

Babylon

(Its Significant Role as a City and System in the End Times)

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A sizeable portion of prophetic Scripture is given to the subject of Babylon. This ancient city encompasses a rather significant role in the events surrounding the End Times. Therefore, we should seek to interpret the Scriptures accurately in relationship to the subject matter dealing with Babylon. I'm convinced that Babylon is both a city and a system of significant importance in the prophetic Scriptures. Therefore, as we study the passages dealing with Babylon, we will consider the history, importance, and future role that this city and system will play in the future Tribulation Period that Jesus identified with the End Times, or as the world nears the end of the Pre-Messianic Age during the Tribulation Period (Matt. 13:39-40, 49; 24:3, 6, 13-14).

There will be a second coming of Babylon. This study will confirm that End Time prophecy demands that Babylon be rebuilt, become an important city in world affairs during the Tribulation Period, and then be cataclysmically destroyed as the prophetic texts indicate. When the Old Testament uses the word "Babylon," the reference is always to a literal Babylon. We should not try and escape from the literal interpretation of Scripture on this point. If Babylon was Babylon in the Old Testament, it's Babylon in the New Testament.

If we follow through with a literal hermeneutic, we should also conclude that the mention of "Babylon" in the Book of Revelation also refers to the city of Babylon. With one sweep of a prophetic brush, Revelation 17-18 paints the prophetic picture that Babylon is both a geographical city and religiously evil system that date back to Nimrod and the land of Shinar. Thus, the significance of this city and its religious system is being dealt with in the book of Revelation.

Several theories exist about the identity of Babylon in the book of Revelation. Some believe Babylon, particularly "mystery Babylon," is a code word for the city of Rome or some other aspect of Rome. One writer

suggests: “Two thousand years of church history verify that apocalyptic ‘Babylon’ is Rome. It is either pagan Rome, papal Rome, or a future revived Rome—but it is Rome!” Many conclude that Babylon is a symbolic reference of the Roman Catholic Church and its evil teachings.

Some teach that Babylon is simply Antichrist’s kingdom (the Revived Roman Empire). But Babylon is both a city and system of corruption during the Tribulation – not an empire. The Antichrist comes out of the Revived Roman Empire to rule in Babylon alongside of the harlot church during the first 3 1/2 years of the Tribulation. Although the RRE (Revived Roman Empire) is associated with the city and system of Babylon – it’s not Babylon. The woman (Babylon’s religious system) rides on the beast (a composite picture of both the empire and individual Antichrist) in chapter 17, but she is not the empire. The destruction of the actual city of Babylon in chapter 18 is not the destruction of the empire/Antichrist which occurs at the Second Coming (Rev. 19:20). So, Babylon is Babylon, a city that houses a religious system of End Time corruption and commerce that adversely influences the entire earth.

Various expositors suggest the line of argumentation that if Babylon is the same city of Babylon we over literalize the Old Testament prophecies and over literalize Babylon. They then conclude that 2,000 years of history reveal that Babylon is a symbolic name for Rome. Of course, history alone does not give us the right interpretation of Scripture. Furthermore, believing Babylon is the same city of Babylon is not over literalizing but interpreting the prophetic Word of God literally unless there is contextual evidence for a symbolic understanding of a specific name or word.

Some assign the title of Babylon to first-century Jerusalem (preterist interpreters). Preterists, like Gary DeMar, scoff at the prospects of a future rebuilt city of Babylon that plays a role in end-time prophecy. “Should we expect a reconstituted Babylon in the future based upon events described in the Book of Revelation,” asks DeMar? “Is Revelation’s Babylon the same as the Babylon of the Old Testament? . . . Not at all.” DeMar believes that those of us who see a correlation between current events and God’s preparation for the coming tribulation period is “newspaper exegesis.” He

says that we are “reading the Bible through the lens of current events.”¹¹ I contend that just the opposite is true.

Others suggest Babylon is a metaphor for a worldwide system of evil. Still others in their fanatical interpretations of Scripture identify the United States as Babylon. However, the prophetic word teaches that the actual city of Babylon must be rebuilt to be destroyed in the manner depicted in the Old Testament prophecies. The Bible envisions the Antichrist ruling from the rebuilt city of Babylon on the Euphrates River in a place we call modern-day Iraq.

In the 1980s, Saddam Hussein started to aggressively rebuild portions of the ancient city of Babylon. Christians began to ask if Hussein’s project had anything to do with Bible prophecy. This in turn rekindled the often-asked question, “Does prophecy predict the rebuilding of Babylon?”



Conservative scholars differ on what the Bible teaches concerning Babylon’s future, but the Bible seems to predict that the city of Babylon will be rebuilt for several reasons. First, Babylon was not suddenly and completely destroyed, as were the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, nor did the city drink the last of God’s wrath when it was taken by the Medo-Persian Empire in 539 B.C. (Isa. 13:19-20; Jer. 51:8). Second, the area is still inhabited, and stones from the old Babylon are being used to rebuild the city (Jer. 51:26, 43). Third, Israel and Judah did not reunite, flee the city, come to the Lord in tears, or find rest from sorrow and fear when Babylon was destroyed (Isa. 14:3-4; Jer. 50:4-5, 8). William Newell states: “If the city of Babylon is restored as Antichrist’s capital, at the end of this age, godly Jews will be warned fully to flee, as in Jeremiah 51:45, 46, 50.”

Here is the point. These unfulfilled prophecies indicate that Babylon will be rebuilt with an ecclesiastical and commercial system that will function on a worldwide scale. Babylon will be a beehive of End Times activity on the

world stage. Babylon was conquered in the past, but it was not destroyed cataclysmically as the Bible predicts. Therefore, it must arise again, a second coming of Babylon, and a final revolt of humanity against God, to be ultimately destroyed and demised by the God of Heaven.

Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum confirms that "the prophecies regarding the city of Babylon have never been fulfilled in the past, as any encyclopedia article on Babylon will make quite clear. In order for these prophecies to be fulfilled, it will require the rebuilding of the city of Babylon in the same general area. Ancient Babylon is in present day Iraq." I agree with this conclusion when interpreting the prophecies literally and not symbolically. Babylon has been conquered in the past, but it never has been totally destroyed as the prophecies demand. In fact, there are said to be about 250,000 people living in Babylon today.

The Binding Together of Religion and Commerce in Babylon

Babylon is a city of both religious (Rev. 17) and commercial (Rev. 18) aspirations. It is pictured as a city existing in the future Tribulation Period that is linked to an ancient historical base, which gave birth to all false religions, and pagan systems that run contrary to truth. Babylon is also recognized as a city of political and commercial power, even as King Nebuchadnezzar of ancient Babylon represented the first great world power from Daniel's perspective. What Babylon symbolizes in chapter 17 (religion) is different from what it symbolizes in chapter 18 (commerce). Nevertheless, the literal city is in view in both chapters (Rev. 17:18; 18:10, 16, 18, 19). Babylon is presented as a literal city housing a political system of religious and economical influence during the End Times. She is pictured in Revelation chapters seventeen and eighteen as a city promoting religious apostasy and possessing both political power and economic sway over the world.

Babylon is mentioned by name six times in Revelation. In Revelation 14:8 it is called "that great city"; in Revelation 16:19, it is "great Babylon"; it is called "Babylon the great" in 18:2; "that great city Babylon, that mighty city" in 18:10; and "that great city Babylon" in 18:21. Only in Revelation 17:5 is she called "Mystery, Babylon the great" which links this city to her

harlotry religion. There is no doubt that all six terms refer to the same basic subject and that this subject includes the real city of Babylon. In addition to the passages specifically naming Babylon, it is called a “city” five times (Revelation 14:8; 17:18; 18:16, 18, 19).

The woman of this prophecy is clearly identified as a city and a religious center that has given birth to the world religions. In short, we see that this woman is a city of great religious influence. Babylon is represented as both a city and a system in Revelation chapters 17-18. In chapter 17 Babylon is portrayed as a city of religious influence (ecclesiastical Babylon). In chapter 18 Babylon is portrayed as a city of political influence (commercial Babylon). In both instances Babylon is seen to be a literal city which supports a religious system and political agenda for the End Times. The fact that this woman is represented to convey an actual city cannot be denied.

Revelation 17:18 states:

“And the woman which thou sawest is that great city (*Babylon*), which reigneth over the kings of the earth.”

Revelation 17:5

“And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.”

