generic system? **It would seem that the actions of Jeremiah, entrusting the message to Seraiah who was traveling to Babylon, point to God’s intention to judge the specific city over which the pronouncement was made.**

⁶² (Even if it were a reference to Rome, the name would not be especially mysterious, since Rome was the great world power of John’s day, and Peter even refers to Rome as “Babylon” in 1 Peter 5:13.)

⁶³ These few paragraphs are also noted in **Supplement to Revelation Bible Study The Beast** while looking at **We must not underestimate the connection between the Dragon and the Beast.** (page 4).

⁶⁴ <https://countrysidebible.org/sermons/20230122p-128376>

⁶⁵ **Revelation 18:11-19** And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: ¹² The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, ¹³ And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. ¹⁴ And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all. ¹⁵ The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, ¹⁶ And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! ¹⁷ For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, ¹⁸ And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! ¹⁹ And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.

⁶⁶ <https://bible.org/seriespage/babylon-seen-scripture-introduction-rev-17-18>

⁶⁷ “A figure of speech in which exaggeration is used for emphasis or effect, as in ‘I could sleep for a year’ or ‘This book weighs a ton.’”²¹ “A hyperbole is a deliberate exaggeration in which more is said than is literally meant, in order to add emphasis. When 10 of the Israelite spies reported on their exploration of the land of Canaan, they said, ‘The cities are large and fortified to heaven’ (Deu. 1:28). Obviously they were not saying the walls of the Canaanite cities reached literally to heaven; they were simply stating that the walls were unusually high.” Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, 3rd Revelation ed (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1970), 11. From https://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/glossary.html#109625E

⁶⁸ https://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/intro/symbols.html#2.7.2

⁶⁹ https://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/topics/babylon.html#4.1.2.2

⁷⁰ Daniel 5.30-31 That same night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was slain. ³¹ So Darius the Mede received the kingdom at about the age of sixty-two.

⁷¹ Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2002), Isa. 14:13. Jeremiah 50.23

⁷² D. J. Wiseman, “Babylon,” in Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed., *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Revised* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1979, 1915), 1:389. As in https://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/topics/babylon.html#86588E

⁷³ Michael Levy, ed., *Britannica 2012 Deluxe Edition CDROM*, s.v. “Babylon.” Supra, spiritandtruth.org.

⁷⁴ Merrill Frederick Unger, R. K. Harrison, Frederic F Vos, and Cyril J. Barber, *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1988), s.v. “Babylon.” Supra, spiritandtruth.org.

⁷⁵ This section is from https://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_Revelation/commentary/htm/topics/babylon.html#86588E, without footnotes that you can find at the original link.

Examples of Babylon under siege yet not politically nor physically destroyed as the prophecies indicated.

Even when Greece, the great leopard beast of Daniel's night vision (Dan. 7:6) came calling in the person and empire of Alexander the Great, the city was not destroyed:

[On] Oct. 1, 331 B.C., Alexander marched to Babylon, where the Macedonian was triumphantly acclaimed, the Persian garrison offering no opposition. He offered sacrifices to Marduk, ordered the rebuilding of temples that Xerxes allegedly had destroyed, and then a month later moved on to Susa.

Alexander subsequently returned to Babylon with great construction plans to make it his capital, but these were interrupted by his death in 323 B.C. After Alexander, the city was ruled by a series of kings including Seleucus I (323-250) during which Babylon's economic—but not religious importance—declined sharply due to competition with the establishment by Antiochus I of a new capital at Seleucia on the Tigris (274 B.C.). Later, the city remained a center of Hellenism, supporting Jews in Palestine who opposed Herod. After the destruction of the *Second Temple* by Rome in A.D. 70, many Jews left Jerusalem for the area of Babylon. This trend increased after the Bar Kokhba war. The region of Babylon became an important center for Jewry outside Israel:

After the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E., and especially after the war of Bar Kokhba (132-35 C.E.), some scholars went down from Palestine to Babylon. The arrival of “Abba the Tall,” Rab, in approximately 219, brought about a period of prosperity in the study of the Law in Babylon. Rab in Sura and Shmuel in Nehardea gave public instruction in the Law and trained many pupils. In this period academies were established, and they continued to exert an influence on Jews, not only in Babylon but throughout all the lands of their dispersion, as late as the 12th century.

