

## A MYSTERY, *THE GREAT CITY* BABYLON

**On her forehead a name was written, a mystery, “BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.”** (Revelation 17.5 NASB)

**“Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! For in one hour your judgment has come.”** (Revelation 18.10 NASB)

It is safe to state that some, perhaps many, Christians see a future dictator ruling the world from a great city called Babylon that will emerge some place on earth. Some thought that Saddam Hussein, who likened himself to Nebuchadnezzar and began building great edifices and monuments in his honor, was a precursor, if not the real thing, of the coming world ruler. Of course, that assumption ended with cruise missiles and a hole dug into the ground so that he could hide, unsuccessfully, from his enemies. Still, when the tanks began rolling into Baghdad, some thought this was prophetic of the future rise of ancient Babylon, in fulfillment of Scripture.

I recall listening to a preacher about two years ago. He was all excited about the events in Iraq and began to preach a series on end-time events along the line of the pre-tribulation rapture followed by a seven-year tribulation that will wipe out billions of people and bring the earth to near destruction. For him, the fact that the Euphrates River was in the news was highly significant in end-time prophecy. Sadly, according to his teaching, while blood is being poured out on the earth, Christ and His bride will be in heaven having a feast. I had held some, but not all, of the elements of this interpretation for many years but had repented prior to listening to this brother in Christ, so I listened with a totally different perspective that allowed me to discern some parts of his interpretation that were not even logical. At times, I sensed that perhaps he sensed some of what he was preaching might not make perfect sense or all of it did not quite fit together. If so, his sensing was right, for it is illogical and, I believe, unscriptural.

Do preachers not see something grotesque about Christ wiping out half the world population on earth, as if in an uncontrollable rage, as if He were like man, at the same time that He is supposedly celebrating a prenuptial wedding feast in heaven with a company of His people called the bride, and this goes on for seven long years? Also, do preachers not see something illogical about the Lord's people *in* death occupying heavenly bodies (or some form), walking on streets of gold, and living in heavenly mansions prior to the resurrection of their bodies? To hear it described, the dead saints come plunging down from heaven and catch up with their resurrected bodies to meet the Lord in the air, the same Lord they have been with for as long as they have been dead. This is quite a serious matter, but I must admit that I felt like laughing when I heard it described by this brother. Given this scenario, there does not seem to be much purpose in the resurrection of the dead. I

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wonder what Paul would have to say about such a teaching? I imagine it would be along the line of “who has bewitched you.”

At any rate, it is a safe assumption, based on what I have heard preached over the years, that when it comes to the matter of Babylon, some, perhaps many, continue to look for the rise of a world dictator, a wild beast, and the rise of a great city from which he will control the world. Conspiracy theories abound amongst many who hold to a “pre-tribulation rapture” and all the Hollywood-type events they see happening on earth based on a literal interpretation of many of the things described in John’s Patmos vision. They are turning over every stone of current events in order to plug them into their interpretation of how things will unfold and bring this age to an end.

But, what if they are way off the mark and have bought into a rather carnal and spatial interpretation of John’s vision? After all, visions of blood flowing in the streets and billions of humans created to be in the image of *Elohim* ending up in a fiery torture chamber called *hell* fits the war-mongering and lawless attitude held by much of Christendom over the many centuries since Calvary and has continued unabated in our day as well.

What if mystery Babylon, *the great city*, is more than a single city located in some nation, but rather it is a system that engulfs the world; and what if we have been living in the midst of this Babylonian system for some time already, and it is ready to fall? What if mystery Babylon is not even a city as we generally view cities? What if it is something much larger? Well, if it is, then it must dramatically change our understanding of what John saw and recorded for us.

To understand *mystery, Babylon the great city*, we need to telescope out from our view of the world in which we live. In doing so, we also need to shed all images that have been fed into our minds through Hollywood-type movies on end-time events, as well as the Left Behind series and all the tribulation and rapture theology held by so many today, and look afresh at what this mystery truly is.

Babylon represents many things, but this article focuses on only one thing in particular, and that is its description as *the great city*. In particular, I submit that a city is primarily an enterprise of commerce, supported by some form of financial system, and this is what is primarily depicted in the description of Babylon in Revelation 18.

### ***A city.***

A city can be a physical location or the people who occupy that location. In other words, a city can refer to all the people of the city; that is, the people are the city. For example, New Jerusalem, the holy city of God, refers to God’s people, the dwelling of God *in spirit*. This is an entire subject in itself that is reserved for other writings. However, it must be noted that mystery Babylon, *the great city*, is the counterfeit to God’s city, New Jerusalem. Or, it could be said that mystery Babylon

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is diabolically opposite to the heart and mind of God, for it is built in the image of fallen man who has set his heart and mind on exalting himself above God.

What is a city, or what does a city represent? A city refers to a people united for a common purpose or with some common bond. Often, a city or the people representative of a city are united by a system of government, commerce, and often religion. To me, the *isms* of the world are represented in the meaning of *city* as well. According to *Webster's New World Dictionary* (The World Publishing Company, 1966), an *ism* is "any doctrine, theory, or system"; and a *system* is "1. a set or arrangement of things so related or connected as to form a unity or organic whole; 2. the world or universe." In Scripture, the word *world* is often translated from the Greek word *kosmos*, which means an orderly arrangement.

Now, having provided some meaning to the word *city*, I want to broaden the definition to what I believe a city represents, especially as it relates to mystery Babylon of Revelation 18.

