

B

Babylon

Babylon first came to prominence under Hammurabi (c. 1792-50 B.C.), who gained control of all southern Mesopotamia. It came under the shadow of **Assyria** from the ninth century until Nineveh fell in 612 B.C. As **Assyria** weakened, Pharaoh Necho sought to establish Egyptian influence in **Syria** to the north of **Israel**. He defeated Josiah at Megiddo in 609 B.C. (2 Kgs. 23:29), but was eventually defeated by Nebuchadnezzar at the Battle of Carchemish in 605 B.C. (Jer. 46:2), thus paving the way for Babylon to gain pre-eminence in the region.

Babylon developed into a powerful and evil empire. It was an idolatrous nation worshipping idols such as Merodach and Bel (50:2). It rejoiced at the destruction in the land of **Judah** (v. 11), and it was known as “the hammer of the whole earth” (v. 23). The empire came to an end when the Persian Cyrus took the city in 539 B.C. (Isa.

45:1). The destruction of Babylon had been prophesied in great detail in the prophets.

In Revelation the city of Babylon is used as an apt way to refer to **Rome**. Babylon’s idolatry, persecution of God’s people and its power all find an echo in **Rome** and the great religious system which sprang from it. In Revelation we read of the harlot: “upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH” (17:5). This woman, John was told, “is that great city, which reigneth over the **kings of the earth**” (v. 18). This city, which was based on seven hills (v. 9), was undoubtedly **Rome**. Alexander Hislop, in his book *The Two Babylons*, shows that many aspects of the Roman Church can be traced to Babylon. Hislop identifies Babylonian origins in such things as the worship of the Mother and Child, Christmas, Easter, the Mass and the rosary of the Sacred Heart.



Lions depicted on a restored section of the Processional Way from Babylon, as displayed in the Pergamon Museum (Jer. 50:17; Dan. 7:4). Daniel may well have walked past these! Source: N.B.

In Revelation the Old Testament prophecies which spoke of the destruction of Babylon are applied to the ultimate end of **Rome**. For example, Isaiah wrote: “Babylon is fallen, is fallen” (21:9). These words are twice echoed in Revelation: “And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication” (14:8); “And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird” (18:2). In Revelation 18:21 John writes: “And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the **sea**, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all”. This takes up some words from Jeremiah 51: “And it shall be, when thou hast made an end of reading this book, that thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of **Euphrates**: and thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her” (vv. 63,64).

Isaiah 14 speaks of the fall of ancient Babylon, but it clearly has an application to the latter-day fall of spiritual Babylon as well. In verse 2 Isaiah writes: “And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place: and the house of **Israel** shall possess them in the land of the LORD for servants and handmaids: and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors”. Whilst the **Jews** eventually returned from their captivity, they never had “rule over their oppressors”. When **Gog** invades, **Rome** will seek to establish its authority in **Jerusalem**: “For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into **heaven**, I will exalt my throne above the **stars** of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north” (v. 13). However, **Rome** will fall and be “cut down to the ground” (v. 12). [\(Ref. 16\)](#)

Beast

There are four beasts mentioned in Daniel 7: a lion with wings which are then plucked, representing **Assyria** and **Babylon**, a bear (Medo-Per-sia), a leopard (**Greece**), and finally the fourth beast: “After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it

devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten **horns**” (v. 7). This beast represents the Roman Empire and the Catholic religious power that would later develop from **Rome**.

In Revelation different phases of the fourth beast are symbolised by different beasts. The beast of the **sea** (13:1) signifies the ‘Christianised’ Roman Empire that developed in the fourth century, after Constantine became emperor. The beast of the earth represents the Holy Roman Empire (v. 11), a political/religious state whose origins can be traced to the Frankish King Charlemagne in the ninth century, and which lasted through until the nineteenth century, when it was brought to an end by Napoleon.

In Revelation 11:7 a beast is said to ascend “out of the bottomless pit [or abyss]”. Whilst in this context it relates to the latter phases of the Holy Roman Empire, by Revelation 17 this **beast of the abyss** refers to the Western European power which emerges at the time of the end to oppose Christ when he becomes King (v. 8). This is the same beast as is mentioned in Revelation 16:13.

There are beasts mentioned in Revelation 4, 5 and 6, but the Greek word here is different, and these beasts are ‘living creatures’, which symbolise the **saints**.

Beast of the abyss

The beast of the abyss is found first in Revelation 11:7 and then, in relation to the time of the end, in Revelation 17. A woman sat on this beast, and this is said to be a city which is based on “seven **mountains**” (v. 9), a city which reigned over the **kings of the earth** at the time the Revelation was given to John (v. 18). The city is **Rome** and the beast represents **Europe** dominated by the influence of that city. It can be called the beast of the abyss because of what is recorded in verse 8: “The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is”. The phrase “bottomless pit” translates the one Greek word *abussos*, and has the sense of ‘without depth’—not that it was not deep, but it was so deep that no depth could be measured. It represents the

uncharted territory beyond the northern boundaries of the then Roman Empire, an unfathomed political abyss. Today this area corresponds to northern **Europe**.

The beast “was” in that the Roman power had been in existence before the time of John. Since its origin **Rome** had been through various phases, typified in verse 10 as the five kings which were “fallen”. The beast “is not”, says the angel to John, because at the time the Revelation was given the particular phase of the Roman power represented by the beast of the abyss was still in the future. This corresponds to the king who “is not yet come” (v. 10). The beast “yet is”, says John, because, although the particular phase represented by the beast had not yet come, the Roman power in general represented by all the various **beasts** in Revelation was in existence in the first century. This corresponds to the king which “is” (v. 10).

