

Chapter 10 Rebuilding Babel's Tower

Introduction. The Biblical Antichrist will be Shia Islam's, al-Mahdi, the eighth head of the scarlet beast of Revelation 17. This demonic incarnation will revive the caliphate of Islam, making it the seventh of seven caliphate periods of Islamic rule. He will lead Islam to dominate the world; but how will the Antichrist accomplish such a feat? What will be his war strategy?"

Revelation 17 pictures a woman riding the scarlet beast. The woman, called "Babylon the Great," is described as a "harlot." She is pictured as extraordinarily wealthy, "sitting" on many nations, peoples and multitudes. Yet, in "one hour," the scarlet beast and his ten horns destroy her. Her vivid death is pictured in the 18th chapter as she is consumed with fire. The merchants of the world mourn her passing – *no one buys their cargoes anymore*. They, and the kings of the earth, "stand at a distance" watching the harlot's destruction.

Who is the harlot? What nation of the world will be so epitomized by wealth that both merchants and kings "mourn" her passing? And how is it possible for one nation to somehow "sit" on the peoples of the entire world?

This chapter will lay the groundwork for al-Mahdi's war strategy to conquer the world under the banner of Islam. But first, we must identify the harlot of Revelation 17. Her destruction will be the first step in his war strategy!

Saudi Arabia - A Short History. To understand how Saudi Arabia fits into Last Days' Bible prophecy, we must review the beginnings of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.¹

In the mid-18th century an Islamic cleric named Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab believed that Islam had moved from its historic roots and that its believers no longer followed the true Islam of Muhammad. Abd al-Wahhab began to preach and teach what he considered to be the teachings of Muhammad over 1000 years before; and, specifically, a teaching which sought to purify the Sunni sect of Islam from all "innovations" added to Muhammad's teaching from the 10th century forward. His teaching focused on these ideals: 1) the importance of monotheism, 2) the denunciation of all forms of mediation between God and believers; 3) the obligation to pay the *zakat* (Islamic tax paid to the leader of the Muslim community), and 4) the obligation to respond to his call for holy war against those who did not follow these principals.² His teaching was greeted with great resistance resulting in his being driven out of Medina. His path took him to the Najd, an area of the central Arabian desert wastelands. There he was received by Muhammad ibn Saud who had heard of al-Wahhab's teachings and reputation. According to Madawi Rasheed, in 1744, the two established an alliance, described as follows:

Muhammad ibn Sa'ud greeted Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab and said, "This oasis is yours, do not fear your enemies. By the name of God, if all Najd was summoned to throw you out, we will never

agree to expel you.” Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab replied, “You are the settlement’s chief and wise man. I want you to grant me an oath that you will perform jihad (holy war) against the unbelievers. In return you will be imam, leader of the Muslim community and I will be leader in religious matters.” (Abu Hakima 1967:30).³

Abd al-Wahhab represented the spiritual leader and spiritual interpreter in the alliance; and al-Saud represented the political and military ruler of the alliance. Together they began a reformation in Islam that is referred to today as the “Wahhabi Reformation.”

The Wahhabi Reformation proved to be one of the bloodiest of Islamic conquests. The Wahhabi conquest which began in the early 18th century, continued through the 20th century. The two men who founded the reform movement, Abd al-Wahhab and bin-Sa’ud, were succeeded in their reform efforts by their descendants. The Wahhabis captured the two holy cities of Arabia, Mecca and Medina. (The importance of Mecca, of course, is that Mecca is considered by Muslims as the holiest Islamic city. Muslims make an annual pilgrimage to Mecca and pay taxes and fees for its upkeep. The taxes and fees become the possession of the controlling country as the “custodian.” Saudi Arabia is still the “custodian” of the holy places today). Later, the Wahhabi doctrine spread to the Gulf region, Oman, Kuwait, and Qatar. With each advance, a blood bath occurred of the indigenous peoples.

On September 22, 1932, Abdul Aziz bin Sa’ud, completed his conquest of the Arabian Peninsula and named his conquered lands, the “Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.” The Saud family became the “royal family,” the most important family of Saudi Arabia; and the Wahhabi family became the second most important family.

Saudi Arabian Governance and Religion. Saudi Arabia is governed by the head of the House of Saud, the king. The king serves as its absolute ruler and monarch. All of Saudi Arabia’s kings have been descendants of Abdul Aziz bin Saud. Author Steven Schwarz describes the governance of the Kingdom as follows:

“The new state was based on three powers: the whims of Ibn Sa’ud, the Wahhabi interpretation of the Qur’an (which became the country’s constitution), and the sword – specifically, the ruler’s personal implement for executions, the saber known as “The Neck Cutter” or raqban.”⁴

Karen Armstrong adds,

“The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, . . . , was based on the Wahhabi ideal. The official view was that a constitution was unnecessary, since the government was based on a literal reading of the Qur’an. . . . The Saudis proclaimed that they were the heirs of the pristine Islam of the Arabian peninsula, and the ulama (Arabic for “Islamic community”) granted the state legitimacy; in return the kings enforced conservative religious values. Women are shrouded from view and secluded (even though this was not the case in the Prophet’s time), gambling and alcohol are forbidden and traditional punishments, such as the mutilation of thieves, are enshrined in the legal system.”⁵

There is no difference between governance and religion; the Qur'an is the state constitution. It is the Qur'an is the governing document for all legal decisions.

