

THE U.S.-IRAQI WAR:

A Prelude to the Rise and Fall of Babylon?

Again, the U.S. finds itself entangled in *two more* agonizing wars! American troops had hardly taken a breather from the Gulf War when orders came to go again...to Afghanistan...and then to Iraq.

But why is there a *second major war on Iraqi soil* in a decade and a half? The present U.S.-Iraqi War is leading up to something. Is it the return, the RISE, of *Babylon the Great and its ultimate and final FALL?*

Historically, the U.S. has answered the calls of free-

"...freedom is gained and maintained at a price."

dom "From the halls of Montezuma to the shores of Tripoli [Lebanon]..." as a refrain from an old U.S. Marine fight song reminds us. We can now add "...to the streets of Baghdad, Basar and Kirkuk..." This has meant bloody, expensive world wars and armed conflicts.

In these and other far-off places an American presence has left footprints and American blood in the soil of nations around the world. Where freedom is and has been endangered, and the oppressed have cried out against tyranny, American troops, U.S. aid and reconstruction have often been there. Some of those freed have turned to say "Thanks." Some have not.

To be sure, many continue to argue that it is only a matter of ideology: American imperialism imposing its will on others. But ask those who American GIs have snatched from the jaws of death, starvation and prison camps and see if it is just "ideology." The *rescued* are more likely to see it as a matter of *freedom, life* and securing the *right of self-determination*. To the oppressed, it is not about democracy, national pride or political agendas. First and

foremost, for *them*, it is about freedom.

Since the days when our founding fathers were sculpting a new American republic, and through the lessons of ancient history, we and the peoples of the world have known through bitter experience that freedom is gained and maintained at a price. It is not just a hollow platitude. Two world wars and hundreds of smaller "conflicts" are not imaginary. The tens of thousands of white crosses marking graves at Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, D.C. and at dozens of veterans' memorial cemeteries are not imaginary either.

The Iraq War: What the Numbers Say A. Coalition Contributors

Something else is very real: the price the U.S. is paying in the Afghanistan and Iraq wars. Spurred by the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist hijackings and resulting deaths, the U.S. is now embroiled in *two* wars with elusive enemies. Now, amid hit-and-run attacks and car bombs, U.S. troops find themselves in the hot deserts of Iraq and mountainous Afghanistan terrain...with no clear end in sight. While it is true NATO has now assumed the major role in Afghanistan, it will be sometime indeed before U.S. troops shake the Afghan dust from their boots on their way home.

We will take a brief look at the mounting costs to the U.S. in the now more visible U.S.-Iraqi war. We will also consider just *why* the *land of the Chaldeans* (modern Iraq) whose capital was the ancient city of *Babylon*, is now such a high profile conflict for the second time in a decade and a half.

When Iraq's first elections were held Jan. 30, 2005, U.S. troop strength was 138,000 versus 23,900 non-US troops. Four months later, by May 15, 2005, U.S. losses



Lance Cpl. Sheila M. Brooks, Dec. 16, 2005. Iraqis in the predominantly Sunni city of Husaybah, wait in lines to vote, during the national election, Dec. 15. Just a few weeks earlier, Soldiers and Marines battled insurgents in this city, located along the Syrian border.

were 1,356 compared to 161 for the other coalition-members. Though U.S. troop strength is about six times as great as coalition allies, American

“...the Korean War cost \$418 billion...and the...Vietnam War cost...\$597 billion.”

losses average about *nine times* the total of all the other 29 coalition forces combined. Obviously, larger numbers of U.S. troops are more often in harm’s way.

In financial support, when the U.S. pledged and delivered \$594.6 million, the United Arab Emirates, for example, offered and delivered a paltry \$10,000. At the same time, Saudi Arabia, a lavish financial contributor to the 1991 Gulf War effort, pledged \$80 million (about the price of sev-

eral of their nickel-plated autos in one auto collection) and delivered \$0 to the Iraq war effort!

Next to the US, the United Kingdom offered \$329 million and delivered \$178.5 million with the second largest number of coalition troops of about 8,500. Behind the United Kingdom, Italy maintained the third largest troop contingent of 3,196, offering financial aid of \$18 million and delivering \$16.2 million. The third largest financial contributor at that time was Japan who had offered \$141 million and delivered \$102 million.¹ Conspicuously missing from the list of coalition partners is Israel, who has had U.S. support dating from its formation as a separate country in 1948.