Babylon is one of the oldest cities of the ancient world. It is located 50 miles south of modern-day Bagdad. It was one of the greatest influential cities on earth that was originally founded by Nimrod and a group of rebellious decedents of Noah approximately 100 years after the Gensis Flood (Gen. 11:1-9). The historical legacy of Babylon dates back to Nimrod whose name means “let us revolt.” The Bible states: “And the beginning of is kingdom was Babel” (Gen. 10:10). Following the Flood, Nimrod (the first king of Babylon) gathered the people together to revolt against God. Instead of repopulating the earth they began to build a city in defiance against God and His ways.

Pantheism, polytheism, astrology, and all kinds of pagan forms of religions and rites were formed in Babylon and Nimrod’s rebellion against God. It’s the birthplace or mother of all harlotry (Rev. 17:5). Babylon could very well

be called the city of Satan because it has been the source of the world's religious evils. The city grew in influence and rebellion against God and therefore God confused the peoples' languages as an act of judgment, inhibiting them to communicate with one another (Gen. 11:9).

By 600 B.C. King Nebuchadnezzar had fashioned Babylon into the pagan empire of Babylonia, a center for religion, commerce, and government. Babylonian may have been the most powerful monarchy in the history of the world. Babylon was the most important city in the world for about 2,000 years. But Babylon's evil influence and control over the world would not last forever. Isaiah and Jeremiah envision a time when the city of Babylon would be totally destroyed, along with its wicked system of pagan idolatry and power. The Bible reveals that Babylon will be revived and brought onto the End Time stage to play a leading role (Rev. 14:8; 16:19; 17—18).

God originally scattered the people to create the nations as part of His divine orderings of things. But Satan's goal has always been to bring mankind back together so that he once again can have unlimited control. Thus, we see a return of the city and system of Babylon during the Tribulation Period (Rev. 17-18) to promote a worldwide, ecumenical, rebellious, religious, prostituting influence over the earth and raise up the ultimate Nimrod and Nebuchadnezzar of the End Times (the Antichrist). Human rebellion will one day cycle back to where it all began.

The name of this literal city is called Babylon. But the actual sight and identity of the city has been debated. There are those who suggest that the city of Rome will fulfill the prophecies related to the city of Babylon and others suggest that a rebuilt Babylon will take place and be revived in all of its past glory. We do know that Romanism (Roman Catholicism) will obviously have a religious impact upon the apostate church in the End Times simply because of its tremendous impact among religions today. The colors of this harlot woman also represent the extravagance and pomp of religion, especially that of Romanism (17:3-4), and suggests that the Roman Catholic Church will have a huge part in welding the apostate church together.

Even today Romanism is pushing for a unification of other religions with her without doing away with individual religious distinctions. So, the Roman religion will undoubtedly have a direct impact upon this apostate wedding of false religion. But to conclude that Babylon will be the actual city of Rome is overlooking what the Bible teaches about the historical city of Babylon. The conclusion by various expositors is that Rome is built on seven hills which relates to the woman sitting on seven mountains in Revelation 17:9. Therefore, Babylon is a cryptic reference to Rome.

But a closer examination of Revelation 17:9-11 actually teaches that the mountains are representative of world empires with their corresponding kings upon which the woman, a religious system and apostate church of the End Times, empowers. Babylon is both a city and system of pagan religious influence which will raise its ugly head during the End Times (Tribulation Period). Put on your thinking cap. I don't want to lose you in these prophetic woods!

The Beast of Babylon

Revelation 17:9-11

“And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.”

This woman is seen sitting upon seven mountains which are intended to have a symbolic meaning since they are later identified as kings ruling over kingdoms (17:10). The same is true in relation to this woman sitting upon the many waters (17:1) which clearly have a symbolic reference to people (vs. 15). A mountain in prophetic and Scriptural usage represents kingdoms (Daniel 2:35, 44-45; Jer. 51:25). Thus, the seven heads on this beast (Rev. 17:3) are portrayed as seven mountains or kingdoms (vs. 9).

In addition, verse ten goes on to say that these seven heads are also kings (“And are seven kings” – literal rendering). Therefore, these verses are teaching that the heads on this monstrous beast (17:3) represent the past, present and future world empires because they are descriptively pictured

or portrayed as mountains, which according to Biblical imagery represent kingdoms. Furthermore, these heads on the beast are also said to represent the corresponding kings ruling each of these seven empires or kingdoms (And are seven kings"). You cannot have kingdoms without kings, so both are in the writer's mind.

This once again informs us that the imagery of the beast in the book of Revelation represents the culmination of the past historical empires with their rulers, whose characteristics will in some sense merge together into one End Time kingdom, with its corresponding king, the Antichrist (Rev. 13:2). The seventh head on the beast is then representative of the future kingdom (Revived Roman Empire) and its corresponding ruler, the Antichrist (Rev. 13:1-3; 17:9-11), since the mountains are confirmed to be kings which align themselves with the kingdoms ("And there are seven kings" - Rev. 17:10).

The interpretive principle of double reference must be submitted in the book of Revelation as one studies the revelation of the beast. This is because the beast with its emphasis on the seventh head – is both a kingdom and a king. The seventh head on the beast is the final form of all the past empires which will converge together into one kingdom representing in some measure all the previous empires or kingdoms with their kings (Rev. 13:1-3). The beast is then the final form of a new world kingdom (Revived Roman Empire) and its corresponding king (the Antichrist) which will rule the world.

In Revelation 17:10 Scripture verifies that the five mountains or kingdoms of the past with their corresponding great kings had already fallen or passed off the world scene in John's perspective of time - Egypt (Pharaoh), Assyria (Sennacherib), Babylon (Nebuchadnezzar), Media Persia Empire (Cyrus), and Greece (Alexander the Great). There was one world kingdom and king remaining in John's day ("and one is") which was the Roman Empire with its well-known king Julius Caesar. The kingdom and king which has not yet come is the Revived Roman Empire of prophecy with its future ruler or king called the Antichrist.



At one point, the future personal beast (Antichrist) is specifically represented by the pronoun “he” (“when he cometh” - vs. 10) as king over this future world empire. There is now a special emphasis on the personal Antichrist who will rule the Revived Roman Empire and eventually become the undisputed leader over planet earth (Rev. 13:1-18).

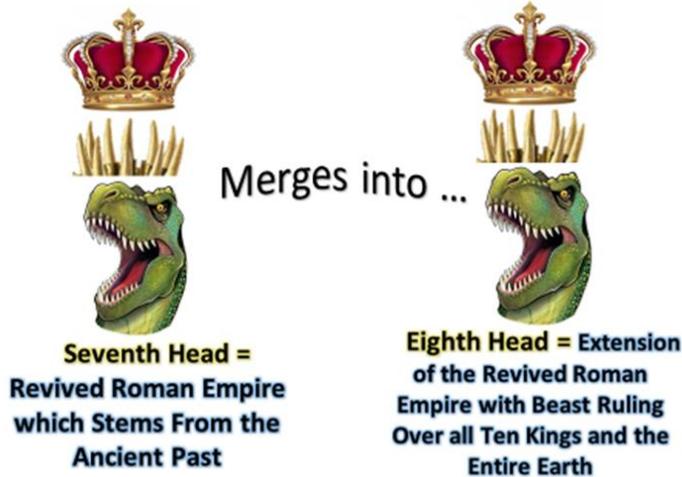
This takes us to the next verse where there seems to be a blending together of the beast concept – both kingdom and king. Revelation 17:11 is a challenge to any expositor of the Word.

“And the beast that was (*past historical Roman Empire & personal Antichrist*), **and is not** (*both would vanish off the world scene – the Roman kingdom would fall apart from within and eventually be overtaken by surrounding enemies and the Antichrist by suffering a wound and apparently dying*), **even he** (*the personal pronoun now referring to the man - Antichrist*) **is the eighth** (*in the sense that he will personally take control of the entire world as an individual and rule it as a dictator and be worshipped*), **and is of the seven** (*evolves from the seventh Revived Roman Empire*), **and goeth into perdition** (*personally meets his doom at the Second Coming of Christ*).”

This verse seems to suggest that the seventh world kingdom of history (Roman Empire) will once again be revived to a state of glory after many years of sleep, even as the personal Antichrist will in some way be restored

to glory and possess a world power status after experiencing what appears to be a mortal wound (“the beast that was, and is not” - 11a).

“even he is the eighth, and is of the seven” – Revelation 17:11



A more detailed explanation goes on to say that out of this seventh revived kingdom will also arise another revived individual (the king of this seventh kingdom) who will independently rise to world dictatorship and in one sense become an “eighth” individual ruler in and of himself. (“even

he is the eighth, and is of the seven” - 11b). In other words, the Antichrist will become an individual king that has evolved out of the seventh kingdom (Revived Roman Empire) after experiencing what appears to be a mortal wound. He will presumably come back to life and reign as an eighth ruler.

