

THE COMING OF THE LORD
BACKGROUND OF RELIGIOUS BABYLON-PART 1
REVELATION 17

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Introduction

People are religious because God created them to be worshipers. If they will not worship the true God, they will worship someone or something else.

We look around and we might think America is getting less religious. Actually, she is becoming MORE religious. Just LESS Christian.

Sadly, man's longing to know God has been corrupted by his love of sin. Satan steps in with the promise to bring man into the spiritual realm without having to give up his sin and the pleasures of the world.

He does this through false religions. It is no wonder that as we study the end times, all false religion will be reunited into one great world religion. It will be known in its finished stage as BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. Now that is quite a title. We will just refer to her as THE GREAT HARLOT.

To understand Babylonian false religion in the future, we need to understand Babylon's role in the false religion of the past.

A. The Ancestry of the Harlot. (Vs 1)

"Great whore" is a metaphor for false religion.

The story of Babylon begins with the Tower of Babel, recorded in **(Genesis 11:1-9)**.

After the flood, the descendants of Noah arrived at a place called *Shinar*. There they decided under the leadership of a man named *Nimrod* to build a monument to themselves for the glory of man.

They built a brick tower which, according to *Herodotus*, was a furlong, or 660 feet, in length and breadth; and according to *Strabo*, it rose to the same altitude. It was in the form of a pyramid, consisting of eight square towers, gradually decreasing in breadth, with a winding ascent on the outside.

It was so very broad as to allow horses and carriages to pass each other, and even to turn.

"Nimrod", the architect of the Tower of Babel's name means *"rebel."* *"Bab-el"* originally meant *"gate to God."*

What we see at Babel was the first recorded organized false religion after the flood. (Cain's religion was false but before the flood.)

So, what was the problem with what they were trying to do and why does God have a problem with it?

1. We See Manmade Unity! (Genesis 11:1).

Some might say, *"Well isn't God for unity?"*

And the answer is YES! God is for UNITY, but the right kind of unity! **(Cf. John 17:20-24)**

This was a unity in REBELLION as we shall see in a minute!

The keynote in our time and the time leading up to God's destruction of false religion, is that of *"ecumenism."*

And this is where *"ecumenism"* began!

2. We See Worldly Ambition And Ingenuity. (Genesis 11:4)

Some might say, *"Well doesn't God want us to have ambition and use our ingenuity?"*

The Tower of Babel and the city they were going to build was about what THEY **could do** and **would do!**

This ambition and this use of their ingenuity was in REBELLION against God as we shall see in a minute!

We See Manmade Unity (Ecumenism)...

We See Worldly Ambition And Ingenuity...

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3. We See Rebellion Against God's Revealed Will!
(Genesis 11:4)

God's command to Noah and his family is found in
Genesis 9:1, 7.

Is there any confusion here about what God wanted them to do?
Is there anything that is open for interpretation?

So, what they were doing was in defiance against God's will!
This is what they wanted, not what God wanted!

Babel was a scheme to avoid being "*scattered abroad upon the face of the earth.*"

False religions have always been about doing what THEY want to do, no matter what God has to say about it!

False religion is about open rebellion against the Word of God and replacing the Word of God with human ideas and human traditions.

4. We See Pride! (Genesis 11:4)

"Let us build...Let us make us a name!"

The pride of false religion has a haughty hatred of humble Biblical faith!

They were rebelling in trying to make their own way to God. Behind all false religion is the denial of God's way! And behind all false religion is trust in ones own strength and abilities instead of God. In other words, it is to become as God.

God was not impressed with their Unity, their Ambition, their Ingenuity, their Rebellion, or their Pride!

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So, God redefined *Babel* and it became known **not** as "*gate to God*", but as "*confusion*" because God made their one language into many.
(Genesis 11:6-9)

Babel later became known as *Babylon* and if you were to locate it on a map today, you would see that it is the city of *Baghdad, Iraq.*

We find out from sources outside of the Bible that the city of *Babylon* was ruled by two people: **Nimrod** ruled over politics and economics and his wife, **Semiramis** ruled over religion.

It was here that the cultic practices of worshiping mother and child began. **Semiramis** became the first high priestess of idolatry.

Here is how the story is told. The legend goes that **Semiramis** gave birth to a son, **Tammuz**, who was conceived by a **sunbeam**.

Semiramis believed that **Tammuz** was the promised deliverer of Genesis 3:15. So, **Tammuz** was the first false Messiah.

The story continues that **Tammuz** was killed by a wild boar. **Semiramis** wept for 40 days and **Tammuz** came to life again.

The power of the resurrection was attributed to the mother, **Semiramis**, and she began to be worshiped as the **Queen of Heaven**. And **Tammuz** was worshiped as the resurrected deliverer. Thus becoming the first mother/child worship.

The celebration of **Tammuz** resurrection was called the **Feast of Istar** at which the participants exchanged eggs to signify new life.

The word **Istar**, which was one of the names of the queen of heaven, has been borrowed by **Christendom** and changed to **EASTER** to commemorate the true resurrection. You can see how eggs got into Easter.

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When their tongues were confused, the people of Babel were dispersed, carrying their false religious system into all the world.

As the mother/son worship spread to other cultures the names changed but the practices did not.

In **Phoenicia**, the mother was know as **Ashtoreth** and the son as **Baal**. The **Egyptians** knew the mother as **Isus** and the son as **Osiris**. The **Greeks**, **Aphrodite** and **Eros**. The **Romans**, **Venus** and **Cupid**.

This kind of worship even sneaked into Israel.
(Jeremiah 7:18; 44:15-19; Ezekiel 8:12-18)

ALL pagan religions can be traced back to Nimrod and his wife, Semiramis. 260 times in Scripture, *Babylon* is used to represent the system of false religions that spun off the first one in Genesis. That is why **Revelation 17:5** refers to her as the “*mother of harlots.*”

The word “*sitteth*” in **Revelation 17:1** shows authority. The authority of the false church during the Tribulation is universal. The entire world will be committed to the worship of the *Babylonian* system under the *Antichrist*.

The Ancestry Of The Harlot.

B. The Alliances Of The Harlot. (Vs 2-3)

The false religion and the state will marry up. It will be state religion supported by political power. And governmental decisions will be supported by the false church’s moral authority.

There are 4 women given to us in the Book of Revelation. All 4 are religious symbols.

In Ch. 2, Jezebel symbolizes all pagan religions.

In Ch. 12, the women clothed with the sun and the moon symbolizes Israel and her religion.

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In Ch. 19, we will meet the Bride of Christ which is the true Church.

Here, the woman is introduced to us as a harlot. Because it speaks of spiritual adultery. i.e. Outwardly, appearing to worship God but really worshipping other gods.

This false religious system of Babylon will unite under the False Prophet with the political and economic Babylon under the Antichrist.

They will work together to rule the world. At first, religion will be in control. Until the Antichrist feels he no longer needs her and then will turn upon the woman and destroy her.

The Ancestry Of The Harlot...The Alliances Of The Harlot...

C. The Affluence Of The Harlot. (Vs 4)

The reward of operating in the world in a worldly manner will be the accumulation of worldly wealth.

Conclusion

I want to stop right here for now because I want to do the next point together so that you can see very clearly who this harlot is.

Nevertheless, I want you to understand that all false religion has its root in Babylon consisting of:

- Manmade Unity
- Worldly Ambition and Ingenuity
- Rebellion Against God’s Revealed Will
- Pride (haughty hatred of humble Biblical Faith!)