This link from my friend Lauren. The World Monuments Fund has launched an ambitious plan to rebuild the ruins of Babylon in the hope that the ancient capital will become a prime destination for tourists. Officials hope that the project, entitled The Future of Babylon, could one day become as popular a tourist attraction as the Pyramids in Egypt or Petra in Jordan. Prior to the invasion of Iraq and the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, the dictator had been rebuilding the ruins of the ancient city, with the goal of restoring the former glory of the Persian empire. Saddam Hussein saw himself as the descendant of King Nebuchadnezzar, who constructed the magnificent hanging gardens, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Nebuchadnezzar had is name stamped on every seventh brick, while Saddam Hussein had his name imprinted on every third brick, hoping to outdo the extravagance of the historic monarch. Following his removal from power in the Iraq war, the United Nations
began pouring millions of dollars into the restoration of the city. The United States have also been spending a massive amount of money on the reconstruction of Iraq, securing over 100 acres of real estate to build one of the
largest embassies
in the world. The new US embassy in Iraq will cover an area six times larger than that of the United Nations headquarters in New York. It will employ 5000 staff and will be totally self-contained, with its own water, electricity and sewage facilities. It seems that even if international forces withdraw from Iraq, the Gulf state will remain at the forefront of American foreign policy for the foreseeable future.

Quote: *""The Future of Babylon" project launched last month seeks to "map the current conditions of Babylon and develop a master plan for its conservation, study and tourism," the WMF says. "We don't know how long it will take to reopen to tourists," said Mariam Omran Musa, head of a government inspection team based at the site. "It depends on funds. I hope that Babylon can be reborn in a better image."*

When you look at the history of the region, it easy to understand how tourism could play a significant role in the rebuilding of Iraq. The region is mentioned more times in the Scriptures than virtually any other country, under names such as Assyria, Babylon and Mesopotamia. The garden of Eden is thought by some to have been located in Iraq, if the names of the rivers described in the book of Genesis are anything to go by. The tower of Babel was built in Iraq. Abraham came from Ur of the Chaldees, which was in Iraq. Jonah was sent by God to preach in Nineveh, which was once a major city in Iraq. Daniel was taken captive to Babylon, the capital city of the ancient kingdom. And Babylon is one of the first major empires mentioned in Bible prophecy. In the Scriptures Babylon could be thought of as being symbolic of man's best efforts to achieve greatness without God. King Nebuchadnezzar once proclaimed, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?
", Daniel 4:30. In testament to God's judgement on the pride of man, King Nebuchadnezzar lost his mind and was removed as ruler of Babylon for a period of seven years, until he understood that it is God that rules in the kingdom of men and gives it to

Whomsoever He will (Daniel 4:25). Nebuchadnezzar then repented of his sin and was restored to his kingdom. I believe he is in heaven today. There is another 'great Babylon' mentioned in the Scriptures. The book of Revelation mentions a city by the name of Babylon. There are differing opinions as to the identity of this city. Some believe it could be symbolic of a major commercial centre such as New York. Some say it could refer to a capital of the religious world such as the Vatican. Others say there is no reason why it could not refer to a future time when the actual city of Babylon will be rebuilt and will become both the commercial and religious centres of the world. Which interpretation you follow doesn't really matter. For whatever form 'Babylon the great' takes in this world today, the outcome will be the same. It is going to come crashing down. Just like in King Nebuchadnezzar's day, seven years of judgement are going to come upon this world. The question is, what are you going to do? Will you respond like Nebuchadnezzar did, and break off your sins by righteousness through trusting in Jesus Christ for salvation (Daniel 4:27)? Or will you respond like Belshazzar did, and continue on in your sins and perish in the overthrow of the city (Daniel 5:30)? Only you can make that choice. Trust in Jesus Christ for salvation today.

Revelation 18:9-10
And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.

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