The Antichrist will come out of the seventh world empire over which he was king and become an eighth individual ruler and dictator of the entire planet with new wonder, admiration, and worship directed toward him for his alleged miraculous feat of returning from the dead (Rev. 13:1-8). The significance of the beast as an “eighth” ruler places emphasis upon his rise to world dominance, dictatorship, and worship at the midway point of the Tribulation Period. It is in this sense that he will become an eighth ruler and the latest wonder of the world.

Once again, the text in Revelation 17:9-10 reveals that these mountains are to be taken symbolically as representative of world kingdoms and their kings. If these mountains represent kingdoms and their kings (“And there are seven kings” – vs. 10), then they cannot represent the literal mountains which were associated with the historical city of Rome. In like manner, when the Bible speaks about these mountains and kings as falling and rising, we must conclude that this could not refer to literal hills. There

seems to be no mention of any literal mountains or hills in these verses, which would point to the city of Rome sitting on seven hills in any geographical sense.

Once again, this woman is seen sitting upon seven mountains, which are intended to have a symbolic meaning as the waters (17:1, 15). John simply says that these seven heads on this beastly monster are pictorially represented as seven mountains (the prophetic imagery of seven world kingdoms – vs. 9) and these heads also represent the seven corresponding kings with these kingdoms (vs. 10). Revelation 17:10 further explains what the mountains represent. They represent kingdoms that are ruled by prominent kings.

John Walvoord states:

“If the hills represent kings, then they do not refer to the seven hills of Rome, and the whole conclusion that Rome is the capital of ecclesiastical Babylon is brought into question.”

David Hocking concurs with this:

“To identify the seven heads as the seven hills (mountains) of the city of Rome is ignoring the clear statement of verse 10 (Rev. 17:10) that the seven mountains are seven kings.”

Charles Dyer also remarks:

“It is far more consistent to view the harlots ‘sitting’ as describing her control over the seven mountains instead of pointing to her physical location.”

Since the mountains are revealed to be kingdoms with their corresponding kings (Rev. 17:10), this would seem to dismiss the whole idea of the city of Rome being used as a code name for Babylon and fulfilling the role of the city of Babylon. It seems more plausible that the actual city of Babylon will be rebuilt. The glory of Babylon will be restored, and it will one day become the center of world religion, economics, and politics. Babylon will be rebuilt upon the Euphrates River in the country of Iraq, which is south of Baghdad. A literal interpretation of the prophetic word will lead the expositor to this conclusion.

The Building and Banishment of Babylon



The rebuilding process officially began in 1978. Many feel that this ancient area is being built as a tourist trap and nothing more. But the Bible predicts that Babylon will be in existence during the Tribulation Period and thriving once again as it did in the glory days of the past under king Nebuchadnezzar. There will arise a new Nebuchadnezzar who will want the world to worship him and he will build his headquarters in the rebuilt city of Babylon along the Euphrates.

The Scripture speaks of Babylon being destroyed in totality during the coming Day of the Lord or the Tribulation Period.

Isaiah 13:1

“The burden of Babylon (a burden of judgment), which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see.

When Isaiah speaks of this coming judgment upon Babylon, he ties it to the time of the Tribulation Period prior to Christ’s Second Coming.

Isaiah 13:4-6

“The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together: the LORD of hosts mustereth the host of the battle. They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, even the LORD, and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land. Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty.”

The destruction of Babylon was partially fulfilled in 539 BC when the Medes and the Persians captured the city. However, as most prophecies, there is a near and far view. The far view envisions a time when this city will be destroyed during the Tribulation Period or the Day of the Lord. There will be a final fall of Babylon related to the events surrounding the Second Coming of Christ.

Isaiah 13:17-22 prophetically anticipates this cataclysmic judgment:

“Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, which shall not regard silver; and as for gold, they shall not delight in it. Their bows also shall dash the young men to pieces; and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eye shall not spare children. And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged.”

It's interesting to realize that Babylon was never destroyed in the manner in which this prophecy depicts. When the Medes and Persians took Babylon, it was never burnt to the ground in ashes like Sodom and Gomorrah. Cyrus the Great took the city (539 B.C.) and restored it as the capital of Babylonia. The city continued to flourish until 239 B.C. when the Greek general Seleucus built Seleucia some forty miles north of Babylon. In 275 B.C. Antiochus I ordered the remaining civilization of Babylon to be removed to Seleucus. But one hundred years later Antiochus IV placed a Greek colony back in Babylon, which flourished for a time. Early in the second century B.C. the city was attacked by the Parthian invaders and severed a blow. However, this did not stop the city from being inhabited by people. In the beginning of the first century Christian era (A.D. 60), Babylon was apparently an important city inhabited by a large colony of Jews. Peter even talks about the church that was at Babylon.

1 Peter 5:13

“The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son.”

Later in the first century A.D. merchants from Palmyra colonized the site. Emperor Trajan wintered there (116) during his campaign against the Parthians. Thus, history shows that the city and area of Babylon was not deserted forever as the Old Testament prophecies depict. We can see that Babylon was never completely destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah. Nor was this city totally abandoned by people for countless centuries of time following the days of the Medes and Persians. It was continually inhabited to some greater or lesser degree throughout history. The city declined in importance after the building of Seleucia, Ctesiphon and Bagdad, but it has not yet been written off by God as an important city of influence.

Information on the city of Babylon becomes rather scarce after the New Testament era. But we can confer that Babylon was never totally destroyed by God nor has the prophecy been fulfilled about inhabitants never stepping foot in Babylon.

Isaiah 13:20 reveals:

“It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there.”

This prophecy has not yet been fulfilled as history has demonstrated to us. In fact, at the present time of writing, we have the resurrection of this ancient site taking place under the leadership of Saddam Hussein. Surely Babylon has not yet been destroyed by God to never be inhabited again. Apparently this great city will be restored and become an integral part of the prophetic picture in the End Times. It will be in existence and once again thriving in all its past glory during the Tribulation Period. And this city will become the religious and economic center of the world with a new Nebuchadnezzar on the throne (the Antichrist) who will rule the world.

We must then conclude that Babylon was never suddenly destroyed by an act of God as the Old Testament prophecies reveal. The forces of nature and military invasion has only gradually destroyed Babylon. Furthermore,

people have inhabited this city throughout history. In fact, people are presently inhabiting this city in our own day and time while it is being rebuilt under the government of Iraq. This city is fast becoming a worldwide tourist attraction and an important center once again. These are valid points to consider in light of the prophetic word. It would tell us that the prophecies surrounding Babylon's destruction must have a future fulfillment attached to them when Babylon can be completely destroyed as a city by the direct intervention of God and never be inhabited again by people.

The prophecies of Jeremiah also prophetically describes the geographical city of Babylon built upon the Euphrates River. And this prophecy also envisions the time in the future when Babylon will suddenly be destroyed to never be inhabited again.

Jeremiah 51:6-9 reads:

"Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the LORD'S vengeance; he will render unto her a recompence. Babylon hath been a golden cup in the LORD'S hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad. Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed: howl for her; take balm for her pain, if so she may be healed. We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed: forsake her, and let us go every one into his own country: for her judgment reacheth unto heaven, and is lifted up even to the skies."

Jeremiah 50:39-40 also says:

"Therefore the wild beasts of the desert with the wild beasts of the islands shall dwell there, and the owls shall dwell therein: and it shall be no more inhabited for ever; neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation. As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour cities thereof, saith the LORD; so shall no man abide there, neither shall any son of man dwell therein."

As we have seen in Isaiah, this type of destruction has never occurred in connection with the historical city of Babylon. And Isaiah convincingly puts this destruction in the context of the "day of the Lord" which is a reference

to the Tribulation Period when God's wrath will be poured out upon the city of Babylon.

Isaiah 13:6

"Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty."

Apparently these prophecies have a future fulfillment attached to them in the Day of the Lord as they look ahead through the corridors of time and envision the time when God destroys the future city of Babylon. This necessitates the rebuilding of the city. As is often the case, we must view these prophecies as having a near view and partial fulfillment in relationship to the Medo-Persian armies invading Babylon as well as a far fulfillment and secondary fulfillment that will occur during the End Times in relation to the Tribulation Period.

The parallels between these two accounts dealing with Babylon in the books of Jeremiah and Revelation are rather striking. Both are compared to a golden cup (Jer. 51:7; Rev. 17:3-4; 18:6); dwelling on many waters (Jer. 51:13; Rev. 17:1); involved with nations (Jer. 51:7; Rev. 17:2); named the same (Jer. 50:1; Rev. 18:10); destroyed suddenly (Jer. 51:8; 18:8); never again to be inhabited (Jer. 50:39; Rev. 18:21); both are illustrated as sinking into God's judgment (Jer. 51:64; Rev. 18:21); God's people are to flee her (Jer. 51:6,45; Rev. 18:4); Heaven is seen rejoicing (Jer. 51:48; Rev. 18:20).