Stephen Schwarz describes the continuing alliance between the Saudi royal family and the Wahhabi family as follows:

In the Saudi kingdom, there is no separation of powers. Al Sa'ud, the royal family, is the state; the royal family is the owner of the energy resources; the royal family's partner for 250 years, . . . the descendants of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, are indistinguishable from the institutions of religion, justice and education. Both families are made up of Najdis, born in the central Arabian wastelands from which Al Sa'ud and Wahhabism emerged. Najdis are the sole holders of power in Saudi Arabia, occupying all administrative and decision making posts. Although no more than 40% of the Saudi population are Wahhabi, the cult holds a monopoly on religious life in the kingdom. The entire judiciary is Wahhabi, made up of graduates of the sect's religious schools."⁶

Of the 20 hijackers of 9/11, no less than fifteen were Saudi Wahhabis.

The Discovery of Oil and its Impact Upon Saudi Arabia. In 1932 when Abd al-Aziz Al Saud proclaimed the Arabian Peninsula to be the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Saudi Arabia was at most a remote "back water." Saudi Arabia as a nation was insignificant in matters of global commerce. In fact, the Peninsula was composed largely of rural people who followed centuries old ways as farmers and nomadic herdsman driving sheep, goats, and camels across great desert expanses. Economically, the Kingdom was poor and utterly lacking in industrial development.⁷ Its sole source of revenue came from fees the Saudis charged to Muslims on their pilgrimage to Mecca. "When Aziz finally became king, the global depression had reduced the flow of pilgrims to a trickle, and the royal family of the new Kingdom teetered on the brink of insolvency."⁸

America was in the throes of its great depression in the late 1920's and early 1930's when Saudi Arabia was brought under Aziz bin Saud's control. At that time, oil had not been discovered on the Peninsula. In the world market, particularly America, the depression had resulted in the erosion of oil demand to such an extent that the price of a barrel of oil had fallen to 10cents a barrel.⁹

Through the efforts of a British envoy, Sir Harry St John Philby, American multimillionaire, Charles Crane (Crane Plumbing), and officials of Standard Oil of California (SOCAL), King Aziz entered into an agreement granting SOCAL an "oil concession." This concession allowed SOCAL an exclusive right to explore and produce oil in the entire Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia. The agreement was signed on May 29, 1933 and would prove to be the only agreement Saudi Arabia would ever sign with an outside party.¹⁰ *This decision of 1933 by Aziz proved to forever change the nature of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. From this agreement, Saudi Arabia became the most important oil producer on the face of the earth.*

According to the "BP Statistical Review of World Energy," Saudi Arabia, as of 2003, held 22.9% of the world's proven oil reserves.¹¹ The Middle East, as a group, which includes in addition to Saudi Arabia,

Iran, Iraq, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Syria, Yemen and Bahrain, accounts for 63.3% of the world's proven oil reserves. Of the Middle East group, Saudi Arabia possesses more than twice the reserves of its closest rival, Iran. At present, Saudi Arabian oil is produced by its 100% owned company, Saudi Aramco. Aramco produces more oil each day than any oil-producing country and twice as much oil as the next largest oil corporation in the world.¹²

Yet, in spite of being the dominant world economic power in oil, it was not until 1973 in the Arab Oil Embargo that the wealth of Saudi Arabia took a leap that is almost incomprehensible. Prior to the Embargo, the world price for a barrel of oil was \$2 per barrel. By 1974, Saudi Arabian oil production had risen from three million barrels a day (pre Embargo) to eight million barrels a day; and, the world price had risen from \$2 a barrel to \$12 a barrel. With these two changes, Saudi oil revenues were increased 16-fold. *This explosion of wealth over such a brief period of time represented perhaps the greatest and most compressed economic change that any nation in all of human history had ever experienced.*¹³ Comparing the 1974 prices with world market prices of the present day results in an even more astounding economic profile for the Kingdom. According to the website of OPEC, for the eleven months ended November, 2006, the price for a barrel of oil reached its high in the week of August, 25, 2006, when the average price for the week was \$67.67.¹⁴ At January 2, 2008, oil surpassed \$100 a barrel for the first time in history.¹⁵

As oil prices continue to hover at \$100 a barrel, this quote taken from BusinessReport.com describes the wealth being amassed by the Saudis:

"Oil spike redistributes wealth, November 18, 2007 by Steven Mufson. WASHINGTON - *High oil prices are fueling one of the biggest transfers of wealth in history. Oil consumers have pumped more than \$2 trillion (R13.3 trillion) into the coffers of oil companies and oil-producing nations this year alone. Every day they are paying between \$4 billion and \$5 billion more for crude oil than they did five years ago. . . . Earlier oil shocks generated giant shifts in wealth and pools of petrodollars, but they eventually faded and economies adjusted. This new high point in petroleum prices has arrived over four years, and many believe it will represent a new plateau even if prices drop back somewhat in coming months.*"¹⁶