A city represents a people united and held together by a system of commerce. I see commerce in a very broad sense to include not only what is considered commerce (buying and selling, and the financial system that makes it possible to buy and sell), but also how people are governed and live as a society. *Webster's New World Dictionary* defines *commerce* as "1. the buying and selling of goods; 2. social intercourse, such as to have personal dealings with." I realize that some would say that a city is representative of a common government, but actually government is under the umbrella of commerce, for it provides the stability for commerce; that is, it provides the stability and framework for people to interact with one another. Government provides the bounds by which people interact with one another. I also include religion under the umbrella of commerce, since religion, as seen by mankind, is a form of social intercourse or how people interact with one another in relation to their god. In some cases, their god is actually themselves; case in point is humanism.

I can hear the cries going up: "Christianity is more than social intercourse." Absolutely true! I agree with such a protest, but I must add that Christianity, at least in its pure form, is not a religion; it is a relationship with a living God. It is *spiritual* intercourse with our Lord and Savior; and out of this relationship, we have a relationship with one another in Christ and with the world.

**Consider this; commerce is truly the one thing that can unite and is uniting the many forms of government and religions found in the world today.**

Thus, I conclude that the heart of the meaning of a city is found in the word *commerce*, and this provides the best foundation for understanding mystery Babylon and, I might add, New Jerusalem as well. After all, New Jerusalem represents the highest order of spiritual intercourse, for it is built on the love of God and is *in spirit*.

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### ***A mystery.***

Turning to Babylon; we need to recognize that it is a mystery or a secret that many do not, and frankly cannot, see. Think about it; there is really no mystery or secret in a literal city. All one would have to do is wait for it to be manifested. However, this city is obviously operative while it is called a mystery. Of course, the mystery is related to a woman who has Babylon the Great written on her forehead. The city is personified as a woman and must not be taken to be a literal woman.

The mystery is what is written on her forehead, and understanding, if you will, the mystery identifies who or, more preferably, what she (it) is. She is a city characterized as great and strong, and as a harlot and an abomination that will be judged in one hour. Simply, she represents something diabolical that has overtaken the earth in such a fashion that she remains a mystery to the world. The world does not know her true nature until she falls and brings down the rest of the world with her, as represented by the cities of the nations.

To make sure the thought does not get lost, I must state at this point that Babylon, *the great city*, is great because it is a system of commerce that has united the entire world. The city is a world system, and we are living in it this very day, and the world probably has been in it since the early days of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Another way of stating this is that the world system in which all live and conduct business is called a city. All the people of the world and their forms of government have been united within this city. The city is the world, and the world is the city. The city is the *kosmos*, an orderly arrangement that unites the world through commerce.

Unfortunately, most of the world does not know this, even though many speak of how the nations are becoming more united in global commerce. I read recently that the world is made up of increasingly interconnected global manufacturing and financial systems. This defines commerce of our day. Many leaders of the world speak in terms of globalization, but they do not discern the true nature of this globalization. They cannot see it with their natural eyes or with their minds. It reminds me of the phrase bantered about by some liberal politicians: "It takes a village to raise a child." The village that they unwittingly speak of is really the global system called *Babylon*.

### ***Signifies.***

Consequently, this mystery can only be seen through something other than the natural eye. The natural or carnal man, including believers who are looking at things with carnal eyes, cannot look at the world system in which he lives and say, "Ah, there it is; there is the mystery." It must be discerned just as John saw it, that is, *in spirit*. We need to see what it signifies, for *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* as penned by John, the apostle of love, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, **signifies** what must occur.

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**The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John...**  
(Revelation 1.1 KJV)

*Signify* means “to be a sign of or indication of”; it refers to something of meaning and importance. *The Greek-English Keyword Concordance* defines *signify* as “a faded metaphor, no longer meaning to make known by signs, but by speech.” A *metaphor* is “a figure of speech transferring attributes to an object which does not possess them.” For example, the river of the water of life (Revelation 22.1; also 21.6) represents the spirit of God (John 7.38-39). Therefore, if we want to know God’s heart, we must discern John’s word-pictures for their spiritual meaning. Let us say that what John saw were symbols of spiritual realities.

Now, to understand the meaning of mystery Babylon, it is best to trace the word *city* as presented in Genesis, the book of beginnings, for it is here that the spiritual meaning of God’s plan is revealed and His divine law is laid down.

### ***Paradise.***

In its purest form, we could say that the first city was a garden, the very garden planted in Eden by the Lord and over which Adam was the caretaker. In the cool of the day (Genesis 3.8), the Lord God visited Adam, and they had what we could call social, or more specifically, *spiritual* intercourse. They engaged in commerce. However, this all changed when Adam and Eve fell for the lie of the serpent. The nature of the spiritual intercourse changed dramatically as death entered the flesh of man and began its slow but persistent march toward the grave.

### ***The first city.***

After the fall, we are told that there were two sons of Adam: Cain tended a garden and Abel tended a flock. The story is well-known that Cain killed his brother, which is the first recorded murder in Scripture. He became jealous and angered over his brother’s offering to the Lord. Cain offered from the fruit of the ground, but Abel offered the firstlings from his flock and their fat portion, which meant he offered an animal sacrifice. Abel’s offering was in line with God’s law of worship through sacrifice. By the way, that same law is operative under the new covenant, but it is now a living sacrifice of our lives given to the Lord.

**Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.** (Romans 12.1 NASB)

The Lord then declared that Cain was cursed from the ground because his brother’s blood was crying out from the ground upon which it was spilt.

