

TEXT: Revelation 16:12-16; 17:1-6

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Rev. 17:1-6, **One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the punishment of the great prostitute, who sits on many waters. 2 With her the kings of the earth committed adultery and the inhabitants of the earth were intoxicated with the wine of her adulteries." 3 Then the angel carried me away in the Spirit into a desert. There I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was covered with blasphemous names and had seven heads and ten horns. 4 The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet, and was glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls. She held a golden cup in her hand, filled with abominable things and the filth of her adulteries. 5 This title was written on her forehead: MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT THE MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. 6 I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus.**

INTRODUCTION:One of the more common cartoon characters is that of a man with a long white beard and dressed in a long white robe carrying a sign proclaiming, "The End Is Near!"

This morning I do not have a long white beard, nor am I wearing a long white robe, I am however, proclaiming "the end is near!" As the song writer declared, "the signs are in the air."

With a Bible in one hand and a newspaper in the other I daily read the same stories. The events occurring in the Middle East daily were so clearly described by Daniel and Ezekiel in the Old Testament and by Christ and John in the New Testament that there can be no doubt whatsoever that we are now in the last days of the Dispensation of Grace. Soon the trumpet of God will sound and the dead in Christ and the living saints will be caught up to be with the Lord in the air. Only the worst of fools would have any desire to remain here on the earth and be a participant in the judgments of God that are to be poured out of the bowls of the seven angels.

Throughout four millennia of human history two cities have played pivotal roles in God's salvific plan for fallen man and for putting an end to sin. Listen to the words of the prophet Daniel:

Dan. 9:24, **"Seventy `sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin , to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy.**

From Babylon, the dwelling place of demons, Daniel prophesied the coming of the Messiah to establish his reign in Jerusalem, God's city of peace.

Today the two cities that have become the focal point of politics, economics, and religion are Jerusalem and Baghdad, the ancient Babylon. Both of these cities have arisen in recent decades as Phoenix from the ashes of history.

I am sure that you know at least one version of the legend of the Phoenix. It is one of the oldest and most widespread legends known to man. It is found in the ancient literature of such cultures as Egypt, Arabia, Palestine, Mesopotamia, India, and China. In these legends after a period of 1000 years a beautiful bird prepares a nest as a funeral pyre and is burned to death. From the ashes a new bird arises to live for another 1000 years to repeat the process again.

This morning I want us to consider the rebirth of ancient Babylon and its prophetic significance for the Church, the saint, and the sinner.

I. THE RISE OF BABYLON IN THE PLAIN OF SHINAR

Genesis 11:1-9, **1 Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. 2 As men moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there. 3 They said to each other, "Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly." They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. 4 Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth." 5 But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower that the men were building. 6 The LORD said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be**

impossible for them. 7 Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other." 8 So the LORD scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. 9 That is why it was called Babel--because there the LORD confused the language of the whole world. From there the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth.

A. The birth of Babel (Babylon) is a repetition of the rebellion of Cain.

1. East of Eden
 2. The plain of Shinar (war, violence, and rebellion)
 3. A city [characterized by]:
 - a. Self protection.
 - b. Self sufficiency.
 - c. Man centered.
- B. Babylon represents an organized rebellion against God:
1. To build a city.
 2. To build a tower into heaven.
 3. To make a name (political power and military might).
 4. To thwart God's judgment.
- C. The end of Babylon demonstrates God's sovereignty.

II. THE PHOENIX OF BABYLON ARISES FROM THE ASHES OF HISTORY

Daniel 1:1-2, 2 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. 2 And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God. These he carried off to the temple of his god in Babylonia and put in the treasure house of his god.

