



# SHADOWS OF BABYLON, THE GREAT CITY, HERE TODAY? – PART 3



By Wilfred Hahn

The Bible is full of prophecies about the endtime conditions of people's pocketbooks. Many of today's financial and economic developments that we observe would already broadly qualify as future fulfillment of these prophecies. For example, Scripture clearly speaks of a last day globalization of the world's economies, its geopolitical convergence, and the related temptations it poses for believers. A major manifestation of this threat is what we have come to call the "Endtime Money Snare."

**A**n intensive commercialization of the world occurs in the last days. Most prominently, this is seen in Revelation 17—18. Crucially, the Old Testament also shows foreshadows of this future unfolding condition. A major one is found in the Bible's account of the city of Tyre. Satan himself, the fallen angel, is shown to inhabit Tyre's trading prowess and wealth.

Interestingly, many prophecies are found in the Bible that apply to this ancient commercial trading juggernaut of its day. For example, it would be destroyed, but then again is to rise for a time. Yet, when will this happen? Just who or what is this revived Tyre? There is a strong case to be made that the spirit of Tyre is the very same spirit that inhabits the trading colossus of the end times, Babylon the Great.

### The Modern Day Prophetic Type of Tyre

The Bible's account of Tyre's reign and fall makes for a convincing parallel to the accounts of Babylon the "great city" shown in Revelation. Some background on ancient Tyre therefore would be helpful. Who was Tyre? It was a Phoenician trading port on the

shores of the Mediterranean, north of Israel. At its prime (700 to 600 BC), it was the most powerful and prosperous sea-trading nation of its time, with prominent colonies in Cyprus and around the Mediterranean.

An extensive account of its enormous economic clout is given in Ezekiel 26:1-21. It was an extremely rich nation—"By your great skill in trading you have increased your wealth," Ezekiel tells us in chapter 28, verse 5.

They were the masters of trade ... in fact, dishonest trade, according to Ezekiel 28:18. Associated with Sidon, another Phoenician city in the Levant, outposts of its trading empire included Carthage and Tarshish (believed to be on the eastern coast of modern-day Spain). In 332 BC, already reduced to an island city, Tyre was finally and permanently destroyed by Alexander the Great, fulfilling Ezekiel's prophecies that she would become "a bare rock ... a place to spread fishnets" (Ezekiel 26:4-5, 14). But, that would not be the end of Tyre ... at least not for the spirit of Tyre.

The Biblical accounts of Tyre must be seen to be significant. Why? For several reasons. Firstly, there



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are more prophecies in the Bible about Tyre and its two sister cities, Sidon and Tarshish, than any other nation or city group except Judah and Israel.

Tyre is mentioned prophetically more times than ancient Babylon, Egypt and Assyria ... even Rome or the revived Roman Empire. By my count, there are 21 prophecies naming Tyre or her sister cities. Jesus Christ and seven prophets—Ezekiel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, David, Joel, Amos and Zechariah—made prophetic statements about Tyre. Ezekiel himself made a total of eight prophecies against Tyre and its related sister city states.

Why is so much attention given to Tyre in the Bible ... both in the Old and New Testament?

There must be a reason. The Bible presents Tyre as an archetype of all nations that put their faith in their economic might and dishonesty (lying particularly). And, this may be the most significant reason: Many of the prophecies concerning Tyre refer to a future fulfillment that is yet to occur.

We count as many as 10 such prophecies. Most certainly, at least seven of these have endtime implications. These speak of the reemergence of a great materialistic trading system. If Tyre serves as a foreshadowing of the last-day Babylon the Great (which is our view), then we should consider that

the major architect behind its rise will be the Spirit of Tyre; namely, Satan himself.

Without a doubt, the Bible shows that the spirit behind the trading nation of Tyre is Satan:

Son of man, take up a lament concerning the king of Tyre and say to him: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; [...] You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. You were blameless in your ways from

the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, O guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings. By your many sins and dishonest trade you have desecrated your sanctuaries. [...] All the nations who knew you are appalled at you; you have come to a horrible end and will be no more' (Ezekiel 28:12-19).

These verses we have quoted leave no doubt as to the nature of the spirit behind the ancient rise of Tyre.

Crucially, Bible prophecy tells us that this spirit of Tyre would again rise in the endtimes. Where do we find this prophecy? Isaiah 23:17 says: "At the end of seventy years, the LORD will deal with Tyre. She will return to her hire as a prostitute and will ply her trade with all the kingdoms on the face of the earth."

The term "seventy years" in this verse figuratively reflects the notion of an era ... or a generation. In other words, "after an era," Tyre would return to her hire as a prostitute (aligning with the prostitute of

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Revelation 17). This must be yet future, though its precedent developments are clearly already visible in our day. According to history, there is no record of Tyre having revived within 70 literal years to ply trade again with the entire world. That has not happened to this day. Also, it is only after globalization has swept the world that Tyre can trade with “all the kingdoms on the face of the earth.”

Another reason we can know that the reemergence of the spirit of Tyre will occur in the end times is because of this prophecy: “Yet her profit and her earnings will be set apart for the LORD; they will not be stored up or hoarded. Her profits will go to those who live before the LORD, for abundant food and fine clothes” (Isaiah 23:18). These conditions can only occur once the Millennium takes place.