⁷⁶ **Prophecies Concerning the Destruction of Babylon**

History records that although Babylon “fell” numerous times at the hands of different invaders, **it never suffered anything like a complete destruction.** Instead, it continued to be inhabited hundreds of years after its initial fall to Persia and eventually, through neglect more than anything else, became insignificant on the stage of world history. **Yet the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and John indicate a completely different scenario for her destruction. One that is sudden, swift, and absolutely catastrophic.** We have gathered a number of these predictions together below so the reader may see for himself what the Holy Word of God predicts concerning the severity and permanence of her destruction:

And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldean's pride, **will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It will never be inhabited, nor will it be settled from generation to generation; nor will the Arabian pitch tents there, nor will the shepherds make their sheepfolds there.** (Isa. 13:19-20)

“And look, here comes a chariot of men *with* a pair of horsemen!” Then he answered and said, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen! And all the carved images of her gods He has broken to the ground.” Oh, my threshing and the grain of my floor! That which I have heard from the LORD of hosts, The God of Israel, I have declared to you. (Isaiah 21:9-10)

Therefore evil shall come upon you; you shall not know from where it arises. And trouble shall fall upon you; you will not be able to put it off. **And desolation shall come upon you suddenly, which you shall not know.** (Isaiah 47:11)

Because of the wrath of the Lord she shall not be inhabited, but she shall be wholly desolate. Everyone who goes by Babylon shall be horrified and hiss at all her plagues. (Jeremiah 50:13)

Come against her from the farthest border; open her storehouses; **cast her up as heaps of ruins, and destroy her utterly; let nothing of her be left.** (Jeremiah 50:26)

“Therefore the wild desert beasts shall dwell *there* with the jackals, and the ostriches shall dwell in it. **It shall be inhabited no more forever, nor shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation. As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighbors,”** says the Lord, **“So no one shall reside there, nor son of man dwell in it.”** (Jeremiah 50:39-40)

“They shall not take from you a stone for a corner nor a stone for a foundation, but you shall be desolate forever,” says the LORD. (Jeremiah 51:26)

And the land will tremble and sorrow; **for every purpose of the LORD shall be performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation without inhabitant.** (Jeremiah 51:29)

Her cities are a desolation, a dry land and a wilderness, a land where no one dwells, through which no son of man passes. (Jeremiah 51:43)

Thus says the Lord of hosts: “The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, and her high gates shall be burned with fire; the people will labor in vain, and the nations, because of the fire; and they shall be weary.” (Jeremiah 51:58)

And Jeremiah said to Seraiah, “When you arrive in Babylon and see it, and read all these words, then you shall say, ‘**O LORD, You have spoken against this place to cut it off, so that none shall remain in it, neither man nor beast, but it shall be desolate forever.**’ ” (Jeremiah 51:61-62)

And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, **make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire.** (Revelation 17:16)

And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, **“Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!”** (Revelation 18:2)

Therefore her plagues will come in one day—death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her. The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously

with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning, standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, “Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.” (Revelation 18:8-10)

For in one hour such great riches came to nothing. Every shipmaster, all who travel by ship, sailors, and as many as trade on the sea, stood at a distance and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, “What *is* like this great city?” They threw dust on their heads and cried out, weeping and wailing, and saying, “Alas, alas, that great city, in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth! **For in one hour she is made desolate.**” (Revelation 18:17-19)

Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, “**Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore.**” (Revelation 18:21)

Again they said, “**Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!**” (Revelation 19:3)

Her destruction is said to be literal and catastrophic like that of Sodom and Gomorrah. Her walls will be completely destroyed and her gates burned with fire. There will be nothing left of her, no person shall ever reside there, nor will any building material be taken from her ruins. This destruction will be sudden, complete, and permanent. It seems clear that Babylon has yet to suffer in the way which God has so extensively foretold.

Not only are the Old Testament prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah **unfulfilled** in the history of Babylon, but **John’s vision recorded in approximately 95 A.D. reiterates and even extends these predictions.** Either God is a God of wholesale and extensive exaggeration or a literal destruction remains pending. It is impossible, unscriptural, and irreverent to believe that such an extensive portion of God’s word is to be spiritualized or taken as hyperbole.

⁷⁷ <https://bible.org/seriespage/babylon-seen-scripture-introduction-rev-17-18>

⁷⁸ **How strange** then to find Barnhouse commenting: “What we have seen of the state of the ruins of literal Babylon satisfies us that the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah have been fulfilled.”—Barnhouse, *Revelation*, Revelation 18:1-3. Barnhouse essentially suggests that God’s language of prophecy is “sloppy.”

⁷⁹ **“The Beast is a man (Revelation 13:18); therefore his throne is in a definite place:** rebuilt Babylon on the Euphrates, we believe,—Satan’s ancient capital, in the ‘land of Shinar,’ where ‘wickedness’ is to be set on its base in the end-time (Zechariah 5:5-10).”—William R. Newell, *Revelation: Chapter by Chapter* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1994,c1935), Revelation 16:10.

⁸⁰ Pink, *The Antichrist*, s.v. “Antichrist and Babylon (Revelation 18).”

⁸¹ Baron, *Zechariah: A Commentary On His Visions And Prophecies*, 164.

⁸² Baron, *Zechariah: A Commentary On His Visions And Prophecies*, 170.

⁸³ Mark Hitchcock, *The Second Coming of Babylon*. (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2003), p. 109, cited by [Woods, *What is the Identity of Babylon In Revelation 17-18?*].