



ETERNAL VALUE REVIEW

MONEY MONITOR & GLOBAL TRENDS REPORT

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"For thinking Christians seeking to understand the times."

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FEATURE REPORT

Connected: Magical Money, Prophecy & Babylon? – Part I

We observe that a global monetary experiment is underway as none ever before in human history. It is true that many of its features have occurred before in the timeline of mankind. In this sense, we agree with the Ecclesiastes writer, who said, "What has been will be done again; what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9).

Yet, what is different today is that this "monetary experiment" is being experienced globally and systematically ... and not just locally. Monetary policymakers around the world have all adopted the same policy "incantations" and "magical thinking" techniques.

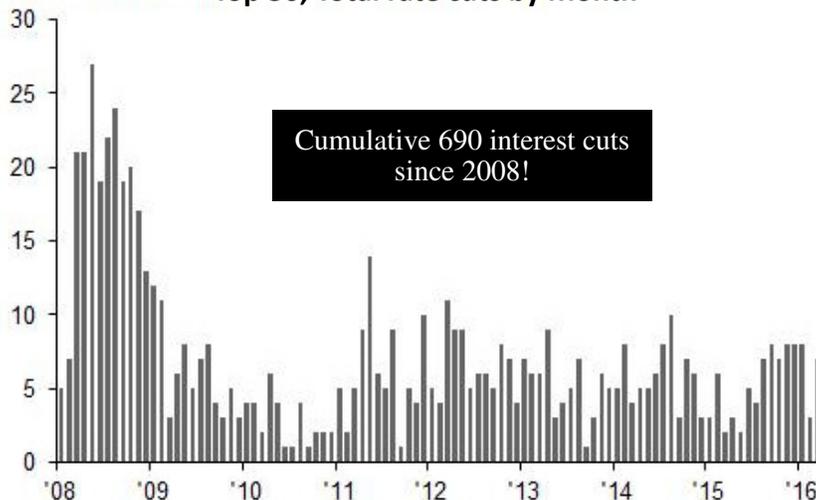
This global "conversion" to the prosperity alchemy of monetarism has unfolded rapidly and relatively recently, as seen in the context of the human timeline upon earth. In less than half a century, common ideologies have been adopted, spanning from monetary and economic theories to central banking and fractional reserve banking systems; to the worldwide economic capture through "national accounting."

Some of these terms may not be familiar to readers. Suffice it to say that, collectively, these developments are all an outgrowth of the worldwide proliferation of humanism and materialism.

In that sense, we would say that the concept of central banking is an emblem of the humanistic times. In fact, we would even venture to say that it is a sign of the endtimes. While it has been true that corruption and manipulation have plagued

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Number of Central Banks Cutting Interest Rates Top 50, Total rate cuts by Month



Source: FT, JP Morgan Asset Management

"Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?"

— Matthew 6:26

WORLD MONEY UPDATE

Why Interest Rates Viewed as Blasphemous

Many parts of the world have negative interest rates today. Despite the sharp back-up in U.S. long-term interest rates in recent times, some \$8 trillion in global sovereign bonds still continue to yield negative interest.

Negative interest rates give rise to a strange phenomenon. An interest rate below zero implies that money has a negative time value. In other words, this state of affairs effectively assumes that the future is more secure and sure than the present.

Of course, this is ridiculous. Not only that, it could be seen as blasphemous. How could a man-made financial instrument (something subject to human valuation) be considered to be as accurate about the future as God. The Christian God (Jehovah, not Allah) stakes His reputation and identity on the fact that He alone has the ability to accurately tell the future. I am the first and I

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am the last; apart from me there is no God. Who then is like me? Let him proclaim it. Let him declare and lay out before me what has happened since I established my ancient people, and what is yet to come — yes, let them foretell what will come” (Isaiah 44:6-7).

Interestingly, now may be a time in which both Islam and Christianity will see interest rates as blasphemous. It makes for an informative exploration.

Historically, a key point of friction between the West (what Islam still considers to be largely made up of Christian nations) and Muslims in our modern Age of Global Capital is the concept of interest (financial interest). The impact that this different perspective on the charging of interest has upon the world today cannot be overemphasized. Let’s then investigate this point of difference more closely.

As most will know, charging interest on loans is expressly and clearly prohibited in the Koran. All interest charges or any transaction that incorporates the spirit of an interest charge is considered usury according to mainstream Islamic interpretation.

The Bible also speaks against usury. However, the charging of interest is not in itself a sinful activity. The main difference here lies in the definition of usury. Whereas only excessive interest rates and financial slavery is considered usury in the Bible, all interest is usury or “riba” according to the Koran.

The Islamic View on Interest

The Koran condemns the practice of charging interest — referred to as Al-Riba — in a number of Suras (the Arabic term for books.) For example, in Sura Aal-Imran, Allah is quoted as saying, “Oh you who believe! Devour not usury doubled and multiplied; but fear Allah that you may prosper.” Moreover, a harsh judgment comes to those who practice “riba.” Says Allah, according to Surah Al-Nisaa’

verse 161, “That they took usury though they were forbidden and they devoured people’s wealth wrongfully; We have prepared for those amongst them who reject faith a grievous chastisement.”

There are more commandments in the Koran that leave no doubt that the charging of interest is sinful and severely punishable. Therefore, fundamentalist Islamic nations take care to avoid this practice (though new creative approaches to doing so are blurring interpretations.)

Actually, the concept of “riba” is much more complex than the charging of interest on loans. Rather, “riba” includes the whole notion of effortless profit or earnings that comes without work or value-addition production in commerce. In short, riba seems to be any charge that relates to the time value of money and capital. Money is not allowed to earn its keep other than through the means of facilitating trade and commerce. This is a very crucial point of difference with the rest of the world’s major religions.

In the Western world, money has two uses — transactional as in buying and selling, and interest-bearing due to its time value. Idle money held by one party can earn income by simply being lent to someone else for a period of time. Very few people in our society would ever stuff their money into mattresses as they would forgo the time value (or interest income) of money.

