



SHADOWS OF BABYLON, THE GREAT CITY, HERE TODAY?



Readers may be aware of yet another global financial bubble recently unfurling across the world. It was only a little more than a decade ago that the last outbreak of speculative distortions culminated in the Global Financial Crisis (GFC).

By Wilfred Hahn

The periodic speculative manias that occur, ultimately act to push the world step by step to a globalized financial system—one that is becoming ever more centralized. Previous columns have outlined the implications of these trends for us earthdwellers.

Viewing these unprecedented developments in light of the cosmological timeline of mankind, we have called it the “Endtime Money Snare.”

Both economic/financial crisis and frothy financial booms play their part in moving the Endtime Money Snare forward. Most people have little idea about this plot line. Many participants are co-opted through greed and the lure and pleasurable of rising wealth and comforts. Indeed, today’s alluring images of wealth may prove to be false—and not real wealth. But that distinction seems not to matter to most people.

Author Edward Balleisen in his 2017 book *Fraud*, notes a characteristic of mania: “The most powerful means of getting people to view a fraudulent scheme as legitimate is the manufacture of upward price movements.” In other words, as long as

wealth gains are imagined, people will willingly believe any mania.

During speculative financial booms, the most unimaginable and comical beliefs can emerge. Wealth gains are thought to be infinite and without any risk. Not to be denied is that some very useful technologies or developments may play a role in these booms. These provide the so-called “hook” for participants and investors. However, expectations of future prospects are then taken to absurd extremes. The new technologies and surging “humanist” confidence promote the belief that future prosperity will be boundless ... perhaps even forever.

While the names, beliefs and contributing actors may change, the pattern of boom/bust remains remarkably the same. For example, the latest technological catalyst that has captured imaginations is the concept of “cryptocurrency” (the most well-known of these being the Bitcoin). Two decades ago, it was the “Dot-Com” bubble that played the catalytic role for that earlier manic financial boom.

While the original rationale for the invention of cryptocurrency may not be entirely without merit,



We can conclude here that financial bubbles play an indelible role in the endtime whirlwind of money. The cycle of boom and bust, manic speculation and depressive crisis, work toward creating the urgency and agreement to form a centralized global financial control system.

greed and speculative fevers have since emerged. Says one well-known analyst: “Bitcoin is an old-fashioned fraud clothed in the new-age wonder of technology. Promoting Bitcoin is not so much about a new asset class as it is a class of felony, yet civil authorities have so far been unwilling to shut it down.”

We can conclude here that financial bubbles play an indelible role in the endtime whirlwind of money. The cycle of boom and bust, manic speculation and depressive crisis, work toward creating the urgency and agreement to form a centralized global financial control system. In fact, one can make the deductive argument that the Bible prophesies that this will occur in the later days. If there were no centralized monetary system, how would it be possible to limit the buying and selling of all earthdwellers at some point in the Tribulation?

The Prophesied Emergence of a Commercial Colossus

In Revelation 18, we find an account of Babylon the Great, an entity that appears to be involved with global trade. It certainly shows a worldwide impact. What is it ... who is it? There are more than a few interpretations. Respected Bible scholars hold different views. In fact, there is so much debate on this question that many simply choose not to take a position. On our part, we will propose an interpretation that appears logical to us. Can we defend it? You will be the judge.

Let’s first look at the large number of identifiers for Babylon the Great found in verses 2-16.

‘Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great!’ She has become a home for demons and a haunt for every evil spirit, a haunt for every unclean and detestable bird. For all the nations have drunk the maddening wine of her adulteries. The kings of the earth committed adultery with her, and the merchants of the earth grew rich from her excessive luxuries. Then I heard another voice from heaven say: ‘Come out of her, my people,’ so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues; for her sins are piled up to heaven, and God has remembered her crimes. Give back to her as she has given; pay her back double for what she has done. Mix her a double portion from her own cup. 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.’ Therefore in one day her plagues will overtake her: death, mourning and famine. She will be consumed by fire, for mighty is the Lord God who judges her. When the kings of the earth who committed adultery with her and shared her luxury see the smoke of her burning, they will weep and mourn over her. Terrified at her torment, they will stand far off and cry: ‘Woe! Woe, O great city, O Babylon, city of power! In one hour your doom has come!’ The merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her because no one buys their cargoes any more—cargoes of gold, silver, precious stones and pearls; fine linen, purple, silk and scarlet cloth; every sort of citron wood, and articles of every kind made of ivory, costly wood, bronze, iron and marble; cargoes of cinnamon and



What should we understand to be “adulterous” in a world trading system? It must be a spiritual adultery ... a systemic worldwide abandonment of God and His Son.

spice, of incense, myrrh and frankincense, of wine and olive oil, of fine flour and wheat; cattle and sheep; horses and carriages; and bodies and souls of men. They will say, ‘The fruit you longed for is gone from you. All your riches and splendor have vanished, never to be recovered.’ The merchants who sold these things and gained their wealth from her will stand far off, terrified at her torment. They will weep and mourn and cry out: ‘Woe! Woe, O great city, dressed in fine linen, purple and scarlet, and glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls!’