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**He said, “What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood is crying to Me from the ground. Now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand.”** (Genesis 4.10-11 NASB)

As a result, the ground no longer yielded its strength to Cain, and he became a wanderer on earth. But notice what Cain did after he was cursed. He built a city, and the first mention of *city* in Scripture is attributed to him.

**Cain had relations with his wife and she conceived, and gave birth to Enoch; and he built a city, and called the name of the city Enoch, after the name of his son.** (Genesis 4.17 NASB)

*Enoch* means “instructed; dedicated; initiated” (*Dictionary of Bible Proper Names*, by C.A. Potts, Bible Truth Publishers, 1981). Thus, we could say that Cain initiated the first city and dedicated it to his son. Also of note is the fact that tent dwellers, musicians, and inventors of tools came through the offspring of Cain (Genesis 4.20-22).

Since the population of the earth was not large in the early days of Adam, it is most likely that, in the next 1500-plus years leading to the flood, offspring of Cain intermarried with offspring of Seth, born to Adam and Eve after the death of Abel. Other cities were probably built, and the heart of mankind grew more and more corrupt until God had to pronounce judgment on all mankind except Noah and his immediate family.

**Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. The LORD said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them.”** (Genesis 6.5-7 NASB)

**Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence. God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth. Then God said to Noah, “The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth.”** (Genesis 6.11-13 NASB)

The point that I want to underline is that the first murderer, who was also cursed from the ground, built the first city (presumably), and this led to corruption and violence until it filled the whole earth. However, as will be shown through Nimrod, this same nature was not lost in the flood but genetically carried over into the post-flood period, most likely through the wives of Noah’s sons, especially the wife of Ham, who produced Canaan.

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You might wonder what all of this has to do with mystery Babylon. It has everything to do with the very heart and foundation of the Babylon in our day, but we must first have some understanding of what Genesis teaches us, for it is in the book of beginnings that God lays down His divine law and reveals the heart of man that is in rebellion against God.

As a side note, I recall many years ago reading an article about the cities of the world and how, in the history of mankind, they have been primarily a breeding ground for corruption, disease, and all sorts of evil. As I recall, the author proposed that man was meant to live in more rural, agricultural settings and not meant to unite in urban settings, that is, areas where people are tightly packed together as we see in so many of our cities today. The proof is in the fact that, historically, more crime, murders, and disease have occurred in big cities. Perhaps, cities under fallen man can be traced back to Cain, the first murderer among men, and as a rule the cities of man are more a curse than a blessing.

Now, let us move on to Canaan, the youngest son of Ham, and an uncle of Nimrod.

### *The curse of Canaan.*

**Now the sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem and Ham and Japheth; and Ham was the father of Canaan. These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the whole earth was populated. Then Noah began farming and planted a vineyard. He drank of the wine and became drunk, and uncovered himself inside his tent. Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. But Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it upon both their shoulders and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were turned away, so that they did not see their father's nakedness. When Noah awoke from his wine, he knew what his youngest son had done to him. (Genesis 9.18-24 NASB)**

Ham was the youngest of Noah's three sons who, rather than covering his father's nakedness, exposed it to his brothers. Nakedness is representative of sin, for when Adam sinned against God by not obeying His one command, Adam and Eve realized that they were naked for the first time. However, rather than expose their nakedness, the Lord covered them with animal skins. Thus, God revealed His divine law (principle) that sin must not only be covered but also be atoned for by a blood sacrifice, for without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness (Hebrews 9.22). Of course, this pointed to the day that God's Son, the Lamb of God, would come to this earth to die for the sin of the world once and for all, and to establish a new covenant with mankind.

It is evident that Ham despised or rebelled against God's law of covering sin and chose to expose the nakedness of his father, representative of sin. I state that Noah's nakedness is representative of sin, for Scripture does not indicate that what

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Noah did was a sin. In fact, it is possible that Noah got drunk not knowing that the grapes that he grew after the flood fermented into an alcoholic drink due to a change in the earth's climate and atmosphere. We do know that after the flood, the earth was no longer watered from below, but it was mostly watered from above, thus altering the way things grew. At any rate, drunkenness is not a desirable condition and often leads to sin. The sin in this case was committed by Ham, because he exposed his father.

Since Ham was Noah's youngest son, a curse was put upon Ham's youngest son, Canaan.

**When Noah awoke from his wine, he knew what his youngest son had done to him. So he said, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants he shall be to his brothers."** (Genesis 9.24-25 NASB)

Consequently, the line of Canaan was cursed to become a servant to his brothers. We see this evidenced later when the sons of Israel were commanded to possess the land of Canaan in which lived the many tribes with names that ended with *ite*. Thus, we read that from Canaan came the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites, the Arvadites, the Zemarites, and the Hamathites. This was the family of the Canaanites. (Compare Genesis 10.15-18 to Joshua 3.10.) When Joshua entered the land of promise, he and the ancient nation battled the giants of the land; it was a battle between the descendants of Shem, who was blessed, and Ham, who was cursed through Canaan.

### ***The mighty one Nimrod.***

However, rebellion and enmity seem to have been characteristic of Ham's seed, as evidenced through his eldest son Cush, and more specifically through Cush's youngest son, Nimrod.

**Now Cush became the father of Nimrod; he became a mighty one on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the LORD." The beginning of his kingdom was Babel and Erech and Accad and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. From that land he went forth into Assyria, and built Nineveh and Rehoboth-Ir and Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah; that is the great city.** (Genesis 10.8-12 NASB)

In these verses, we learn that Nimrod was a mighty one, a mighty hunter, and he established a kingdom called *Babel*, which is the first mention of a kingdom in Scripture; and he built a great city.