But why did Mohammed expressly prohibit “riba”? Islamic scholars offer several reasons. Firstly, there was an awareness that the practice of charging interest would eventually stratify wealth in their society and lead to the oppression and enslavement of the poor. They understood the power of compound interest; that a modest amount of money can grow to very large sums over time without any trade or work being done. After all, the Arabs were amongst the world’s foremost mathematicians, having imported and popularized the decimal system of the Hindus in India that we use today.

It was Arabs who later discovered the concept of zero.² This discovery was a necessary step, giving rise to the mathematical expertise that today is used to underpin the modern-day explosion of global financial wealth. Without the necessary math to capture the time-value of money, the Western world could not have experienced the modern-day boom in capitalism and financial markets; nor the impetus it has given to excess-consumption; nor the unprecedented chasm between the world’s rich and the “have-nots.”

Another reason why riba is forbidden in the Islamic faith is because it is sometimes understood to infringe upon Allah’s sovereignty. In this view, the charging of interest is seen to guarantee a rate of return in the future. This is considered blasphemy since Allah alone can guarantee or know the future. To set a fixed interest rate upon a loan is to put oneself in the place of Allah. Since the fate and security of mankind rests in the will of Allah, only an “unbeliever” relies on the future obligations of mankind.



ETERNAL VALUE REVIEW
MONEY MONITOR & GLOBAL TRENDS REPORT



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Considering these Islamic views of “riba,” concentrated wealth, waste, extravagant spending and miserliness, most Christians would probably agree with the supporting merits we have just reviewed. The first time that the Islamic concept of riba was explained to me was by a Muslim intellectual I met on a trip to Egypt. The pious motivations behind its prohibition as presented were touching; its logic seemingly displayed high ideals. Practicing Muslims can only be admired for their commitment to such principals.

The Bible’s View on Interest Rates

The Bible’s view on interest is somewhat different. As mentioned, usury — the excessive charging of interest — is warned against in scripture. But what is excessive interest? No clear definition is given. However, in the case of the poor or needy, any amount of interest was unlawful. "If one of your countrymen becomes poor and is unable to support himself among you, help him as you would an alien or a temporary resident, so he can continue to live among you. Do not take interest of any kind from him, but fear your God” (Leviticus 25:35-36).

As these verses make clear, lending money to those who do not have the means to repay the loan is really an act of human slavery ... usury at its worst. Instead, charity is called for in situations such as these. There are other forms of usury, as well; for example, the charging of high interest rates to unsuspecting or gullible people (precisely the thing that the success of some lending institutions depends upon). Ezekiel also confirms this interpretation, saying: "Suppose there is a righteous man who does what is just and right. He does not lend at usury or take excessive interest” (Ezekiel 18:5, 8).

We see that the paying of interest in Jewish society for regular commercial pursuits was a normal practice. Jesus Christ referred to interest without condemning its practice. In the Parable of the Talents found in Matthew 25, the master rebukes the last of the three servants who had buried his money saying, “You wicked, lazy servant! [...] you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest” (Matthew 25:26-27).

Without pursuing a lengthy review of this topic, suffice it to say that charging interest rates is not frowned upon in the Bible as long as no usury is involved. Christians have the liberty to charge interest — to use the concept that money lent today will be worth more in the future. But with that liberty also comes the duty of charity and considerate application.

All the same, Jewish society of earlier times was aware of the ultimate consequences of a debt-based society (approximately 2000 years earlier than reflected by the writings of Mohammed)³. Eventually, humankind left to its sinful nature would end up with a highly stratified society of a ruling super-rich and an oppressed, enslaved underclass of the poor.

Partly to protect against this outcome, the Jubilee Year was observed. Every 50 years, the clock was set back to the starting point in terms of human financial obligations ... particularly those that were a consequence of poverty. For example, if an individual was required to sell his property because he had fallen upon hard times, it would be returned to his family during the Year of Jubilee. In this year, all debt had to be forgiven, bond-slaves released, and property returned to its original owner. In this way, wealth transfer through lending and compounding interest could not lead to an unjust society with a perpetual poverty class.

In conclusion, both Islamic and Christian faiths speak against usury. Muslims, however, go one step further. They condemn all forms of interest or any transaction that assigns a time value to capital. It is this differing perspective between Muslims and Christians that contributes to a major rift in the modern world.

More than anything else, the concept of riba explains why Muslim nations are not a large part of the present financial power structure of the world (excepting the influence of large oil reserves). This is a significant source of tension behind the instabilities that the world is facing today. Yet, nowhere is this explained in the popular media. This is not surprising. We live in a day and age where materialism reigns supreme.

To the Western world, the Islamic attitude (those that take a literal reading of the Koran) of wishing harm upon those who choose to remain “unbelievers” in Allah and the Prophet is a present evil. On the other hand, is there merit in the Muslim view that the Western world’s idolatry with materialism and modern-day financial wealth is also evil?

Notes:

- 1 Riba According to Quran and Sunnah. Source: <http://muttaqun.com/riba.html>.
2. The number zero was perhaps the most important discovery ever for the field of mathematics, paving the foundation for the development of modern-day financial systems and technology. In a sense, zero was a philosophical concept, opening the door into the abstract application of mathematics. The world really had no need of a “zero” to this point. Only what existed needed to be counted. If there was indeed nothing, why require a number to account for it? The invention of the zero was of importance in three ways: a. It allowed a huge contraction in the number of numerical symbols (10 symbols from 0 to 9); b. It greatly advanced the decimal system’s power of mathematics science — a necessary forerunner to the numerical systems of the financial endtimes; c. It opened the door to the concept of negative numbers.
3. The Koran only came into existence in the mid-600s, approximately 15 years after the death of Mohammed, Islam’s Prophet (632 AD). It is not clear what were the normal practices in the “Age of Ignorance”, the period before the religion of Islam was founded. The principle of the Year of Jubilee is found in Leviticus, a book considered to be written by Moses between the years of 1445 to 1406 BC.

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all of mankind's history, what differentiates our day is the rapid and worldwide adoption of interlinked central banking systems ... and the timing of their emergence.

This globally-intertwined, central banking system that we observe today has come about in less than one century or so. This is astounding. Why did this not occur earlier ... why now at this time? As we have already shown, such a development must be considered "prophetically significant." Therefore, its timing is also significant.