Dan. 2:36-44, "This was the dream, and now we will interpret it to the king. 37 You, O king, are the king of kings. The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory; 38 in your hands he has placed mankind and the beasts of the field and the birds of the air. Wherever they live, he has made you ruler over them all. You are that head of gold. 39 "After you, another kingdom will rise, inferior to yours. Next, a third kingdom, one of bronze, will rule over the whole earth. 40 Finally, there will be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron—for iron breaks and smashes everything—and as iron breaks things to pieces, so it will crush and break all the others. 41 Just as you saw that the feet and toes were partly of baked clay and partly of iron, so this will be a divided kingdom; yet it will have some of the strength of iron in it, even as you saw iron mixed with clay. 42 As the toes were partly iron and partly clay, so this kingdom will be partly strong and partly brittle. 43 And just as you saw the iron mixed with baked clay, so the people will be a mixture and will not remain united, any more than iron mixes with clay. 44 "In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever.

The Phoenix of Babylon

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A. The rise of the Babylonian Empire:

1. Exactly parallels the captivity of Judah (606 B.C. to 536 B.C.).

2. Was permitted by God.

3. Was ended by God. B. The Babylonian Empire was the apex of human civilization and government:

1. We think of Western Civilization as being the highest form of culture and learning.

2. God said that the Persian, Greek, and Roman cultures were all inferior to Babylonian culture.

C. God gave a preview of history to King Nebuchadnezzar:

1. The dream without an interpretation.

2. God gives Daniel the interpretation:

a. Medo-Persian Empire.

b. Greek Empire.

c. Roman Empire.

d. The Kingdom of the Stone (Christ). D. The great Babylonian Empire disappeared into the trash bin of history in one night.

III. THE PHOENIX OF BABYLON RISES FOR THE LAST TIME

Rev. 16:12-16, **12 The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the East. 13 Then I saw three evil spirits that looked like frogs; they came out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14 They are spirits of demons performing miraculous signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for the battle on the great day of God Almighty.**

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A. Mesopotamia was an economic and political wasteland from 1453 to the early 1900s.

B. Gottlieb Daimler invents the gasoline powered internal combustion engine in 1885.

C. Iraq gains independence from the Ottoman Turks in 1921.

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- D. Serious oil exploration begins about 1925.
- E. Tirkuk oil field comes on line in 1934.
- F. There are 10 billion proven barrels of oil reserves in Iraq.
- G. Oil brings wealth, and wealth brings power.
- H. The Phoenix arises.
- I. Iraq is now recognized as the magnet for all brands of Islamic terrorists.
- J. The recent war is not over.
- K. Iraq will lead the forces arrayed against Jerusalem in the war that leads to the Battle of Armageddon.
- L. Baghdad (the ancient Babylon) represents the final organized opposition against God and against His people.
- M. Just as the budding of the fig tree (the rebirth of Israel) is a clear sign of the coming of the Messiah, so the rebirth of Babylon is a clear sign of the coming judgment of God.
- N. The dragon (Satan), the first beast (the Anti-Christ), and the second beast (the False Prophet) are described between chapters 13 and 18 of the Book of Revelation.

CONCLUSION: The Bible indicates that Babylon (Iraq) will become the most powerful nation on the earth prior to the Battle of Armageddon.

All of modern civilization is dependent upon energy derived from petroleum. Governments and civilizations have become slaves to energy. He who controls the source of energy can control the world.

World population cannot be sustained without energy for food production, transportation, and production of goods. Political alliances will be based on who has energy. We live in a topsy-turvy world:

1. Our courts are out of control.
2. Security is a thing of the past.
3. Anarchy is on the rise.
4. Islam is surging.
5. Christianity is in decline in the West.

How can we confront the coming changes?

The best way is to change your address! That is, respond to the trumpet call of God. Don't be

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left behind!

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This is the outline of the sermon Dr. Harold Carpenter preached at Fair Grove Assembly of God, Fair Grove MO. Dr. Carpenter and his wife served as missionaries for twenty years. Dr. Carpenter also taught missions for twenty years at Central Bible College. He now serves as Pastor of Fair Grove Assembly of God, Fair Grove MO.

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In Essentials: Unity; In non-essentials: Liberty; In all things: Charity—Peter Meiderlin
1626.

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