The word *mighty* is an intensified form (appearing twice) of the Hebrew word *gibbôr*, which means "powerful; by implication warrior, tyrant:—champion, chief, giant, man, mighty (man, one), strong (man), valiant man" (*The New Strong's*

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*Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996). The same word is used of Joshua and his valiant warriors or mighty men of valor (Joshua 1.14; 8.3), as well as the valiant warriors within the walls of Jericho that Joshua defeated (Joshua 6.2). Thus, it is safe to state that Nimrod was a mighty warrior, one who conquered.

The word *before* can also mean “opposition.” This is most likely the meaning of the phrase *before the Lord*; thus meaning, *opposition to the Lord*.

*Nimrod* means “increase; rebellious; apostate; valiant one” (*Dictionary of Bible Proper Names*, by C.A. Potts, Bible Truth Publishers, 1981). *The Book of Jasher* (see Joshua 10.13; 2 Samuel 1.18) states: **They called his name Nimrod saying, ‘At that time the sons of men again began to rebel and transgress against God.’** Other references state that it means “headstrong,” “rebel,” or “let us rebel.”

*The Bible Encyclopedia and Dictionary – Critical and Expository*, by A.R. Fausset, Zondervan Publishing House (undated), explains Nimrod as follows:

“The Hebrew name *Nimrod* means “let us rebel,” given by his contemporaries to Nimrod as one who ever had in his mouth such words to stir up his band to rebellion. Nimrod subverted the existing patriarchal order of society by setting up a chieftainship based on personal valour and maintained by aggression. The chase is an image of war and a training for it. The increase of ferocious beasts after the flood and Nimrod’s success in destroying them soon gathered a band to him. From being a hunter of beasts he became a hunter of men. “In defiance of Jehovah,” as virtually “before Jehovah” (Prov. xv.11) means Nimrod, a Hamite, intruded into Shem’s portion, violently set up an empire of conquest, beginning with **Babel, ever after a symbol of the world power in its hostility to God.** From that land he went forth to Asshur and builded Nineveh. ... Nimrod was the *Bel, Belus*, or Baal, *i.e. lord of Babel*, its founder. Worshipped (as the monuments testify) as *Bilu Nipru* or *Bel Nimrod, i.e., god of the chase*; the Talmudical *Nopher*, now *Niffer*. Josephus (Ant. 1.4) and the targums represent him as building in defiance of Jehovah, the Babel tower. If so (which his rebellious character makes likely) he abandoned Babel for a time after the miraculous confusion of tongues, and went and founded Nineveh. Eastern tradition pictures him a heaven-storming giant chained by God, among the constellations, as Orion, Heb. *Cesil*, “fool” or “wicked.””

Consequently, Nimrod was more in character with Cain, his grandfather Ham, and his uncle Canaan, in opposition to the character of his great-uncle Shem, of whom Scripture declares: **“Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem”** (Genesis 9.26). Shem stood with the Lord, and Nimrod stood against the Lord. As will be shown, this is a very important distinction and lies at the heart of the meaning of mystery Babylon.

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### ***Meaning of Babel.***

In Scripture, the Greek word for *Babylon* is *Babulōn*, which was the capital of Chaldaea. However, the meaning of the word is discovered in the Hebrew language. The words *Babel* and *Babylon* are translated from the Hebrew word *bâbel*, which means “confusion.” *Bâbel* comes from a primitive root word *bâlal*, which means “to overflow (especially with oil); by implication to mix” (*The New Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995). So, at the heart of the word *Babel* or *Babylon* is the word *mixture*. The fact of the matter is that confusion is inherently a mixture.

The *New Bible Dictionary*, Second Edition, Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1982, (pages 110, 111) adds to our understanding of the meaning of Babylon.

“The Hebrew word *Bâbel* means “gate of god.” The name Babel is explained by popular etymology based on a similar Heb. root *bâlal*, as ‘confusion’ or ‘mixing.’ Babel thus became a synonym for the confusion caused by language differences, which was part of the divine punishment for the human pride displayed in the building.”

“There is as yet no archaeological evidence to confirm the existence of a city of Babylon prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> Dynasty (c. 1800 BC) but Babylonian tradition and a text of Sharkalisharri, king of Agade c. 2250 BC, mentioning his restoration of the temple-tower (*ziggurat*) at Babylon, implies the existence of an earlier sacred city on the site. ... The ‘Tower of Babel,’ an expression not found in the OT, is commonly used to describe the tower (*migdol*) intended to be a very high landmark associated with the city and its worshippers. It is generally assumed that, like the city, the tower was incomplete (v. 8), and that it was a staged temple tower or multi-storeyed *ziggurat* first developed in Babylonia in the early 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC from the low temenos or platform supporting a shrine set up near the main city temples. ... A late Babylonian plan of a seven-staged *ziggurat* shows that the architectural form was a height equal to the width at base with a cubic temple on the summit.”

### ***Come, let us build.***

Now, with this background, let us turn to the scriptural account of Nimrod’s plan to build a city and a tower whose top would reach into heaven. It is such a common Biblical story that it is not necessary to dig deeply into its meaning, other than to make a few points that apply to the discussion at hand.

