

INTRODUCTION TO BABYLON THE GREAT

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[Grace Bible Gillette Study Notes](#)

I. INTRO

A. *There has been a great deal of speculation about the identity of Babylon. This great [harlot] of the last days has been identified with the Roman Catholic church and the Vatican, apostate Christendom, the United States, New York City, Rome, or some unknown great metropolis that will emerge in the end times. Preterists, who view the events in Revelation as past, equate Babylon with Jerusalem, which was destroyed by the Romans in AD 70. Some believe that Babylon is used the same way we might refer to Wall Street, to describe the entire American financial system. [So What is Babylon?].*

II. BABYLON'S ORIGIN (Gen 11:1-9)

A. Name (Gen 11:9) - There is a connection between the name Babel and the name Babylon.

1. Babel was in the land of Shinar (Gen 10:10; 11:2, 9) as was Babylon (Dan 1:1-2).
2. Babel (*babel*) received its name as a play on words for the Hebrew word for "confusion" (*balal* - Gen 11:9).
3. "Babylon" (*Babulōn, Babylōnos*) is the Septuagint's translation for the Hebrew name Babel (2Ki 17:30).
4. Present day Babylon is located about 50 miles south of Baghdad, Iraq.

B. Rule of Nimrod - Babylon (Babel), in the land of Shinar, was the capital of the world's first ruler, Nimrod (Gen 10:8-10).

1. He was the great-grandson of Noah. Some estimate it was only 100 yrs since the Flood.
2. He was a "mighty hunter before the Lord" which may mean that he was a warrior-mercenary, a hunter of men.
3. His kingdom included Babel, Erech Accad, and Calneh (in Shinar); also Nineveh, Rehoboth-Ir, Calah, and Resen (in Assyria).
4. He could have been the leader that said, "Come, let us" build a city, a tower, and a name.

C. Organized Rebellion - Babylon (Babel) was the city of the world's first organized rebellion and false worship (Gen 11:1-11), i.e. Tower of Babel.

1. Disbursement of Nations - They "settled" (*vs. 2, yashab - remain or dwell*) in Babylon as opposed to God's command to "fill the earth" (Gen 9:1, 7). This answers how the nations were dispersed with different languages.
2. Rebellion - So, organized rebellion was expressed in vs. 4 by: 1) disobeying God's command by "settling" and building a "city", 2) refusing to glorify God by making a "name" for themselves, and 3) promoting pagan worship by building a tower to "reach into heaven."
3. Babel's Tower - Speculation in regard to Babel's Tower could suggest that it may have been one of the first ziggurat-type structures. Ziggurats were part of temple complexes built for the purpose of worshipping and contacting their gods (i.e. Marduk). Several historical documents regarding the famous ruins of Etemenanki ("temple of the foundation of heaven and earth"), an ancient Babylonian ziggurat, confirm that it was built for pagan worship.

III. BABYLON'S HISTORY

A. Hammurabi - Hammurabi unified and ruled southern and central Mesopotamia beginning an empire called Babylon (1792-50 B.C.). Hammurabi was noted for his oversight of the legal code (Code of Hammurabi), distinguishing Babylon from other nations.

B. Nebuchadnezzar II - Babylon became the capital of the world's greatest Neo-Babylonian Empire under the Nebuchadnezzar II in 605 B.C.

1. Babylon was known for its triple-layered walls said to be 40-foot-high and wide enough to have chariots driven on them.

2. Babylon was known for its “Hanging Gardens,” which was *a colossal maze of terraced trees, shrubs, flowers and manmade waterfalls, are one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World* (history.com).

3. Babylon was known for its Ishtar Gate, which was a half-mile entrance decorated with blue bricks adorned with pictures of bulls, dragons, and lions.

C. Destroyed Jerusalem - Babylon, under King Nebuchadnezzar II, destroyed Jerusalem (2Ki 25:1), looted and destroyed the Temple (2Ch 36:7), and forced Judah into Babylonian Captivity (Dan 1:1-2).

D. Gentile Empires - Babylon was the capital city of the first of four Gentile world empires (Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian, Roman) to rule over Jerusalem

E. Present Day - For a time, it came under the rule of the Parthians and then Muslims in the mid-7th century. It dissolved into oblivion until archaeological interest began in the early 1800's. In 1978, Saddam Hussein, began the “Archaeological Restoration of Babylon Project.”

