



ETERNAL VALUE REVIEW

MONEY MONITOR & GLOBAL TRENDS REPORT

ISSUE 2, VOLUME 11

"For thinking Christians seeking to understand the times."

April 2008

FEATURE REPORT

The Babylon Occlusion Here and Now: Can you see it?

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 virtual 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.

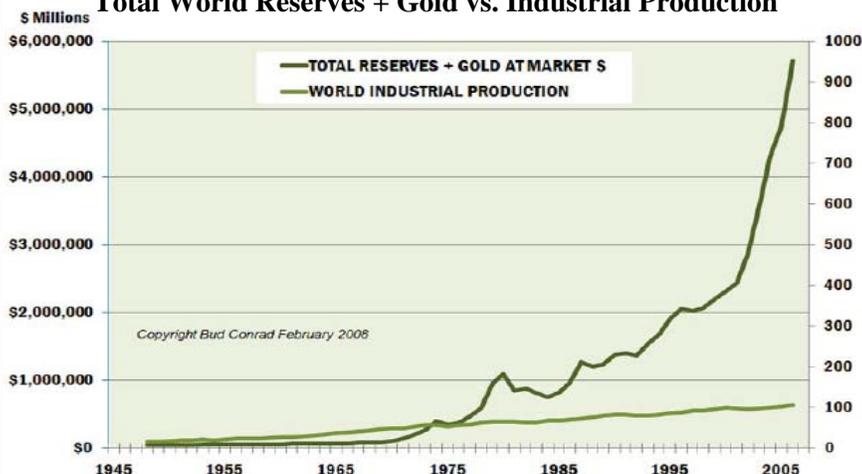
The word "Babylon" appears 294 times in the Bible (KJV). Not surprisingly, there are numerous prophetic statements about this entity in its various forms, many of them already fulfilled. A number of these prophecies are mirrored in the treatments of Tyre in scripture, another city of which prophecy often speaks (*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 — a la Revelation 18 — it alone is certainly not endtime Babylon. (*Please see our 3-part series, The American Economic Colossus: A Foreshadow of Endtime Babylon or Endtime Fulfillment? published by Midnight Call, August, September, October 2005 or visit our website.*) However, it is reasonably sure that Babylon takes forms and

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A Golden Cup: Endless Fiat Money

Total World Reserves + Gold vs. Industrial Production



Source: www.CaseyResearch.com

"[...] it will be the same for priest as for people, for master as for servant, for mistress as for maid, for seller as for buyer, for borrower as for lender, for debtor as for creditor. The earth will be completely laid waste and totally plundered. The LORD has spoken this word."

Isaiah 24:2-3

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WORLD MONEY UPDATE

Is Financial Armageddon Here?

By now, everybody knows it. It's front page news. Tough economic and financial times have hit Western economies ... notably the United States. Securities markets are reeling and financial companies are falling like flies.

Is it financial Armageddon ... the start of the big, deflationary bust that pitches the entire world into the final economic crisis? Actually, we think not. If anything, it likely is another station stop on the road to a thoroughly globalized world and a launch point for the next world-wide economic boom. We'll yet put this perspective into the context of a pre-tribulation view.

For now, and true to form, grim news and dour economic data are being spewed out. No doubt you have read the reports. Perhaps over 1.5 million US households this year may default on their mortgages and perhaps lose their homes. As many as 10% of all US households are now upside down (*meaning the house is now valued less than the outstanding mortgage*) according to some analysts, with much worse to come.

The US economy at large, according to economists, is now in recession. US and other

... continued on next page

international financial institutions are likely to face losses mounting to as high as \$2.7 trillion before the current credit “revulsion” is papered over. And, the US dollar is again plumbing new lows against the euro... surely to crash much farther so everyone thinks...even while the price of commodities such as gold, oil and foodstuffs surge ... at least, until recently.

However, we’ll stop there. Recounting obvious headlines doesn’t do anyone a service. Frankly, it is much too late and it would actually only serve to mislead given the dynamics of “crowd psychology” playing out at present. Consider that the euro has already soared some 90% against the US dollar in recent years and that the housing bubble peaked almost 3 years ago. Now that the great majority have come to recognize the reality of what we have warned about for years, we need to look ahead to the next stage. If that is so, to what perspective should we then orient ourselves? What should we expect next?

To be sure, the world is currently facing a financial crisis that is most certainly the worst since the 1930s. This should not be a surprise. And, it is indeed a palpable possibility that a financial meltdown may yet get much worse in some parts of the world. But, it certainly is not the end of the world nor is it likely to spell doom for the majority of the world’s population. The direct impact of the credit system breakdowns of late are largely confined to the Western nations. That is not to say that there will not be reverberations around the world. Yet, once this period has passed, some countries will emerge much weakened, and others will be in a more powerful position. (*Most certainly, the United States, will have lost some strength and authority.*) However, the key thing to see is that world will have moved to a more centralized, globally-coordinated state. What we are witnessing today is simply part of the pattern of that long continuing process.

While there surely are real consequences for many households in North America, we must take a global view and not forget that there is a world financial system today. To be sure, it is thoroughly compromised — a post-modern,

relativistic, immoral system that is in the service of the Mammon spirit. It is specifically designed to deceive and entrap. Frankly it is surprising how few Christians are wise to this reality.

Bible readers who understands things of the end (*eschatology*) know that an economic and financial control structure takes form; a boom in (false) wealth takes place; and an elite group of wealthy complicitors emerges even as a greater part of humanity become entrapped slaves. All these processes, though perhaps not yet complete, are clearly observable today. Much worse manifestations occur in the Tribulation itself.

Consider that the global trend of financialization is the bedrock — the very seedbed — of the endtime power structure that underpins the last-day ecumenicism and rulership of the final Antichrist. It is the trends of globalization, globalism, financialization, corporatization ... etc. — all of which are related — that provides the sinew and connectedness of a last-day world that has staked its hopes and faith upon the common commercialism of mankind. We have commented on this role numerous times (*See the book, Endtime Money Snare: How to live free.*)

All of which serves to make this point: None of these outcomes can happen if the world’s financial system collapses before its time. It is a perspective that also applied to the Y2K hysteria which swept the world in the late 1990s (*including various pulpits and ministries*).

To recall, the Y2K mania ended up being more of a psychological crisis than it an unsolvable technical problem. Some intrepid observers early on defused concerns about Y2K with the simple deduction that computer technologies were essential to global interconnectedness and therefore were absolutely necessary to bring about a number of conditions that were clearly prophesied in Scripture. (*See Dave Hunt’s book Y2K: A Reasoned Response to Mass Hysteria, 1999.*)

As such, it was a reasonable conclusion that the world would not succumb to a Y2K-type holocaust before the prophesied Antichrist could complete his program. And while we cannot know the exact time that this would occur, we at least know that it plays out inside the 7-year tribulation period (*and therefore after the rapture — the harpazo*).