The "Big Seven" of Saudi Arabia. An astounding fact of Saudi oil production is that for the last 60 years, 90% of her oil has been produced by *seven giant oil fields.*¹⁷ Author and energy expert, Matthew R. Simmons lists the seven and their daily oil production as follows:

Ghawar	5,000,000
Safaniya	960,000
Abqaiq	650,000
Berri	400,000
Zuluf	500,000
Marjan	400,000
Abu Sa'fah	150,000. ¹⁸

For almost 60 years, Saudi Arabia's "Big Seven" oilfields have produced most of the oil that has made Saudi Arabia the world's #1 producer of crude oil. In fact, 75% of her oil has come from five of the seven oil wells. Ghawar accounts for 62% of Saudi oil and is by far, *"the greatest oil bearing structure the world has ever known."*¹⁹

The Saudi Royal Family - the House of Saud. The Saudi royal family, i.e, the descendants of Abdul Aziz bin Saud, the first king of Saudi Arabia, owns all rights to all petroleum resources of the Kingdom.²⁰ Other than the royal family, no Saudi individual possesses any rights to the land or its resources. *Everything belongs to the royal family.* The Saudi *royal family* owns the billions in revenue received through the sale of petroleum. Each Saudi prince receives a monthly allowance from this revenue. They can spend it, hoard it, do anything they want to with it.

The "Prostitution" of the House of Saud from the perspective of Many Islamists. The cozy relationship of the Saud family and the Wahhabi family that began in the 18th century has seen its strain over its history, but probably no more so than in modern times. The reason for the divide is the alignment of the royal family with non-Muslim countries.

The alignment began with the British following World War I. By the end of World War II, in 1947, the Saudi king, citing "mutual interests and friendship to safeguard" began to look to the Americans for security from its neighbors. In exchange, the Americans looked to the Saudis and the availability of Saudi Arabian oil as the key factor to their post World War II recovery.²¹ In other words, an *"I'll scratch your back, you scratch mine"* relationship was entered into between the Saudi royals and her Western protector.

For many Wahhabists, this alignment by the royal family came to be viewed as an infidelity, a prostitution, which headed towards its apex when American troops landed on Saudi territory in their liberation of Kuwait in the Gulf War of 1990.

In March, 1997, CNN reporter, Peter Arnett, interviewed Osama bin Laden. Among the many questions that Arnett asked bin Laden was this question, *"Could you give us your main criticism of the Saudi royal family that is ruling Saudi Arabia today?"* Bin Laden replies:

*"Regarding the criticisms of the ruling regime in Saudi Arabia and the Arabian peninsula, the first one is their subordination to the U.S. So, our main problem is the U.S. government, while the Saudi regime is but a branch or an agent of the U.S. By being loyal to the U.S. regime, the Saudi regime has committed an act against Islam. And this, based on the ruling of sharia (law of Islam based on the Qur'an), casts the regime outside the religious community."*²²

Other quotes of Osama against the Saudi royal family:

*"What shows their position [the royal family] toward the umma's causes is the support they provided to the United States by opening their bases for its crusader campaign against Afghanistan; this is obvious support for the infidels against an Islamic country; and a cardinal sin that renders one an infidel."*²³

(Emphasis added)

"It has become clear that the Gulf rulers are not qualified to apply religion and defend Muslims. In fact, they have provided evidence that they are implementing the schemes of the enemies of the umma and religion and that they are qualified to abandon its countries and peoples. Now, after we have become aware of the rulers' approach, we should examine the policy they have been pursuing. Anyone who examines the policy of those rulers will easily see that they follow their whims and desires, and their personal interests and Crusader loyalties."²⁴ (Emphasis added)

I think you have the point. *There is plenty of hatred of the royal family to go around. It is this hatred that will be the fuel to effect the divine justice of God and bring down upon the head of the Saudis, the "cup from which she has poured."*

Summary. Keep in mind a couple of important historical markers for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Arabia is the birthplace of Islam. Saudi Arabia is an Islamic state governed by the Qur'an. The House of Saud is wealthy beyond comprehension for most of us. The wealth of the royal family finds its root in the House of Saud's claim to the petroleum resources of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Many of the Muslim "neighbors" of the House of Saud hate her, considering the royal family to have prostituted itself with the West. Lastly, the preponderance of Saudi oil comes from seven massive oil wells. Through these wells, she has made herself and the merchants of the world people of great wealth and power.

Now, we will address what the Bible gives us to identify the harlot who rides the scarlet beast. There are many clues. The Saudis will meet each one.

Bible Prophecy of the Harlot that Rides the Scarlet Beast. Here are the identifiers the Bible gives us for the woman.