B. Contrasted with Other U.S. Wars

The 1991 Gulf War was a financial bargain for the U.S. According to the *Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments*, a nonpartisan Washington think tank, the 1991 Operation Desert Storm war against Saddam

Hussein cost about \$84 billion, adjusted for inflation. The U.S. was part of a coalition of wealthy countries like Britain, France, Germany, Japan and Saudi Arabia. These partners and the other allies paid about *90 percent* of the costs.

“This time we’ll probably pay 80 to 90 percent of the cost of the war ourselves, not only in human terms and casualties, but in financial terms as well.”²

“...Operation costs in Iraq are estimated to be between \$4 billion and \$5 billion per month while the average cost of U.S. operations in Vietnam...was \$5.1 billion per month adjusting for inflation...”³

Estimates of the final cost of the war if it is an ‘open-ended conflagration’ leading to a Vietnam war-sized bill range up to 12 percent of present GDP [gross domestic product] or around \$1.2 trillion!⁴

By contrast, adjusting for inflation the Korean War cost \$418 billion and

the eight-year Vietnam War cost approximately \$597 billion.⁵

C. The WMD Question

The WMD (Weapons of Mass Destruction) question, *one* often-cited reason given for going to war with Iraq, is an ongoing debate. According to the Center for Nonproliferation Studies (CNS), as of April 2002, *twenty-one* different countries were “known, probable or possible” possessors of WMD.

According to *ProCon.org*:

“Between January 1985 and August 1990, the U.S. Department of Commerce approved 771 licenses for exporting \$1.5 billion worth of dual-use items to Iraq. Dual-use items are those with both civilian and military uses. Those exports ranged from biological agents like anthrax and West Nile fever germs to personal computers and civilian helicopters.”

Noam Chomsky reported:

“When Saddam was reported to have gassed thousands of Kurds at Halabja, the White House intervened to block any serious congressional reaction...”

He further noted:

“Western corporations took an active role in building up Iraq’s military strength, notably its weapons of mass destruction... [and] Reagan and Bush [Sr.] regularly intervened... strenuously opposing any actions that might interfere with profits for U.S. corporations or with Iraq’s military build-up.”⁶

Former United Nations weapons inspector, Scott Ritter, said, “I bear personal witness through seven years as a chief weapons inspector in Iraq for the United Nations to both the scope of Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction

programs and the effectiveness of the U.N. weapons inspectors in ultimately eliminating them.”⁷

The U.S. voiced only occasional public concerns over possible Iraqi BWD (Biological Weapons Development) prior to Saddam amassing armies along the Kuwait border in mid 1990. However, U.S. troops were equipped with masks and clothing to protect against biological warfare agents. It was a known fact that Iraq’s BWD program was restarted in 1985 when fermenters and bacterial strains were purchased from the American Culture Collection.⁸

It is interesting to note that on July 25, 1990, April Glaspie, former U.S.

Arab-Arab conflicts like your border disagreement with Kuwait.”⁹

Brief Iraq History

Iraq was formerly known as Mesopotamia. Technically Mesopotamia was the region between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers which empties into the Persian Gulf. Present day Iraq includes much of that region. Mesopotamia (meaning “between two rivers”) is mentioned by name seven times in the Bible. Isaac’s wife, Rebekah, came from there (Gen. 24:10) and Abraham was from Ur in Mesopotamia (Gen. 24:4, 10; Acts 7:2).

It may be surprising to see even more cases where Mesopotamia (Iraq) was a part of Biblical history. For example, Iraq was the location of the garden of Eden where Adam and Eve were created (Gen. 2:10-14), where Noah built the ark,¹⁰ the tower of Babel, Nineveh where Jonah preached and the location from which the Wise-Men (“Magi”) are purported to have journeyed to visit the young Messiah.¹¹

There are 291 Biblical references to Babylon, a city in southern Mesopotamia. Many of these refer-

ences are prophecies regarding Babylon’s (Iraq) role in coming events of major importance. *Babylon is second only to the city of Jerusalem* in the number of times it is referred to in Scripture. It was the capital of Babylonia (empire in the lower Euphrates and Tigris valleys; peak period 2800-1750 B.C.) and later of the Chaldean empire. The ancient region referred to as Chaldea was primarily in the lower Tigris and Euphrates valley. Chaldean (referenced 68 times in Scripture) was the indigenous Semitic language of Chaldea, with Aramaic as auxiliary language.