### Spirit of Endtime Tyre Here Today

The wicked, demonic spirit behind Tyre returns to the world scene in the last days. In our view, Endtime Tyre has already begun to rise on the world stage, and the Great City of Babylon is its New Testament parallel (Revelation 18). In other words, the Bible’s accounts of Tyre provide a foreshadowing of the last-day Babylon the Great.

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Do endtime Tyre and the commercial colossus of Babylon the Great already exist today? In my view, yes. However, that is not to say that prophecies have yet been fully fulfilled. We cannot know Baby-

lon’s exact time of judgment described in Revelation, nor how perverse it may become. But, its dangerous, controlling and deceiving presence has clearly emerged upon the world, erupting in a very short space of time—not much more than two hundred years. Any economic historian would agree that a rapid phenomenon has gripped the world since the late 1700s or so.

A vast commercial colossus now spans the entire earth, the very essence of its driving force being the worship of earthly wealth (materialism). Seen in terms of its underlying motivations and spirit, it is deeply corrupt and violent—based on deceitful trading and lying (see Zechariah 5). While some people will wince at these statements, it can be factually proven.

The account of Babylon the Great City in Revelation—this the last-day manifestation of ancient Tyre—may sound out of date, talking about commodities such as myrrh and frankincense ... items that are hardly the staple of today’s global trade. That may be true. However, these and 25 other commercial terms mentioned (including iron, bronze and wood) all are still in use today. We would not expect the Apostle John to have specifically mentioned cargoes of computer chips or flat-screen TVs.

Also mentioned is that that Endtime Babylon’s trade would be carried in ships. Even in this day of motorized transportation and transcontinental airplanes, the reader may be surprised to know that sea trade (marine shipping) is still by far the most prominent form of the transportation of goods in the world today. Ships remain the very backbone of the world’s trading system. Well over 90% of all global trade in goods is still carried in the hull of ocean-going ships.



The pictures provided of Babylon the Great in Revelation 18 are hardly out of date. When that day of Babylon the Great's judgment comes in full fulfillment, indeed, "Every sea captain, and all who travel by ship, the sailors, and all who earn their living from the sea, will stand far off" (verse 17) as they watch its destruction. "Woe! Woe, O great city, where all who had ships on the sea became rich through her wealth!" (verse 19).

### Points to Ponder

Reviewing the evidence, readers may already conclude that Babylon the Great City—a world spanning commercial system—is in her prime today. Indeed, such a system is already evident in our times. However, we cannot say that Bible prophecy is completely fulfilled. One reason is that the Tribulation period has not yet started.

Revelation 18:23 says that Babylon the Great will lead "all the nations ... astray" with her magic spell. It is an observation that should immediately put Christians on guard. Could the magic spell of this endtime financial manifesto be leading Christians off the narrow path as well? Are we steering our lives to the siren call of the luxuries and false wealth of this idolatrous endtime commercial system?

These are serious questions, because a very dire warning is given. The Lord's people are admonished to come out of her so that they "will not share in her sins ... for her sins are piled up to the heavens" (verses 4-5). Even though the Church will have been raptured away before the great catastrophic collapse of this endtime commercial system occurs, we will still be held accountable for our complicity and the participation of our hearts while this system took form and became world-dominating. Whether or not the interpretation of Babylon the Great presented here is correct, the warning it presents to Christians today surely remains relevant.

Scripture many times reaffirms the fact that it is God alone that raises and tears down. As soon as man claims his prosperity and might are the result of his own acumen and power, destruction soon

follows. Moses spoke of this principle during his last admonishments to Israel before they went into Canaan under Joshua's leadership:

"You may say to yourself, 'My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.' But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today. If you ever forget the LORD your God and follow other gods and worship and bow down to them, I testify against you today that you will surely be destroyed" (Deuteronomy 8:17-19).

Another example of man's conceited folly is found in Nebuchadnezzar. He boasted, "Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?" (Daniel 4:30). He said this as he viewed the peak of splendor of his kingdom from his illustrious balcony. No sooner had the words come out that God struck him down immediately with a mental illness for a period of seven years. A similar condition will apply for the world in the seven-year Tribulation period.

The King of Tyre betrayed the same self-reliant attitude. "In the pride of your heart you say, 'I am a god; I sit on the throne of a god in the heart of the seas'" (Ezekiel 28:2). We see here again that the spirit behind Babylon is the same as the one behind the commercial colossus of Tyre (Ezekiel 28:12-19). We also see this spirit run rampant across the last-day world in Revelation 18, where it speaks of Babylon the Great in commercial terms. It is infused with the same attitude: "I sit as queen; I am not a widow, and I will never mourn" (Revelation 18:7).

Destruction will be sudden and swift when it comes. "Fallen, Fallen is Babylon the Great" (Revelation 18:2). Her doom comes in one hour.

The world is indeed shaking and trembling. Financial markets are manic and volatile. The world's economic and trading systems groan with imbalances and high risks. It is not unreasonable to conclude that the time of judgment cannot be far off. The Day of the Lord approaches ever nearer! (MC)