1. The harlot's "wine" has made the merchants of the world, wealthy and great (Rev 18:3, 18:19, 18:23).
2. The harlot is pictured as the epitome of wealth (Rev 17:4).
3. The harlot possesses something that the entire world desires, and, in fact, is addicted to (Rev 17:2, 18:3, 14:8).
4. The harlot "sits" on "seven mountains" (Rev 17:9).
5. The harlot is blinded by her own arrogance; she believes her "fruit" will never depart (Rev 18:5, 7).
6. The harlot is called "Babylon the Great"; and, her use of wealth is likened to an immorality (Rev 17:5).
7. The kings of the earth have committed "immorality" with the harlot (Rev 17:2, 18:3).
8. The harlot will be hated by those whom she is associated with. Her associates will destroy her in one hour (Rev 17:16, 18:10, 18:17).
9. The harlot is drunk with the blood of the saints and the witnesses of Jesus (Rev 17:6).

The "Wine of Her Immorality." Almost every time the phrase "*wine of her immorality*" appears in the text,

it is accompanied by another word that relates to *wealth, commerce, or business* (Revelation 17:4, 18:3, 15, 16, 19).

Revelation 18:3 *"For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed acts of immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich by the wealth of her sensuality."*

Some scholars have interpreted this phrase to be a reference to spiritual adultery or spiritual apostasy. That is, the "wine" is a metaphor for false religion and the "immorality" is what happens when the harlot spreads this false religion to the peoples of the world. This view is based on similar passages in the Old Testament where Israel's worship of false gods is likened to "spiritual adultery" (Ezekiel 16:17-19, 23:37, 43).²⁵ But here is the problem. When the phrase "wine of her immorality" is used, it is always associated with commerce, or those impacted by commerce, and the wealth created from that commerce. Further, this wealth *comes from the harlot* to those who associate with her. *The wealth is not created by the selling of products to the harlot*, rather, the merchants of the world have become rich *from the harlot*. Notice verse 18:15 which repeats 18:3:

Revelation 18:15 *"The merchants of these things, who became rich from her, will stand at a distance because of the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning,*

In this context, any guesses what "wine" might refer to? What makes the merchants of the earth wealthy?

The World's Addiction to Petroleum. Read what the text states,

^{NAS} Revelation 17:2 ". . . and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality. . . 18:3 *For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality, . . .*"

The 21st century world is addicted to petroleum. We need it for our automobiles, our airplanes, our ships; natural gas for our stoves, boilers, heat pumps, almost every industry requires some form of petroleum product whether in powering transportation or manufacturing equipment or powering factories. We cannot do without petroleum. Matthew R. Simmons in his book, *"Twilight in the Desert"*, gives some specifics about our addiction:

*"In 1969, the last year that oil was really cheap, the world oil demand was only 45 million barrels a day. Oil prices were just over \$1 per barrel, and many experts thought they were overpriced by a factor of three to four. By the time the Iranian Revolution began in 1979, oil prices were about \$18, setting the stage for the second oil shock of the 1970's. When Iran's troubles began, oil prices soared once more, going from \$18 to a peak of over \$40 a barrel. In the meantime, how much did this explosion in oil prices really impact demand? Between 1969 and 1978, global oil demand grew from 45 to 65 million barrels a day, an increase of 44% in a decade, despite the fact that oil prices had soared by about 14-fold."*²⁶

The International Energy Agency, according to its report dated February 13, 2007, quantified 2006 global oil demand at 84 million barrels a day with a projection of 86.5 million barrels a day for 2007.²⁷

The Seven Mountains Upon Which the Woman Sits. Notice another very important characteristic of the woman. The scarlet beast that carries her has seven heads and ten horns. The text states (Revelation 17:9):

"9 Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits, 10 and they are seven kings. . .,"

Once again, we see a single metaphor having two separate meanings. We have already looked at one of the meanings – the *seven heads symbolize seven kings and seven caliphate periods of Islam*. The second meaning is what we will address now, i.e., the *seven heads symbolize seven mountains*. This meaning and its interpretation is completely independent and unrelated to the previous meaning.

The text tells us nothing more about the “seven mountains” other than the woman “sits on them.” Is the reader to understand them to be seven *literal* mountains or do the mountains have a symbolic meaning for something else?²⁸ If they are literal, how does the woman literally “sit” on seven mountains? Also, our interpretation of the text thus far has interpreted the elements in the text metaphorically, not literally. If we are to now interpret the seven mountains as “literal” mountains, then we are switching between a metaphorical interpretation to a literal interpretation within the same passage. How would an interpreter ever be successful in interpreting the text, if at one point the text is to be interpreted literally and the very next point the text is to be taken metaphorically?

From the perspective of this writer, this is one reason why interpreters of the past have gone astray in their interpretation of a “revived Rome” as the scarlet beast. Ancient Rome was surrounded by seven hills, literally.²⁹ So Rome became the traditional interpretation of the scarlet beast, in part, because it was surrounded by seven hills; but as we have seen in an earlier chapter, Rome is symbolized in Revelation 12 as the satan incarnate dragon with ten horns and seven heads.