The collective actions of central banks around the globe betray incredible presumption and foolishness. To understand why, one must grasp the utter arrogance and blindness reflected by the policies of these leaders and their sovereign sponsors.

These leaders are part of the collective human leadership that is part of the historical Man-Satan Collusion; this being depicted in the Bible as the 7-headed beast (MCM 3-part series entitled "The Last-Day Global Power Coalition," October to December 2006).

The absence of the "fear of God" in their policies aptly fits the description by King David found in Psalm 36:1-2, "I have a message from God in my heart concerning the sinfulness of the wicked: There is no fear of God before their eyes. In their own eyes they flatter themselves too much to detect or hate their sin."

Consider these implied viewpoints of today's elite leaders, policymakers, and those that idolize them:

- That real wealth can be created by sleight of hand. By tinkering with interest rates, prosperity can be created ex nihilo.
- That central banks can overcome the market-depressing impact of almost any social and economic problem.
- That there is no reason why the world will reap what it sows. Prosperity is determined by the "magic thinking" of humanity alone.
- That the creation of money out of thin air can be done with impunity and without consequence.

According to the Bible, the manipulative actions of central banks that we observe today are immoral. God many times warns of how much He hates "dishonest scales" (i.e. Ezekiel 45:10). The lack acknowledgement that God is not mocked and that all are sure to reap what is sown (Galatians 6:7-9) is chilling.

Helicopter Money: Money Ex Nihilo

Many readers will have recently encountered the term Helicopter Money (HM). It is the latest nickname for a potentially explosive type of monetary alchemy. (It has also

been named "money-finance," Overt Permanent Money Finance or People's Quantitative Easing.) The term "Helicopter Money" is more readily visualized. The basic idea is to effectively create lots of money (without needing to repay debts) and spread it around so that people and governments will spend it as if it would be "found money" that has been dumped by a helicopter from the air.

We need not review the technical details behind these contemplated policies. Frankly, it is nothing more than "magical thinking." Suffice it to say that the net result is that money is created without being offset by new savings or the need to pay back debt in the future. The most shocking aspect of all concerning Helicopter Money is that many academic economists actually believe it will be without negative consequence.

Ultimately, these types of policies will trigger great social strife, as well as a further collapse in moral restraints. When honesty and stewardship are no longer regarded and honored, it can affect all aspects of life. Historians who have studied the monetary mismanagement of the Weimar Republic in 1930s Germany observed that linkage. For example, pregnancies of unwed mothers increased sharply.

If central banks are creating unlimited money, it would be foolish to exchange an asset of limited and finite supply (gold or petroleum, for example) for a currency that has declining value and infinite supply. It is therefore likely that prices for "real" goods such as commodities, gold, real estate and alternative income sources will soar once the general populace discovers the deceits that are being perpetrated upon them.

Notably, a similar situation appears to be described in Revelation 6:6. One of the four living creatures says: "[...] Two pounds of wheat for a day's wages, and six pounds of barley for a day's wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!" This occurs after the 3rd seal. At that time, the 3rd rider upon a black horse with a pair of scales is released. The black color of the horse and the pair of scales denote that a difficult economic time occurs upon earth. We see here that the price of basic staples such as barley and wheat become unaffordable. The luxury goods of wine and oil are so expensive one dares not even touch them.

This same situation is certainly not being fulfilled today. The Tribulation period is yet future. However, we are undoubtedly observing policies that could very well lead the entire globe to experience similar conditions.

Prognosis for Helicopter Money

Just how likely are new HM-type policies to be introduced around the world in the future? Actually, HM-type policies have already been introduced. They are already in force in some parts of the world. Looking ahead,

we would judge that such policies will be vastly expanded ... carrying on for years, perhaps decades. Why?

There are two main reasons. To begin, humanity has chosen unbiblical values, instead pursuing indulgence and its lusts. Of many symptoms, anti-familialism (the decline and repudiation of family formation and child-rearing) in particular is the most destructive. It is having a restraining effect upon economies, with much more to come. Anti-familialism will not reverse any time soon. If anything, the various forces undermining family formation will greatly worsen. A godless society will not repent, choosing instead to keep their tottering idols.

The second reason is that God has designed Creation with His foreknowledge. He created both the possibilities and the limitations of the physical world. There are limits to technology and productivity. The growth in prosperity and wealth that was achieved in the recent century cannot be assumed to continue forever.

The renowned economist, Robert J. Gordon, illustrates in his recent book (*The Rise and Fall of American Growth*¹) the remarkable advances of the period between 1870 and 1970. He concludes that the great technological gains which contributed to an enormous increase in living standards over that historical period are not repeatable.

If Dr. Gordon's predictions are correct and anti-familialism continues unabated, global economic systems will continue to decay and buckle as economic growth declines ... and, eventually, will reverse course. Such conditions will force policymakers to even greater levels of desperation and alchemy, embracing ever more manipulative responses and magical thinking. It would not be overly speculative to conclude that the economic and monetary trends that we are observing in our day are indeed in alignment with endtime prophecies.

(In Parts II and III we will present additional prophetic connections to our day, as well as comment on the likely time of the fall of Babylon the Great.)

Notes:

1. Robert J. Gordon, *The Rise and Fall of American Growth: The US Standard of Living Since the Civil War*, Princeton University Press, 2016.

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Presentation Topics

1. **Prophecy Unfulfilled: Anxiety Merchants and Profiting False Prophets**
2. **Amazing Unfilled Prophetic Trends**

Terrible Times: 10 Challenges Facing Christians in the Last Days—Part X



Iconic Last Days: False Images and Picture-Perfect Prophecy

A unique development of our time is the image—the icon, the picture, and the moving video. These images are an inextricable part of our culture. What household today does not have a camera, television or a DVD player?

Writes one observer, “Images. They are so compelling that we cannot not watch them. They are so seductive that they have revolutionized human social communication. Oral and written communication are in decline because a new form of communication, communication by image, has emerged.”¹

Actually, this age of “image communication” was really born with the invention of photography a little more than 150 years ago ... a very recent development, viewed in terms of the human timeline on earth.

