

“And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 Jno. 1:4-7).

If God is light and we have fellowship with God, we must be in the light. Being in the light, the fellowship we have with God is a fellowship we share with all other believers. It is a travesty both of logic and of Scripture to argue from 1 John 1 that fellowship “with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ” absolves us from responsibility towards other believers. In fact it should strengthen our mutual love and care for each other.

[\(To be continued\)](#)

Prophecy

Today’s global economic crisis—the final migration of Tyre (1)

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Tyre was a significant power contemporary with the nation of Israel in Old Testament times. Its influence came as a maritime trading power, rather than a military power. In this way it interacted with and influenced much of the world of its day. This article reviews some of the features of Tyre at its peak. Two further articles will develop this theme and propose a possible typical fulfilment in our contemporary world.

SUB-PRIME, collateralised debt obligations, housing bubbles, stimulus plans, government (or, rather, taxpayer) bailouts, too big to fail—these are familiar phrases to all of us as we find ourselves in the middle of the greatest economic upheaval since the Great Depression of the 1930s. What started out as a great way to make money by selling high risk loans to poor people has dragged the world financial system into a vortex of financial trouble and put governments and taxpayers on the hook for trillions of dollars.

The Biblical principles by now should be obvious to all of us. Any nation which fails to look after its widows, fatherless and poor ultimately will find itself judged by God. But should we have seen this coming? Plenty did; and some commentators, noting the low interest rates and expansion of the

money supply, predicted a bubble as early as 2004. But, for the most part, the mainstream media kept on with the farce up to and beyond the burst of the sub-prime bubble in mid-2007. What should we have seen as Bible students?

“Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets,” says the prophet Amos (3:7). Does this include

global economic crises? Should we have seen this coming before it did? Does the Bible say anything about something like this? And if so, where?

From a big-picture perspective, we are living in the kingdom of men. Babylon is a type of the religious/cultural centre of the kingdom of men because Babylon appears at its beginning, in the middle and at the time of the end. Assyria accounts for the more militant aspects of the kingdom of men. But what of the economic centre of the kingdom of men? Where in the Bible do we look to be guided on aspects of world trade, global finance and multinational monopolies?

Babylon and Assyria

In Daniel 7 the Assyrian aspect of the first beast is represented as a lion with wings, whereas the

Babylonian aspect is represented as the wings plucked, the beast standing and a man's heart being given to it. Early on, Nebuchadnezzar was the general of the army and responsible for many victories, but he did not write of himself as a man of war; in fact, most of his writings are about his religion and his restoration of temples, in particular the temple complex in Shinar Etemenanki (more than likely the restored Tower of Babel) where he stored the vessels of the house of God. In Daniel 1:4 the word 'palace' is better translated as 'temple.' Nebuchadnezzar was the representative of the god Marduk, and as such he reigned as a king-priest. The fact that God chose to work on Nebuchadnezzar for so long is further proof of his religious bent.

The religious influence of Babylon extended well beyond the territory ruled by Babylon. Achan stole a garment he recognised as Babylonian, which is an indication of Babylon's cultural and religious reach. In Jeremiah 51:7 the nations are described as drunk with her wine, which is congruent with the comments in Revelation 17, where Babylon is described as a mystery religion.

The Assyrians, on the other hand, were renowned for their brutality and aggression.¹ Their kings were mostly military men, whose palaces were decorated with carvings of their victories, complete with decapitated and tortured victims. Isaiah describes the Assyrians as destroying utterly all nations (37:11,18) and as the rod of God's anger (10:7), while in Nahum Nineveh is described as the city of blood and robberies (3:1).

Isaiah 19:23-25 says that Assyria will be present in the Kingdom, which means that it must exist in some form today. Like Babylon, its existence is not geographical, but rather a characteristic manifestation; hence Brother Thomas identified Russia and her allies as the latter-day Assyrians. There is an ethnic group in Iraq which claims to be Assyrian, but this is not the subject of Isaiah's comment.

The mother of the market-based economy

There was one place in Bible times that established itself as an economic superpower: a shining beacon of progress, capitalism and free-market enterprise; a vast multinational conglomerate, which at its peak monopolised world trade from England to India. Like the United States after World War II, this economic superpower was famous for its manufacturing, its technology, its architecture, its engineering feats and its entertainment.



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Tyre monopolised the trade in purple dye, which was produced from murex snails.

Many historians and commentators, including Brother Thomas, have noted that the inherited characteristics of today's economic empires can be traced back to the mother of all economic super-states, the Biblical city of Tyre.

A brief history of Tyre

If we look at the history of Tyre as presented to us in Isaiah 23, Ezekiel 26, 27 and 28, and also what the historians tell us, then it becomes apparent. Our market-based economies, our globalised world, our multinationals, are very much based on the Tyrian system. Tyre stretched from Britain to India, possibly even to China.