These prophetic parallels cannot be overlooked. There is an amazing connection between these prophecies, which would indicate that Babylon is seen in both the Old and New Testament prophecies as that same city which will once again be rebuilt and finally destroyed by God's judgment at the close of the Tribulation Period. But what about Jeremiah chapter fifty?

Jeremiah 50:1-5 says:

"The word that the LORD spake against Babylon and against the land of the Chaldeans by Jeremiah the prophet. Declare ye among the nations, and publish, and set up a standard; publish, and conceal not: say, Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in pieces; her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces. For out of the north there

cometh up a nation against her, which shall make her land desolate, and none shall dwell therein: they shall remove, they shall depart, both man and beast. In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: they shall go, and seek the LORD their God. They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the LORD in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten.”

Many see this as a reference to Babylon’s fall to the Medo-Persian Empire, but several points do not fit historically. First, when Cyrus took Babylon, he did not lay waste her land or destroy the city so that no one would live in it (Jer. 50:3). This means that historically the city was actually spared and made one of the ruling centers for the Persian Empire with Daniel serving there in an administrative position (Dan. 5:30; 6:1-3). Only in a prophetic sense would the city be destroyed and become without habitation. Several times Jeremiah repeated this fact about Babylon being without any inhabitants (see 39b-40; 51:29, 37, 43, 62). This obviously refers to the future when God will destroy Babylon. Second, this record cannot fit Babylon’s fall to the Medo-Persians because in the historical account there is no record of people fleeing the city when it fell to Medo-Persia.

In fact, Daniel, who had access to Jeremiah’s prophecies (Dan. 9:1-2), remained in the city during and after its fall (Dan. 5:28, 30-31; 6:1-3). Thus, there must be a future fulfillment of this text. Third, the promise that in “those days” (vs. 4) and “at that time” when the children of Israel and Judah would again unite as a nation and return to Zion and bind themselves to God in an everlasting covenant (Jer. 50:4; 31:31; 32:40) was not fulfilled after Babylon’s fall in 539 B.C.

Jeremiah’s prophecy evidently looked beyond the destruction of Babylon in 539 to an eschatological destruction that will reverse the fortunes of Israel and Judah and as a result bring them into the promised Millennial Kingdom. Once again, this prophecy represents a blending of the near and the far. This is to say, the capture of Babylon by the Medes and the Persians coming from the north country took place historically and then we read about the return of the captives under Zerubbabel. All of this has been fulfilled historically. But this capture and overtaking by the Medo-Persian Empire

and the return of the remnant from captivity during the reign of King Cyrus is in some measure merged into the prophetic picture of the future destruction of Babylon by God and the final restoration of Israel and Judah into the land during the golden age of the Millennial Kingdom.

The destruction of Babylon will be the climax of God's judgment on the Gentile powers that have oppressed His people and will open the way for the fulfilling of God's promises to Israel in the kingdom. Other prophetic portions of Scripture also point to a rebuilding of Babylon and the total destruction and devastation of Babylon in the context of the Day of the Lord or future Tribulation Period (Isaiah 13:19-22; Zech. 5:5-11; Rev. 14:8; 16:18-20; 17-18). The city of Babylon will be rebuilt only to be destroyed at the end of the Tribulation before Christ returns to establish His millennial reign.

Babylon was never destroyed as a city in the way that the prophecies unfold to us. Therefore, this necessitates a rebuilding of Babylon with a new Assyrian ruler or Nebuchadnezzar. It suggests that the ancient city of Babylon must be rebuilt and restored to its former glory as a world center of religion and commerce. And it will be this rebuilt Babylon that will be crushed by God through the End Time event of a cataclysmic earthquake.

Revelation 16:17-19 reveals:

“And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

Babylon will obviously be rebuilt so it will be able to be destroyed in the exact manner which the Bible depicts in fulfillment of Old Testament apocalyptic literature. Babylon is a literal city that will be rebuilt to reflect its past glory and then be destroyed by God. It's interesting to note that the future Antichrist will be connected with this rebuilt city of Babylon in the land of Iraq. He will evidently have his headquarters in this religious and

commercial city as he rises to world dictatorship and power. The prophetic overtones of Scripture picture Antichrist as an End Time Assyrian (“O Assyrian” – Isa. 10:6, 24) that attacks Jerusalem after the three-and-one-half years of the Tribulation Period (Isaiah 10:1-27). What happened to the Jews historically under Sennacherib (701 B.C.) will happen prophetically in “that day” (Isa. 10:20), the coming Day of the Lord, when the Assyrian Antichrist descends on Jerusalem during Daniel’s 70th week (Matt. 24:15-22).

When the Antichrist breaks his covenant with the Jews at the middle of the Tribulation (Dan. 9:27) he will storm upon them with fury from his land of Assyria where his Babylonian capital will be reestablished. An Assyrian Antichrist may indicate that he might be of Arabic background, but still qualify as a Roman prince (Dan. 9:26), since historically Assyria was an extension of the old Roman Empire. Antichrist, following in the train of Gentile kingdoms and world leaders as outlined in Daniel (Dan. 7:1-8), will evidently be back in his own Arab country close to the world’s oil supplies in the Middle East. The Antichrist will obviously have his headquarters in the city of Babylon, possibly as an Assyrian, and will rule the world through his tie with Babylon’s religious and commercial headquarters. This seems to fit into the sockets of Bible prophecy.



Zechariah also envisions that in the End Times wickedness will once again rear its ugly head in the same place where it began – Babylon. Babylon as an actual city will once again become the center of religious, commercial, and political activity during the End Times. Because Babylon had already fallen (539 B.C.) by the time this prophecy was given (519 B.C.), Zechariah’s vision appears to predict a futuristic, rebuilt Babylon. A woman rising out of a measuring basket which is termed as “wickedness” reflects the rise of the city of Babylon during the future Tribulation Period which will house idolatry and pagan religion.

Zechariah 5:5-11 prophetically reveals this: “Then the angel that talked with me went forth, and said unto me, Lift up now thine eyes, and see what is this that goeth forth. And I said, What is it? And he said, This is an ephah that goeth forth. He said moreover, This is their resemblance through all the earth. And, behold, there was lifted up a talent of lead: and this is a woman that sitteth in the midst of the ephah. And he said, This is wickedness. And he cast it into the midst of the ephah; and he cast the weight of lead upon the mouth thereof. Then lifted I up mine eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came out 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, Whither do these bear the ephah? And he said unto me, To build it an house in the land of Shinar: and it shall be established, and set there upon her own base.”

The parallels between these two accounts dealing with Babylon in the books of Zechariah and Revelation are also very enlightening. In Zechariah a woman is seen sitting in a bushel basket whereas in Revelation 17 she is seen sitting upon a beast, seven mountains and many waters. In Zechariah the emphasis is on the commerce aspect of this future city as it is in Revelation chapter 18. In Zechariah she is called “wickedness” (vs. 8) even as Revelation chapter 17 speaks of this woman (vs. 5). In Zechariah’s vision there is a focus on a return to Babylon and the false worship established here during the End Times in the form of a house of idolatry (vs. 11). This is the similar focus in Revelation chapter seventeen.

Human history will cycle back to where it began – Babylon. It is absolutely intriguing to study this vision and realize that Zechariah envisions a time when both economics and false worship will once again return to the headquarters of this Babylonian city. This necessitates that the actual city of Babylon must once again be in existence for these things to be literally fulfilled. If we take the prophecies literally, we can come to no other conclusion. We must understand that the city of Babylon will once again emerge as both a religious and commercial center in the world. It will once again become the center of all commerce and religious wickedness as it was in the past under Nimrod. It will again be the prostitute headquarters of all false religion as it was in the land of Shinar (Zech. 5:11). The commerce and religion will be brought back to its original head in this city

and the original religious revolt against God will be replayed during the End Times with the apostate Church and Antichrist.

The city of Babylon is the hall of fame for all false religion and will once again resurrect itself as the mother of all harlots. Thus, these visions in the books of Revelation, Zechariah and Jeremiah portray Babylon as a woman (Rev. 17:2, 3, 4,6, 18; Zechariah 5:7,9; Jeremiah 51:7,9 “her”). These pictures of women represent the false religion and commerce of the End Times, which will once again be rooted in Babylon. Now that we have established that Babylon is an actual city that will be rebuilt, we must once again consider its religious influence upon many peoples.

The Book of Revelation and Babylon

Revelation 17:1

“And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters.”