ambassador to Iraq, met with Saddam Hussein. In this meeting Saddam reportedly asked the U.S. position on an Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Six days later Iraqi armies attacked Kuwait. Glaspie’s much-quoted comment was perhaps what gave Saddam the biggest ‘green light’ of all:

“I admire your extraordinary efforts to rebuild your country. I know you need funds. We understand that, and our opinion is that you should have the opportunity to rebuild your country. But we have no opinion on



The national boundaries of modern Iraq were drawn in the 1920's enclosing a land area about the size of California. It was created when the French and British divided up the formerly Ottoman-controlled lands in the Middle East.

In 1543 Ottoman Turk ruler Suleiman the Magnificent conquered Baghdad. Nearly four centuries later in 1917, the Ottomans relinquished control of Baghdad to the British. After the defeat of the Ottoman in World War I, British forces took control of the oil-rich Ottoman province of Mosul (1918). This brought a large Kurdish-populated area under British rule, and on April 25, 1920, Iraq was placed under British Mandate. On Aug. 23, 1921, the British installed Emir Faisal as king of Iraq.

By 1932 Iraq had declared its independence and was admitted to the League of Nations. However, through the decades of the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s foreign invasions, overthrows of Iraqi monarchies and the development of Iraq's rich oil fields (Kirkuk, Mosul, etc.). These contributed to a general condition of prosperous instability.

The decade of the 1970s saw a 15-year Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between Iraq and the Soviet Union, the nationalization of Basrah Petroleum (1975). The Ayatollah Khomeini was expelled from Iraq in 1978

In 1979 Vice President Saddam Hussein, succeeded President Al-Bakr who resigned that year. The 1970s also saw a variety of Kurdish, Baathists and Iranian agreements with the Iraqi government deteriorate and collapse.

The eight-year war between Iraq and Iran (1980-1989) was the bloodiest war in the history of the modern Middle East and was accompanied by sharp declines in oil production.

What Is Ahead for Iraq?: The Force Behind the Scenes!

The answer to this question depends to a large extent on the answer to another question, "What is ahead for *Babylon*?" The Scriptures have a great deal to say about the future of Babylon. Specifically, the Bible points to the 4300-year old *CITY OF BABYLON* as a major player in future events.

One stunning, but little-known reason for Babylon's strategic role in present events and those just ahead, is the fact that Iraq *is the location of A throne of Satan himself. HE IS THE KING OF BABYLON!* As surprising, perhaps even surreal as it may seem, this is the clear fact of Scripture; as will be shown beyond doubt. This is the "force behind the scenes," an unseen hand operating at critical locations *down through the ages*. This ages-old archenemy of Yahweh is still very active and very dangerous!

Even more shocking perhaps, is that the Bible clearly

shows Satan has THREE thrones on Earth and even pinpoints their geographical locations! People are often surprised to learn that Satan has a throne at all. But *three*? On Earth?

He is clearly shown to be the *king* of TWO cities, and another city is named where Satan has a *throne*: modern *Bergama* in western Turkey (Pergamos: Rev. 2:12-13).

"...HOW DO WE KNOW... SATAN...IS THE KING OF BABYLON?"

Another throne is located at *Tyre* just off the western coast of Lebanon (See article this issue: "Wars and Rumors of Wars"). A third is located at *Babylon* in southern Iraq about 50 miles south of Baghdad.

The existence of these thrones or strategic "centers of sinister spiritual power" is one of the salient overlooked facts behind many Biblical prophecies. Remember, Paul wrote:

"For our fight is not against any physical enemy: it is against *organizations and powers that are spiritual*. We are up against the *unseen power* that controls this dark world, and spiritual agents from the *very headquarters of evil*" (Eph. 6:12; *Phillips translation*).

From *where* does this unseen power operate? And *who* are we to assume *is* this spiritual power? The answer to these questions is now clear. Now we know *where* and *who*!

The existence of Satan's thrones is one of the mysterious reasons *why* there *are* so many Biblical prophecies about Tyre, Lebanon and Babylon, Iraq! And we must not forget Bergama, Turkey. Do not be surprised if Bergama too, comes into view on the radar screen of world events in the not-too-distant future!

