



SHADOWS OF BABYLON, THE GREAT CITY, HERE TODAY? – PART 2



We continue with Part II of our quest for the identity of Babylon the Great, which is mentioned in Revelation 14, 15, 17, and 18. Convincingly, what is being described in these chapters is an entity of some type that is hyper-commercialized and with global reach. In Part 1, we agreed that the descriptions of Babylon the “great city” showed a vague “mishmash” of characteristics.

By Wilfred Hahn

However, this was deliberately so, according to the “testimony of Jesus [which] is the spirit of prophecy” (Revelation 19:10 KJV). After all, the entire Bible—every jot and tittle (Matthew 5:18)—is inspired and will not fall to the ground before it is fulfilled. The descriptions of Babylon the Great represent the outworking of an endtime economic/monetary colossus that envelops the nations, its humanistic philosophies and power structures of the world.

Not only is Babylon the “great city” active in global trade, but also it is shown as the nexus point for the wealth and riches of the world. A massive global wealth imbalance is another characteristic of this endtime regime. In fact, this condition aligns with the statements of James. Not only is a last-day wealth imbalance prophesied by James (James 5:1-6), this condition must be a deductive conclusion of Revelation 18:19. To be “rich” is a relative concept. Therefore, if the “merchants” are said to be the world’s wealthy people, then by definition the rest of the world’s population must be relatively poor.

Who Is Babylon the Great?

Many Bible scholars have debated the identity of “Babylon the Great” over the past two millennia. What is it ... who is it? There have been many opinions (perhaps tens of thousands). Some have been convinced that it is the Roman Catholic Church (perhaps more narrowly focusing on the descriptions of “Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth”: Revelation 17:5).

Others make the case that this Babylon connects with a literal and physical revival of the ancient city of Babylon, at its original site found today in the country of Iraq. We are more inclined to interpret that it is the “spirit of ancient Babylon” (as also the spirit of ancient Tyre) that inhabits the final global financial/religious colossus. Unsurprisingly, many commercial concepts used in the modern world today have their roots in ancient Babylon (this being Babylonia, then later in the period of Neo-Babylonia) ... for example, mutual funds and financial contracts. According to the findings of Assyriologists (archaeologists that focus on the Middle East),



Christ said that one cannot serve both God and Mammon (Matthew 6:24). Satan, however, has promoted a different idea. Why not do both—worship God and Money at the same time? Many so-called churches today teach exactly that.



Babylon was a hyper-commercialized city. More than 90% of the clay tablets that have been uncovered were finance and trading records.

The name “Babylon” appears six times in Revelation, four of these in chapters 17 and 18. It would only be understandable to assume that all of these instances refer to the same identity of Babylon. Yet, each one of the times that Babylon the “great city” is mentioned in these two chapters, a different aspect of this mishmash of trade, idolatry and false religion is shown. Some statements refer to the spirit of Mammon. Some, just to the religious manifestations of the great whore; others to the economic and financial system (commerce and trading).

In essence, what is represented in the 17th and 18th chapters of Revelation is the “adulterous” fusing of Mammon and Apostate Religion. The great final “ecumenicism” of Mammon and worship of a god occurs. Since God cannot be worshiped alongside Money (Mammon), this endtime manifestation (even appearing to have a form of godliness; see 2 Timothy 3:5) well suits those “[...] of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain” (1 Timothy 6:5).

Christ said that one cannot serve both God and Mammon (Matthew 6:24). Satan, however, has promoted a different idea. Why not do both—worship God and Money at the same time? Many so-called churches today teach exactly that. You can have your best life now on earth; you can pursue financial success and be godly at the same time; that the Bible is a “how to” book to become prosperous. Such teachings are a big spiritual mishmash.

It is appropriate to again emphasize a key distinction applying to the use of the name Babylon (whether Babylon the Great or shortened to just Babylon). The term is never used alone in the entire book of Revelation. Rather, it is repeatedly—8 times!—called a “great city.” It is never, never called simply a “city.” No, it is always referred to as a “great city” (with one exception, when it is additionally said to be a “mighty city”: Revelation 18:10). This is significant.

Pursuing the grammatical historical approach to the interpretation of Scripture, we can allow that expressions thought to be common today may have had no counterpart thousands of years ago. For example, just how might a prophet of that ancient time have attempted to prophesy about the future emergence of the “smartphone”? This would have been nearly impossible in the vocabulary of that day. One can only imagine how the ancient mind would have described this invention. Most certainly, its modern name would not have been used.

A similar case can be made for the word “system.” We understand this term easily today, commonly referring to a monetary system, a global trading system, the economic system, and in many other applications. Thousands of years ago, there was no concept of a system as we understand it today. The closest concept of an organization that could be most like a system was a city.

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The Bible, therefore, may be expressing the notion of an economic system as a type of “city.” As such, the phrase “great city” could be used to describe a much larger system ... perhaps a global system spanning the world. If so, then in fact, Babylon the “great city” depicts the global hyper-commercialism that has developed over the past decades and centuries.

