

Babylon – The Harlot

Babylon the Harlot, which is the one spoken of in Revelation chapter 17

The Current Identity of Babylon the Harlot: A careful examination of this passage of Scripture should make it easy for us to identify the current prostitute of Babylon and predict with some degree of accuracy what we can expect on the religious horizon, (see Revelation 17:4-6).

To do so however, we must develop a basic understanding of the biblical meaning of “Babylon.” This word occurs 290 times in the Bible. The greatest book ever written on this subject is the masterpiece “The Two Babylons”, by Rev. Alexander Hislop, published in 1858. This book containing quotations from 275 authors and to Tim LaHaye’s knowledge has never been refuted, best describes the origin of religion in Babylon and its present-day function.

Two more recent authors who quote heavily from this book are likewise presented at length because they have so clearly and simply summarized the heart of Hislop’s work and provided, in few words, the best description of these ancient events that I have found. Dr. Harry Ironside, in his commentary on Revelation, has written: The woman is a religious system, who dominates the civil power, at least for a time. The name upon her forehead should easily enable us to identify her.

But in order to do that we will do well to go back to our Old Testament, and see what is there revealed concerning literal Babylon, for the one will surely throw light upon the other. We learn that the founder of Bab-el or Babylon, was Nimrod, of whose unholy achievements we read in the 10th chapter of Genesis. He was the arch apostate of the patriarchal age. He persuaded his associates and followers to join together in “building a city and a tower which should reach unto heaven.” Not a tower by which they might climb up into the skies, but a tower of renown, to be recognized as a temple or rallying center for those who did not walk in obedience to the word of the Lord.

They called their city and tower Bab-el, gate of God; but it was soon changed by divine judgment into Babel, Confusion. It bore the stamp of unreality from the first, for we are told “they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar” (Genesis 11:3). An imitation of that which is real and true has ever since characterized Babylon, in all ages.

The Birth of Babylon: The historical drama of Babylon began on the plains of Shinar, where the first world dictator established the world’s first religious center. The dictator’s name was Nimrod, which means “we will revolt”. The beginning of this kingdom was Babel, or Babylon (Gen. 10:8-10). Under this leader, the first united religious act was performed, the building of a tower “whose top would reach into the heavens” (Gen 11:4).

These people were smart enough to know that they couldn’t build a tower through which they could climb up to where God lives. That wasn’t of interest to them. They

were already studying the stars and the moon and were codifying the first system of astrology. The tower was to aid them in better observation of the stars. It was, in essence, an astrological observatory. Many centuries later, when God pronounced future judgment on Babylon, He said that "She had labored with sorceries and astrology from her youth," indicating that these were practiced in Babylon from her very beginning in history (see Isaiah 47:12-13).

Babylon and the Harlot: When the angel told John that he would tell him the mystery of the woman, he meant that this Harlot, the false religious system, would have as its main teachings the same occultic practices as ancient Babylon. It would include black magic, demon contact, seances, miraculous materializations, witchcraft, astrology and sorcery. We know that the ancient city of Babylon was ruled by this occultic influence, but not many people are aware that the religion of Babylon passed from empire to empire until the days of ancient Rome.

The mystery that John was seeking to unveil for his readers was that religious Babylon would be revived to control the last great world power in the last days of history. This religion will be an occultic amalgamation of all the world's religions. For the first 3-1/2 years of the Tribulation, it will enjoy a position of great power and influence over the Revived Roman Empire and its leader, the Antichrist.

Nimrod, or Nimroud-bar-Cush, was a grandson of Ham, the unworthy son of Noah. Noah had brought through the flood, the revelation of the true God. Ham on the other hand seems to have been all too readily affected by the apostasy that brought the flood, for he shows no evidence of self judgment. His name means "swarthy," "darkened", or more literally, "the sunburnt." And the name indicates the state of the man's soul, darkened by light from heaven. Ham begat a son named Cush, "the black one," and he became the father of Nimrod, the apostate leader of his generation.