The seven heads have nothing to do with seven literal mountains. They relate to another factor – the one factor that keeps appearing in Revelation 17 and 18 – *the wealth of the harlot, and the wealth of the merchants created from the harlot*. The mountains are the wellspring of the harlot’s wealth. *They are the fountainhead!* From these mountains come the harlot’s *fruit* that she believes will never spoil, never run dry. What is her fruit? *The fruit is oil*. The mountains symbolize the *Saudi Big Seven*. Seven oil fields that have produced 90% of her oil for the last fifty plus years, the largest of which is Ghawar. The woman *sits on these seven mountains*. *She sits on them in the present time*. At no other time in human history could interpreters conclude this is what the text is telling us; but now we can. The Saudis have a Big Seven. This Seven has made the merchants of the world rich.

The harlot is said to sit on the Seven. How so? Because *she doesn’t belong on them*. *They are not rightfully hers!*

The Woman Sits Ever been to a ball game and had your tickets in hand only to find someone sitting in your seat?

Notice - the woman does not “live” in the mountains. She is not “surrounded” by the mountains. She “sits” on them (17:9). Same word is used in another passage and it is here that we find the real meaning. In 17:15, the woman “sits upon many waters,” which are “peoples, and nations and tongues.” In her sitting upon them, she symbolically enslaves them. The people have drunk of the “conveniences” and experienced the personal prosperity that the woman’s wine can provide. The result? They are eventually entrapped. They cannot do without the harlot’s “wine.” The harlot’s wine has intoxicated them beyond their ability to abstain her wine. Notice how the text describes the people and their dependance upon the harlot:

“they are made drunk with the wine of her immorality” (17:2).

Remember what we said about the royal family of Saudi Arabia. The royal family owns the petroleum resources of the entire Kingdom.³⁰ No other Saudi individual possesses any rights to the land or its resources. *Everything belongs to the royal family.* The royal family never purchased the land for fair value. They possess it for one reason: *by virtue of blood descent through the first king of Saudi Arabia, Abdul Aziz bin Saud, who in 1932, conquered the Arabian Peninsula and declared it the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.*³¹

*In an article for Atlantic Monthly magazine, Robert Baer, a 21-year CIA veteran in the Middle East, estimated the Saud family consists of some 30,000 members - a number he says will double within the next generation. And privilege comes with membership: no need to work (there's a monthly stipend for the 3,000 to 4,000 princes, amounting to tens of thousands of dollars each); unlimited flights aboard Saudi Arabian Airlines; and first dibs (not to mention low prices) on land expropriated by the kingdom.*³²

The royal family’s control of the land and its petroleum rights has caused her to have many enemies. Baer describes the Saudi enemies this way in *Sleeping With the Devil*,

There’s already more than enough rage against the West and against the House of Sa’ud. It’s in the air in Riyadh and Jeddah’s bazaars: the conviction that all the oil money has corrupted the ruling family beyond redemption, that the Saudi leaders have defiled the faith by allowing U.S. troops into the kingdom. Getting rid of the American military presence might help, but the brief against the ruling family runs further than the United States. On the street, the Al Sa’ud are reviled for failing to protect fellow Muslims in Palestine and Iraq and for standing by helplessly as Islam is humiliated. At the beginning of a new millennium, many Saudis believe that their country would be better off and the faith purer if everyone went back to the desert and lived off of dates and camel’s milk.³³ (Emphasis supplied)

The woman “sits on the mountains” because she claims possession of the petroleum in the name of the House of Saud. By what right? Her declared right.

The Arrogance of the Harlot. How does the verse go? *“Pride goes before destruction.”* Proverbs 16:8.

See if you think the following statement by the harlot sounds a little prideful.

^{NAS} Revelation 18:7 ". . .; for she says in her heart, 'I sit as a queen and I am not a widow, and will never see mourning.'"

Know what she is talking about? Her mourning? The mourning has nothing to do with her coming judgment, her death. The harlot believes her “fruit” will never fail; she will never run dry. Read the following verse that describes the harlot after her destruction:

^{NAS} Rev 18:14 *"And the fruit you long for has gone from you, and all things that were luxurious and splendid have passed away from you and men will no longer find them."*

In 2004, Saudi Arabia's oil corporation, Saudi Aramco, and its CEO, Abdullah Jumah, was questioned as to the need to bring in outside auditors to verify Aramco's oil production and petroleum reserve statistics. Jumah is quoted as having stated, *“Why should we? We have never failed to deliver a single barrel of oil promised to anyone, anywhere!”*³⁴ Jumah's statement might be paraphrased in this way: *“Don't worry about the numbers. We have always pumped all the oil the world needs and we always will. Nothing will ever change this.”*

A similar statement was made by Saudi Minister of Petroleum and Mineral Resources, Ali Al-Naimi, before a gathering of the oil industry professionals in 2004:

*“WASHINGTON, 29 April 2004. Officials from Saudi Arabia's oil industry and the international petroleum organizations shocked a gathering of foreign policy experts in Washington yesterday with an announcement that the Kingdom's previous estimate of 261 billion barrels of recoverable petroleum has now more than tripled, to 1.2 trillion barrels. Additionally, Saudi Arabia's key oil and finance ministers assured the audience which included US Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan that the Kingdom has the capability to quickly double its oil output and sustain such a production surge for as long as 50 years. . . . There will be no shortage of oil for the next 50 years. Perhaps much longer.”*⁶⁵ (Emphasis supplied).