To illustrate, in the 1990s this writer was still managing a large global investment operation and needed to grapple with the Y2K issue in various parts of the world. It was actually comforting to witness the high levels of concern at the time. Why? It ensured motivation and action to solve what was really a simple technological problem.

The same consideration applies to the world’s developing financial system and the current crisis. Consider then this perspective: If you believe that the current financial meltdown is the start of “*THE*” global financial and economic bust, then you may have missed the rapture. This perspective does not at all deny the imminency of the rapture, a doctrine we consider as inviolable. The fact that we are even considering this question should quicken our hopes to the promise of His coming very soon! The Antichrist needs an integrated, functioning, global financial system to bring



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about his agenda. Therefore, all that we are postulating here is that the final world-spanning financial crisis does not occur until the Tribulation period ... probably near the mid-point. Of course, smaller financial crises will occur before that point, but these will all be survivable and play a necessary role in prodding further global commercial convergence.

The great fears (*as in the Y2K saga*) now hastens the actions of policymakers and central banks around the globe. They are fighting the current financial crisis tooth and nail, working every possible trick of financial alchemy in their toolkit. As this takes place, the seeds for the next boom are being laid ... the next stage of globalization and world deception. Very likely, at least one more inflationary world boom will begin. Near the peak of one of these (*if not the next one*) may be the time where "*as ye think not*" (Matthew 24:44) that the Lord may come ... when people are "*eating, drinking ... marrying.*" (Luke 17:26)

In fact, we should expect the next boom to be world scale; enveloping the entirety of all nations; firmly entrenching mankind in the last-day money snare ... the systemic Babylonian colossus of Bible prophecy. It could be argued that 60% and more of the world's population are yet only marginal participants in the world's emerging commercial structure. Much more globalization could lie ahead. But before anyone might get too elated about this prospect, let's ground our perspective in a Dispensationalist, pre-tribulational view. We must make three points.

Above all, the Lord's return is imminent. Whatever the theories or speculations, we could be with Him at any time and our sojourn upon earth completed. We would have no more chance to set things right ... to shed our idolatries and worldliness. The Bema Seat lies ahead.

Secondly, certainty about the time of future events has not been given to man. We can know the season and such things as the destination point of the path upon which the world is traveling, but we are not given the hour or the day. That means that even though we may theorize that another global boom may be underway at some point and that the final "big financial meltdown" need wait until the Tribulation, these give no assurances of anything near-term.

With respect to the world's headlong rush into the last-day super-religion — the merging of God and Mammon — we can be sure of its occurrence. The world is on a path to destruction ... morally, economically and spiritually. We have the more sure word of prophesy on that point. On this road, there are serious, scary financial tremors (*also wars, pestilences, earthquakes ... etc.*) through which many people (*greedy, naïve or otherwise*) will suffer or profit greatly.

This brings us to the third and final point. Deception and corruption remains the mode of the world's developing systems. The successive economic booms of the world ... the temptations of the rising endtime apparition of great wealth ... the greater material comforts ... the "*cares of this world*" ... the ever ensnaring endtime money trap ... they all play upon the affections of Christians. Who then can sustain such an assault on the affections and still stand ready at all times for His coming? "*Pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.*" (Luke 21:36)

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manifestations at a number of different levels in prophecy. This view does not deny in any way that all Bible prophecy culminates in literal fulfillment ... sooner or later.

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 contradictory signs in one event. The Jews 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 this possibility open as we continue our examination. (*A further perspective on Babylonian forms is treated in the Personal Perspective. Please see Back Page.*)

However, rather than try to conclusively answer the broader question of Babylon's endtime identity (*or identities*), we want to here focus upon just one set of its characteristics — its global reach and its commercialism. But before delving into these, 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 B.W Newton's writings, penned in 1843.¹ (*Thank you to the reader who made us aware of this old book.*)

"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 despots, 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 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.”

(The entire chapter from which this excerpt is taken is reproduced and appended to the email and online versions of this issue.)

Newton, writing 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,

also 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 the day of his writing (1840s). 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’s 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, a particular form of righteousness, 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 (not to say that it does not have spiritual dimensions also). 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 peace is attainable through the eradication of poverty (*meaning equality and wealth for all*), 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 vulnerability to the judgment and wrath of God.*

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

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Signs of the Times



One of the well-known signs of the times is that there will be many deceivers, false christs, (Matthew 24:24) and mockers. It follows that the veracity of the Bible, its divine authorship, the Gospel, Israel, Christians and the Jews will all be under attack and repudiation. Mockers, thinking themselves to be wise, prove themselves to be fools ... not the least among them being academics. This recent news item was carried around the world. One wonders why. Was it the strength of the scholarship or the world's glee to see the Bible repudiated?

Was Moses stoned on Mount Sinai?—p2pnet news, March 5, 2008 — *An Israeli researcher figures he may have been. "Benny Shanon, a professor of cognitive psychology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, has argued that the miraculous sights and sounds in the Exodus account of God's giving of the Torah to Moses may have been drug induced," says the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.*

"Shanon, who published his theory in the scholarly journal Time and Mind, said the Mount Sinai spectacle recalled a 'trip' he experienced after drinking psychotropic drugs of a kind that can be found in some desert plants."

"And all the people perceived the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the voice of the horn, and the mountain smoking." Thus the book of Exodus describes the impressive moment of the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai, notes Haaretz.com:

"The "perceiving of the voices" has been interpreted endlessly since these words were first written. When Professor Benny Shanon, professor of cognitive psychology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, reads the verse, he recalls a powerful hallucinatory experience he had when he visited the Amazon and drank a potion made from a plant called ayahuasca.

"One of the things that happens when you drink the potion is a visual experience created via sounds," he says in the story.

Former head of the Hebrew University psychology department, Shanon said his first experience with ayahuasca was in 1991 when he was invited to a religious ceremony in the northern Amazon of Brazil in 1991.

"I experienced visions that had spiritual-religious connotations," he says. Since that time, he has used it hundreds of times, and has published a book about the plant.

The acacia tree also has psychedelic properties, Shanon says, according to Haaretz, which adds:

"The acacia is mentioned frequently in the Bible, and was the type of wood of which the Ark of the Covenant was made. According to Shanon, he drank a potion prepared from a species of acacia while he was in South America, which caused similar experiences to those produced by the ayahuasca. Shanon also sees signs of a hallucinogenic vision in the story of the burning bush."

Believable? The Bible is true. "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked." (Gal. 6:7)

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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 over a very short period of time.

The End of Babylon

We live during a great, great time of 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.

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 readers. Virtually all of us are inclined to view Bible prophecy through the conditions seen around us in our day — 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. Mankind thinks that its progress will endure forever and that these great global phenomena of the last two hundred years are permanent.