The tales of these *three ancient cities* are being told again and will resound in new roles as their destinies are played out in the days and years ahead. They have been important historically, and prophecy shows they will be in the future as well! In fact, in only the last two months *one* throne (Tyre) has been prominent in world news! The existence and location of Satan's thrones, or seats of power and influence ("headquarters of evil"), are not fantasies, nor figments of the imagination. They are dynamic driving forces affecting the news reports we watch and creating the bold headlines we read. Paul knew...and now so do we!

Now, how do we know that Satan has a throne at Babylon, i.e. is the *King of Babylon*?

Turn to Isaiah Chapter 14:

“...take up this proverb against the **KING OF BABYLON** (v. 4)...Your pomp is brought down to the grave (v. 11)...How are you *fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning* (v. 12)...”

WHO fell from heaven? Let Yahshua answer, “...I beheld **SATAN as lightning fall from heaven**” (Luke 10:18).

Notice what Lucifer—the King of Babylon—says,

“...I will ascend above the clouds, *I will exalt my THRONES above the stars of Elohim*: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north....I will be like the most High” (Isa. 14:12-14).

If Lucifer has thrones, then *he must be a king*. He is. He is the King of Babylon!

Babylon to Rise AGAIN: An exalted throne of Satan to emerge

Briefly, in the not too distant future, the ancient city of Babylon will once again take center stage on the world scene. Why, is now more evident. It is the location of *one* of Satan’s thrones.

One clear prophecy regarding Babylon’s rise says, “...the woman which you saw is that GREAT CITY, which *REIGNS OVER THE KINGS OF THE EARTH* (Rev. 17:18). How can a city *reign* unless a *king* resides there on a *throne*? And what king is and *will* this be?”

Now, what is the name of this city? John tells us, “...upon her [the woman, vv. 3-4] forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, **BABYLON THE GREAT...**” (v. 5). The Babylon of prophecy is a **CITY** and is often referred to as a woman, “her” (see Jer. 51:1-4, 6-7, 9, etc.). The *king* that reigns there from his throne is *Satan, the invisible man!*

Notice this city, Babylon, will be of such great importance and influence that it is called a *great* city that actually *rules* (reigns) over the *nations of Earth*. That is awesome geopolitical and governmental power!

Recall that Satan, while tempting Yahshua, showed him

“...*all the kingdoms of the world*...and said to him, “ALL these will I give you if you will fall down and worship me...” (Matt. 4:8-9). How could he give what was not his to give? He obviously was the King of those kingdoms then and apparently will be until Yahshua deposes of him after his second coming (Rev. 17:14)!

AND, Satan will or has apparently chosen Babylon as his pinnacle throne “of thrones” from which to rule over the kingdoms of Earth for at least *part* of the period described in the Revelation prophecy. Remember, the book of Revelation is a *prophecy*. So the rulership of the king of Babylon over the kingdoms of Earth from his throne in the city of Babylon is *yet to happen!*

Babylon, the *queen city* (Rev. 18:7; where there is a *queen* there is a *king*), is prophesied to be of such opulence that “...the kings of the Earth...shall bewail her [great political power]...and the merchants of the Earth shall weep and mourn over her [“...*made rich* by her...;” v. 15]...” (Rev. 18:19). Notice, too, the immense *global* scope of Babylon’s maritime commerce: “And...alas, that great city, wherein were *made rich ALL* that had ships in the sea...” (Rev. 18:19).

Two Things to Watch

What events ahead will propel Babylon to such prominence and worldwide influence as a (or perhaps “THE”) economic, governmental and *religious* world center in the end times?

The economic part of the answer almost certainly has to do with *oil*. The Middle East’s economic leverage of oil could be used by the beast of Revelations—once he ascends one of SATAN’S THRONES (Rev. 13:2)—to declare Babylon as the *capital of an as yet unnamed empire*. Since Babylon *reigns over the kings of Earth* (Rev. 17:18), it will be the *capital of a world-ruling empire!* Iraq is

destined to remain an “item” of the major news networks for years to come!

What about a religious world center? Babylon has historically been a center of religion involving *idol worship* (Isa. 21:9). It is prophesied to become the home of *devils* (Rev. 18:2). Too, recall the beast, who has a devil (Rev. 16:13-14), is *worshipped* (Rev. 13:4, 8, 12) by *the entire world*. **THIS IS A ONE-WORLD RELIGION!** Martyrdom is the fate of those who refuse this religious system (Rev. 13:15).