**They said, “Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.” The LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. The LORD said, “Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what**

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**they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them. Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another's speech." So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of the whole earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth.**  
(Genesis 11.4-9 NASB)

*First*, it is necessary to understand that building the city was an act of rebellion against the Lord's command for the descendants of Noah to fill the whole earth (Genesis 9.1). Nimrod's band knew they were to scatter over the face of the earth and building the city was their way of preventing that from happening. Some believe this was in defiance of Peleg's move to divide the land (Genesis 10.25). However, it is just as likely that Peleg divided the land once confusion of language set in. Obviously, a city gave them strength and unity, so the Nimrodites decided to settle down in the land of Shinar.

A city also is representative of commerce and government. Again, we need to be reminded that the word *kingdom* is first mentioned in reference to Nimrod, who could be described as a fierce conqueror.

They were attempting to remain united apart from being one with God. We can only imagine that they had a vacuum within their inner man that craved for purpose and unity. They could have dispersed and known the love of God, but instead they chose to unite around themselves, probably even to unite by force.

Again, *The Book of Jasher* may give some further indication as to the nature of Nimrod and his followers. Supposedly, Nimrod conquered all his enemies around him and became king. His followers built him probably the first city in a large valley, and Nimrod called it *Shinar*. He became their lord and king. Jasher 7.46 states: **And all the earth was of one tongue and words of union, but Nimrod did not go in the ways of the Lord, and he was more wicked than all the men that were before him, from the days of the flood until those days. And he made gods of wood and stone, and bowed down to them, and he rebelled against the Lord.**

Whether this account is more legend than fact is difficult to say, but it does seem to fit in with the Biblical account.

*Second*, their heart was set against God, for they proclaimed: **"Come, let us build."** It was not a heart that turned to God and sought for His building, as was the heart of Abraham, born the tenth generation from Shem, who went out looking for the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God (Hebrews 11.10). Abraham was a Hebrew, one who went beyond, one who had a heart to obey and go where the Lord commanded. The heart of Nimrod and his people was just the

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opposite. They were going to be the builder, and they were going to get the glory for their accomplishments.

*Third*, the purpose for building was for themselves, for they revealed their heart as they proclaimed: “**Let us make for ourselves a name.**” The name of the Lord did not matter; what mattered was their name that they sought to glorify. They wanted a name of recognition and honor amongst mankind in their day rather than seeing the name of the Lord proclaimed throughout the earth (see Exodus 9.16). This reeks of the pride and self-exaltation of man.

*Fourth*, they were trying to build a tower to heaven, which must mean that they were seeking to form some type of religious worship, also involving the stars. As revealed through Fausset’s commentary, Nimrod was most likely worshipped as “the god of the chase,” so the tower to heaven was some form of worship that was in defiance of God’s law, later given to Moses, to have no other gods before Me (Exodus 20.3). Men sought to be their own god.

There is some thought that the tower was an indication of *sabeanism*, that is, the worship of *saba*, “the hosts of the heavens” (page 66 Fausset). This obviously supports the fact that *Bābel* means “the gate of god.”

Putting these points together, we can conclude that Babel stands for more than confusion of language; it stands for the mixture of man and the heart of rebellious man trying to exalt himself above God, to be even his own god, and establish his own name and system of commerce (including government and religion), apart from God.

Now, before proceeding to mystery Babylon, let us briefly consider the matter of government.

### ***The God of Shem.***

It wasn’t until after the deluge of Noah’s day that Scripture records the first kingdom or form of government to appear on earth, and it came through the three sons of Noah.

As stated previously, when the flood had subsided, Noah drank of the wine and became drunk, and then was uncovered inside his tent. His son, Ham, saw his nakedness, and on account of this sin, his son Canaan was cursed to be the servant of his brothers.

He also said, “Blessed be the LORD, **the God of Shem**; and let Canaan be his servant. May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant.” (Genesis 9.26-27 NASB)

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Because of this blessing and curse, two forms of government or, we could say, kingdoms formed on the earth. One was *man*-centered and the other was *God*-centered.

The *man*-centered government was the one fashioned by Nimrod and his people, the mighty and fierce conquerors that settled in the land of Shinar. Nimrod's kingdom was the kingdom of Babel, which was also called **Babylon**.

Babylon has continued in some form or fashion throughout the long history of mankind and is culminated in the Babylon of our day, which is the focus of this article. In fact, God used the descendants of Nimrod to chastise His called-out nation, Israel, by allowing them to be exiled to Babylon.

The *God*-centered government followed the line of Noah's son, Shem, and progressed from Peleg to Terah and then to Abraham, the Hebrew, until it broke forth through the sons of Israel as Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt as a **theocratic** nation under the one, true God—a kingdom of priests, a holy nation (Exodus 19.6), chosen to lead all the nations of earth to God. The reign of the heavens was to be manifested through the nation of Israel. We could say that this is the progression of the kingdom of God in the history of the nations that began with Adam but was halted by the flood and restarted with the descendants of Shem and has continued through the line of the true Israel that is in the heart and mind of God, until Christ ascends the throne over this earth and New Jerusalem comes to this earth in all her glory.

New Jerusalem is beyond the scope of this article; however, we need to keep in mind that the holy city is the heart and mind of God for mankind, and that Babylon is the antithesis or counterfeit to New Jerusalem.

However, there is something important to note about Shem in relation to the city of Jerusalem. Shem was most likely the priest of God Most High that Abraham met after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him. He was Melchizedek the king-priest that Abraham blessed and gave a tenth of all the booty of war. Melchizedek, the king of righteousness and the king of Salem, which is king of peace, was a type of Christ who is *the* priest of the order of Melchizedek (see Hebrews 7), the King of Righteousness and the King of Peace.