As with all such sudden and recent trends that have impacted the world, one must ask: Why now ... why during these last days? Is the “image” just another friendly technological development? Or, are there also some side effects to consider, along with novelty and convenience? Could perhaps the video phenomenon be playing handmaiden to key last-day trends?

Worldwide, though the eyes of mankind are engaged as never before with icons and moving pictures, “Though seeing, they do not see” (Matthew 13:13). Being so taken up with communicating through seeing, they are largely blinded to the rapidly approaching judgment. Yet, as we will see, this very same society is better equipped than ever before to comprehend the prophetic imagery of the Bible. Not only that, the Bible seems to have anticipated our last-day era, communicating in graphic form much of the last-day prophecy that is yet to be fulfilled.

A Picture Imperfect World

The emergence of the image has had a great effect upon the world. Following the invention of photography, it then only took 50 years or so for this new method of illustration to become a major influence in the communication of social values. A little later, moving pictures were invented ... otherwise known as movies. As old as the moving picture or photography may be, the impact of the image upon society is still unfolding today.

Images are now shot or viewed virtually everywhere, from cell phones to computers, surveillance cameras and a

whole host of other media devices. According to 2005 census data, adolescents and adults now spend, on average, more than 64 days a year watching television and a little over a week using the Internet.² Of course, images are found almost everywhere, from newspapers and billboards to elevator video screens and the exteriors of city buses.

Yet, the invasion of the image continues. According to Gartner, a technology consultancy, over 1 billion phones with cameras (representing as much as 80% of total sales) will be sold in 2010. That would mean that as many as one-half of the world's population will soon have camera phones. There will hardly be an event or occasion in the world that will not find its way into recorded media.

Not that there haven't been plenty of things to watch already. Since Louis Lumiere invented the first movie camera in the 1890s, approximately 370,000 motion pictures have been made around the world (to the end of 2002). If the entire universe of original film and video titles produced over that period were played continuously, the show would continue for 2,108 years.³

With all the new digital technology these days, increasingly the whole world is on stage. Consider that you are already likely to be caught on closed circuit TV (CCTV) at least several times a day if you are out shopping. In Britain, people are captured on video media an average of at least 8 times a day. Almost every retail store today has surveillance equipment, as do key traffic intersections and highways. A British report in 2004 estimated that there were up to 4.2 million CCTV cameras in that country (about one for every 14 people).⁴ With websites proliferating such as YouTube, where people can post short videos of themselves or on virtually any topic or interest, everybody can be on display.

We use and process images virtually everywhere and anytime. Is it not unreasonable to conclude that visual images clog the mind today? From every direction, the human eye is being lured by images and their potentially influential messages. We are attuned to the icon, this communication medium barraging us with worldly values imbedded in both real and un-real images.

The Impact of a Visual Society: Seeing is Believing

There is little doubt that our image culture today opens up mankind to a greater vulnerability to perceptual deception. Images can powerfully manipulate our emotions and perceptions, hampering our ability to interpret facts and truths.

Of course, modern-day marketers of products well understand the persuasive powers of icons. Not surprisingly, according to estimates, 95% of consumers are more likely to buy a product because of a visual image or a photograph.

However, taking in information through graphic images involves a very different mental process than through the

written word. Studies have shown that "brain images" can subconsciously affect our perceptions and interpretations even of written text.

It is indeed a documented fact that graphic images, whether moving or stationary, have very powerful and unique impacts upon perception. Images can have emotional or cognitive effects that the viewer may not ever realize. As such, they can be an effective medium for manipulation and deception.

Is it then any wonder that the False Prophet mentioned in Revelation uses an image to deceive the world? Says the Bible, "And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed" (Revelation 13:15, KJV).

How God Communicates

There is little doubt that our generation is being prepared to be deceived by images—ultimately by the images of the beast. However, at the same time, God allowed it to be so that our intensely "image conscious" generation would also be ideally equipped to understand endtime prophecy. To discover why this is case, we must first briefly review the main form of God's communication to mankind—the written Word.

God chose to mainly communicate His truth and revelation to most of mankind through written communication. If pictures and moving images had been the more reliable means for mankind to study, interpret and contemplate Scriptures, would God not have used this technique instead? At creation, would He not have designed it that images would be the main form of communication rather than speech and writing? Though a picture may claim to represent a thousand words, the fact is that images alone are inadequate for all communication and are far too unreliable for literal and precise interpretation of truths and facts. Therefore, instead, we were given the written Scriptures.

But just how did the Scriptures come to be recorded? How were prophecies revealed? No Angel Moroni appeared with neatly typeset golden plates as the Mormons claim occurred to Joseph Smith. Indeed, God did write the 10 commandments on 2 tablets and gave them to Moses ... twice. Yet, with a few exceptions, all of the original impartations of revelation were not in written form, but rather visual or aural or both (though not necessarily in the physical sense of being actually seen or heard). They received visions and dreams. On this point, God said, "When a prophet of the LORD is among you, I reveal myself to him in visions, I speak to him in dreams" (Numbers 12:6).

Though we may think that the moving picture (the movie) was an invention of the late 1890s, in reality a form of video communication had already been invented by God a long, long time ago. God used visions to communicate

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Facts & Stats ... Ends & Trends



TOPICAL QUOTES

Twenty of the biggest banks have paid more than \$235 billion in fines and compensation in the last seven years. Misdeeds included manipulation of currency and interest-rate markets. Compensation was awarded to customers who were wrongly sold mortgages in the United States or insurance products in the United Kingdom. — **Stratfor, October 26, 2016**

Global wildlife populations have fallen by 58% since 1970, a report says. The Living Planet assessment, by the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) and WWF, suggests that if the trend continues that decline could reach two-thirds among vertebrates by 2020. The figures suggest that animals living in lakes, rivers and wetlands are suffering the biggest losses. — **BBC News, October 27, 2016**

Hand over your coins. That is the message being sent by the central bank in South Korea as one of the world's most technologically advanced and integrated nations eyes the advent of a "cashless society". South Korea is already one of the least cash-dependent nations in the world. It has among the highest rates of credit card ownership—about 1.9 per citizen—and only about 20% of Korean payments are made using paper money, according to the BoK [Bank of Korea]. — **Financial Times, December 1, 2016**