Now, IF the beast reigns (he is a king: Rev. 17:10-11) from Satan’s throne in Babylon during the city’s coming

“...this religious system would...be centered NOT in Rome...but in Babylon, Iraq!”

brief-but-glorious heyday, then *Babylon must be the center of this religious system*. Glorious but brief, Babylon's rise will apparently last somewhat less than the 42 months the beast dominates (Rev. 13:5). During those coming "glory days," this religious system would, therefore, be centered NOT in Rome, nor Jerusalem, nor in some European Union nation, but at *Babylon, Iraq!*

Ahead we see a world-ruling empire headquartered at Babylon and a world-religion possibly headquartered there as well.

We should not be surprised if *already existing* political and religious capitals are **moved to Babylon**. If swift timing of these events is paramount, moving an established bureaucratic headquarters in tact could well expedite the transfer of the seat of power.

The Fall of Babylon & the King of Babylon

The rapid climb Babylon makes to prominence will be short-lived. She and her king will meet the same miserable fiery fate (Rev. 18:18; 19:20; 20:10).

In one prophecy Yahweh says, "...Behold I will punish the *king of Babylon* [actually SATAN] and his land [*Iraq*]..." (Jer. 50:18). He says further, "...I will raise and cause to come up against Babylon an *assembly of great nations* ...Chaldea [*Iraq*] shall be a spoil" (v. 10).

Honestly, is there not an assembly of great nations [a coalition of nations] NOW operating against Chaldea-modern Iraq?

But Yahweh decrees an ultimate and decisive demise of Babylon:

"Because of the wrath of Yahweh it [Babylon] shall not be inhabited but it shall be wholly desolate" (Jer. 50:13); "...and

it [Babylon] shall no more be inhabited forever; neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation...so shall no man abide there, neither shall any son of man dwell therein" (Jer. 50:39-40).

Also,

"And the land shall tremble and sorrow: for every purpose of Yahweh shall be performed against Babylon, to make the *land of Babylon* [Iraq] a desolation without an inhabitant" (Jer. 51:29).

Notice too, the prophet Isaiah's record, "And Babylon, the glory of the kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' (Iraqi's) excellency, shall be as when Elohim overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. [Notice now] *It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation*" (Isa. 13:19-20); "...so shall no man abide there [Babylon]..." (Jer. 50:40).

The final fulfillment of these prophecies has not happened YET! It is still ahead despite the fact that many claim these prophecies of Babylon's final fall have *already* been fulfilled. But have they?

The clear fact remains that *Babylon* is in part inhabited *to this very day!* Hillah is presently a city within the ruins of ancient Babylon. This very fact show these prophecies of the utter wasting of Babylon, are definitely on their way, but are *not* facts of history-*yet*. Though Chaldea and Babylon have been conquered more than once, (Sennacherib: 689 B.C.; Cyrus: 539 B.C.; Xerxes: 482 B.C.; Artaxerxes: 450 B.C.), Babylon has never been completely destroyed nor utterly void of inhabitants.

Babylon and her king will be destroyed completely as these prophecies say, but not until their final meteoric rise to world prominence in the not too distant future!

And what is the U.S. role in all this?

American and coalition troops are

in Iraq, first to carry out the cause of Yahweh's vengeance on Chaldea by bringing an "...*assembly of great nations*..." so that "...Chaldea [*Iraq*] shall be a spoil..." (Jer. 50:10). This prophecy of old has had numerous fulfillments as mentioned earlier. This time mainly U.S. troops are *actually fulfilling this prophecy before our very eyes on ABC News, CNN, etc!*

BUT NOTE THIS. This prophecy WILL BE FULFILLED AGAIN!! This is the understanding generally lacking about Biblical prophecy: *It is fulfilled over and over again!* Prophecy is not just *dual* as so many claim. Prophecy has a multiplicity of fulfillments, successions of recurrences. Why? Because prophecy follows the cycle of the Biblical yearly Holy Days and Yahweh's little-known cycles of 7 years, 50 years, 280 years and 490 years, etc.

Secondly, American and other coalition troops are in Iraq to set the stage for the staggering events ahead. Coalition troops are providing the momentum to propel events onward to their final fulfillment in the last 70 years of the cycle of punishment laid on the Gentile nations!

They are setting the stage for the final fulfillment of the rise and fall of Babylon! —ICY

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