There is much to be said of the priesthood of Christ according to the order of Melchizedek, but this is beyond our present theme. The point is that, after the flood, Melchizedek built the first city that could be called a city of God, and it was the prototype, if you will, of the Jerusalem that is in the heart of God.

The Hebrew word for Jerusalem is *Yerushaim*, and this word is first mentioned in Joshua 10 in the account of Joshua defeating Adoni-zedek the Canaanitish king of Jerusalem. Evidently, after Shem died Adoni-zedek gained control of the city of Jerusalem until Joshua came along and defeated him. Note that Adoni-zedek and Melchi-zedek both end with zedek, which means “the right.”

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In studying this matter, I had to ask myself why no mention is made in Scripture that Shem built a city when it was most likely the closest thing on earth to what God has in His heart in regard to a city. To me, the answer is in the description of Melchizedek's lineage.

**Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he remains a priest perpetually.** (Hebrews 7.3 NASB)

In like fashion, the city of God, the Jerusalem in the heart and mind of God, has no beginning or end either. We could say that it is eternal. It is as if Scripture is telling us that the true Jerusalem is not of this earth. Even though there is a long history, and often a sordid history, of a place on earth called *Jerusalem*, this Jerusalem was never intended to be the place where God would place His name forever. All earthly Jerusalems were merely prototypes, and rather limited and tarnished ones at that, of New Jerusalem that will come down out of heaven, having the glory of God.

Consequently, I conclude that Shem was not identified directly with being the first builder of Jerusalem because God wants us to know that what He is building is spiritual, or as I prefer to state it *in spirit*; it is not of this earth and not of the materials of this earth. It is not of the soil of this earth but of heavenly or celestial materials. It is *in spirit*, and we must see it *in spirit*. Cain and later the Canaanites and the Nimrodites built great cities for their own fame and glory. New Jerusalem is **the** glory of God.

***She reigns over the earth.***

Now, let us consider the mystery of Babylon *the great city* that closes out our present wicked eon. A few verses from *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* establish her character, as well as her influence and power over the earth.

**“The woman whom you saw is the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth.”** (Revelation 17.18 NASB)

**And another angel, a second one, followed, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality.”** (Revelation 14.8 NASB)

**And he cried out with a mighty voice, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird. 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.”** (Revelation 18.2-3 NASB)

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**“And the kings of the earth, who committed acts of immorality and lived sensuously with her, will weep and lament over her when they see the smoke of her burning...”** (Revelation 18.9 NASB)

**“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, saying, ‘Woe, woe, the great city, she who was clothed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls; for in one hour such great wealth has been laid waste!’”** (Revelation 18.15-17a NASB)

The first thing to note is that the city reigns over the whole earth, not only over the kings of the earth. **“The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues”** (Revelation 17.15 NASB). The waters refer to the entire world population, which today is approaching 6.6 billion people. This is also confirmed by the commerce that is conducted by way of the sea. In Scripture, the sea is often a symbol of the nations.

There are three specific spheres identified that direct the affairs of the earth and over which she reigns: the nations of the earth, the kings of the earth, and the merchants of the earth. These three groups cover the entire realm of commerce as I have presented it. In other words, the entire commerce of the world is controlled by Babylon, *the great city*, and this has led the entire world into a system of immorality, sensuality, and great wealth. Truly, the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil (1 Timothy 6.10). We can assume that the love of money is the heart of this system that has led to greed and personal gratification, as represented by sensuality. This brings to mind Psalm 52, which captures the heart of Babylon.

**The righteous will see and fear, and will laugh at him, saying, “Behold, the man who would not make God his refuge, but trusted in the abundance of his riches and was strong in his evil desire.”**  
(Psalm 52.7 NASB)

*The New American Standard Bible* (NASB) translates the Greek word *strēnos* as *sensuality*; however, other translations use the words *luxury*, *excessive luxury*, *delicacies*, and *wantonness*. According to *Strong’s New Exhaustive Concordance*, *strēnos* means “straining, strenuous, or strength, that is (figuratively) luxury (voluptuousness):–delicacy.” Interestingly, the *Concordant Version* (cv) translates the latter part of Revelation 18.3 as: “The merchants of the earth are rich as a result of her power to indulge.”

I would imagine that many think of the word *sensuality* as sexual pleasure, but the word has a greater meaning than this. *Webster’s New World Dictionary* defines *sensuality* as “the state or quality of being sensual; fondness for or indulgences in sensual pleasures; lasciviousness or lewdness.” *Sensual* is defined as “sensory or sensuous; of the body and the senses as distinguished from the intellect; connected

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or preoccupied with bodily or sexual pleasures; voluptuous; lustful, licentious; lewd; resulting from, or showing preoccupation with, bodily or sexual pleasures.”

Notice that the word *licentious* appears in the definition. This immediately brings to mind the word from Jude.

**For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. (Jude 1.4 NASB)**

Turning the grace of our God into licentiousness means that these ungodly ones are lawless, for they forsake the divine laws of God and, in turn, sin at will, while saying there is nothing wrong with their actions, even denying that they are sin or against any law. They say in their heart that there is no sin, and thus, there is no divine, absolute law by which to judge their actions. To them, all their actions are relative; that is, they are what they make them to be. If they do not acknowledge sin, then their actions are not sin but simply their actions. The result is that they seek to indulge in all that will bring satisfaction to their body and their soul.

This, in turn, should bring to mind one of Jesus' parables.