From the standpoint of Bible prophecy of the Last Days, whether or not the Saudis' petroleum reserves are nearing their “twilight” is not really the issue. Our issue is whether or not the harlot proclaims arrogantly that she will not see “twilight,” i.e., she will never run out of oil. The House of Saud, the “owner” of the petroleum on the Arabian Peninsula has done this. *She arrogantly* claims she will never run out of her “wine.”

The Immorality of the “kings of the earth.” But what about the harlot’s immorality “with the kings of the earth”?

See if this quote might sum up what happens to the “kings of the earth” when lots of money is involved. This is from the book flap of *Sleeping With the Devil, How Washington Sold Our Soul for Saudi Crude*, by Robert Baer.

In Sleeping with the Devil, Baer documents with chilling clarity how our addiction to cheap oil and Saudi petrodollars caused us to turn a blind eye to the Al Sa`ud’s culture of bribery, its abysmal human rights record, and its financial support of fundamentalist Islamic groups that have been directly linked to international acts of terror, including those against the United States. . . Baer vividly portrays our decades-old relationship with the increasingly dysfunctional and corrupt Al Sa`ud family, the fierce anti-Western sentiment that is sweeping the kingdom, and the desperate link between the two. In hopes of saving its own neck, the royal family has been shoveling money as fast as it can to mosque schools that preach hatred of America and to militant fundamentalist groups – an end game just waiting to play out.”

Historian Madawi al-Rasheed describes the Saudi relationship with the West as follows,

“In the 1980s Saudi Arabia increasingly became a partner of the United States, upon whom it depended for vast quantities of arms, economic development and above all security. . . . By the end of the 1980s, the Saudi regime sensed hostility from important sections of society which criticized its close liaison with the United States. Early warning signals were given during the siege of the mosque in 1979.³⁶ . . . The country sought important military assistance from the United States, but continued to promote itself as a non-aligned Islamic country, resisting all US efforts to establish military air-base facilities on its soil. Saudi Arabia was under the illusion that this resistance would conceal the intimate relationship with the United States that had been developing since the Second World War. Military equipment and American military advisers were a constant reminder of both the country’s dependence on the United States for security and its deeply rooted sense of vulnerability to internal and external threat.”³⁷

Can you fill in the blanks yourself or do I need to give you some more “stuff”? We (the West) are addicted to Saudi oil. We demand that we have it and pressure our politicians to do something about it or we will put them out of office. The politicians give us what our addiction demands: if it means they turn their heads on the immoralities of the Saudis, then so be it; and, *the birds of a feather all flock together*.

Her Name And Her Immorality. *Did you think we forgot the second part of the phrase, “wine of her immorality”? No. Can’t forget “immorality.”*

Immorality. What does the word mean? And why is it used in conjunction with the harlot’s wine?

Revelation 17:2 *“with whom the kings of the earth committed acts of immorality, and those who dwell*

on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality."

Three verses include the phrase the "wine of her immorality" (Rev 14:8, 17:2, 18:3). If "wine" refers to Saudi Arabian oil, why is the sale or use of it "immoral"? What is "immoral" about making a profit, even if a substantial one?

Listen to the words of Osama bin Laden as he describes the actions of the royal family and see if even in his words the Saudis have committed an immorality with the use of their oil revenues:

*"The Saudi regime has committed very serious acts of disobedience—worse than the sins and offenses that are contrary to Islam, worse than oppressing slaves, depriving them of their rights and insulting their dignity, intelligence, and feelings, worse than squandering the general wealth of the nation. Millions of people suffer every day from poverty and deprivation, while millions of riyals flow into the bank accounts of the royals who wield executive power. At the same time, public services are being reduced, our lands are being violated, . . ."*³⁸

Sound immoral to you? I could give you a lot more quotes, but I think you get the point.

Saudi Arabia's Use of Oil to Deify Herself. But what about Revelation 17:5? ". . . and upon her forehead a name was written, a mystery, "BABYLON THE GREAT. . ."

Wow, that seems pretty easy. The woman is the ancient city "Babylon" originally located in modern day Iraq. Why look any further? *But look closer.* The text also tells us her name is a "mystery."

It wouldn't be a "mystery" if the woman was *literally* Babylon. A mystery is something you have to uncover; something hidden that must be discovered. And, as we said before, how can we switch between a metaphorical interpretation to a literal interpretation within the same passage? Not very sound Biblical interpretation if we do! What's more, Babylon, the ancient city, is in ruins today. Its ancient location is in modern day Iraq (not Saudi Arabia) on the eastern bank of the Euphrates River. Its Old Testament spiritual infamy is when King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon likened himself to God, and brought a curse upon himself and the city. The curse has remained throughout the city's history, as Babylon has never been rebuilt.

^{NAS} Isaiah 14:22 "And I will rise up against them," declares the LORD of hosts, "and will cut off from Babylon name and survivors, offspring and posterity," declares the LORD. ²³ "I will also make it a possession for the hedgehog, and swamps of water, and I will sweep it with the broom of destruction," declares the LORD of hosts."