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. It is here that we find the major occlusion in our eyes. 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 their 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. And, this system has culminated in deep idolatry and is not unassociated with religion, even modern-day Christianity. Said John Wesley 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.*” (Heb.11:25-27)

Notes

1. B.W. 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.

Facts & Stats ... Ends & Trends



TOPICAL QUOTES

U.S. law firm growth will drop by half in 2008 after six years of double-digit growth, according to a report by a legal consulting firm that cited a “perfect storm” triggered in part by the subprime mortgage crisis. The report predicted industry revenue growth of 6 to 8% and net income growth of 3 to 5%. Law firms reported revenue growth of more than 13% in the first half of 2007 and compound annual growth of about 11 percent between 2001 and 2006.

Hildebrandt International Inc. and Citigroup Private Bank

At 27 stories, Mukesh Ambani’s home will have a helipad, a health club and 600 servants. The house — more like a tower, really — is estimated to cost \$1 billion, and its future resident, is India’s richest man. At 570 feet tall, the home’s 27 stories will look more like 60 because the ceilings are so high. All of this for one family consisting of Ambani, his wife, Neeta, their three children and Ambani’s mother.

The Guardian

Living standards in the UK as measured by GDP per capita are set to rise above those in the US in 2008 for the first time since the 19th century. According to Oxford Economics, UK GDP will reach \$48,000 per head of the population in 2008, compared with \$47,430 per capita in the US.

Oxford Economics

Self-storage facilities nation-wide numbered about 8,000 in the mid-1980s, and experts now put that total at between 40,000 and 50,000. “It’s a \$17-billion (USD)-a-year business devoted entirely to finding a place to store our abundance,” says Daniel Pink, an author and culture watcher. “It’s bigger than the motion-picture-production industry.”

Christian Science Monitor

China became the world’s largest gold producer last year, helped by Canadian- and Australian-led projects that aim to add millions in ounces to the world gold

supply. The ranking pushes South Africa into second place, the first time the gold giant has lost its top ranking since 1905. The title of top gold producer adds to a list of raw materials China can claim to produce more than any other country, including aluminum and steel. It’s not likely to lose that lead anytime soon as more foreign producers make inroads in China’s untapped mining fields.

GFMS Limited, Market Watch

Tobacco-related diseases may kill a third of middle-aged men by 2030 in China, where smoking habits resemble those of America in the 1950s, researchers found. Cigarette consumption in the world’s most populous nation lags 40 years behind the U.S., where about 33 percent of adults aged 35 to 69 died of tobacco-related causes. China has 350 million smokers, equivalent to the entire population of Russia, Germany and Japan.

Bloomberg

Per capital consumption rates in China are still about 11 times below ours [America’s], but let’s suppose they rise to our level. Let’s also make things easy by imagining that nothing else happens to increase world consumption — that is, no other country increases its consumption, all national populations (including China’s) remain unchanged and immigration ceases. China’s catching up alone would roughly double world consumption rates. Oil consumption would increase by 106 percent, for instance, and world metal consumption by 94 percent. If India as well as China were to catch up, world consumption rates would triple. If the whole developing world were suddenly to catch up, world rates would increase elevenfold. It would be as if the world population ballooned to 72 billion people (retaining present consumption rates).

Excerpted from What’s Your Consumption Factor —New York Times, Jan. 2, 2008

Many point out the right road after the wheel is broken.

Ancient Turkish Proverb

There is no means of avoiding the final collapse of a boom brought about by credit (debt) expansion.

Ludwig von Mises

No where does history indulge in repetitions so often or so uniformly as in Wall Street. When you read contemporary accounts of booms or panics, the one thing that strikes you most forcibly is how little either stock speculations or stock speculators today differ from yesterday. The game does not change and neither does human nature.

E. Lefevre —1923

We regularly keep in touch with overseas central banks on market developments and share each other’s understanding. That is something we do all the time. But when financial markets are volatile, we are even more closely in contact with each other so that we come up with a common understanding.

Bank of Japan Chief Toshihiko Fukui, Oct. 3 2007

EVR



Letters to the Editor

Editor's Note: *We get questions, many of them similar. A large portion of these inquiries ask for personal investment advice. Admittedly, in the past we have shied away from this type of inquiry for a number of reasons. Firstly, Eternal Value Review is not a financial advice letter. Rather, our emphasis has always been on examining the endtime roles of money. Secondly, financial advice can be dangerous, especially if the advisor is not intimately familiar with a person's circumstances. The last thing we want to do is lose friends. Lastly, such inquiries do take quite a bit of time ... something that is at a premium for us as The Mulberry Ministry has no full-time staff. Then why not handle such questions in a format from which all can benefit? Therefore, we are introducing this column as a regular feature of EVR. In this section we'll deal with the practical issues of stewardship in this age. That said, we also receive feedback, interesting insights and questions. The column will pass on these comments as well as deal with specific financial questions (Please note that questions may be edited.)*

EVR

READER: I have been witnessing to people and we discuss the "kingdom of God" now. I see the "kingdom" all around us and one of the most graphic illustrations of this is if we follow the flow of the spread of the gospel throughout history. We'll see societies changed; wells dug; charities begun; orphanages built; care of mothers and elderly increased. This is demonstrated by societies becoming more civilized and their financial institutions and government agencies becoming more prosperous and more socially oriented. Industries start, science and inventions are encouraged ... etc. My thought: Is there a graph with the economic growth along side of the growth and or spread of the gospel? We can also see a decline in this where Christianity has been replaced by other religions or ideologies; as when and where Islam or Communism took over. We have a wonderful opportunity to see the influence of Christianity in Africa and Asia today. Thanks — **A. B., USA**

EVR: Yes, there is much opportunity for Christianity to affect individual lives. However, you pose questions that have been the subject of weighty debate and examination for centuries. Social economists have examined such relationships ... and more recently, quantitatively-oriented scientists have attempted the same. For example, some have identified the Reformation as being a large influence on the industrialization of the 1800s. Also, I have written on this topic from time to time, for example, two chapters in this book (See link: <http://www.eternalvalue.com/books/OneWorldBook.pdf>)

Unfortunately, I can identify no testable relationship

between the gospel and economic development ... not in this present dispensation, in any case. The great difficulty in this project is to identify "pure gospel" at work ... in other words, in spirit and truth and not corrupted by money and empire. There are little to no statistics or historical precedents that support the view that "Christian" organizations or agendas, though perhaps doing good for a time, are not susceptible to corruption and materialism over time. Invariably, greed and the lures of dominion and power corrupt. Please check out some of the articles on our website. A good place to start is this article on faith and money, Last Day Prophecy: Hot Comfort, Cold Faith.