Total fertility rates, which can be defined as the average number of children born to a woman who survives her reproductive years (aged 15-49), have decreased globally by about half since 1960. This has drastically shaped today's global economy, but as *Visual Capitalist's* Caitlin Cheadle explains, a continued decline could have much more severe long-term consequences. If the world has too many elderly dependents and not enough workers, the burden on economic growth will be difficult to overcome. — **zerohedge.com, November 30, 2016**

As Credit Suisse tantalizingly shows year

after year, the number of people who control just shy of a majority of global net worth, or 45.6% of the roughly \$255 trillion in household wealth, is declining progressively relative to the total population of the world, and in 2016 the number of people who are worth more than \$1 million was just 33 million, roughly 0.7% of the world's population of adults. On the other end of the pyramid, some 3.5 billion adults had a net worth of less than \$10,000, accounting for just about \$6 trillion in household wealth. — **zerohedge.com, November 22, 2016**

A recent study in the *Lancet*, a medical journal, estimated that 56m abortions are carried out each year worldwide, ending a quarter of all pregnancies. The annual rate, of 3.5 abortions per 100 women of childbearing age, is only slightly lower than it was in the early 1990s. — **The Economist, December 3, 2016**

Fewer than 1 in 4 Canadians claim a charity tax credit, and this incidence has declined by almost a third, from 30% in the 1990s to a mere 21% in 2014. The average donation per tax filer is also declining. Volunteering behaviour shows similar trends. The unintended consequence? A weakening of the social fabric in our communities; more homeless Canadians, stray pets, dirty parks, ignored seniors, battered women, and so on. — **Policy Magazine, November/December 2016**

The wave of easy credit and longer auto loans has left a record percentage of consumers trading in vehicles that are worth less than what they owe on their loans. [...] A record 32%, or nearly one-third, of all vehicles offered for trade-ins at U.S. dealerships are in this category, according to research by Edmunds.com. When these people go to buy a new vehicle they must add the difference between their loan balance and the vehicle's value to the price of the one they want to buy. — **Detroit Free Press, November 27, 2016**

"The noblest pleasure is the joy of understanding" — **Leonardo da Vinci**

"We must make our choice. We may have democracy, or we may have wealth concentrated in the hands of a few, but we can't have both." — **One-time Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis**

"Never do the correct thing when you can do the right thing instead." — **Dave Weinbaum**

"We have two classes of forecasters: Those who don't know — and those who don't know they don't know." — **John Kenneth Galbraith**

"The wisest prophets make sure of the event first." — **Thomas Walpole**

"If one could divine the nature of the economic forces in the world, one could foretell the future." — **Robert Heilbroner**

"The world is naturally averse to all the truth it sees or hears, but swallows nonsense, and a lie, with greediness and gluttony." — **Samuel Butler**

with his prophets. We see that the Holy Spirit frequently used “neural movies” to impart the content and meaning of much prophecy.

The Prophet—An Ancient Media Device

Many (if not all) of the major prophets mentioned in the Bible—both Old and New Testament—experienced either visions or dreams. Consider that virtually the entire book of Revelation is the product of a vision. Apostle John wrote down what he saw and heard. Another example is the book of Zechariah, 5 chapters of which consist of 8 separate visions. Other prophets expressly received prophecy in visual form. Examples abound. Said Ezekiel, “the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God” (Ezekiel 1:1). “The word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision” (Genesis 15:1). Jeremiah was asked, “What do you see?” (Jeremiah 1:11), and, “God spoke to Israel in a vision at night” (Genesis 46:2). These are only a few examples.

But why did God give visions and dreams to the prophets when the written Word (Scripture) was the intended form of communication to following generations? We see here that a two-stage process was involved. The prophets saw visions and then accurately wrote down what they heard and saw. In a sense, they served as ancient “high fidelity” media players. Crucially, the writing down of these visions was guided by the Holy Spirit. For the Bible says, “For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21). What we see then is that God many times chose to impart revelations in the form of images, then to be written down in words, and not pictures. Why?

We theorize that there are a number of reasons. For one, God was able to show the prophets things of the future for which adequate words to describe them did not yet exist. Moreover, visions and the symbols could contain much more information than could be understood through hearing.

No doubt there are other reasons. However, we observe a significant fact: A high proportion of prophecies and the greater volume of information that applies to the latter days—the very last of the last days and the events of the Great Tribulation—were given in the form of “image-rich” visions. Why should God have chosen to communicate more of His prophecies to later generations such as ours, in visions that are full of symbols and imagery?

Could it be true that God knew that our “last day” generation would be an “image conscious” society, one highly attuned to communication through images? As such, it is our generation that has the suitable aptitude to understand and interpret the visions and dreams described in the Bible better than any other. While, on the one hand, our age of

visual communications opens up our world to greater manipulation and deception, it also gives this generation the means to better understand prophecy, as we will further show.

Thoughts to Ponder

Our generation, namely the last generation—as the Bible defines this term with respect to the re-establishing of Israel in its own historical land and its reunion with the Messiah—is also the very last to experience actual visions and prophecy. We are not referring here to “personal prophecies” as some like to interpret today, but rather the type of prophecy that is inspired by “the spirit of prophecy,” that being the testimony of Jesus (Revelation 19:10).

Scripture clearly says that there will be no more prophecy after the Tribulation period. “Seventy ‘sevens’ are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy” (Daniel 9:24). Here it is confirmed that visions and prophecies will be sealed up after the 70th week (the 7-year tribulation period). That is because no new visions will be necessary after this time. Jesus Christ himself will reign during the millennial period. No longer will it be necessary for Him to enable visions to be uttered and written down by men. His own words are the Word ... no visions required.

For today, the Bible expressly promises that the person who studies the book of Revelation will be blessed. “Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book” (Revelation 22:7). Of course, one is only able to keep the words of prophecy if one studies them. Moreover, we are also told in the Book of Daniel—the Old Testament book which most closely parallels Revelation—that the day would come near the end that “Many will go here and there” (Daniel 12:4) to gain the knowledge with respect to its prophecies and the divine plan of God. Both these books of the Bible (as well as Zechariah), which emphasize endtime prophecy, rely heavily upon imagery, symbolism, visions and dreams.