Before we begin to examine the many obvious connections to wealth and commerce presented in the quoted verses above, we must point out a key distinctive.

Babylon the great is called a “city.” But is it really a city? To be more specific, we note that it is always called a “great city”—not just “city,” but “great city.” (There is one exception: It is also called “city of power” in addition to “great city” in Revelation 18:10.) So, we must keep in mind that Babylon is not a mere city—whether large or small, or of great repute or not—but rather a “great city.” The term “great city” is found exactly 7 times in the book of Revelation. What does the Bible mean to say with the term “great city”? We will come back to this question in the next part of this series.

Let us now review the activities of Babylon the Great cited in the referenced quote. We observe the heavy use of economic terminology. No less than 45 terms of commercial meanings are used in this passage, some of them numerous times. Many references are made to luxuries and precious items. Clearly, the functional essence is that of a great global trading entity that deals in both physical goods and money. By my count, a total of 28 commodities and products are mentioned.

There is more to note about this commercial/economic entity called Babylon the Great. First, it is both a source and distributor of

great wealth. The merchants of the earth “grew rich from her excessive luxuries” (verse 3) and “gained their wealth from her” (verse 15), yet they also are identified as being part of this system. In verse 23 they are referred to as “your merchants.”

Furthermore, we note that this Babylon is the very embodiment of riches. Though it is called a “great city” (verse 16), it is figuratively dressed as a person in the most expensive clothes; glittering with gold and jewelry. Her luxuries, “maddening wine” (verse 3) and “magic” (verse 23) prove to be intoxicants for the world’s kings and merchants. Tellingly, there is no mention of the poor or the middle class. Strangely, the common person seems not to be mentioned. It appears that only the wealthy merchants and elites are benefiting from this system ... apparently, an economy of plutocrats. Every nation and king has relations with it, committing “adulteries.”

Adulteries? Several interesting characteristics emerge here. First, why is Babylon the Great cast as a woman? Second, how is it possible that the entire world of elites has adulteries with her? For one, committing adultery is only possible if one is already married or betrothed. Then, what should we understand to be “adulterous” in a world trading system? It must be a spiritual adultery ... a systemic worldwide abandonment of God and His Son ... a rebelliousness claiming a “heaven-on-earth” humanism. It is the choice of Mammon over God. Mankind’s smug “elite” have developed a self-dependent worldwide economic (and monetary) system that suits them just fine.

Points to Ponder

How can we escape the clutches and temptations of the Endtime Money Snare ... carried along on the great false wave of a global wealth explosion ... being oppressed by the suffocating commercialism of ancient Tyre (of which there are many prophecies

The annals of history are chock full of examples of human delusion. As mentioned, most often these departures from good sense were either goaded by greed or pressured by economic fears. Both the educated and the uninformed can be susceptible when running with the herd. The psychology of crowds is powerful.



that we will explore in the next parts of this series)? As we always must answer: It is not possible to escape ... at least physically. But spiritually, we need not fall into the blinded subservience as do most earthdwellers.

Most certainly, we should all be careful (including this writer) not to be swept away by worldly pied-pipers and popular delusions. Humans are easily persuaded to ignore facts and logic, and instead to pursue fantasy. The annals of history are chock full of examples of human delusion. As mentioned, most often these departures from good sense were either goaded by greed or pressured by economic fears. Both the educated and the uninformed can be susceptible when running with the herd. The psychology of crowds is powerful.

Accounts of human folly written by various authors testify to mankind's vulnerability to deceit. Two books that document this history that I often recommend are as follows: *Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds*, an early study of crowd psychology by Scottish journalist

Charles Mackay (first published in 1841). And later, *Manias, Panics, and Crashes: A History of Financial Crises* by Charles P. Kindleberger (1978). Accounts found in these two books about the actions and beliefs of maniacal human crowds test believability.

Human beings—especially so, crazed crowds of them—have the most incredible capacity for delusion. Does the Bible have any perspective on these challenges?

Yes. First, the Bible does not venerate crowds, or popular majorities, or a consensus of beliefs. It cares nothing for these. God says “[...] beside me there is no other” (Isaiah 45:6). When it comes to Truth, God represents 100% of the majority. God says that He is not a “respector of persons” (Acts 10:34 KJV). Therefore, the crazed pull of the human throngs should have no hold upon us.

As for our anxieties and concerns in regard to the recent “financial bubbles” ... the humanist beliefs ... the lure to plunge into speculation, the Bible has this to say: “For the pagans run after all these things” (Matthew 6:32). “They think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they heap abuse on you” (1 Peter 4:4).

The Lord knows what we need, “So do not worry” (Matthew 6:31).

In Part II, we will complete documenting the Bible's prophecies of an endtime boom in commercialism and the associated Endtime Money Snare. And, we will address the question of whether the prophecies regarding ancient Tyre align with the manifestation of Babylon the Great City in Revelation 17—18.

The Lord approaches ever nearer! (MC)