The fact that this woman is presented as a harlot or whore indicates that she will be religiously or spiritually unfaithful to the truth and present her own form of religion contrary to Christ and His truth. The figure of a woman in the book of Revelation and elsewhere is connected with the workings of false religion (Rev. 2:20; Matt. 13:33; Zech. 5:5-11). Although the woman in Revelation chapter seventeen is represented as a city she is still prostituting religion and therefor takes on a religious connotation as well. This woman will be a city of tremendous religious influence. She is represented as a whorish woman who is unfaithful to God’s truth and who becomes religiously seductive to humanity. She will attract multitudes to follow and support her seductive religious ways and she will become rich and powerful during the first three-and-one-half years of the Tribulation Period.

When the true Bride of Christ is taken out of this world in the Rapture only the prostitute church will remain and become an amalgamation of false religions and denominations which will be unfaithful to God and His truth. Her harlotry then depicts her unfaithfulness to God and her religious seductive ways among humanity. This woman will have a tremendous

religious and political influence upon many people as she links up with the Antichrist and gains worldwide recognition.

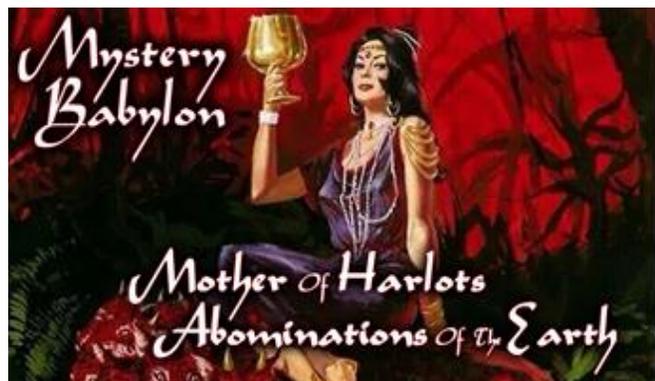
Revelation 17:15 interprets the waters that this woman sits upon by concluding: “And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.” This tells us that this woman will have a worldwide influence upon the people of the earth. She will evidently have both a religious and political influence upon the world population like no other religious organization ever has in history.

Her picture as a “whore” or prostitute identifies her as a wicked city and system who will have a prostituting religious effect upon humanity. In other words, she will commit spiritual prostitution or fornication with the leaders of the world and many people within the world will be affected and seduced by her religious prostitution and proliferation. She will persuade multitudes of people (represented by the waters) to follow her and support her End Time deception of religious idolatry.

Revelation 17:2 says:

“With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.”

In Revelation 17:5 she is called “THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS” prostituting the leaders and people of the world with false religion and apostasy. The first three-and-one-half years of the Tribulation Period will be the time when this woman seduces humanity with amalgamation and ecumenicalism of false religion.



The prophetic announcement of Babylon’s doom and destruction is given in Revelation 14:8 and mentions the religious prostituting or fornication that

she will commit with mankind. “And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.”

Revelation 18:3 also says:

“For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.”

Revelation 18:9 similarly states:

“And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning.”

Revelation 19:2 once again repeats:

“For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.”

The references in these chapters tell us the reason why the city will be destroyed. It's because she has had this religious prostituting effect upon humanity. The leading kings of the earth and world governments were deceived by her false religion during the first three-and-one-half years of the Tribulation. She is pictured as having a prostituting effect upon them and they are seen to have committed fornication with her in the religious realm. Religion and politics have always played hand in hand. Her spiritual fornication will be apparent in that she will get the world rulers to confide in her and rule over them in some way during the first three-and-one-half years of the Tribulation.

Once again, we must understand that the references in these chapters refer to a religious type of prostitution that this End Time religious system within the city of Babylon will have upon people. The imagery of prostitution, fornication, and adultery in prophetic language refers to religious apostasy (Isa. 23:17; Jer. 2:20-31; 13:27; Ezekiel 16:17-19; Hos. 2:5; Nah. 3:4). The super church or this apostate church, seen as mystery Babylon in chapter seventeen, will strategically unite people together under this amalgamation

of false religion. She will have a unifying effect in that the world will support her and see her great significance for mankind. The whole world will become intoxicated by her religious idolatry and be swept into her arms of prostitution as she defames Christ and the truth and glorifies herself. This coming religion of the city of Babylon is further emphasized in this particular chapter.

Revelation 17:5 says:

“And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.”

This verse clearly tells us that Babylon not only is a city but a city of tremendous religious historical background. It is description of a wicked religious system that has historical roots in the original city of Babylon, which was built along the Euphrates River. The idea that she is the “mother” of all harlot systems of religious error indicates that the original city of Babylon gave birth to all the pagan religions of the world up to this present time. She is the breeding ground of all false religion. All the religious paganism of today can be traced back to this one city which was the first to defy God and follow their own established religious system.

Background of Babylon



Genesis 11:1-8 records:
“And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick for stone,

and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.”

The ancient city of Babylon began shortly after the Flood and was an expression of man’s direct rebellion against God and His command to “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish (fill) the earth” (Gen. 9:1b). Babylon is not only an ancient city but a system that reaches back to the tower of Babel. As previously mentioned, the land of Shinar is where the city of Babylon was built, and this land would become known as Mesopotamia. Babylon as a city was built out of spiritual rebellion and defiance to God and was established as city center of religion that would defy the God of truth. This is represented by the ziggurat that was built to house their own deity. The Tower of Babel may have been similar to ziggurats built by the Babylonians as places of worship for their chief god Marduk. This tower was built out of sun-dried bricks and was actually a sacred temple of worship to a false god.

The tower of false religion would not actually reach to the abode of God in the heavens. However, their sins would reach as high as heaven (Rev. 18:5)! But this high tower became a monument to Babylon’s religious defiance against God as they disobeyed God and attempted to steal His heavenly glory. It was also built high to give the impression that their false god could overlook the city and protect it from the true God of heaven.

Nimrod, who was a hunter of men (Genesis 10:9-10), attempted to confederate the people into a city that would defy what God had said about repopulating the earth. He went on to establish his own form of idolatry and religion in a city. Nimrod wanted to build a city that would receive worldwide fame and recognition. This is what the future Nimrod or Antichrist will do as he rises to power in the world. He will evidently want

to headquarter religion, commerce, and politics in a rebuilt Babylon and once again establish a God-defying religious system in the End Times prior to Christ's return.

Revelation 17:5 once again reads:

“And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.”

The fact that this whore is called a “mystery” does not give us the interpretive license to commit allegorical interpretation regarding Babylon. Some claim that “mystery Babylon” is a code word or cryptic reference for papal and ecclesiastical Rome.



The “mystery” aspect of Babylon does not change her identity in any way. She is still a city, but she will reveal something that was previously hidden or not revealed about her.

Again, the word “mystery” connected with “Babylon” does not mean the identity of the city should be allegorized any more than the mystery about the Rapture (1 Cor. 15:51) or Church (Eph. 5:32). In other words, just because “mystery” is applied to a specific event or city does not give us the interpretive license to assign a figurative meaning to the event or city. The Rapture and Church are literal events that will transpire and the same is true concerning the reemergence of the literal city of Babylon during the End Times.

Mysteries are truths revealed in the New Testament which were not previously revealed in the Old Testament. For instance, the truth about the early kingdom was revealed in the Old Testament but not the “mysteries of the Kingdom” (Matt. 13:11) which reveal the course, character, and conditions that would occur on earth before the arrival or establishment of the kingdom, specific events which were not revealed in the Old Testament in conjunction with the establishment of the kingdom over the earth. This would include what Ironside called “The Great Parenthesis” or the time between Israel’s rejection and reception and blessing in the Kingdom. They

are previously unrevealed events that would transpire on earth prior to the establishment of the kingdom over the earth.

In a similar way (like the kingdom), the religious departure connected with the city of Babylon was repeatedly revealed in the Old Testament but there was a specific “mystery” connected with this city of Babylon which was not revealed. This mystery would be the specific End Time ecumenical corruption of the false church that would be centered in the city of Babylon, prostituting the earth with false teaching. The mystery parables predict that a leavening process would occur during the mystery period of time an eventually end up with worldwide total apostasy during the End Times (“till the whole was leavened” - Matt. 13:33).

The “mystery” of Babylon is that she would promote a worldwide unity that brings false religions, cults, and liberal denominations together under one umbrella, promoting mysticism, astrology, and all kinds of false teachings during the Day of the Lord. The specifics about this certainly were not revealed in the Old Testament regarding Babylon. The mystery is that prophetically Babylon will reemerge as the religiously corrupt city which has become the “MOTHER OF HARLOTS” – promoting an ecumenical brothel of all evil, End Time, religions and wickedness lumped together to form the apostate church during the eschatological Day of the Lord.

