

Q2) Will Babyon be rebuilt?

Question: Some Bible commentators maintain that the city of Babylon will be rebuilt in the last days and become the world capital under Antichrist. This has been linked to a claim that Antichrist may be an Assyrian. In view of claims that Saddam Hussein attempted to rebuild Babylon and that the focus of world attention has been on Iraq, is it possible that the UN could move its headquarters to Iraq and Antichrist set up world government from there?

Answer: The concept of Babylon being rebuilt has attracted a great deal of speculation over recent years, and I suspect it has sold many books on the subject. Unfortunately it has no Scriptural validity and contradicts the plain statements of God's Word. Some who have presented the case for a rebuilt Babylon seem predisposed to the idea that Antichrist will be an Assyrian, but this also has no Biblical basis.

Babylon was the pride of the entire earth in her day. Her wall, according to Herodotus, was 350 feet high and 87 feet thick, with 100 solid brass gates, 25 on each of the four sides. Between each gate were three towers raised ten feet above the wall. Streets 151 feet wide crisscrossed the city forming 676 squares.

The River Euphrates ran through the city and filled an immense ditch surrounding the walls. A bridge spanned the river between two palaces. The famous Hanging Gardens of Babylon rose in terraces to the height of the city walls, and water for the gardens was pumped from the Euphrates to an aqueduct on the top terrace. The temple of Belus occupied almost a complete city block near the eastern palace.

Herodotus (440BC), is called "the father of history" and wrote nine books recording events from the Persian and Grecian eras. He visited Babylon about a century before Alexander the Great arrived. Whether his description is exaggerated, we cannot tell. Bearing in mind the construction materials available, a wall 350 feet high seems excessive, nevertheless there is no doubt it was a massive structure and the Hanging Gardens rate as one of the Seven Wonders of the World. We know, however, that the Pyramid of Gizeh was built of limestone and was originally 492 feet high. It is not surprising that Nebuchadnezzar was lifted up with pride when he said, *"Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?"*(Dan.4:30).

After Darius the Mede took the kingdom of Babylon, the city declined. Cyrus moved the capital to Shusan (or Suza), and when Alexander the Great arrived the famous Ziggurat of Etemenanki, which originally rose 270 feet, was in disrepair.

Within sixty years of the Persian victory four Babylonian revolts were put

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down, and in 482 BC Xerxes destroyed much of the wall and punished the inhabitants by downgrading the city.

The Persian kings had not paid tithes to the Babylonian temples, and when Xerxes came on the scene he destroyed the temples and carried away the solid gold statue of Bel-Marduk to be melted down.

When Alexander took Babylon he ordered restorations to be carried out, but after his conquests in Central Asia he returned to Babylon, where he died.

The decline of Babylon continued, and by the first century AD a small part was inhabited and the rest cultivated. In the second century after Christ nothing but portion of the walls remained.

During the 4th century the Persian kings repaired the walls to create a wild-life park where they could hunt game. Visitors in the 14th century found it deserted and infested with venomous snakes. Much of the area had been inundated with water and was swamp land. Scripture says:

"It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation" (Isa.13:20).

The prophecies have been fulfilled and Babylon is now desolate, *"as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah"* (Isa.13:19). It is now like the area south of the Dead Sea where there was once a fertile plain around Sodom - just **barren desert with no cities**.

The initial destruction of Babylon came from the "north", from the land of the Medes. Jeremiah wrote:

*"A people shall come from **the north**"* (Jer.50:41).

That invading army is identified as the Medes.

*"The LORD hath raised up the spirit of **the kings of the Medes**: for his device is against Babylon, to destroy it"* (Jer.51:11). The destruction of Babylon began as God said it would when *"Darius the Median took the kingdom"* (Dan.5:31), and since Babylon has been desolate for centuries, God's Word must be fulfilled that

*"Because of the wrath of the LORD **it shall not be inhabited, but it shall be wholly desolate"***(Jer.50:13).

On what basis then do some Bible teachers tell us that Babylon will be rebuilt and become the world capital under Antichrist?

Perhaps the Scripture in Revelation 17 and 18, written in AD96 by John, may be appealed to, but an examination of this passage will soon reveal that the judgment described is quite different from the one foretold in Isaiah 13 and Jeremiah 50 and 51.

"Mystery Babylon" is burned with fire at the end of the Tribulation and is utterly consumed, but the destruction of the city of Babylon saw **only**

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the high gates “burned with fire” (Jer.51:58). They were gates of brass and were removed and smelted down. Certainly Babylon appears denuded **like** a “burnt mountain” (Jer.51:25) without trees, but it did not occur through fire.

Mystery Babylon is quite different from the ancient city of Babylon and is clearly defined in Revelation chapter 17 as **Rome**. John said the harlot woman was “that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth.”(Rev.17:18).

Surely nobody would dispute that Rome ruled the world when John wrote.

In addition, *Mystery Babylon* sits on 7 mountains (Rev.17:9), and everybody knows that Rome is the city of seven hills. Even the eastern Roman capital, Constantinople, is built on seven hills.

Mystery Babylon is guilty of the “blood of the **martyrs of Jesus**” (Rev.17:6). The city of Babylon was pre-Christian!

Mystery Babylon rides **the fourth beast on earth** as described in Dan.7 and Rev.13. This is the final Gentile kingdom before Christ returns to establish His universal reign. After Babylon, Persia, and Greece it was, and is, Rome.

The final ruler will be the “*prince which shall come*”, Antichrist, who has to be from the **Roman Empire** because **his people** fulfilled the prophecy of Dan.9:26 and destroyed the “*city and the sanctuary*” in AD70 and again in AD135.

There are no grounds whatsoever for suggesting that the old city of Babylon will, contrary to prophecy, again be inhabited, or that Antichrist will come out of Assyria (Iraq).

Apostate Christendom, headed up by the Roman Catholic Church, is undoubtedly the harlot woman of Rev.17, and the Roman Antichrist will burn her with fire at the end of the Tribulation, **not the Medes**. Is it any wonder that on 31 August 2003 Pope John Paul II entrusted the future of the EU to the Virgin Mary? He “**placed Europe in Mary’s hands**, so that it would become a symphony of nations committed to building together the civilization of love and peace” (Zenit, Catholic magazine 31/8/03).