In 1985, Saddam Hussein decided he would defy the "curse" by rebuilding Babylon on top of the ancient city's existing ruins. His reconstruction plan included his name being inscribed on many of the ancient bricks, an imitation of King Nebuchadnezzar. One inscription read: "This was built by Saddam Hussein, son of Nebuchadnezzar, to glorify Iraq." The bricks became sought after collectors' items after the

downfall of Saddam, and the ruins are no longer being restored to their original state.³⁹ *Saddam Hussein was executed on December 30, 2006, after being found guilty of war crimes.*

“Babylon” is the Greek word for “*babel*” (Hebrew), meaning “confusion”.⁴⁰ The city takes its name from the *Tower of Babel*, humanity’s failed attempt to glorify ourselves by building a tower reaching to the heavens (Genesis 11:1-9). The building of the tower just happens to be the next chapter in the Bible after Noah’s Ark and the great flood. In Genesis 11, it seems we didn’t want to be judged by another one of God’s floods; so a tower reaching to the heavens should take care of it. When the people began to build, everyone spoke one language; but God confounded their efforts. He sent the “curse” of different tongues. Confusion was the result. The scene ends in total chaos. The tower was never completed. A city eventually was. The ruins of the ancient city of Babylon still remind us of mankind’s attempt to glorify ourselves and make ourselves equal to God. The tower was to be the monument to our success. It became a monument to humanity’s failure.

The woman is not *literal* Babylon. We might call her “metaphorical Babylon” or “mystical Babylon,”⁴¹ but not literal “Babylon.” What happens when the harlot, Saudi Arabia, uses her oil profits to glorify herself in the same way that the people of ancient Babylon did with their tower? By building bigger, more luxurious, more modern buildings, palaces, and everything that a materialistic society can provide for its own desires?

Have you even seen pictures of the skyline of Riyadh, the capital city of Saudi Arabia? Check out its tallest skyscraper, the “Kingdom Center” rising almost 1000 feet.⁴² Do an internet search and look at the luxury of the royal family and see if you do not think she has used her oil outside of God’s intended purpose. Look at this quote from a Reuters News Source:

November 16, 2007 by Andrew Hammond. **“Riyadh is boom town as Saudis enjoy oil bonanza.** By Andrew Hammond. RIYADH (Reuters) - *The malls are full, the cars are fast, the fashions are sharp --conspicuous consumption is king as Saudis enjoy the benefits of oil at almost \$100 a barrel. Little more than a dusty desert outpost three decades ago, Riyadh is a boom town where even a stock market crash last year and a spike in inflation over recent months have failed to halt the orgy of conspicuous consumption.*”⁴³

Consider this quote from Osama bin Laden as he describes the opulent palaces of the House of Saud (referred to as the “rulers of Riyadh”):

*As for the violation of our peoples’ lands and the greed of the rulers of Riyadh in building palaces, King Fahd has commissioned the building of the Salam Palace, on which he has spent 4 billion riyals. As for the palace of Dhahban, where do we start? It is 40km down the Jeddah-Medina road on the Red Sea coast, but to get an idea of the land it has greedily used up, if the Kingdom of Bahrain were put in its back courtyard, those in the palace wouldn’t even notice it. And Bahrain has nearly a million inhabitants and an area of more than a million square meters! Even if the whole world came into the palaces of these kings and presidents, or into this palace in Dhahban, they would be dwarfed. Has history ever seen such foolishness?*⁴⁴

Conclusion. *The harlot is Saudi Arabia.* The House of Saud is simply *rebuilding “Babel’s Tower.”* Their efforts are no different than those of humanity thousands of years ago in Genesis 11. A tower to the heavens sought to glorify the hands that built it; so the Saudis seek to glorify themselves through their handiwork. The Tower of Babel “came down” upon the heads of her builders. So will the tower of the Saudis. *Her oil will actually be used by God as the means of her judgement.* We will see that in our next chapter.

The Bible says so.

Summary of Key Points in this Chapter	
Point 1	Arabia is the birthplace of Islam. Saudi Arabia is an Islamic state governed by the Qur'an. Islam has been at enmity with Jews and Christians since its formation in the 7 th century AD.
Point 2	The House of Saud, i.e, the royal family, is wealthy beyond our ability to comprehend wealth. Saudi oil and gas has not only made the royal family wealthy, but also, the merchants of our world. Without Saudi oil, the appetite of the world's voracious economies would be all but impossible to sustain.
Point 3	The House of Saud owns all petroleum rights for the Kingdom of Saud. Saudi Arabia is the world's #1 owner of proven oil and gas reserves.
Point 4	The House of Saud is hated by most of her neighbors; she is considered to have prostituted herself to the West by virtue of her alliance with the world's free economic powers. She exchanges her oil for military equipment, protection, and wealth.
Point 5	90% of Saudi petroleum has been pumped by seven large oil wells.
Point 6	The world's people, particularly, the developed world, cannot do without petroleum. We are addicted to it.