As already mentioned, the word used for “MYSTERY” (mystērion) in the New Testament refers to a secret that is about to be revealed. In other words, something about this whorish system, previously kept concealed through the ages, is about to be openly revealed in the Book of Revelation. The word “mystery” implies a new revelation of something that was previously hidden regarding the pagan city and system of Babylon. This inclusion of the word “mystery” does not refer to a reborn identity or the remaking of Babylon into another country (Babylon now becoming Rome or America as some suggest) but to something new in relationship to the city and system of Babylon, which was not previously revealed during its former existence on earth. In other words, there is a new revelation about the old Babylonian system and city.

In short, Babylon's mystery is that in the future she will manifest her pagan and religious system through a worldwide ecumenical unity and prophetically become "a mother of harlots" during the End Times (Tribulation Period). It's a unity that brings all false religions, cults, and liberal denominations together under one umbrella, promoting mysticism, astrology, and all kinds of false teachings. The new revelation is that Babylon would reemerge on the world scene as a whorish system ecumenically uniting all false religions during the eschatological Day of the Lord. This mystery is closely tied to the "mystery of iniquity" (lawlessness) in 2 Thessalonians 2:7 which in some measure has already been operative on earth.

The mystery connection with the city of Babylon includes the fact that she is seen riding the Beast during the End Times (Rev. 17:3, 18). The city of Babylon is seen controlling the earth for three-and-one-half years through an alliance with Antichrist. This was also not revealed in the Old Testament. This city will promote a worldwide ecumenical, apostate, religious system that is prostituting all the leaders of the earth as she moves in concert with the Antichrist for three-and-one-half years. None of this was revealed about Babylon in the Old Testament.

Every system of error and apostate paganism with all its rituals and ceremonies can be traced back to the city of Babylon. All apostasy and paganism had its roots in this wicked city and the religious system connected with this ancient civilization. And one day it will reemerge as a whorish system of ecumenical paganism the likes of which the world has ever seen.

The idea of the word "mystery" may also have a secondary illusion to the practice of mystery religions in ancient Babylon and all the secret ceremonies and rites which could only be known by initiated followers. Therefore, this harlot woman in Revelation chapter seventeen is pictured as an amalgamation of all apostate religions in Protestantism, Catholicism, the cults and pagan religions which stem back to Babylon's original religious center and the practice of the secret mystery religions and rites.

This is an ancient civilization which mothered and generically gave birth to all apostate and pagan religions of today. In the future all the apostate

religions of the world, which stem back to this mother of harlots (the founding religious system of Babylon), will be joined in this amazing organization of the End Times. It's an apostate super church that is pictured as a harlot who is unlike the true Bride of Christ or church and who is seductive to all of mankind because of her size, wealth, beauty, and politics. This is the "MYSTERY BABYLON" and "MOTHER OF HARLOTS" that John is envisioning during the Tribulation Period.

Interestingly, the practices of the Roman Catholic Church clearly retain many of the same practices of the mystery religions that historical Babylon created in the land of Shinar. In some measure this distinguished apostate church of our present hour may have a leading role in the binding together of the false ecumenical church since she is in love with her past ancient paganism of Babylon. In any event, the city of Babylon will once again become a religious oriented city giving way to a strange brew of harlot religions that all stem back to the original founding city of Babylon.

Amazing, as it may seem, the ecumenical movement of today is paving the way for this reunification of the religious tower of Babel in the End Time religious city center of Babylon. And the Christians who are ecumenically linking together with these God-defying and disobedient false religions, which stem from ancient Babylon, should obey God and separate from such activities that cater to false religion.

Revelation 18:4-5 records:

"And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities."

God has always called His people away from paganism and false religion even as He did in the days of old (2 Cor. 6:14-17).

Jeremiah 51:45

"My people, go ye out of the midst of her, and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the LORD."

The city of Babylon will once again be the glory of all false religion that is against God where this giant pot of false religion and mysticism will have its religious headquarters. So, Babylon as a city will be once again blooming in all its past pagan religion and falsehood during the future Tribulation Period.

Genesis 11:4

“And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower (a religion), whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.”

Beauty on the Beast in Babylon

In Genesis chapter eleven we see Babylon in its historical setting. In Revelation chapter seventeen of the book of Revelation we see the city of Babylon in its future religious setting. In chapter eighteen of the book of Revelation we see Babylon in its future commercial setting. In any event, Babylon will be rebuilt, and the Antichrist will evidently have a religious and political headquarters in the rebuilt city. We might look at this as the second coming of Babylon, a reemergence of Babylon as a system and city during the End Times.

John says in Revelation 17:3:

“So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.”

This is beauty on the beast! The ten horns are later identified as ten kings (kingdoms with their kings) over which the Antichrist will rule which is the reemergence of the old Roman Empire in the modern federated states of Europe and the Middle East (the boundaries of the original Roman Empire).



Revelation 17:12 gives the interpretation of the horns:

“And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.”

The great whore or harlot is then the religious part of the End Time Babylonish system, which evidently will have an impact upon the beast, or Antichrist and his restored Roman Empire. She is seen riding upon the beast or Antichrist controlling or at least influencing his movements, decisions, and directions. In other words, the Antichrist will cater to the false religious system of this great harlot church. He will carry her around or assist her in any way that he can. He will popularize the fusing together of these religions and their cooperation with one another and do all that he can to promote her religious cause. And in doing so, he will gain popularity and acceptance with the world of religion. If you want to be popular you must cater to all the religions and see good in all of them.

Actually, the apostate church and Antichrist will use the other. The religious system of Babylon will use the Antichrist and the Antichrist will use the harlot system to gain his goal to rule planet earth. The apostate church riding the beast means that she will use the Antichrist’s political power to possess a strong influence and authority throughout the earth. She will ride the beast and his political popularity so that she can promote her own evil ambition and agenda to rule the world.

Linking up with such a political genius and superstar like the Antichrist will guarantee her political and religious ambitions to rule the world. And we can be sure that the religious apostate church, centered in the city of Babylon, will one day have a universal ruling effect on all government and leaders of the world. Her political ambitions cannot be overlooked. Religion would like to rule the world and for nearly three-and-one-half years this false religious system headed up in the city of Babylon, the fountainhead of all religion, will have a worldwide ruling influence over mankind.

Revelation 17:18 says:

“And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.”

The picture of this woman riding the beast would indicate that she will be given great political authority to make world decisions and influence the earth. That is why she is pictured as “ruling over the kings of the earth.” Her political ambitions and influence, along with her hatred for all true believers in the Tribulation Period, will cause an intense persecution to break out against all true saints who are saved during the first three-and-one-half years of the Tribulation and who are faithfully proclaiming the Gospel. The false church hates the Gospel of Christ and as a result will seek to destroy all those who participate in evangelism.

Revelation 17:6 records:

“And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.”



The woman, who represents the joining together of all false religions with its religious headquarters in the city of Babylon, will not tolerate competition from tribulation believers who reject her message and error. For this reason, the apostate church will pour out her cruelties upon the Tribulation saints. She will be drunk with human blood. And this will be the blood of saints.

The religious apostate church, likely headed up by Roman Catholicism, will return to the Inquisition. A worldwide Inquisition or persecution will break out as this godless and wicked system seeks to destroy all Christians and the true message of Christianity. The political ambitions of this Romanish ecumenical system cannot be overlooked. And the Antichrist will assist her torture of the saints by providing her with political power to carry out this dastardly deed.

Revelation 6:9-11 prophetically reveals:

“And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the

earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.”

Although the harlot or super church will use the Antichrist to gain world authority the Antichrist will also use her religion to gain his world popularity. The Antichrist will readily promote the false religious alliance. In one sense, the Antichrist will use world religion to weld together his world empire and prepare the world to accept him as the final god, so he can completely rule the world by the middle of the Tribulation. This is what the woman riding the beast indicates. The future Antichrist will accommodate the religious base in Babylon and do great things to push her agenda forward during the first three-and one-half years of the Tribulation Period. But this will come to a screeching halt and end.

Revelation 17:16-17 reveals what happens next:

“And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.”



This is the ruin of religious Babylon. The Antichrist and His Roman Empire (ten horns) will destroy the religious or ecclesiastical connection with the city of Babylon at the midpoint of the Tribulation Period which will result in the entire world worshipping him alone without any connection to any other established religions (Rev. 13:4-8). The Antichrist will use the harlot church and religious center of Babylon as a way to gain influence before the entire world. But in a moment's time he will stop all the religious associations with the city of Babylon, at the same time stop the Jewish sacrifices in Jerusalem (Dan. 9:27), and deify himself as the ultimate fulfillment and quest of all false religion by claiming equality with God.