**And He told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man was very productive. And he began reasoning to himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?’ Then he said, ‘This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.”’ “But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?’ “So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.” (Luke 12.16-21 NASB)**

This and many more verses of Scripture capture the very heart of mystery Babylon and its effects on fallen mankind. Simply, Babylon represents a worldwide system that leads man to indulge in his bodily senses or needs. He seeks to live luxuriously in every way that he can to bring full satisfaction to his body and soul. By the way, the soul does not exist apart from the body, and it can be defined as the perception of the senses of the body. (See my book titled *The Purpose and Plan of the Eons*, Volume 2, Chapter 1, *The Dead Know Nothing Whatsoever*.)

### ***The sea.***

Now, one thing that stands out in Revelation 18 is the reference to as many as make their living by the sea (18.17). Again, in Scripture, the word *sea* can refer to the nations or to literal bodies of water. According to her description, Babylon sits

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upon the many waters, which refers to **peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues**. Given this, we could surmise that the sea refers to the entire world population. However, there is another meaning to the word *sea*, which brings into focus the matter of a world system of commerce.

Consider this: According to 2004 statistics, worldwide, there are 4,000 ocean ports served by 46,000 ships, carrying 5.8 billion tons of goods in 11 million containers. These numbers, although quite large, do not give us a perspective of how big they truly are until we realize that goods shipped by sea account for 80% of all goods shipped worldwide. In other words, shipping goods by sea is the predominant mode of transport, greater than by air or by land.

What John saw *in spirit* was a colossal worldwide system of commerce that leads the entire world into sensuality, that is, into seeking after luxury, wealth, and body-soul pleasures. It makes people drunk with the things of this earth that bring gratification to the body and soul. In fact, this sensuality becomes a form of worship and glorification of man. It is also a system that brings the masses into bondage; they become slaves to the system and must live by its rules, which stand in opposition to God's divine laws.

There was no reason for John to see airplanes or trucks, things that were totally foreign in his day and that would have greatly puzzled him. However, ships were the common mode of transport in his day, especially on the Mediterranean Sea, which was the main body of water that, we could say, was central to where the gospel spread in those days. But it was more than this, for John was caught up *in spirit* and given a prophetic view that signified something that extended beyond the Mediterranean Sea of his day to include all the seas of the world (literally, all the seas or oceans; figuratively, all the peoples or nations of the world). He saw that the primary mode of transporting goods throughout the world by sea would continue in his day and to the very end of the eon, and whatever drives this system makes people rich and, we need to add, immoral and unclean.

Now, when we think of a city, we often think of a place with streets and many buildings all crammed into a rather tight piece of real estate. Using this picture, as stated earlier, many teachers of end-time prophecy see Babylon as a revived city some place on earth, either in present-day Iraq, Rome, or perhaps New York City.

However, I believe this view is shortsighted and misses the mystery of Babylon. I once held some of this view, but I have since repented and spit out the bones. For too long, the Lord's people, me included, have been too myopic and, frankly, have not been seeing things *in spirit*. It is for this reason that we need to telescope out from the world as we see it, and when we do, I believe we will see that the city John saw actually engulfs the entire world, that is, the whole world is the city. Thus, the mystery is related to the whole world as *the great city* and the system that drives the world.

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Related to this part of the mystery is the fact that the city is comprised of all the cities on the earth, for in one hour when Babylon falls, so do all the cities of the nations (Revelation 16.19). Does this mean that all the structures in the cities of the nations fall into dust and ashes, as if wiped out by a nuclear bomb? I do not think so! Again, we need to see what this signifies. Cities, among many things, signify commerce, which includes stock markets, banking, trading (buying and selling), and the financial systems that, as we say, “make the world go around.” Commerce is what drives the economic engine of the world, and it is quite apparent that John saw commerce in action. After all, he heard the angel speak of merchants, cargoes of gold and silver and precious stones and pearls and fine linen and purple and silk and scarlet, and the list goes on to include things that John knew of in his day (Revelation 18.11-13), which all symbolize the commerce of buying and selling goods of value. The merchants become rich from the commerce of Babylon and great wealth is amassed.

All the nations of the world participate in what Babylon offers, and the merchants of the earth become rich by her wealth. But there is more, for Babylon is described as a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird.

**“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.”** (Revelation 18.3 NASB)

Notice how inclusive this declaration is, for it includes all the nations, and all the kings, which means all the leaders of the nations, and all the merchants, which means everyone who buys and sells. I realize that some, perhaps many, see this as part of a worldwide kingdom under an antichrist that will live in this great city. But this is not what John saw. He saw a great, immoral, wealthy city (system) that reigns over the kings or leaders of the earth and in which was found the blood of the prophets and of the saints and of all who have been slain on the earth (Revelation 18.24).

This is another very inclusive statement that reaches all the way back to Abel. How could a modern-day city be held to such account? It cannot unless it symbolizes something. Cain and Abel both symbolized commerce in its infant form. Cain tended a garden and Abel tended a flock. Of course, Cain killed his brother, which is the first recorded murder in Scripture. But what did Cain later do? He built a city, and the first mention of *city* in Scripture is attributed to him (Genesis 4.17).

I find it significant that the first murderer built, presumably, the first city. Perhaps we could assume that commerce began with Cain as well. Thus, at the heart of the cities of the world are murder and the curse of Cain.

Why would this end-time Babylon be held accountable for all the murders that have been committed on earth? Because murder in every incident can be traced to

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the heart of fallen man that is lawless and that seeks personal gratification or sensual satisfaction in disregard of others. Intentional murder comes from the selfish heart of man that lives apart from God and His law, love, and mercy.