NOTES

1. J. Francis Davis, Power of Images: Creating the Myths of Our Time. Media and Values, Issue #57 / Winter 1992.
2. Sam Roberts, Who Americans Are and What They Do. In Census Data, New York Times, Dec. 15, 2006.
3. How Much Information? UC Berkeley's School of Information Management and Systems, 2003.
4. A Report on the Surveillance Society. Surveillance Study Network, September 2006. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/02_11_06_surveillance.pdf> Accessed May 10, 2008.

Based on the article: Iconic Times: False Images and Picture-Perfect Prophecy, August 2008, Midnight Call Magazine

EVR



Letters to the Editor

READER: Great article! [Connected: Magical Money, Prophecy & Babylon Part II] Bullinger has some interesting insights on the "merchandising" function of Babylon. Basically, he says she is a buyer; not a seller in the traditional sense (although for sure, one interpretation of "your merchants" is those who peddle the Babylonish economic system(s), as opposed to those of us who are on God's economy). But, the physical merchant ships constantly sell to her, she buys their stuff nonstop...which is one reason they weep & wail at her destruction. — **S.E.**

EVR: Giving your viewpoints some thought, I see it a bit differently from Bullinger (though fundamentally the same). There are several verses that identify the transactional nature of dealings with Babylon the Great. For example: Revelation 18:11 "The merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her because no one buys their cargoes anymore" and Revelation 18:15 "The merchants who sold these things and gained their wealth from her will stand far off, terrified at her torment." None of these verses (or others) expressly prove that Babylon the Great is exclusively a buyer (nor seller). The way I understand it is that Babylon is the transactional system that facilitates exchange of trade, wealth, labor, shipping, etc. In any case, even were this argument not to stand, it would make eminent sense that Babylon fulfills its great convenience and service to a materialistic world (caught in the so-called money trap) in that "she" facilitates buying. In the economies of our day, which provide a surfeit of goods, the most valuable action is "buying." Selling a product is hard for producers; buying is easy for consumers. Producers are constantly on the prowl for buyers. Every corporation is incessantly trying to generate growth in revenues through more selling. That requires buyers. The buyer is king. As such, if Babylon the Great facilitates the buying, she implicitly is also facilitating the ultimate consumers.

READER: [...] I'm hoping you can give me your view on the dire 2017 outlook that floods the prophecy sites and internet in general. For the past several years I've been a loyal reader of RaptureReady.com (RR) as well as many other prophecy websites. With the exception of RR the outlook for 2017 (by the majority of writers) is very bleak. Some of them state that 2017 will be the first year of Tribulation [...] and then there is the ever-looming economic crash that is always lurking around the corner. Having read most of your articles [...] I've developed a sincere respect and admiration for the conservative and

pragmatic approach to Bible prophecy. [...] I would appreciate your opinion on a few questions below: I've learned more about what prophecy writers are basing their Rapture beliefs on and it concerns me. Until recently I had no doubt that there would be a Rapture but is it possible that the two statements in the Bible that experts are basing their opinion on are indeed related to another topic and don't necessarily support the idea of a Rapture? [What do you think] of the many end-of-the-world scenarios (i.e. Planet X, WW III, Wormwood ...) and yet there are so many prophecies yet unfulfilled in the Bible. — **D.M.**

EVR: Thank you for your note. You probe a number of topics. I'll be brief. Firstly, wavering doubts about the Rapture Doctrine may actually can be a good thing [and would not be unusual, in any case; I have experienced the same]. It will encourage some thorough and balanced research. I would highly recommend visiting the Lamb and Lion Ministry website and downloading Dr. David Reagan's recent video entitled "In Defense of The Pre-Trib Rapture." He provides an excellent defense. I don't often write about broad theological issues; however, I did so in the past year concerning the Rapture. I openly stated that many "Rapture Naysayers" employ insulting "hatchet" techniques. A calm consideration of what the Bible actually teaches is comforting. Many concepts in the Bible require deduction and a prior knowledge of the character of God. In any case, one's Rapture beliefs are not a salvation issue. However, I do believe that every unscriptural view we might harbor reduces the blessings of believing in Jesus Christ as Savior. In regard to economic developments, I do believe that we are seeing many endtime "enabling" trends. May I suggest that you keep a look-out for Part III of a recent article series entitled Connected: Magical Money, Prophecy & Babylon. Part III should answer a number of your questions.

READER: I would like to comment on one of your articles I read [re: The Proof the Martyrs Tell]. I am a Christian believer who believes in the Rapture. While I previously believed in a Pre-Trib Rapture, I have now switched allegiance to a Mid-Trib Rapture or rather Pre-Wrath Rapture. I will explain why, and why I think your argument for a Pre-Trib Rapture, is erroneous. The fact we disagree on this point surprises me, by the way, because I almost always agree with your articles. [Editor: Two pages of well-considered arguments are offered in this letter.] — **W.W.**

EVR: I have never been satisfied with the pre-Wrath view (usually attributed to Marvin Rosenthal). A good rejoinder to this idea is provided by Dr. David Reagan. Consider checking out this link: <http://christinprophecy.org/articles/the-pre-wrath-rapture/>

EVR

Revisited: The Babylon Occlusion, Here and Now ... Cont'd from Back

such circumstances become wonderfully careful of each other's interests. This is the kind of dependence into which nations are being brought, one on the other.

That peace may be promoted in this way is beyond doubt. The sword is not mentioned in all the detail of the greatness of Babylon. Instead "merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyme wood, and vessels of ivory, and vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, 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 bodies and souls of men" (18: 12-13) are its stabilisers."

Newton, writing early in the 1800s, realized that the Babylon of Revelation 17-18 was to include a global, commercial "system," though it indeed may eventually find its centre in a specific city. He clearly sees the picture of the ephah shown in Zechariah 5:5-11 as being related to endtime commercial Babylon. (In previous articles, we reviewed this vision, but more importantly, its companion vision — Zechariah's sixth — which shows a flying scroll. The interpretation of this vision is crucial in understanding the Babylon occlusion.)