In verse 3 it is said of the beast that it had “seven **heads** and ten **horns**”. This is similar to the **beast** of the **sea** in Revelation 13. In Revelation 13 the **beast** of the **sea** represents the Roman Empire in the West after it had become ‘Christianised’ in the fourth century. The sea around which this empire was centred was the **Mediterranean**. The invasion of the Goths led to the end of imperial rule in **Rome**. The end of imperial rule is symbolised by one of the heads being wounded: “And I saw one of his **heads** as it were wounded to death” (v. 3). The imperial head was replaced by the seventh Gothic head.

However, the imperial head would be revived: “and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast”. The imperial form of government revived, but this time it was a religious empire, the so-called Holy Roman Empire. In this empire Vienna as well as **Rome** played an important role. The power base had shifted inland. This more inland-centred empire is typified in Revelation 13 as the **beast** of the earth (v. 11). The **beast** of the earth was essentially a new version of the empire symbolised by the sixth head. The Holy Roman Empire invoked and emulated the old imperial Roman Empire: “And I beheld another **beast** coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a **dragon**. And he exerciseth all the power of the first **beast** before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first **beast**, whose deadly wound was healed” (vv. 11,12).

In Revelation 17 it is written: “And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition” (v. 11). The beast of the abyss was thus also like the **beast** of the earth. Just as the **beast** of the earth was another version of the sixth head, so the beast of the abyss was also “of the seven”. The beast of the abyss is a latter-day version of the **beast** of the sixth imperial head.

The “bottomless pit” or “abyss” today is no longer unfathomed or uncharted, but is dominated by countries such as **Germany**. Like Vienna of old, northern cities such as Berlin will no doubt play a major role in the development of this beast. The European countries are represented by the **horns** of the beast: “And the ten **horns** which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast” (v. 12). These countries will have “one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast” (v. 13). This unity and willingness to give up their authority to the beast shows that we can expect a federal **Europe** to develop in the latter days where countries are willing to sacrifice their autonomy for the European cause. One of the functions of this beast in the last days will be to send out socialist **frog**-like teachings that will help bring nations together to **Armageddon** (Rev. 16:13,14).

The beast of the abyss will not last long. It will go “into perdition” (17:11) when Christ returns and overcomes it (v. 14). ([Refs. 10, 26](#))

Bones, valley of

In Ezekiel 37 we read: “The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, and caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry” (vv. 1,2). These bones are caused to become bodies following an **earthquake**, and then “the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army” (v. 10).

God provides the interpretation of this vision: “Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of **Israel**: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O My people, I will open your graves,

and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of **Israel**" (vv. 11, 12).

In Ezekiel 19 we also read of their hope being lost: "Now when she saw that she had waited, and her hope was lost, then she took another of her whelps, and made him a young lion" (v. 5). The "young lion" here refers to Jehoiachin. He was made king following the reign of Jehoiakim. Jehoiakim had been appointed by the Egyptians after Pharaoh Necho had taken Jehoahaz into captivity. While this Egyptian-appointed king was in place, the children of **Israel** "waited" until all "hope was lost" for Jehoahaz to return.

In Ezekiel 37 it is not just the ruler of the people but the people as a whole who are out of the Land. When **Gog** invades they will truly say, "our hope is lost". **Gog** will establish his own rule, for "he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy **mountain**" (Dan. 11:45). At the same time he will go down into **Egypt** and will take **Jews** there, for, when Christ intervenes there, then shall "five cities in the land of **Egypt** speak the language of Canaan" (Isa. 19:18). These things parallel the events of Ezekiel 19, where a new ruler is appointed by the invader and where the original ruler is taken to **Egypt**.

The **Jews** have returned to the land during the past century, but it is only when Christ and the **saints** begin to set up the Kingdom that the prophecy of the valley of dry bones will truly be fulfilled. ([Ref. 3](#))

C

China

There is little in Scripture that can be related directly to China. However, some suggest that China is the "land of **Sinim**" mentioned in Isaiah 49: "Behold, these shall come from far: and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of **Sinim**" (v. 12). This speaks of the gathering of the **Jews** back to the Land at the return of Christ. In Ezekiel 16 God speaks of **Israel** having silk, which most likely would have originated in China (vv. 10,13). Irrespective of whether or not China is the location of the land of **Sinim**, it is the case that China does have a small number of **Jews** living there.

Bozrah

Bozrah was a city in **Edom**. The modern Buseira (or Busayra) in **Jordan**, thirty miles southeast of the Dead Sea, is thought to be its location. In Isaiah 63:1 it is written: "Who is this that cometh from **Edom**, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save". This speaks of Christ and the **saints** marching towards the land of **Israel** after the resurrection and judgement has taken place. In Isaiah 34 God shows how one of the battles related to **Armageddon** will take place at Bozrah: "For the indignation of the LORD is upon all nations, and His fury upon all their armies: He hath utterly destroyed them, He hath delivered them to the slaughter . . . The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea" (vv. 2,6). In conjunction with this, Ezekiel shows that the armies of **Gog** will be buried in the area east of the Dead Sea: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will give unto **Gog** a place there of graves in **Israel**, the valley of the passengers on the east of the sea" (39:11). ([Refs. 8, 17](#))

Britain

See **United Kingdom**.

A substantial community of **Jews** developed in the city of Kaifeng, about 300 miles from Beijing, between the ninth and seventeenth centuries. It is thought that those who originally settled there were primarily involved in the manufacture of cotton fabrics. They even built a synagogue. Its destruction in an **earthquake** in the 1840s effectively marked the end of a clearly identifiable Jewish community in the city. However, today there are around 100 families in the town who claim to be descendants from this community. In the meantime the nineteenth century saw new waves of **Jews** arriving in China in significant numbers in the wake of British colonial trade in the area. In the first half of the