READER: Dear Brother Hahn: I read with interest your articles every month in Midnight Call magazine, and today took the time to check out your "eternalvalue" website, which I found quite interesting. First, let me say that I am in total agreement with you in regard to what you say about not "trusting" in corruptible riches (James 5:1-3). My wife and I both love the Lord, and put our complete trust in Him (Proverbs 3:5-6). But we also realize the scriptural mandate to prepare for the future, as pictured by the ant in Proverbs 6:6-8 and 30:25. And so, while not having a "love" for money per se (1 Timothy 6:10), we do recognize the need to use it wisely, and wish to do the right thing in regard to investing it (Luke 16:1-11). Do you feel it is ethical/biblical to us as believers in Jesus to continue to invest our money in these Annuities, MMs, CDs, Bonds and so forth? And, if it is OK to invest this money, is this the best way, in your opinion to do it? Again, thank you very much for any input which you might be able to provide. Blessings to you. — **J.B., USA**

EVR. I am always heartened to hear from people with such God-honoring objectives as you express. It is not an easy task to steward material possessions in this world, but rather a continuing task ... much like "continuing to work out our faith." In short, I see no ethical reasons not to consider the types of investments that you mention. However, that still leaves one with the burden of decision making ... finding secure investments ... etc. As for specific and personal investment advice, due to a lack of a complete overview of your financial picture, I can really only offer general principles. We have much material on our website that offers general advice. Particularly the document The Disinvestment Guide: The Bible, I believe best sets out the general task. My most often repeated advice with respect to retirement investing is diversification and a cold assessment of risk. I say cold, because when markets are caught up in euphoria (*as they were a little more than 8 months ago*) the general error is to both ignore and mis-price risk.

READER: I appreciated your article (*EVR February 2008. Anxieties of Life in America*) You however failed to mention the references in the book of Daniel that have the anti-christ rewarding his minions with, gold, land and jewels. By the way, as a possible point for you to ponder,

there are some who think the antichrist or at least his position may already have been identified by its multiple connections to the number 666. Check out *Fulfilled Prophecy* on the web. It makes for interesting reading unless you are a dogmatic pretribulationist who embed their eschatology within their systematic theology. In such a case, to even consider post-trib or pre-wrath positions is unthinkable (poor fellows).—J.R.G., USA

EVR: One of the privileges of our faith is that one is free to check out any theory, ask any question, and then to test answers by the light of Scripture. Speaking of Scripture, you are referring to Daniel 11:38 which is not at all related to the “rulers” mentioned in the cited article (Daniel 11:39) but rather the “unknown god” — “a god unknown to his fathers he will honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts.” This is speaking of the gods that the Antichrist will honor. The free booklet entitled *The Rise of Three False Gods of the Endtimes*, which is available on our website, discusses this point in greater detail.

READER: I was reading the Feb. 2008 EVR where you refer to Dan 11:39 and referenced the word “those” using the NIV. The main problem I have here is the use of the NIV for a “word” reference. The NIV is not a word for word translation as the KJV is, so specific words in the NIV do not carry any real message for us. It wasn’t composed with that intent, words were selected to convey an overall thought. Using the English word from the KJV with Webster’s dictionary would be valid. Using Greek or Hebrew text with appropriate dictionaries is somewhat valid, but has a lot of problems. It is inappropriate to use a “commentary type text” for a dictionary. I do appreciate your insight and willingness to share with us so freely from your background. — C. N., USA

EVR. We are open to all comments and instruction. For the record, I always check a number of English translations including the KJV. I was not exegeting the word “those” in any case, merely trying to address the question of just which people were being referenced. The KJV translation uses the word “them.” Either translation does not invalidate the point I was making nor my choice of English translation. As best as possible, I also check the Greek and Hebrew texts (*though certainly do not claim scholarship in this area*). After all, as we know, these are the closest we have to the original autographs, not the KJV or any other English translation.

READER: Dear Mr. Hahn, Your article on “10 End Time Signs for Heathens” that I read on www.raptureready.com is very interesting and so timely. The day of the Lord is near. Thank you for sharing your perspective with us. Sincerely — D. J., USA

READER: So grateful for your studies and the work you do, Wilfred. I look forward to follow your further research. Regards, and be blessed! — T. A., Norway

EVR

Personal Perspectives: 2 Babylons

- cont’d from back page

Biblical teaching on idolatry and materialism. For example, such organizations as the influential Acton Institute, seem to exist solely to validate capitalism and free-market economics as a Biblically endorsed system. No. To the contrary. God has never endorsed any human system.

Any religious movement that claims to build a “kingdom” on earth will be sure to be fostering ideologies that promote earthly citizenship rather than heavenly ones. Jesus Christ could not have been clearer on this point, saying that His kingdom was not of this world. (John 18:36) Furthermore, He pointedly asked: “When I return, will I find faith upon earth?” (Luke 18:8) It is a prophecy enfolded in a rhetorical statement. In fact, it is probably the most indicative of the very few prophecies that specifically apply to the Church.

Implied in this question is that He will find little faith on earth at that time. A main reason why that is likely to be the case is faith and materialism cannot co-exist. (*See our article Last-day Prophecy: Hot Comfort, Cold Faith which explores this relationship in greater detail.*)

Sadly, Christians (*denominations, movements and individuals*) and Christian-look-alikes — namely, religious developments deliberately conspired by the Enemy to be an imitation — today risk either falling for or trafficking in the lures of both Babylons.

And that, as far as I can tell, is the truth.



Wilfred J. Hahn

EVR

1. The title to this article has no connection to Alexander Hislop’s work of 1858, *The Two Babylons*.

Wilfred’s 2008 Itinerary: *The Mulberry Ministry*

- **September 27-29—Midnight Call Ministries, Atlantic Prophecy Conference—Charleston, South Carolina**
www.midnightcall.com or call 1-800-845-2420
- **October 17-19 —3rd Annual Saskatoon Prophecy Conference —Berean Watchmen Ministries, Saskatoon, SK, Canada**
<http://www.bereanwatchmen.com/conferences/index.php>
- **December 8-10—Pre-Trib Research Conference, Dallas, Texas—www.pre-trib.org/conference.php**

Recent Engagements:

- **Interview with Ray Gano of Prophezine Ministry**
Profiling Wilfred’s views on current financial trends.
www.Prophezine.com [Link to MP3 Here](#)

Contact us at mulberryministry@telus.net

Personal Perspectives

Danger: When Two Babylons Become One¹

One of the prominent phenomena of the Last Days is the emergence of Babylon the Great, the great commercial colossus that is depicted in Revelation 18. Its emergence is frequently also foreshadowed and prophesied in the Old Testament, as this issue's feature article, *The Babylon Occlusion*, also points out. The prophecies applying to Tyre and Egypt for example all provide an anodyne for the final golden cup filled with the vile toxins of commercialism and materialistic idolatry. (See graph pg. 1. *Fiat money may be one the abominations in the cup — Rev. 18.6*)

Yes, there assuredly is much debate on the general topic of endtime Babylon, aspects of which we have often commented upon. However, for the purpose of the topic at hand, we need not stop to consider these many views. Here, we only want to focus in one additional aspect of endtime Babylon(s) ... namely, the "inseparability" of the two Babylons.