IV. BABYLON'S LITERAL FUTURE CITY

A. Called a City - Twice Babylon is called a “city” (Rev 18:10, 21) and implied numerous times (Rev 16:19; 17:18; 18:16, 18, 19). The majority of cities mentioned in Revelation are literal (Rev 2-3). *Revelation specifically refers to the last-days capital of the Antichrist as Babylon six times (Rev 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2, 10, 21)* (Hitchcock).

B. Biblical History - Babylon has vast biblical history and is mentioned by name some 264 times. It is mentioned more than any other city, except Jerusalem. It is a likely candidate for the end-time capital.

C. Babylon's Location - Babylon could be an ideal location for an international center. It is located in the fertile crescent, near vast oil reserves, and at a centric geographical and travel location (Morris).

D. Revelation's Description - Babylon is located on the Euphrates River. The great river is mentioned twice in Revelation. Once as an epicenter for demonic activity (Rev 9:14) and once as a plague that dries the Euphrates, allowing nations to cross (Rev 16:12).

E. Zechariah and Revelation - Zec 5:5-11 is most likely describing Rev 17-18. Both mention a woman, her wickedness, her great commerce, her false worship, and Babylon (Shinar).

F. Babylon's Destruction - Jeremiah 50-51 (and Isaiah 13) predicted a complete destruction of Babylon. However, Cyrus took over Babylon without a major battle or mass destruction. Babylon's complete destruction will take place in a future end-time event (Rev 17-18).

V. BABYLON'S FUTURE RELIGIOUS SYSTEM

A. Future Babylon

1. Babylon is the great harlot symbolizing idolatry, apostasy, and false religion (Rev 17:1).

2. The kings following Antichrist will engage in Babylon's false religion (Rev 17:2).

3. Antichrist will utilize Babylon's capital and false religion for a time (Rev 17:3, 7).

4. Babylon will wine and dine the nations into its false religion (Rev 17:4, 15; 18:3).

5. Babylon's false religion is the source of all false religions (Rev 17:5).

6. Babylon's false religion will persecute God's saints (Rev 17:6).

7. The Antichrist will abandon Babylon's religion and seek self-deification (Rev 17:16).

B. Original Babylon

1. Babel made a concerted effort to unify the entire city to engage in false religion.

2. Babel's sin was idolatry and apostasy (cf. Rom 1:18-23).

3. Babel was led by a single treacherous ruler (Nimrod).

4. Babel's lure was a grandiose tower and a great name.

5. Babel most likely was the location of false religion that spread around the world.

6. Babel rejected God, His Word, and His messenger (Noah).

7. *[Babylon the great harlot] leads the world in the pursuit of false religion whether it be paganism or perverted revealed religion. She is the symbol for a system that reaches back to the tower of Babel (Genesis 10:9-10; 11:1-9) and extends into the future when it will peak under the regime of the beast* (Thomas).

VI. BABYLON'S FUTURE COMMERCIAL SYSTEM

A. Babylon's commercial system will engulf the entire world (Rev 18:3).

B. Babylon's commercial system will make her proud and ruthless (Rev 18:6-7).

- C. The ruling kings and merchants will weep when Babylon's commercial system ends (Rev 18:9-11).
- D. Babylon's commercial system will control the world's resources and luxuries (Rev 18:12-14).
- E. Babylon's commercial system will make kings, nations, and businesses wealthy (Rev 18:15-18).
- F. Babylon's commercial system will include the ruling kings (Rev 18:9).

VII. BABYLON'S FUTURE DEMISE

- A. Kings, merchants, and businesses will weep at the end of Babylon's commercial system (Rev 18:9-9).
- B. The saints will rejoice at the demise of Babylon (Rev 18:20-24).
- C. In the beginning of the Tribulation, the Antichrist will utilize Babylon's false religion. At mid-Tribulation the Antichrist will remove Babylon's false religion and deify himself. He will then have worldwide rule over the nations and its commercial system until Babylon's demise at the 7th Bowl.
- D. Armageddon and the demise of the Beast and kings will shortly follow (Rev 16:16; 17:11; 19:19-21).
- E. Charles Dyer - *Throughout history, Babylon has represented the height of rebellion and opposition to God's plans and purposes, so God allows Babylon to continue during the final days. It is almost as though he calls her out for a final duel. But this time, the conflict between God and Babylon ends decisively. The city of Babylon will be destroyed* (Charles Dyer, The Rise of Babylon).