Ancient lore now comes to our assistance, and tells us that the wife of Nimroud-bar-Cush was the infamous Semiramis the First. She is reputed to have been the foundress of the Babylonian mysteries and the first high priestess of idolatry. Thus, Babylon became the fountain head of idolatry, and the mother of every heathen and pagan system in the world. The mystery religion that was there originally spread in various forms throughout the whole earth and is with us today, and shall have its fullest development when the Holy Spirit has departed and the Babylon of the Apocalypse holds sway.

Building on the primeval promise of the woman's Seed who was to come, Semiramis bore as one whom she declared was miraculously conceived! And when she presented him to the people, he was hailed as the promised deliverer. This was Tammuz, whose worship Ezekiel protested against in the days of the captivity. Thus, was introduced the mystery of the mother and the child, a form of idolatry that is older than any other known to man. The rites of this worship were secret. Only the initiated were permitted to know its mysteries. It was Satan's effort to delude mankind with an imitation so like

the truth of God that they would not know the true Seed of the woman when He came in the fullness of time.

Dr. Clarence Larkin, in his book *Dispensational Truth*, includes these interesting details: Babel, or Babylon, was built by Nimrod (Gen. 10:8-10). It was the seat of the first great apostasy. Here the "Babylonian Cult" was invented, a system claiming to possess the highest wisdom and to reveal the divinest secrets. Before a member could be initiated, he had to "confess" to the Priest. The Priest then had him in his power. This is the secret of the power of the Priests of the Roman Catholic Church today.

Once admitted into this order, men were no longer Babylonians, Assyrians, or Egyptians, but members of a Mystical Brotherhood over whom was placed a Pontiff or "High Priest," whose word was law. The city of Babylon continued to be the seat of Satan until the fall of the Babylonian and Medo-Persian Empires, when he shifted his Capitol to Pergamos in Asia Minor, where it was in John's day (Rev. 2:12-13).

When Attalus, the Pontiff and King of Pergamos, died (in 133 B.C.), he bequeathed the Headship of the "Babylonian Priesthood" to Rome. When the Etruscans came to Italy from Lydia (the region of Pergamos), they brought with them the Babylonian religion and rites. They set up a Pontiff who was head of the Priesthood. Later the Romans accepted this Pontiff as their civil ruler.

Julius Caesar was made Pontiff of the Etruscan Order (in 74 B.C.). And then (in 63 B.C.), he was made "Supreme Pontiff" of the "Babylonian Order," thus becoming heir to the rights and titles of Attalus, Pontiff of Pergamos, who had made Rome his heir by will. Thus, the first Roman Emperor became the Head of the "Babylonian Priesthood", and Rome the successor of Babylon.

The Emperors of Rome continued to exercise the office of "Supreme Pontiff" (until 366 A.D.), through the influence of the monks of Mt. Carmel, a college of Babylonian religion originally founded by the priests of Jezebel. So (in 378 A.D.), the Head of the "Babylonian Order" became the Ruler of the "Roman Church." Thus, Satan united Rome and Babylon in one religious system.

Soon after Damascus was made "Supreme Pontiff" the "rites" of Babylon began to come to the front. The worship of the Virgin Mary was set up (in 381 A.D.). All the outstanding festivals of the Roman Catholic Church are of Babylonian origin. Easter is not a Christian name. It means "Ishtar," one of the titles of the Babylonian Queen of Heaven, whose worship by the Children of Israel was such an abomination in the sight of God. The decree for the observance of Easter and Lent was given (in 519 A.D.). The "Rosary" is of Pagan origin.

There is no warrant in the Word of God for the use of the "Sign of the Cross." It had its origin in the mystic "Tau" of the Chaldeans and Egyptians. It came from the letter "T", the initial name of "Tammuz," and was used in the "Babylonian Mysteries" for the same

magic purposes as the Romish Church now employs it. Celibacy, the Tonsure, and the Order of Monks and Nuns, have no warrant or authority from scripture. The Nuns are nothing more than an imitation of the "Vestal Virgins" of Pagan Rome.