Inseparability of two Babylons? How can there be two, and yet they are inseparable? Actually, this was the very question put to me the first time I ever spoke on the topic of Babylon mentioned in Revelation 17 and 18. At the time, I was unprepared. The question was this: Where do you see the break between the Babylon mentioned in Revelation 17 and the one mentioned in Chapter 18? I was caught rather flatfooted, as I had simply assumed that they were different Babylons since they were treated in separate chapters and had slightly different names.

While I still hold to the view that they are different Babylons — in other words, alternate dimensions or at least different perspectives of the last-day Babylon emergence — I also hold to the view that they are inseparable. While this might seem contradictory, it is not. Basically, it is two Babylons¹ clandestinely in bed together, in effect becoming one. I say clandestinely because most people — surely including many who claim to be Christians — are blind to this emerging union. For the most part, it is a relationship that has been conducted under the covers and in secret ... but, less so recently. The harlotry is becoming ever more open. From the religious side, it is a union that has been blessed by more and more Christian denominations and religious movements.

Jesus Christ clearly said that there are two separate masters — God and Mammon. (Matthew 6:24) You can serve only one. Either you love the one or the other. While God promises to be near and never to forsake us, (Heb. 13:5) Mammon has masterfully honed its attractions to accurately and lethally target the fleshly affections of mankind. These temptations are also near and with us. Who does not agree that the lures of Mammon are lustrous and inveigling? Its apparent entreaties and

promises of security are so tempting and immediate.

But, here is the danger: This apparently unbridgeable gap between God and Mammon offers one of the biggest, exploitable marketing opportunities ever known to mankind. How can one have the assurance of being righteous and spiritual and not pass up the chance for rich comfort and lucre from the horn of Mammon?

If you can figure out a way to convince people that they can both worship God and sup with Mammon at the same time, you will meet certain success. This is not a new discovery. It is a gimmick that has worked in past history every time since New Testament times. But now it is institutionalized and unfolds on a global scale.

The merging of God and Mammon — figured as religion and materialism, faith and globalization in bed together — are the final capstone of global deception that is reflected in the religious and commercial Babylons shown to rise in illicit cahoots in Revelation 17 and 18. It is the final, global-spanning religion. As such, that may be why the two Babylons in these chapters are presented as one, unbreakable continuum.

Where is the evidence, people might ask. Is this happening today? It assuredly is ... and in many ways.

There are numerous channels and multiple feed-back loops in this present-day progression. In the future, we will publish an article that tracks these developments. For example, we see an enormous convergence in the world under the rubric of "ethical investing." It has found a huge alliance within religious circles. Such new organizations as the International Interfaith Investment Group (3IG), which claims to wield some \$10 trillion in wealth and 7% of the inhabitable real estate in the world, are pushing for a purer and better world with the power of money. Also, the "green" movement has bridged alliances with religious groups through such organizations as the Association for Religion and Conservation (ARC). Again, money is the blunt truncheon being used to bring about change and reform on behalf of religion.

Also, within Christianity there are many movements in this direction. Various prosperity gospels (*material comforts in the here and now*), Reconstructionism, Kingdom Now and many other ideologies risk consorting with the deadly and deceitful embrace of Mammon. We do not doubt that there are sincere and godly who may be swept up in these ideologies and who come by their ignorance honestly. However, there are certainly also wolves and entities masquerading as "angels of light."

While we greatly respect good scholarship, it is also academics that have come to the aid of human lust through the introduction of new theories that "re-vise"

... continued on page 9



ETERNAL VALUE REVIEW

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Thoughts on the Apocalypse:



The Babylonian System – Revelation 17-18 — W. B. Newton

It is helpful to notice that it is the habit of prophecy first of all to develop the end. It describes the consummation *first*. If in subsequent visions the same subject is retraced, we find ourselves led further back as to time, and earlier circumstances are portrayed. He who has valued and given heed to the earlier lesson, will desire further knowledge and he is worthy to receive it. We find a remarkable instance of this enlarged instruction in the chapters before us. The 13th chapter had revealed the great monarch [antichrist] of the prophetic earth in all the plenitude of his glorious power. We see him there in his last estate, with all glory centered in himself — all recognised as proceeding from him, and all returning to him — for he glorifies himself as God.

But this chapter deals with a preceding period. It ends where the 13th begins. We find here the initiatory steps of his glory. Although that glory is even here exceedingly great, for “the beast had seven heads and ten horns” — the emblems of concentrated authority over the whole Roman earth - he holds this glory from and with another who is fairer and more attractive than himself. We are told that he sustained a “woman arrayed in purple and scarlet and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls” (17:3-4).

The path, therefore, of Antichrist into power will not be dissimilar to that which has before uniformly been trodden by those who have exalted themselves into greatness. They who have risen from obscurity into glory - who have founded sovereignties and given their name to empires - have first been the servants of some existing system which they have served, and under whose favours they have grown, until they have become strong enough to despise and spurn its patronage.

For this reason, none, no, not even saints (except indeed they watch and keep the testimonies of the prophecy of this Book) will feel surprised or scandalised at the course upon which Antichrist enters. He will merely be the friend and supporter of a system already known and already honoured — a system that will have been long existent and long valued. They who have seen no deformity in that system — whose eyes and whose thoughts have been habituated to rest in it with complacency, if not with joy — who have seen in it no “mystery” of iniquity, will find little to offend them in the ways of that mighty one who will arise to be its champion and its shield.

Indeed it cannot be doubted, that many an individual, admired and idolised by men, is even at this present hour occupying a place that resembles, in the estimate of God, this *early* place of Antichrist. Few resemble him in his *final* place of individualised power. But all who have thrown their energies into the support of any systems whereby the truth of God has been discredited, or wickedness sanctified by the name of Christ, do virtually stand in a place that answers, in measure, to the symbol here given. They do have, like the beast, names, though not *all* names, of blasphemy written on them.

We cannot, therefore, be surprised that this chapter has frequently been applied by the servants of God, in different ages, to those ruling systems which they have certainly recognised in their own day as hostile to the people and to the truth of Christ. These same systems were perhaps blasphemously assuming His authority and name. Nor were these servants of God altogether wrong in this recognition. What ecclesiastical body, I might add what secular body, has yet arisen in the earth that has set itself to order the ways of men, either in their relations toward Christ or in their natural relations toward God, that has not run counter to His will, dishonoured His Scripture, opposed His saints, and arrogated to itself a place which God never gave it?