Point 7	<p>Saudi Arabia fulfills these criteria of the harlot of Revelation 17:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Her “wine” has made the merchants of the world wealthy and great;• The peoples of the world are “drunk” with the wine of the harlot;• The scarlet beast has “seven heads” which are “seven mountains”; the Saudis have seven oil wells that pump 90% of her oil; the harlot “sits” of these seven mountains; the Saudis own all petroleum rights to her oil;• The harlot does not believe she “will ever see mourning”; the Saudis do not believe they will ever run short of oil;• The “kings of the earth” have committed “immorality” with the harlot; the world leaders of the free world turn their heads to the immoralities of the Saudis because they must provide their people with petroleum to maintain their standard of living;• The harlot uses her wealth to exalt herself; the Saudis are “rebuilding Babel’s tower through construction projects of bigger and more opulent palaces and showplaces.
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Chapter 9 Endnotes.

1The kingdom of Saudi Arabia is located on the Arabian Peninsula. The land area for the Kingdom comprises 90% of the land area on the Arabian Peninsula. It is bordered by the Red Sea on its western border, the Arabian Sea on its southern border, the Persian Gulf on its eastern border, and by the states of Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait on its eastern border. Its southern borders include the states of Yemen and Oman. The Kingdom includes the well known Muslim cities of Medina, Mecca, Jeddah and Riyadh (its capital). The largest of its land area is comprised of the Arabian desert.

2Madawi Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia*, p. 16.

3Madawi Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia*, p. 17.

4Stephen Schwartz, p 106.

5Karen Armstrong, *Islam - A Short History*, p. 161-162.

6Stephen Schwartz, p 261.

7Matthew R. Simmons, *Twilight in the Desert*, p 1

8Simmons, p 9.

9Simmons, p 10.

10Simmons, p 26-27

11Simmons, p 101.

12Simmons, p 101.

13Simmons, p 56.

14<http://www.opec.org/home/basket.aspx>

15Available at, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/02/business/02cnd-oil.html?hp>, at January 31, 2008.

16Available at <http://www.busrep.co.za/index.php?fSectionId=&fArticleId=4131994>, at November 20, 2007.

17Simmons, p. xv.

18Simmons, p. 89.

19Simmons, p 40, 89, and 151.

20Simmons, p. 261.

21Dore Gold, p. 66.

22Reported in *Messages to the World, The Statements of Osama bin Laden*, edited by Bruce Lawrence, p. 45.

Chapter 9 Endnotes.

23 Bruce Lawrence, p. 223.

24 Bruce Lawrence, p. 226.

25 Robert L. Thomas, p. 282.

26 Simmons, p. 59.

27 Available at http://www.greencarcongress.com/2007/02/iea_forecasts_i.html at June 26, 2007.

28 Biblical scholar John Walvoord interprets the harlot as Rome (which he asserts will arise in the future as a dominant world power) and the seven mountains to be literally the "seven hills of Rome." John F. Walvoord, *Every Prophecy of the Bible*, p. 607. Scholar Robert Thomas doubts this interpretation and sees the seven hills to refer to seven successive empires of the beast. See Thomas, p. 296.

29 Available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven_hills_of_Rome, at July 16, 2008.

30 Simmons, p. 261.

31 Simmons, p. 261.

32 Available at <http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/saudi-arabia/sauds.html>, at December 16, 2007.

33 Robert Baer, *Sleeping With the Devil*, p. xxix.

34 Simmons, p. 338.

35 Available at <http://www.arabnews.com/?page=6§ion=0&article=44011&d=29&m=4&y=2004>

36 In 1979, Muhammad b. Abd al-Qahtani proclaimed himself Islam's "al-Mahdi" (savior – see following chapters for discussion). He and a group of his followers stormed the great Mosque of Mecca, announcing that he would lead the destruction of the apostate Saudi regime. Among his five demands were: to sever relations with the West so as to protect Islamic values; to stop all oil exports to the West; to overthrow the illegitimate Saudi royal family, including the apostate *ulama* (religious scholars), and the redistribution of all Saudi wealth. Al-Qahtani and his followers were killed by Saudi troops in intense fighting. See Timothy Furnish, *Holiest Wars, Islamic Mahdis, Their Jihads, and Osama bin Laden*, p. 60.

37 Madawi al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia*, p. 161.

38 Message posted on the Global Islamic Media Front to all Muslims; entitled "Depose the Tyrants," December 16, 2004, as reported in *Messages to the World, The Statements of Osama bin Laden*, edited by Bruce Lawrence, p. 247 - 248.

39 Available at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Babylon> at June 14, 2007.

40 Easton Bible Dictionary, Electronic Version, BibleWorks 6.0.

41 Easton Bible Dictionary, Electronic Version, BibleWorks 6.0.

42 Available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_Tower at June 27, 2007.

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43 Available at <http://www.reuters.com/article/lifestyleMolt/idUSL1541047320071116> at November 16, 2007.

44 Message posted on the Global Islamic Media Front to all Muslims; entitled "Depose the Tyrants," December 16, 2004, as reported in *Messages to the World, The Statements of Osama bin Laden*, edited by Bruce Lawrence, p. 265 - 266.