Neither the system, nor the yet future city, existed in his day. He says "that this system is not as yet developed, so that we must not expect at present to be able fully and accurately to trace its details [...]."

Yet, reading scripture, he could see that the day would arrive where the enjoining of Mammon would almost be universally accepted as the sure "road to peace" and the basis for world union and power. Rather than Christ guiding "*our feet in a straight line into the way of peace*" (Luke 1:79), the common interests of money and prosperity are seen as the glue and catalyst for world peace and unity. However, the exact opposite would result — tyranny and an insurrection against God.

Christ at his first coming was not at all about peace. Rather he said, "*Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword*" (Matthew 10:34). Truth and the kingdom of God (*in the hearts of believers during the dispensation*) would bring turmoil into the world. Only Christ himself, in the role of Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6), brings peace in the Millennium.

Christian Blindness

Sadly, much of today's Church has swallowed the lie that enduring peace among men can only be found in the bowels of Mammon — particularly those branches of Christendom that endorse Replacement Theology (the Church being substituted for Israel) and aspects of Dominion Theology (which is dominating political circles today), but not exclusively so. Even much of North America's pre-Millennial, evangelical community suffers from this Babylonian occlusion.

We think our riches and power in the world (also

evangelical political power) is a useful tool for God to disseminate faith in the world. We spout and shout judgment, the right way, and sanctified destiny, replete and comfortable from the bowels of the most materialistic societies in the world.

What exactly is this occlusion? It is an optical one for the most part. Living inside the systemic Babylon now suffusing the world and living in its present hot spots (certainly including North America) — the time of Babylon the Great, the great city, the global village of commercial religion — they (we) cannot see. The sliver has become so large, it has become a log. "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?" (Matthew 7:3).

They (we) cannot see clearly for several reasons. The most crucial one is that our point of reference has become the world, not the Bible. The world enjoins us, shouting that the "*future is friendly*"², that better capitalism and peace is attainable through the eradication of poverty (*meaning equality and wealth for all*), and that the objective of a prosperous heaven on earth is found in religious and commercial Babylon.

A second reason is that the same smugness and confidence found in ancient Babylon is evident today. "Sit in silence, go into darkness, Daughter of the Babylonians; [...] You said, 'I will continue forever—the eternal queen!' But you did not consider these things or reflect on what might happen. Now then, listen, you wanton creature, lounging in your security and saying to yourself, 'I am, and there is none besides me. I will never be a widow or suffer the loss of children.' Both of these will overtake you in a moment, on a single day" (Isaiah 47:5, 7-9). While this prophecy did have a near-term fulfillment, it also speaks of a yet future event.

Isaiah's words line up with Revelation 18:7, which describes the "great city" of Babylon: "Give her as much torture and grief as the glory and luxury she gave herself. In her heart she boasts, 'I sit as queen; I am not a widow, and I will never mourn.'" Given these characteristics of pride and complacency, they (we) are blind to the reality of true riches and the world's extreme aversion to the judgment and wrath of God.

A third reason why we may not be able to see the greater endtime Babylon today is because we may have misconceived notions. Some prophecy commentators today would hold the view that Babylon the Great of Revelation 18 is only a city — in other words, a physical place.

Indeed, there may be a city considered to be its centre. But, in fact, endtime Babylon the Great is never called a city in the Bible. To be technically correct, the "economic" Babylon of Revelation 18 is always called the "great city" — in fact, six times in the Book of Revelation. It is never called a "city," only a "great city." This is significant.

In the Greek, the word combination "great city" is found only 10 times in the New Testament— 6 times for economic Babylon, 3 times for religious Babylon and once for the New Jerusalem. Each of its uses leaves open the interpretation that "great city" means something bigger than just a common city

— perhaps a system, organization, or a unique structure. In former times, a city was the closest thing there was to an organized economic entity ... a system.

In fact, ancient Greek had no word for “system” or “organization” as we understand the terms today. We are hard pressed to find words or word combinations anywhere in the Bible that explicitly refer to the idea of a system. We do find word combinations in the Old Testament that refer to globalism. But not a specific word that means “system.”

As such, Babylon the Great is not necessarily only a physical city. Rather, it seems more plausible that it is also a system, in this case the economic trade and financial system dominated by the present or future high-income countries of the world, if not the entire world.

The great global commercial system or “city” exists today. A similar concept is still imbedded in the English language today ... the global village. This global economic village has erupted upon the world in very short order.

The End of Babylon

We live during a time of great deception and corruption. Many can't see it. A great trap is being laid for the people of the world.

Many Christians are in that number, particularly those who live in the prosperous West. We have also been duped into believing that, in the end, it is Mammon that will bring peace to the world, not Christ. Globalization finds a common ground upon gain and complacency.

There is one thing that all prophecy scholars must agree upon. Babylon — whatever its type or identity — clearly comes to an end. In one hour it falls and is judged. The final form of Babylon does not carry through into the Millennium. The great commercial colossus and its imbedded religious idolatries are ended. But what does that really mean?

The answer will be a shock to most. Virtually all of us are inclined to view Bible prophecy through the lens of what is seen — the conditions of today, which is the same mistake the Jews made 2000 years ago. We are living in this brief space of time marking the great ascendancy of man's global systems. It is the unprecedented time of the great industrial age of rising wealth and prosperity (though largely an illusion for the majority of the world's citizens); the Age of Oil; and the Age of Global Capital.

It is a time of great arrogance, smugness and confidence, though increasingly tested as of late. Mankind thinks that its progress will endure forever and that these great global phenomena of the last two hundred years are permanent and repeatable and under the control of policymakers.

The Age of Oil, the Age of Global Capital, and Globalism will pass and be replaced. Technology will have its pedestal moved as well. It all seems so unthinkable to us at this late great point of history today. And, therein we find a major occlusion.

It is a form of blindness and confidence apart from God. And, that is precisely why it is so easy for us as Christians to say “I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a

thing” (Revelation 3:17) as does the church of Laodicea. The same blindness applied to Sodom and Gomorrah just prior to its judgment — “[...] pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness” (Ezekiel 16:49-50).

