

THE RISE OF BABYLON

The last world empire is symbolically called 'Babylon'. It was the first world empire that Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar saw in their dreams, and it was the Babylonians, who in 586 BC, conquered Israel and destroyed the first temple built by Solomon. The final 'Babylon' will be a coalition of many countries. Nebuchadnezzar's vision of a great statue represented four empires, generally interpreted as being Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek, and Roman. The fourth kingdom is described as being as strong as iron; it would shatter and crush everything. The feet and toes of the statue were part clay and part iron, representing a future, unstable coalition of nations. Another weakness will be multiculturalism. Countries that surround the Mediterranean will be the base of this future empire as they were in the past Roman Empire.

The people will have different allegiances and this worldwide empire won't hold together for long. Eventually, God will step in and set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, the Kingdom of God Jesus spoke about. When the Messiah returns, he will shatter and crush the unstable worldwide coalition, and establish his kingdom which will stand forever (Dan 2:40-43).

Daniel had a later vision of four beasts that represent the same four empires of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. The fourth beast is described as an awe-inspiring, terrifying, and viciously strong animal! It has large, iron teeth and devours and crushes things and tramples under its feet whatever remains. Different from all the previous animals, it has ten horns and will devour *the entire Earth*, trampling it down and crushing it (Dan 7:7, 23). The leader is a global dictator.

An angel interpreted the meaning for Daniel. The four great animals are four kings, founders of kingdoms, who rise to power on Earth, but

eventually, the saints of the Most High receive the kingdom and possess it forever (Dan 7:17-18). The four kingdoms, represented by wild animals, are renegade kingdoms established by men who are oblivious to God and his plan. God allows their establishment, but eventually, he will establish his kingdom on Earth, putting an end to corrupt empires that don't acknowledge him. The fourth kingdom is the Roman Empire, represented by the legs of iron, but the feet and toes represent an extension of that kingdom in the last days that will be defeated at the return of the Messiah. Rome and Babylon are symbolic names for this end-time kingdom. The ten horns represent ten kings, leaders of the most powerful nations. On observing the economic, social, and political integration that is happening in our world today, the probability of a single-world empire is great, if not inevitable. It is driven by ever-developing technology in transport and communications, multiculturalism, AI, climate change, and a general recognition that the planet has reached a dangerous phase. The European Union currently consists of 28 states and has ongoing negotiations with a dozen others.

The Bible teaches that the end of the age is closely tied to what will happen in Israel and Jerusalem. The angel Gabriel declared to the prophet Daniel:

“Seventy sevens/weeks 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 Place” (Dan 9:24).

Gabriel said, “The people of the ‘ruler who will come’ will destroy the city and the sanctuary.” That was what the Roman armies did in 70 AD. The final week of Daniel’s seventy weeks (490 years) is the seven years before the Messiah’s return. Gabriel said, “He (the ruler who will come) will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven’. In the middle of the ‘seven,’ he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And at the temple, he will set up an Abomination that causes Desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on

him” (Dan 9:27). The seven years are divided into two halves of 3 ½ years each.

❖ **Antichrist’s early years**

(Dan 9:24-27, Rev 6:1-8, 13:1-4)

Not much is said about the first period, but the beginning is marked by the rise of the Antichrist, who makes a covenant with Israel for seven years promising Israel protection and religious liberty and allowing a third temple to be built where the Jews would re-establish their system of sacrifices and offerings. But then in the middle of that time, he will put a stop to sacrifice and offering and put an image of himself in the temple and claim universal worship.

The opening of the first four seals (Rev 6:1-8) describes in symbolic language the rise of Antichrist as he conquers the whole world and brings it into submission. This empire is called ‘Babylon’ in Revelation but is often recognized as a revival of the Roman empire which was in power at that time. It covered much of Europe, North Africa, and much of the Middle East. The opening of the second to fourth seals reveals the distress caused by a conqueror who takes peace from the world, causing much bloodshed, famine, and disease. The rider of the fourth horse is called Death, having the power to kill a quarter of the world’s population through warfare, famine, and plague leaving them for animals and birds to devour.

The rise of the last world empire is described in Rev 13:1-4. The empire is called a beast because it is dangerous, terrifying, frightening, and very powerful, crushing and devouring its victims and trampling underfoot whatever is left. Satan gives it his power, his throne, and great authority. The whole earth will marvel at this great empire and they will worship it and Satan, the power behind it.