How can any work to sustain such things without names of blasphemy being written on them, and more in proportion to the energy and devotedness of their labour? Many a defender of Romanism and such systems must be regarded as marked with names of blasphemy — for falsehood cannot be thrust into the place of Truth without Truth being rejected and reviled. False assumption, and the consequent reviling of Truth and people, is blasphemy in His sight. “I know *the blasphemy* of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan” (Revelation 2:9).

The exactness of prophetic statement must not be destroyed by applications, which, however valuable *as applications*, must never be substituted for direct and exact interpretation. Our first duty always is to inquire, definitely and specifically, what the event is which God is pleased to reveal.

It may be with godly and upright intention that many have sought to turn the edge of the testimony of the 17th of Revelation sometimes on Rome, sometimes on national assumptions of Christianity. However, the cause of Truth will not ultimately be served in this way. For it seems that in doing this they have unconsciously narrowed the testimony of God, and refused to see in this chapter the definite picture of that closing system to which Romanism, and everything else that successfully sways the unregenerate heart, will lead.

This particular system is the more important one to be watched, because it is future, and may be (I believe I can

safely say, *is*) at present rising. By the terms of this prophecy, it will extend its influence over regions which the ecclesiastical systems of Rome, or Greece, or England, have never swayed. Its adaptation to such a mass of nations — for they are described as "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues" (17:15) — shows that it *must be* constructed on principles as wide as the heart of man. Therefore all men, whatever their creed or whatever their nation, are in danger of its seductions, if their path is not simply ordered by the Spirit of God.

It cannot be doubted by any who seriously examine this chapter that its fulfilment is altogether future. The beast by whom the woman is sustained has ten horns, which indicate a sphere not less extensive than the whole Roman earth. And when, since the power of secular Rome crumbled, have we seen any system that has thus borne sway over the West and East together? Or when have we seen any individual like him that is described sustaining such a system? Moreover, the seven mountains occupied by the woman is the symbol that all and every form of concentrated governmental influence — in a word, all authority belongs to her; and as we might expect, her sustainer and instrument is invested with the same: in him, symbolised by seven heads; in her, by seven mountains on which she sits.

This complete possession of all authority has never yet been found in any system that has previously acted in the earth. Many have coveted it but none have attained it. Power has conflicted with power, system with system, and the jar of opposing interests has hindered the progress of any into undisputed supremacy.

We only need to consider what it means to have the control of all the influence of the renovated Roman earth — its political, military, civil, religious, commercial, and educational systems. If we imagine what it will be to have the control of these things in and throughout the many and now differing nations within its scope, we can see a control that is awesome if exercised only in one nation. But how much more awesome if it is in all nations?

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 marvellous exhibition of a power yet to be. It is all the more marvellous, 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" (17:6).

Yet so is it determined by the word of God, and if we watch the signs of the times we may see the symptoms of returning union. [*The reader may wish to note that this was written in 1843, nearly 150 years before the emergence of such things as the European Economic Union or World Trade Organisation. - Editor*] We see

nothing like the restoration of one undivided empire, neither the appearance of any one universal monarch, for the time of the last monarch of the Gentiles is not yet come. We see, on the contrary, kingdoms broken into distinctness, and divisions of this kind there must be. The last unity of the Roman earth is a unity of distinctness.

Yet while these things are silently progressing, we may equally observe the rapid rise of a peculiar system that is beginning to give to these kingdoms a likeness one to another. This system is beginning to unite them, not by arms or by religious uniformity, but by the influence of a moral and political system as extensive and as certain as the covetousness and pride of the heart of man.

Limited or, as it is called, constitutional monarchy, commercial enterprise, the consequent subjection of everything — art, science, taste — to utility (the standard of utility being productiveness of wealth). This is the control of ecclesiastical by civil power, and what is still more remarkable, the increasing control of governments by capitalists, manufacturers, and merchants. This system is the gradual yielding of the aristocracy of birth and station to the aristocracy of wealth. These and other connected principles have marked a character so distinctive upon the present period, as to be recognised even by those who have never thought of reading these things in the light of the testimony of God.

If facts prove to us that these are the principles that are beginning to spread a moral unity throughout the Roman earth, we could scarcely avoid concluding upon this ground alone that this is the system, represented in this chapter, as dominant over the prophetic earth at the time of the end. When we also find that these are the very features which the Scripture notes as characterising the Babylon of the latter day, it remains no longer an undetermined question. 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 Commerce

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. The ruling power in each depended for its support, sometimes on the nobles or the aristocracy of birth; sometimes on the aristocracy of merit

— such as successful generals, or sometimes on the people, but never on an aristocracy of merchants.

But when, in the history of the declension of kingly power, the sovereign began first to lean upon his nobles, then upon his generals, then upon the people, and the cry of democracy was on every lip, we have seen suddenly arise another barrier more potent and more firm than any that has yet existed in the history of man - the aristocracy of wealth. “Capital” is power; and men of wealth are becoming the chief guardians of society and the firmest pillars of the throne.

In times past, democrats were wont to assist despots, 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 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.

Inhabitants of the commercial nations are interested in the maintenance of order and tranquillity in their own countries (for commerce diffuses wealth, and gives to millions an interest in the prosperity of the common weal, which they never had before). But when the wealth of one nation becomes closely tied to the undertakings of another, or when one nation lives by selling to another, they become dependent on each other, and soon becoming aware of their mutual dependency, they understand that common interests involve common prosperity or common ruin.

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.

Such are the fruits that the soul of Babylon loves. They flourish beneath a sky that is to the eye fair and serene. The rude jarring of former ages has passed away. It seems as though men had at last learned that it is best for their own interests to cease from biting and devouring one another. The disturbance and dissension that was once caused by God’s own Truth is gone. Men respect the opinions of their neighbours, and charity hopes well of all. Every one shall be fostered, and loved, and valued, if they are willing to serve the interests of the common good and not interfere with the ways or doctrines of others.

Such are the rules of Babylon, such the principles on which human society is beginning to be organised throughout the Roman earth. Such rules indeed will not bring the sword into the household, yet Christ in His faithfulness may (for Truth is a sword and He will not permit it banished from the earth). Then there will be the opportunity for Babylon “to drink of the blood of saints, and of the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.” With this exception, the moral atmosphere will be untroubled and serene, and there will be little indication of the coming storm.

The Idolatry Of Money

For man to be proud of anything is a sin — or to lean upon anything, or worship anything, other than God. How peculiarly hateful must that sin become when the idol is that which God has so expressly named “filthy lucre.” Yet money is everything in the system of which we speak: its foundation and its pillar - the mainspring of all its energies.

For men to spread over the earth and subdue it, to produce wealth by supplying food and necessary clothing by the sweat of their brow, to exchange with each other on principles *fairly* remunerative of the time and labour spent in the production, all this is according to the natural arrangements of God. This, however, is not the commerce of Babylon. It deals in luxuries rather than in necessities. In other words, it ministers to the lusts, rather than to the need of man — “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, the pride of life,” and vanity of spirit.