In fact, Bible prophecy about the Millennium does confirm significant changes for the world and mankind.

Thoughts to Ponder

The great Babylon occlusion: Can you see it?

I believe we live during the day that Zechariah and the Revelator saw ... at least with respect to the systemic Babylonian conditions. This system has culminated in deep idolatry and is not unassociated with religion, even modern-day Christianity. Said John Wesley, more than two centuries ago, “I fear, wherever riches have increased, the essence of religion has decreased in the same proportion. Therefore, I do not see how it is possible ... for any revival of true religion to continue long. For religion, almost necessarily, produce both industry and frugality, and these cannot but produce riches. But as riches increase, so will pride, anger, and love of the world in all its branches.”³

We need to regain our sight to this fact. For, “How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye” (Matthew 7:4-5).

Without a doubt, the massive commercial idolatry that the world would witness in the last days is evil. Zechariah tell us that this system “is the iniquity of the people throughout the land” (Zechariah 5:6). In short, “This is wickedness” (verse 8); “This is the iniquity [...]” (Ezekiel 16:49).

Now is the time to repent of the rose-colored glasses through which we peer at our condition today. Christ specifically calls out to us, even as He stands at the door of his imminent return. “Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me” (Revelation 3:19-20).

Is there a price? We can take the example from Moses. “He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible” (Hebrews 11:25-27).

Notes

1 B.H. Newton, Thoughts on the Apocalypse, 1843. Source: The Coming Day, Volume 2, [The Babylonian System Revelation 17 & 18](#). Accessed: December 23, 2006 <http://www.searchlight-missions.org/Periodicals/ComingDayIssues.cfm>.

2 Advertising slogan of TELUS Inc., a communications company.

3 John Wesley, quoted in Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (New York; HarperCollins Academic, 1992), 175.



Personal Perspective

Revisited: The Babylon Occlusion, Here and Now

The topic of Babylon in prophetic scripture is one of the most actively debated in Christian circles. The most contested portion, of course, has to do with questions of yet future fulfillment. Here we see a myriad of interpretations ranging from the increasingly popular position that modern-day America is endtime Babylon, on through to strict literal interpretations that emphasize an actual physical rebuilding of Babylon (situated in present-day Iraq) as the final totality of fulfillment. There seem to be tens of interpretations in between, a number of them quite bizarre.

The word “Babylon” appears 294 times in the Bible (KJV). There are numerous prophetic statements made about this entity in its various forms, many of them already fulfilled. A number of these prophecies are mirrored in the treatments of Tyre in scripture, another city that prophecy often speaks of (at least 23 times.)

The topic of Babylon is obviously a very important topic; therefore, it is unfortunate that so much confusion exists related to its yet future fulfillments. Just what is the Babylon of future fulfillment?

We have commented in the past on what it is not, i.e. America. While America may be a major contributor to the development of the characteristics of a modern-day Babylonian system, it alone is certainly not endtime Babylon. (Please see MCM, August, September, October 2005.) However, it is reasonably sure that Babylon takes forms and manifestations at a number of different levels in prophecy. This view does not deny in any way that all Bible prophecy ultimately culminates in literal fulfillment.

However, the same challenge on the topic of Babylon may arise as faced the Jews on the question of identifying their Messiah. The mistake made was to assume that only one appearance of the Messiah was to be expected. Though scriptures said that Christ will appear as “mighty [...] upon on the throne of David” (Isaiah 9:6-7) and as the one “they have pierced” (Zechariah 12:10), they looked for these signs in one event. The Jews therefore nationally rejected Jesus Christ as the Messiah, one of the reasons being that he did not first come as the long-awaited king.

Today, a similar confusion exists with respect to the expected return of Christ. He will appear again at a time that people think not — a time of “eating and drinking, marrying” (Matthew 24:38) as was the case just prior to the Great Flood during Noah’s time. Yet, he also returns at a time marked by great tribulation (Mark 13:24-26). It is the same type of problem. These prophecies cannot be reconciled in one single event. Therefore, there must be at

least two.

The same concept of multiple occurrences (or manifestations) could apply to endtime Babylon. All of its literal prophetic characteristics may not take the form of one single manifestation or physical entity. Let’s keep that possibility open as we continue our examination.

However, rather than try to conclusively answer the broader question of Babylon’s endtime identity, we want to focus upon just one set of its characteristics — its global reach and its commercialism. But before delving into them, we need to be sure that we have the correct mindset.

The Western Occlusion

Olden time Bible readers could see that one day, when the systemic form of Babylon would stretch its tentacles across the whole earth, that it would involve the intertwining of commerce and religion. Imbedded in it would be enormous power.

Consider these comments excerpted from W.B. Newton’s writings, penned in 1843.¹

“When we consider this, we cannot but confess that such a spectacle has never yet been presented in the history of human things. It is the marvelous exhibition of a power yet to be. It is all the more marvelous, because it will be the power not of an individual, but of a system, which, though long prepared in secret (see Zechariah 5:5), will suddenly burst in development upon the eyes of men. “When I saw the woman,” says the apostle, “I wondered with a great wonder” (Revelation 17:6).

What features can be more clearly marked as indicative of the Babylonish period than commercial greatness, the supremacy of wealth and the mixing of iron and miry clay in the government of the kingdom?

The supremacy of commercial wealth is an unusual feature in the history of men. I do not mean that there have never been cities like Tyre, Corinth, Carthage, or Venice, that have flourished commercially: but their influence has been little felt beyond their own immediate sphere, nor have they by their institutions ever imparted a character to the general system of the nations. Commerce was not supreme either in the early native monarchy of Nimrod, nor in the Chaldean, Persian, Grecian, or Roman empires. None of these empires were distinctively commercial.

They all would have emblazoned the sword rather than the ephah on their banners.

In times past, democrats were wont to assist democrats, and despots to aid despots. But now men have found a new and more efficacious centre of union in their commercial interests, and they feel themselves mutually dependent upon each other for the preservation as well as the increase of their riches. When the ruin of one involves the danger of all, men in

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