Tyre was a multinational, multi-ethnic, ecumenical trading empire. It controlled the Bronze Age through its monopoly over tin. It also controlled the largest gold and silver mines, including the prized gold of Ophir. It invented and monopolised purple dye, creating a brand so powerful that one ounce of dye was priced at over ten times the value of gold.

Unlike the Assyrians (who trumpeted their racial purity) and the Babylonians (who pushed their culture and religion), Tyre was not concerned about race or religion. Like our market-based economies, Tyre was proudly multicultural, money being the glue that bound the diversity together. This is illustrated in Jonah, where every man in the ship had his own god, and they tried all possible options before throwing the cargo overboard.

Different nations have displayed common traits that can be identified by the observer. The facts

1. See G. Henstock, *Mercy and Judgement: an exposition of Jonah and Nahum*, pp. 14-18 (CSSS); W. H. Boulton, *Assyria*, pp. 7,32; Helen Hindmarsh and Cathy Harnack, *The Near East*, p. 39.

that Babylon changes location, as do Assyria and Tyre (being a sojourner—Isaiah 23), and that all are present in the latter days, tell us we need to focus on the characteristics and their differences and identify them as they are manifest in different nations and locations.

All nations have a military element, all nations trade, and all nations have religious beliefs. But nations generally characterise themselves by one or the other of these elements depending on their culture. The United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand are market-based economies; they do not characterise themselves as religious or militant nations.

Sometimes, however, a nation manages to have a powerful military, a trading dominance and a dominant culture and religion. This is when a superpower such as the Roman Empire emerges. Paganism, borrowed from the Greeks, was the dominant superstition; their military was strongest in the world; while the Punic Wars ensured control over all the Phoenician trading bases, and the denarius as the reserve currency ensured their continued monopoly over trade. Consequently, Rome lasted 500 years, and emulating its success has been the ambition of all empire-builders since. This is the goal of the EU, which I believe they will partly achieve. The growing ties between Russia and Germany, the increasing influence of the Church, the economic dominance of Germany, are all key factors. The US has had a strong military and dominant trade, but its American dream and Hollywood has not been a successful religious alternative in supplanting traditional religious beliefs.

Outsourcing, subcontracting, cheap foreign labour

The latest Boeing *Dreamliner* aircraft is assembled in the United States, with components built all around the world. Ezekiel 27 tells us the Tyrians were doing something similar 3,000 years earlier, with the components of their ships constructed in various locations from Egypt to Assyria. They were the first to use paper in recording their business and history, and they traded in paper. The word 'Bible' comes from 'Byblos,' a city which was part of Tyre Inc. Papyrus was imported from Egypt and made into scrolls, which were then exported from Byblos.

When it came to technology, innovation, architecture and engineering, Tyre was contracted to do complex jobs that no one else could do. They oversaw and probably participated in the

construction of a canal from the Nile to the Red Sea² and a canal in Athos, Greece.³ They circumnavigated Africa,⁴ and they played a key part in the construction of Solomon's temple (1 Kgs. 7:13,14; 9:10,11) and many other temples around the ancient world.

The Tyrians were the first to navigate by the stars, they invented the phonetic alphabet that we use today, and they put together the beginnings of what is now known as Maritime or Admiralty Law, the law which all multinationals and globalised corporations use today. Maritime Law is currently headquartered in London.

In the nineteenth century, John Ruskin, an expert on the history of Venice, noted the Tyrian characteristics which Venice had inherited and how that those same characteristics were then present in Britannia:

"Since first the dominion of man was asserted over the ocean, three thrones of mark beyond all others have been set up upon its sands—the thrones of Tyre, Venice, and England. Of the first of these great powers, only the memory remains. Of the second, only the ruins; the third, *which inherits their greatness*, if it forgets their example, may be led through prouder eminence to less pitied destruction."⁵

Encyclopaedia Britannica also notes the inherited characteristics of Tyre in Venice in an entry article on Venice, a name that is derived from Phoenice:

"There are many curious analogies between Venice in the early part of its career and the Phoenician city of Tyre in the 8th and 7th centuries B.C., in the position of the two cities, their mercantile habits, their custom of acting as carriers for other races, and their both being, in their habits of life and in their artistic productions, links between the East and the West!"⁶

So the characteristics of today's global trading systems are all inherited from Tyre. The Bible has much to add about this, which is why a study of Tyre and its migratory characteristics is a highly relevant pursuit if we want to know what the current economic problems will bring.

[\(To be continued\)](#)

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2. See Glenn Markoe, *Phoenicians*, p. 51.
 3. Herodotus, *The Histories*, 7.22-24, 7.117.
 4. Herodotus, *The Histories*, 4.42.
 5. John Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice*, p. 1.
 6. Quoted by C. C. Walker, *Ministry of the Prophets: Isaiah*, p. 394.