Dr. Robert Thomas correctly concludes:

“In the future day anticipated in the pages of this prophecy, this city will become the focal point for a religious system staunchly opposed to the truth of Christianity. The system will thrive for a time in gaining influence over the commercial and political entities of its time, until the beast and the ten kings determine that it no longer has a usefulness for their purposed. They will then dismantle it.”

The Antichrist with his ten-nation confederacy (ten kings) will “hate” the religious center established at Babylon in view of the fact that he will want the entire world to center all religious aspirations upon him. He will also make “her desolate” which means that he will strip her of all her wealth, which she has confiscated throughout the world. The Antichrist and his empire will also make her “naked” or strip away all her personal support, position, power and prestige. The beast’s empire “shall eat her flesh” which symbolizes that he will totally and completely take this religious system out of the way. They will “burn her with fire” which also suggests that the empire of the beast will totally eliminate the religious affiliation attached to the city of Babylon and take it out of the picture completely.

2 Thessalonians 2:4 describes his ultimate goal for worship:

“Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.”

The world at this point will wonder in amazement as they view the ultimate New Age God which religion has produced. At this point, the world will begin to worship the Antichrist as God and see him as the ultimate superman of all religion. There will be no need for Babylonian pagan religion any longer because the Antichrist will embody the final form and outcome of all the past Babylonian religion when he claims to be God himself. The religion of the false church will be replaced by the new religion centered on the Antichrist. The story of the Tammuz child of ancient Babylon will be reborn, which promised a world Savior through the mother Semiramis. And this world Savior will claim to be God Himself. The Antichrist will be the culmination and final product of this pagan religion of the past.

It stands to reason that at the midpoint of the Tribulation Period the Antichrist will shatter his religious promises to the Jews concerning sacrifice (Daniel 9:27) and stop the Gentile religious system from operating, crushing all his religious competitors. There will be a total stoppage of all religious based organizations so that the entire world will be prepared to center their religious affections on the final Nebuchadnezzar, who will as the old Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 3:1-7), deify himself as God before the entire world with an abominable statue of himself within the Jewish temple (2 Thess. 2:4; Matt. 24:15; Rev. 13:15) as he rules in the rebuilt, End Time, God-defying city of Babylon.

By the middle of the Tribulation Period the Antichrist will unite the world's political systems under his own authority and control. After the destruction of this apostate church the religious system of the world will reside only in the Antichrist. But Babylon will continue to exist and thrive as a commercial city of great importance (Rev. 18) even after the religious part of the city is cut off by the Antichrist or world dictator at the middle of the Tribulation Period (Rev. 17). This is why we find in Revelation chapter eighteen the actual city being destroyed by God and the merchants of the world, who do business with this commercial and political city of the End Times, mourning over her loss.

The Business and City of Babylon Destroyed

John had already heard harbingers of Babylon's destruction (14:8; 16:19); now the details of that destruction will be given in the remarkable vision of chapter 18.

Revelation 18:9 records:

“And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning.”

Revelation 18:11

“And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more.”

Revelation 18:15-18 also states:

“The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city!”

The business world will totally and finally collapse since the headquarters of all commerce and trade is cut down by God. And those greedy profiteers who have done business with her will mourn as they see their coffers being stripped of wealth and luxury.

Revelation 16:17-20 reveals how God is going to destroy the actual city of Babylon. “And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.”

God will destroy the rebuilt city of Babylon and all its manmade glory and God-defying Antichrist worship through an unprecedented and cataclysmic earthquake associated with the seventh and final Bowl Judgment of the Tribulation Period. And all the merchants of the world will mourn as they see their profits go up in smoke. God will bring a devastating and decisive judgment against this city so that it will not be resurrected any more. In fact, only desert animals will run through its ruins as a reminder of



God's utter hatred and destruction of this city, which gave birth to all religious pagan idolatry and housed unfathomable religious apostasy and wickedness.

Jeremiah 50:39 prophetically records:

"Therefore the wild beasts of the desert with the wild beasts of the islands shall dwell there, and the owls shall dwell therein: and it shall be no more inhabited for ever; neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation."

The reading of Revelation chapter 18:1, "After these things" indicates that a different event of Babylon's destruction is in view which answers to the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah and the cities literal collapse. This kind of reading ("After these things") normally introduces a new set of circumstances (Rev. 4:1-2). The reader of Scripture must note that in Revelation chapter seventeen the ten kings destroy the false religious (ecclesiastical) system centered in the city of Babylon (17:16) whereas in Revelation chapter eighteen (18:8) the Lord directly intervenes to destroy this literal erected city of architectural magnificence which John saw in his End Time vision. And in doing so, the commercial aspect of the city will be done away with by God.

In chapter seventeen God will use evil men to destroy an evil religious system without destroying the literal city but in chapter eighteen God will use His own power to bring the actual destruction to the city that has polluted the world with false religion and economic prosperity that is independent of God.

Revelation 18:8 says:

"Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her."

We must simply allow Scripture to speak for itself. If we follow the literal approach to the interpretation of Scripture, we must conclude that Babylon is a literal city that will be rebuilt to its former glory and then be destroyed by God to literally fulfill the Old Testament prophecies referencing the total destruction of this city.

Richard Thomas correctly summarizes about Babylon's destruction in his exegetical commentary on Revelation: "Until the present, Babylon has never undergone the destruction prophesied for her in the OT (Isa. 47:11; 51:8). The present devastation of the region is the result of slow decay, not of sudden destruction. In fact, the site of Babylon of old has been the location of a city of one type or another until very recent times.⁸⁷ The sea-traffic of the city, indicated in 18:17, suits this location since the Euphrates in ancient times was navigable for ships for some five hundred miles from its mouth (Bullinger).

"The prophecy thus indicates that before the advent of the warrior-king in 19:11–16, Babylon will rise to its greatest heights, not only of idolatry (chap. 17), but also of luxury (chap. 18). John's allusions in chapter 18 to OT passages dealing with other cities such as Tyre and Jerusalem is not a convincing argument against limiting this chapter to Babylon of the future, because John in his use of the OT freely adapts it to his own purposes without regard for the meaning of passages in their original setting. Babylon of the future, therefore, will be the center for both false religion and world economic prosperity."

Allow me to repeat my general thesis. Babylon is pictured as a city existing in the Tribulation Period that revolves around an ancient historical base, which gave birth to all false religions and systems that run contrary to truth. It is also recognized as a city of political power even as King Nebuchadnezzar of ancient Babylon represented the first great world power from Daniel's perspective. Babylon is then seen as a literal city housing a political system of religious and economical influence during the End Times. But the city with its religious and commercial aspects will be destroyed. The former (religious system) will be destroyed by the ten-nation confederacy under the Antichrist whereas the latter (commercial system and enterprise) will be destroyed by the actual crumbling of the city by God's direct divine intervention. The two chapters tell us how two aspects of the city's functions will come to a dramatic end with the ultimate doom of the city itself.

The expositors who deny that Babylon will be rebuilt do so on the basis that Babylon will only be destroyed as a religious system in the future. But I

cannot agree with this interpretive conclusion since the Book of Revelation envisions a literal city of Babylon existing during the Tribulation Period. The Bible passages specifically name Babylon and call it a “city” five times (Revelation 14:8; 17:18; 18:16, 18, 19). Furthermore, since the actual city of Babylon was never destroyed as both history and the prophecies confirm, it necessitates a rebuilt Babylon.

There is no other way to properly interpret the Old Testament prophecies that clearly speak of the city of Babylon being completely overthrown and destroyed. Since this never occurred historically it must occur prophetically. This aligns itself with New Testament prophecies that envision a future city of Babylon being rebuilt to ultimately be destroyed and decimated during the End Times. It would be an injustice to the grammatical, historical, and literal approach to Scripture to conclude that the Babylon of prophecy is not a literal city. It is a city of religious and commercial trappings that will capture the hearts of multimillions in the Tribulation Period during the End Times (Rev. 17:15).

The existence and destruction of the literal city of Babylon during the Tribulation Period cannot be readily denied. All the phases of Babylon’s operations (religious, commercial, and political) will come to their destruction at their appropriate times. And the actual city of Babylon, housing all these End Time operations, will find its death in the ruins of God’s eschatological judgment.

Revelation 18:8 says:

“Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.”