This is not its only drawback. Heedless of everything except profit, its avowed principle is “to buy at the cheapest, and to sell at the dearest.” The misfortune of another may constrain him to sell all he has — that misfortune is welcomed, if it reduces the cost of the object of my desire. Poor distant barbarous nations may be ignorant of the real value of what I bring, and I scruple not to take a price a hundred times greater than the value of that which I sell.

But did God prescribe these principles to regulate the mutual supply of the need of those who found themselves together the inhabitants of a ruined earth — themselves born to sorrow? Were these the principles on which Abraham dealt with Lot, or with the sons of Heth? Or are they the principles of him who loves in this and every other way to add to the miseries and sins of men, and deepen the groan of creation?

We cannot, therefore, wonder at the result. Unscrupulous avidity, endowed with every superiority that skill, and art, and science, and courage, and commanding influence can give, going forth to ransack the whole earth for treasure, is sure to prosper, now that God has “withdrawn Himself into His place,” and is “still, and refrains Himself.”

But what is wealth, what is prosperity without Him and His blessing? It ministers joy. But what joy? I saw “a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication. And upon her forehead was a name written, ‘Mystery, Babylon’ the great, the mother of the harlots and abominations of the earth” (17:4-5). Such is the symbol. Who would desire such joy? Yet men do desire it, and will desire, and will drink of it till they are drunken, for conscience has become dead.

The Reformation itself (sent as it was in mercy) has been one innocent cause of this. Before that, men were sinning comparatively in the dark, but since, they have been sinning in the light. Worldly and designing men have availed themselves of the truths of the Reformation. They have struck off thereby the fetter of superstition from many a hand, but their wish has been to set it free for worldliness, not for God. They have succeeded.

The Power Of The Babylonian System

This system, it must be remembered, is in the fullest sense to be a *ruling system*. That is, it will not be merely a morally influential system which kings and governors may be glad to use. It will be a system that will *use them*, and make them subservient to its will. The beast having ten horns *carries* the woman. This willing subjection of the executive organs of government is a peculiarly distinguishing feature in the Babylonish period.

The Papal system struggled for ages to reduce the crowns of Western Europe into this kind of subservience to itself; but the attempt signally failed, even in the limited sphere in which it was made. But here we find the ten horns of the Roman earth in willing and complete subjection. This very fact of governors acting not as individuals, not on the unbiased judgments of their own minds but as the organs of a system, invests their actions with the greater importance as signs of the moral character of the times. The actions of the representatives of a system indicate not the condition of a mere individual mind but the habitual moral condition of millions before God. I say habitual, because caprice may determine an individual, but it cannot influence the acting of a deliberately planned and settled system.

Although that system is as yet but partially formed, and is only partially influential, yet the character of policy and legislation at home and abroad is strongly enough marked with new peculiarities. Those peculiarities we shall, I doubt not, find to be retained when it is developed in its perfection.

Babylon - The Economic Centre

I have said 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. Its manifestation before the eyes of men (when it will assume a form as definite and palpable as Popery, or Islam, or any other system that has

ever appeared) — its manifestation will not be until it shall be set up in the land of Shinar on its own base.

This woman represents not a system merely, but a system connected with one special city, and that place is Babylon, the Euphratean city in the land of Shinar. “The woman which you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth” (17:18). Such are the concluding words of the seventeenth chapter; and in that which immediately succeeds, the outward circumstances of that great city are described.

The land of Shinar from which civilisation first proceeded, is the place to which it will again return, and in which it will be concentrated. There also it shall find its grave. The pit shall suddenly open its mouth upon it. The silent progress of the mystery of iniquity is advancing secretly now — so secretly, that even they who are expecting something to arise, are expecting anything except the right thing.

The lid of the ephah, however, is lifted for the servant of God, and he is allowed to glance at that which is contained within it. To him it is given to understand the truth, while others are lost in conjecture.

Some, for example, fear that the hordes of the North from Russia shall again pour down upon the plains of Europe and again establish a universal monarchy upon the ruins of Western civilisation. Others hope for the rise of some great conqueror who, like Napoleon, may again individualise power and give the sword pre-eminence over the sceptre. Others expect — some with fear, some with hope — that a dominant religious system will be revived, and Romanism or a modified Romanism will again be supreme. Others desire that the government of the whole Roman world should depend upon religious systems, but that those systems should be all the Churches of Christendom that can pretend to (so called) apostolic lineage, linked together in a catholic union.

I merely mention these things to show how utterly unconscious men are of the real nature of the system that is being silently prepared. While some are exclaiming against one form of evil and others against another, the literature, the philanthropy, the government, and often the real Christianity of the day, is in the meanwhile advancing, and that with most successful efforts. That is the system which God has named “Babylon the Great, the Mother of the harlots and abominations of the earth.”

Zechariah’s Vision

It is well that we should consider carefully that remarkable passage in Zechariah to which I have alluded, respecting the ephah and its “going forth.” When the prophet was taught where the influence would dwell which, in the latter day, should “go forth” with pervading sovereign power over Israel and the nations of the prophetic earth, there was shown to him not a sword, nor a

mitre, nor a diadem, but an ephah —the emblem of commerce.

“Then the angel that talked with me went forth, and said to me, ‘Lift up your eyes, and see this that goes forth.’ And I said, ‘What is it?’ And he said, ‘This is an ephah that goes forth.’ He said moreover, ‘This is their resemblance through all the earth’” (Zechariah 5:5-6). Such was the vision; and how truly is it beginning to be verified! Is not commerce the sovereign influence of the day? If we wished to inscribe on the banners of the leading nations of the earth an emblem characteristically expressive of their condition, could we fix on any device more appropriate than an ephah? Will not Israel, when they shall concentrate their unsanctified energies, and gather together their wealth, and resettle themselves in the land from which they have been driven, glory in assuming some such symbol as this?

The commencement of the reign of commerce is already recognised, and men welcome it. We have suffered enough (they say) from the sword of the conqueror, and from the mitre, and from the crown. We do not wish that society should fall beneath the sway of either. Let economics be supreme. Its influences are benign and gentle. It gives scope to the energies of man. It ennobles and enriches. It cherishes science; it encourages art; it stimulates research. It diffuses wealth and banishes penury. It breathes of peace and concord. It is the panacea for our ills. Who, then, will condemn commerce? Who will say that the ephah can be the harbinger of anything but good?

The *material* interests of commerce for the most part absorb the attention of those who are occupied in it, and they care little respecting the moral principles which the god of this world may be silently connecting with the exaltation of their idol. Yet it is very manifest, that the inauguration of this age of commercial greatness is accompanied by the introduction of new principles — new governmental principles which, although not yet fully systematised, are silently operating on society and gradually casting it in a new mould.