Could Babylon the Great then be identified as a commercial colossus—a humanistic, materialistic, self-confidence system of commercialism? We are inclined to take this view. Why? For one, no other Scriptures in the Bible would nullify this position. Rather, quite the opposite in our perspective; there are many other confirmations and alignments in the Bible, pointing to the occurrence of a crass materialism and imbalanced wealth skew engulfing the world in the last days.

Some important confirmations are found in Zechariah, Isaiah, James, and in some of the prophecies concerning Tyre. We will review a few of these.

As an example, consider the Lord’s word spoken through Isaiah. He speaks of the various conditions of the world at the time of the “day of the Lord,” the term he uses for the last days (likely, meaning

the entire seven-year period of the Tribulation).

In the prophecies of Isaiah 24:1-3, we notice a heavy emphasis upon commercial activities. “See, the LORD is going to lay waste the earth and devastate it; he will ruin its face and scatter its inhabitants—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.”

One-half of the twelve-named earth’s “inhabitants” in these verses, representing the people living at that future time—i.e. the time of the “day of the Lord”—are directly involved in economic or financial activity. Specifically identified in this way are sellers, buyers, borrowers, lenders, debtors and creditors.

That is a very high concentration of “money” occupations. Were today’s labor force in North America to be that highly concentrated in such activities, we would witness five times the number of people working in the FIRE sector (Finance, Investment and Real Estate) today.

It also is not a coincidence (after all, there are no coincidences found in the Bible) that the subject of debt is mentioned four times in one form or another in this passage. A creditor is the same as a lender; a borrower the same as a debtor. It would therefore not be surprising to discover that a debt-based financial and economic system might play a prominent role during the last days. While this passage does not provide conclusive evidence of this last statement, it certainly offers a compelling mirroring of the prophecies about Babylon, the Great City and Tyre.



Points to Ponder

Revealingly, the Bible says that the “merchants were the world’s great men” (Revelation 18:23) during the time of Babylon the Great City.

Just what societies down through history have considered “merchants” the world’s great men? This confirms an interesting phenomenon of the last-days era upon earth. The world’s greatest men are no longer kings, philosophers, priests or political leaders. Here they are now shown to be merchants ... business people, in other words.

When has this ever been true in human history—at least on a global scale? Generally, down through history, philosophers and religious heads have been considered the most accomplished and important of men. Commerce was regarded as a lower caste activity ... something earthly and not heavenly. Many cultures actually despised the merchant classes. The pursuit of truth and virtue was held as the highest calling in these religious cultures. Yet, in this endtime system, it is merchants who are the heroes and great men of the world.

Why would being a successful businessperson offer a candidacy for the status of world-class greatness? Obviously, a globalized economic and financial system must have emerged during the last days. If this were not so, merchants could not be the world’s “great men.” Today, the leaders of this commercial economic system accumulate enormous luxuries, are given high visibility, and are honored and idolized. In our media-saturated times today, the rich (these being mainly business people ... traders and sellers, therefore) are highly venerated. Everyone knows of Jeff Bezos, Bill Gates ... and so on.

The adulation that the world and its news media pour out on the world’s business titans today surely fits this image. In fact, we would make the case that the entity Babylon the Great City is already here today. It is a “system”—Babylon being the spiritual name for that expression and not a specific city (though a city could certainly represent this system’s center).

There were indeed times and situations where merchants were highly influential. The Bible mentions Tyre and Assyria as great traders. For example,

it describes a major seaport city “whose merchants are princes, whose traders are renowned in the earth” (Isaiah 23:8).

We see that possessions are the rewards of the elites conspiring with the Antichrist. He (the Antichrist) “[...] will greatly honor those who acknowledge him. He will make them rulers over many people and will distribute the land at a price” (Daniel 11:39).

Here we find a possible parallel or connection to the wealthy elites that are mentioned in Revelation 18. This may not be surprising, as there are many links between the books of Daniel and Revelation.

In the list of the twenty-eight commodities or “costly gifts” mentioned in Revelation 18, the first three mentioned are gold, silver, and precious stones. These are the very same three—even in the same order—mentioned in Daniel 11:38. There, Daniel tell us that the last world regime (headed by the Antichrist) and its rulers will honor a god unknown to his fathers—the “unknown god”—with “gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts.” Nowhere else in the Bible are these same precious metals and jewels mentioned together, let alone in the same order. This is likely not a coincidence.

Readers may recall earlier columns discussing the possible evidence for the identity of this “unknown god.” A conclusion we had offered was that the “unknown” god was the false idol represented by the collective faith of mankind in modern day economic and financial systems—a god we dubbed MOFI (monetary/financial).

Looking ahead to Part III of this series, did you know that a large number of prophecies—a total of twenty-one, as many as ten of these yet to be fulfilled in the future—refer to Tyre and its Phoenician trading sisters in the Old Testament? Why should this city receive such emphasis? Interestingly, the accounts and future prophecies of Tyre given by Ezekiel and Isaiah bear a strong likeness to the last-day emerging of Babylon, the Great City.

In the next issue, we will examine whether the prophesied return of Tyre to the world stage is the same manifestation as Babylon, the Great City depicted in Revelation. (MC)