After reading the above quotation, you may think me anti Catholic says Tim LaHaye, but that isn't exactly true: I am anti false religion he states. For example, he is opposed to any religious system that has enough of the truth to deceive the faithful and enough of the false to damn its followers. A false religion is worse than no religion at all. In some respects, the religion of Rome is more dangerous than no religion because she substitutes religion for truth. Human beings would be better off with their God given desire for truth unfulfilled that they might seek after Him.

Rome's false religion too often gives a false security that keeps people from seeking salvation freely by faith. Rome is also dangerous because some of her doctrines are pseudo Christian. For example, she believes properly about the personal deity of Christ but errs in adding Babylonian mysticism in many forms and salvation by works.

What is the will of God in regard to the Babylonian system? That she be annihilated. I am not suggesting that Christians attack her and seek to exterminate her, states Tim LaHaye. Instead, our responsibility is to "come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. "Touch no unclean thing" (2 Cor. 6:17b), leaving her destruction to God, who will use the ten kings of the Tribulation period as His agents.

The true Church of Jesus Christ must not sink into the pitfall of the religious phobia of our day, which is "religious unity." I am reminded of a statement I once heard attributed to Charles Haddon Spurgeon, that "you cannot have unity without forsaking truth, and to forsake truth for the sake of unity is to betray Jesus Christ." May God help us to be faithful to Him in these last days.

Every false religion in the world can be traced back to Babylon. Even before its citizens tried to build the Tower of Babel, Satan had made that city his headquarters and introduced idolatry, the first secret societies, and many of the religious practices that continue to the present day. These eventually appeared as the foundational teachings for Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Gaia worship, and a host of other cultic systems summed up in the Bible as "Mystery Babylon".

Gaia is the name of the ancient Greek goddess of the Earth, and as a name it was recently revived to refer to the hypothesis formed by James Lovelock and Lynn Margulis, who postulate that the whole biosphere may be alive in that the Earth's life forms are themselves responsible for regulating the conditions that make life on the planet possible.

David Spangler recently was invited to a worship service and celebration in which Gaia was specifically incorporated as a source of spiritual nourishment and help. In ritual and song, the participants called upon the "Spirit of Gaia" to heighten their awareness of

their connections with the earth and to fill them with love and compassion for all creatures and for the physical environment as a whole.

If Babylon is the mother of all false religions and Jerusalem is the mother of true faith (since Jesus Christ was crucified, buried, and resurrected there), then Rome is the mother of an unholy mixture of the two. One of the things that impress tourists visiting Rome is its incredible religious history. It existed long before the Romans rose to power and today displays the ruins of many pagan religions, all of them received from Babylon. By the time Paul and other Christians got to Rome, the city had become not only the capital of a world empire, thus the center of civilization and the most important city in the world, but also the center of pagan "Mystery Babylon" religion. Satan had moved his spiritual headquarters from Babylon to Rome even before the birth of Christ.

When Constantine made his "confession of faith" in the 4th century, (if indeed that is what it was), he turned over to the Christian leaders the temples of the pagans that, according to the official tour books of Rome, included: The Greek divinities, Athena, that had become Minerva, Ares became Mars, Aphrodite became Venus. Apollo retained its Greek name; thus the Greek god of mythology became the Roman Olympus. The temple of Isis, straight from Babylon, was there, along with the Egyptian Campus Martius, many oriental divinities including Mithras, the Persian God of the Sun.

Self Serving Translations: Here we must issue a word of caution. Unfortunately, some of the cults have tampered with the biblical text in order to promote their own peculiar doctrines. Obviously, any teachings that require an alteration of God's Word for their support are not authentic. The Jehovah's Witnesses are an example. They deny so much biblical doctrine, including the deity of Christ and salvation by grace through faith, that they have found it necessary to produce their own New World Translation.

It is not, however, a translation from the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts, but a self-serving perversion, as a comparison with numerous other more widely accepted translations will quickly reveal. Their proprietary "Bible" was specifically designed to support their peculiar heresies. The Catholic Douay-Rheims Bible is another case in point. In its attempt to glorify Mary, it has long rendered this passage from Genesis as follows: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel". So, Mary, not the Messiah, is presented as the one who will destroy Satan. The marginal note says, ("In art, Mary is frequently pictured with her foot on the head of a serpent").