Revelation 18:2 adds this:

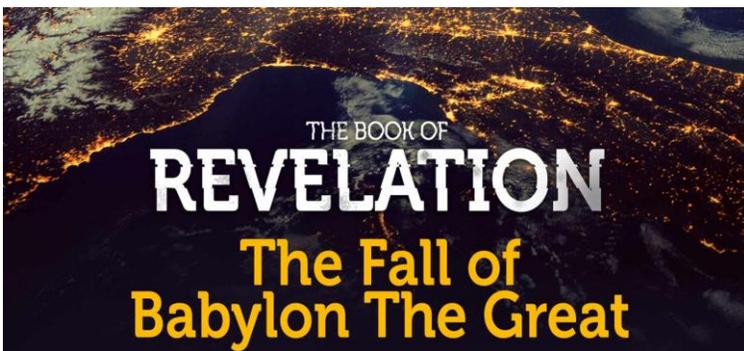
“And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.”

The Scripture records that after God’s total devastation and judgment upon this wicked city that it will only be inhabited by the very demons that once directed all its religious, economical, and political aspirations. Isaiah and

Jeremiah prophesied this kind of desolation for Babylon (Isa. 13:21–22; 34:11–17; Jer. 51:37). Jeremiah and Zephaniah did the same regarding the city of Nineveh (Jer. 50:39; Zeph. 2:14–15).

The words “hold” and “cage” refer to a prison. The prediction in this verse is that Babylon will become a den of demons (fallen angels) which are further identified as “every foul spirit” (wicked spirit beings who have followed Satan in the rebellion against God). The mention of the “unclean and hateful bird” is another descriptive way to talk of demons or sinister wicked spirits. The depiction of the demons as unclean and hateful reflects heaven’s view of them. After Babylon’s destruction the Bible predicts that demons will indwell the fallen ruins and remain incarcerated in the ruins of the city.

The once-thriving city will become like a wilderness filled with imprisoned evil spirits hovering over the ruins and area, like scavenger birds over their prey. Like the wild animals jumping among the ruins (“satyrs shall dance there” - Isaiah 13:21), Babylon will be dancing with demons! The Bible indicates that some demons will be imprisoned in this city throughout the Millennial Kingdom as a reminder of the wickedness of this city and God’s judgment upon it.



Revelation 14:8

“And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.”

If Babylon falls in the future Tribulation Period, this can only mean one thing. A future Babylon will reemerge during the End Times that aligns itself with the original city and system of Babylon. Since the original Babylon was defeated but not destroyed, Babylon must resurface during the End Times. There is a second coming of Babylon. Everything will come full circle. The ancient city of Babylon will be rebuilt and then destroyed to fulfill the Old

Testament and New Testament prophecies regarding Babylon's destruction.

As we have seen, Babylon was the city of the first world ruler Nimrod (Gen. 10:8-10; 11:9). Babylon is the city where man rebelled against God with his own organized and pagan religious system (Gen. 11:1-11). This same city with its idolatrous and paganized religious system will return to its original place for its final stand and showdown against God during the End Times. But God will utterly destroy this city in fulfillment of Old Testament apocalyptic literature (Isa. 13:17-22; Jer. 50:7-8) which is reconfirmed in the New Testament epistles (Rev. 14:8; 16:19; 18).

Both older and newer dispensational expositors embrace the rebuilding of Babylon as being part of the prophetic Scriptures.

William Newell comments in this way:

"We are forced then, to the conclusion, that the overthrow of Babylon, as the revealed center of iniquitous luxury and Satan-worship, the culmination of man's glory, lies yet in the future, in the land of Shinar, where Babylon's history began!"

"The final form of Babylon is the literal city on the Euphrates, rebuilt as Antichrist's capital of the last days, opposing Israel as God's earthly people who will have gathered back to their land (the Church of course, having been raptured), and opposing Jehovah's worship with the most powerful and enslaving form of idolatry that the world has ever known—the worship of the Beast and his image!"

J. Vernon McGee said:

"The capital of Antichrist will be Babylon, and he will have the first total dictatorship. The world will become an awful place. In that day everything will center in Babylon. The stock market will be read from Babylon—not New York"

"Ancient Babylon on the Euphrates River will become the political and economic center of the world. If a small nation in the Mideast can turn off the spigot to stop the flow of oil and thereby bring the world to its knees,

what will it be when ancient Babylon in that very area becomes again the world center?”

Dr. Timothy Ice also shares:

“History reveals that Babylon declined until it was abandoned about two centuries after Christ. Although the city of Babylon sunk beneath the sands of time during the past seventeen hundred years, it has begun to rise in this century. Watch for Babylon to become a dominant force in the world religiously, commercially and governmentally for Revelation 17-18 predicts the destruction of that city and, in order to be the city those prophecies require, it must be rebuilt on a grand scale like in the days of Nebuchadnezzar.”

John MacArthur concludes:

“Some commentators deny that the great city is a literal city, preferring to see it as a symbol of the religious aspect of Antichrist’s empire. Some of those who view the great city as an actual city identify it as Rome, others as Jerusalem. But the angel quite clearly and repeatedly refers to Babylon on the Euphrates throughout chapters 17–18. Those allusions can be seen by comparing 17:1 with Jeremiah 51:13; 17:2, 4 with Jeremiah 51:7; 18:7 with Isaiah 47:5; 18:2 with Isaiah 13:21 and Jeremiah 51:8; 18:4 with Jeremiah 50:8 and 51:6, 45; 18:5 with Jeremiah 51:9; 18:6 with Jeremiah 50:15 and 51:24; 18:21 with Jeremiah 51:63–64. The description of Babylon’s destruction (cf. 18:10, 18, 21) also suggests that an actual city is in view. Thus, a rebuilt city of Babylon will be closely identified with Antichrist’s world empire, perhaps as its capital city. That city will be the center of his kingdom, the extent of which will be the whole earth.”

Today Babylon is in the center of a huge percentage of the world’s oil wealth and is a strategic military location between the East and the West. We know that the Persian Gulf is surrounded by rich oil reserves. A rebuilt Babylon will serve as a natural geographical location for Antichrist’s capital headquarters and the economic center of the world.

The Rapture, a universal world currency, a war-stricken world, and the emergence of a world leader in a future “United States of Europe” (the

Revived Roman Empire) will set the stage for a power shift to Europe and the Middle East. Keep your eyes on Iraq and Babylon.

Charles Dyer wrote:

“God put the oil in the ground, God sets the stage of world history, and I believe when the final events are ready, when the final curtain goes up, Babylon is going to be there.”

The critiques of a rebuilt Babylon conclude that it would take years to build a city like this. But even today Babylon is being prepared for the final stage on human history. The building process began under Saddam Hussein and at one point it will become a booming center of economics, religion, and global authority.

A city can quickly rise out of nowhere. One might consider the story of Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Until 1942, the area where Oak Ridge is located was rural and remote despite being only twenty miles from Knoxville. But the government decided to build facilities to support the extraction of uranium. The Army built a complete city in this locality in a very short period of time. Within eighteen months the city had 100,000 residents. A huge bussing network was quickly developed to provide transportation for residents around town, to the three plants, and to Knoxville.



There is also a newer city in the Middle East that has quickly arisen out of the sand dunes. It's called Dubai Internet City. It's referred to as an oasis in the desert and is heralded as one of the most ambitious engineering, business, and political projects in the Middle East. Dubai Internet City was founded in October 1999, and it opened its doors in October 2000. This newer city is located in the United Arab Emirates, not far from the city of Dubai. This entire city was designed, built,

and made available to tenants in only twelve months. Dubai Internet City is the Middle East and North Africa's largest information and communications technology hub.

Wikipedia gives interesting information about this city:

“One model of operation includes 100% foreign ownership, similar to those prevailing in other designated economic zones in the United Arab Emirates. These freedoms have led many global information technology firms, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Google, Dell, Intel, Huawei, Samsung, SAP, Microsoft, IBM, Oracle Corporation, Tata Consultancy, 3M, Sun Microsystems, Cisco, HP, Nokia, Cognizant, Accenture, and MicroStrategy as well as UAE-based companies such as Ducont, to move their regional base to the DIC. DIC is located adjacent to other industrial clusters such as Dubai Media City and Dubai Knowledge Park (formerly Dubai Knowledge Village).”

A similar thing will happen with the city of Babylon during the End Times. The city will be quickly erected (adding to what is already built in Babylon) and become a commercial, religious, and political capitol that will be a hub for all the wealth, religion, and politics during the Tribulation Period.

What was the fastest building ever built? A Chinese construction company erected a 57-storey skyscraper in 19 working days in central China. With today’s technology the glory of ancient Babylon can quickly be rebuilt and manifest itself as a thriving city and metropolis of the End Times. Believing that the city of Babylon will be rebuilt and then destroyed is another test for Bible students to embrace the literal fulfillment of Bible prophecy. We need to be a Babylon believer.