For governments *openly* to ignore Truth and *avowedly* to cherish all the varieties of falsehood is, in the history of Christendom at least, something new. Society apart from God, and from His Truth, is but a many-tongued monster that gives utterance to voices that all emanate from the pit. Yet we are taught that it is the duty of government to be the exponent of the mind of society and to give effect to the expressions of its will — that it should honour falsehood, sustain its emissaries, conciliate all by pleasing all, and oppose none except those who maintain that the Truth of God is unchangeable and eternal. These same ones insist that God’s Truth is clear, precise, and definite - that it cannot bend to the willfulness and perversity of man, nor confound darkness with light, nor call evil good.

But the steadfast inflexibility of Truth ill suits the designs of those who need pliant principles — principles that can accommodate themselves to all circumstances, and adapt themselves complacently to all forms of superstition, to all varieties of evil. If the “*solidarity*” of nations is to be sought on such principles as these, and if the “*material*” interests of the human family are to be made the supreme object of pursuit, it is no wonder that God and revealed Truth should be excluded from such consolidation. Such will be the result of the now germinal principles of this rising age of commercial greatness. Few, however, care to analyse them. They are *hidden* in the ephah.

The Mysteries Inside The Ephah

Zechariah was not restricted to the sight of the outward form of the ephah only. He was also commanded to look within, and there he saw a woman seated in the midst of the ephah. “A woman,” as we have already seen, is a symbol continually used to designate a *moral* system. Thus we are taught in this vision just what we learn from present facts, that an attractive moral system is associated with that which, if viewed only in its physical aspect, would be nothing but the bare form of an ephah.

The prophet looked again, and he saw the angel cast something into the ephah with the woman, saying, “This is wickedness.” And he cast it into the midst of the ephah, and he cast the weight of lead upon the mouth thereof. “Wickedness,” or as it is interpreted by Paul, “lawlessness,” is a word that specifically designates that peculiar form of evil which makes Antichrist what he will be as the man of lawlessness, or the wicked one (Isaiah 11: 2 Thessalonians 2).

The principles, therefore, of “lawlessness” in their earliest form of concentration, will be found connected with the ephah. But they remain hidden and continue to be the “mystery of lawlessness” until the ephah is translated to the land of Shinar, and there established. With its establishment in the land of Shinar (and can any words more plainly mark locality?), the vision of Zechariah touching the ephah closes.

Can there be any difficulty in understanding these things? In the land of Shinar, the woman hidden in the ephah will be manifested and known as Babylon the Great, “wondered after” by men, but in the estimate of God, “the Mother of the harlots, and the abominations of the earth.”

The System Of The Antichrist

It is this system, then, that Antichrist will, in the early period of his history, espouse. All plenitude of authority and influence, indicated in the vision by seven mountains, will at the period of which this chapter treats, be possessed by the woman. But power, if it is to be used, requires of course some form of executive agency, and this is

supplied in him. He, for the time being, becomes the executive agent of all her power.

A system, however, like that of Babylon, will not fully suit the individual ambition of Antichrist. He will not submit to be legislated for by the classes of the wealthy, nor any other classes. He will spurn even the laws of God, and will do according to his own will. The ten kings of the ten kingdoms will gladly own him as their lord. The yoke of the Babylonish system is a hard yoke upon them. Besides which the democratic pressure, which is perpetually increasing in strength, could scarcely be finally resisted even by the system of Babylon itself. They will gladly, therefore, take refuge under the arm of one whom Satan strengthens for dominion, and join in destroying a system which has really made them its slaves and, in many things, left them less liberty than the meanest of their subjects.

“They shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire, for God has put in their hearts to fulfill His will and to agree and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled” (17:16-17). The *system* of Babylon will be destroyed; but the *city* with all its wealth and greatness will for a time continue, and Antichrist will reign over it for a season until the hour of *his* doom and *its* doom together comes. He will hate its system, but he will not hate *it*. Its resources, its palaces, its ships, and its merchandise will be among the chief objects of his desire — the sinews of his strength, and the adornment of his glory.

We have not, therefore, to watch so much against Antichrist himself, as against that system which precedes Antichrist, which he adopts and by which he rises into his glory. This is a system whose principles are already operating and everywhere spreading their destructive influence, and yet it is discerned by few, neither judged according to the light so fully given in this chapter.

The system of Babylon will not be an ecclesiastical system — on the contrary, it will be distinctively secular. Ecclesiastical systems may be dragged in its train, as every system will be that is not simply ruled by the Spirit of Jesus. Neither will any but they who are content “to go without the gate bearing His reproach” be free from its evil influence.

It has been the practice of some, and especially of those who have been lately labouring to revive the darkness and abominations of Popery in this country, to speak much of Antichrist. If, they say, such an antichrist is to arise (as he surely will) full of all wickedness and blasphemy, and if he will set himself to destroy all institutions, human and divine, that are contrary to him, then let us consider what he will destroy, and then we shall learn what we should cherish. According to this we may — no, we ought to — nourish the Harlot and all her

abominations, because Antichrist will be her ultimate destruction.

This is strange counsel; and yet it is virtually accepted by all who justify their position, not because it will answer to the requirements of Truth, but because it is obnoxious to some more palpable form of wickedness that may be at hand. It is an easy thing to speak against Antichrist, and yet to sustain those very things that cause God to send him in judicial infliction upon a transgressing world.

The alarm which has lately been excited as to the revival of Popery, has concentrated the attention of God’s children upon one corner of the camp and diverted their attention from that point where Satan is making his real and triumphant assault. I do not say that the deadly doctrines that are being spread around us ought not to be resisted, even unto death. I do not say that they may not yet more widely spread, but another system is being prepared, which is not religious, and *it* is the system to be really feared, for it will reign supremely in the nations among whom we dwell.

It is being secretly prepared, and therefore men do not see it; but its establishment will be sudden. “I saw,” says the prophet, “and behold there came forth two women, and the wind was in their wings, for they had wings like the wings of a stork. And they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heaven. Then said I to the angel that talked with me, ‘Where are they taking the ephah?’ And he said to me, ‘To build it an house in the land of Shinar (Babylonia). It shall be established and set there upon her own base” (Zechariah 5:9-11).

The stork is a bird of strong and rapid flight - their wings were spread. No adverse influences resisted, but all influences were in their favour — even all influences from God - for “the wind was in their wings.” Such will be the rapidity and the success with which these principles, which are now being prepared in these Western regions, will be suddenly established in the East. The nations will be suddenly knit into this harmony of evil. They will have one mistress and one cup, from which they will all drink, until they are together drunken.

Antichrist, in all the attractiveness of his glory, will then arise in their midst. The power of delusion will be on them. They will worship the dragon and worship him; and then the end will come.

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

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