The following events will occur during this time:

1. Just before or at this time, the third temple will be built in Jerusalem (Mat 24:15, 2 Thess 2:4, Rev 11:2).

2. Satan will empower a final worldwide empire, symbolically called Babylon, a renewed form of the Roman empire that will take peace from the world (Daniel 7:22-24, Rev 6:2-4, 13:1-4).
3. Antichrist will rise to power (Rev 13:5-6, Daniel 11:36-39) together with the false prophet (Rev 13:11-18).
4. Worldwide famine, pestilence, and death will follow the warfare, a quarter of humanity will perish (Rev 5–8), and a third of the environment will be ruined (Rev 8:7–12).
5. Before persecution begins, angels mark God’s servants (Christians) with a seal for their eternal security (Rev 7:1–8). As God’s people, they are symbolically depicted as the tribes of Israel, as in Galatians 6:20, “the Israel of God” (genuine Christians). Believing Jews are part of the Church, there is no reason to differentiate them. They follow the Lamb wherever he goes (14:4).

These events precede the time of Great Tribulation during which Antichrist makes war on the saints.

❖ **Nuclear war**

Antichrist has no regard for any god but exalts himself above them all and depends on a god of fortresses, his nuclear military apparatus (Dan 7:7-8, 11:37-39, Rev 6:2-6). Any modern-day world dictator depends on his nuclear arsenal and the Antichrist is no exception. Famine and plague will follow warfare and two billion people will die (Rev 6:8). A further two million will die at Armageddon (Rev 9:15-18). Jesus said, “If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened” (Matt 24:22). Jesus’ followers are still there!

The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end and desolations have been decreed (Dan 9:26). He will attack the mightiest fortresses with the help of a foreign god and will greatly honor those who acknowledge him, making them rulers over many people and distributing land at a price (Dan 11:39). Symbolized by

the apocalyptic horsemen, the Antichrist and his forces are responsible for the deaths a quarter of the world's population.

Daniel's last vision (Dan 10–12) was received in the third year of Cyrus, king of Persia. It concerned a great war (10:1) in a time yet to come (10:14). Participants include demonic powers, the prince of Persia, the prince of Greece, and Michael, an angelic power who protects Israel (Dan 12:1).

Then the sixth angel pours out his bowl of wrath on the Euphrates River, preparing the way for the kings of the East to advance on Jerusalem: the Russia-Iran-Iraq-Syria coalition and the seven 'stans:' Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan. The demonic powers are in league with Satan, the Antichrist, and the False Prophet, gathering the kings of the whole world to join the battle of Armageddon.

❖ The temple

If a third temple is built before Jesus returns, it would presumably be destroyed by the earthquake when Jesus descends to the Mount of Olives just one kilometer away. The last OT prophet said, "Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking (the Messiah) will come to his temple ... But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears?" (Mal 3:1-2). Isaiah said, "Suddenly, in an instant, the Lord Almighty will come with thunder and earthquake and great noise, with windstorm and tempest and flames of devouring fire. Then the hordes of all the nations that fight against Ariel (Jerusalem), that attack her and her fortress and besiege her, will be as it is with a dream, with a vision in the night (Isa 29:5-6).

Daniel prophesies about a despicable person whose armed forces will rise up to *desecrate the temple* fortress and abolish the daily sacrifice. Then they will set up the Abomination that causes Desolation (Dan 11:31, 12:11). He may have been *seeing* Antiochus Epiphanes who profaned the temple in 167-68 BC, but Jesus assures us that the real fulfillment of this prophecy is at the end of the age. He said, "When you see standing in *the Holy Place* the Abomination

that causes Desolation, spoken of through the prophet Daniel - let the reader understand - (Matt 24:15). Jesus added, “At that time there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now - and never to be equaled again.” He was not talking about the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, but the Great Tribulation before the Day of the Lord. He said, “If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect, those days will be shortened (Matt 24:21-22). Paul confirms that this profaning of the temple would occur shortly before the Day of the Lord, when the man of lawlessness (the Antichrist) will appear and exalt himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat *in the temple of God*, proclaiming himself to be God (2 Thess 2:3-4).

All this implies that a third Jewish temple will be built on Mount Zion in Jerusalem, with sacrifices and offerings being offered to God, before Jesus returns.

In a vision regarding the end times, John is told to measure the temple of God in Jerusalem (Rev 11:1). This measuring of the temple and altar implies that they will be rebuilt. We are not told by who, but the temple would not be considered authentic if not approved by the Jewish religious authorities of the day. In Daniel 9:27 the “ruler who will come” (the Antichrist) will confirm a covenant with many for one week (seven years) and in the middle of that time he will put an end to sacrifice and offering and at the temple and he will set up an Abomination that causes Desolation. The temple-building may be part of his covenant with ‘many’ which will include Muslims, without whose approval a temple cannot be built. The covenant would also need to solve the Palestinian problem.

and ever.