### ***Sodom, Egypt, Jerusalem.***

Now, this leads to another matter that relates to Sodom, Egypt, and Jerusalem.

**And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified.** (Revelation 11.8 NASB)

There can be no doubt that *the great city* in this verse refers to Jerusalem that is located in the heart of the land of Palestine or the present-day state of Israel. In this case, it is not only a symbol of something but also the literal city itself and what she has come to represent in the sight of God. This is seen in the fact that she is mystically or spiritually called or identified with Sodom and Egypt.

Christians that place much emphasis on the Jerusalem of our day and declare how much they love her and how much God loves her should have some difficulty with this verse. After all, Jerusalem is not only mystically linked to Sodom and Egypt but also to *the great city*, mystery Babylon. This is not meant to be an encouraging word about Jerusalem, for she embodies all that Sodom, Egypt, and mystery Babylon embody. She is a rebel and a harlot that loves sensuality and money, and that seduces the rest of the world into bondage to her system of immorality and greed.

*Mystically* means that this is not a reference to physical locations called Sodom and Egypt but to what these places signify in the spiritual or figurative sense. *Sodom* signifies **immorality** of the highest order, and *Egypt* signifies **bondage under a world system** of the highest order. Lot and his family were called out of Sodom before its destruction, and the sons of Israel were called out of Egypt and the bondage of Pharaoh. Need we be reminded that the latter calling out required the shedding of blood? The coming out of Lot and Israel signifies coming out of the kingdom of the world and into the kingdom of God where there is forgiveness of sin.

However, take note that *the great city* is the place where our Lord Jesus was crucified, which refers to only one place and that is Jerusalem, and she is mystically called Sodom and Egypt. So, *the great city*, Jerusalem, not only signifies immorality and world bondage of the highest order, but also **murder** of the highest order. One cannot go any higher in rebellion against God than killing the only begotten Son of God. Jesus lamented over Jerusalem: **Upon you may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah. Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones who are sent to her!** (Matthew 23.35, 37 NASB).

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The mystery is that Jerusalem, *the great city*, and Babylon, *the great city*, are of the same heart; in fact, they are one and the same, except Jerusalem is a literal place on earth and Babylon is a system that engulfs the entire world. Both will fall in one hour to bring forth the end of Man's Day, and to usher in the Lord's Day or the Tabernacles Age when the sons of glory are manifested to the nations, along with the King of Glory. Both will be destroyed by ***the fire of gehenna***.

It is worth noting that *gehenna* is reserved for God's chosen people that broke His covenant with them. Those chosen to be the head of the nations rejected the covenant and became apostate and harlots with the world. *The fire of gehenna* represents judgment by death, not judgment by being cast into an eternal torture chamber called *hell*. The Jerusalem on earth has become a symbol of apostasy and harlotry, and this is why she is called *the great city* along with Babylon, and this is why she will be judged as Babylon is judged.

### ***The mystery.***

So what is the mystery of Babylon? The mystery is that Babylon is a wicked system that reigns over the world, and the world will not know it until it is too late, for when it falls, it will fall quickly and decisively in one hour. The mystery is that this system of man, operating apart from God and apart from the blood of Christ, is capable of all sorts of evil until its sins have piled up as high as heaven. The mystery is that on the surface it looks good, even glamorous to some, but inside it is corrupt to the core. **For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness** (Matthew 23.27 NASB). The mystery is that the greed and pride of man has led to the killing of others. The mystery is that it is a system of commerce that overtakes the world, globalizing all world trade, and causing all sorts of greed and hate to be manifested. The mystery is that it is a financial system that is against the laws of God and that fosters greed and hate and sensuality. The mystery is that all mankind is ruled by this system whether it wants to be or whether it even recognizes it. The world is yoked to it! The people of the world have become its slaves. The mystery is that this system dictates the rules for buying and selling amongst the nations of the world. The mystery is that when it falls, the entire world will be in shock, and all the things of life will come to a screeching halt as everyone laments and mourns over the great loss and upheaval. The musicians will stop playing, the people will stop singing, the factories will stop producing, the weddings will cease, and the glory of globalization and its system of commerce will no longer be the light of the world, for its glamour will be snuffed out in one hour. The mystery is that the world has been seduced by her sorceries (Revelation 18.23). The word *sorcery* comes from the Greek word *pharmakeia*, which means "medication or magic." The mystery is that she has put a spell on mankind; it is like ingesting a drug or magic potion to make one drunk or to change one's senses, to even make one euphoric. It blinds the eyes and hardens the heart. It pumps up the pride of man.

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### **Today!**

Saints, the mystery is that we are now living in the day of the mystery; we are living in Babylon, *the great city*. She has overtaken the world, and the world is being made drunk by her wealth and sensuality. However, the good news is that she must and will fall in one hour at the time appointed by our God.

Today, the world is facing a potential colossal financial crisis, and, as of this writing, we may not have seen the light at the end of the tunnel. Many leaders of the nations are trying to put a good spin on what has happened, but no one knows the full extent of the crisis or how it will end or when it will end. I have heard some financial experts say that it will work out, for the US government, along with the other nations of the world, cannot let it collapse.

Please understand that I am not stating emphatically that this Babylonian system, with roots that can be traced as far back as Nimrod and perhaps even Cain, is going to fall today, tomorrow, or even this year. I do not know when it will fall; it could continue on for some years and reach greater heights of pride, arrogance, and greed. Like I state in other writings; the days in which we live are likened to the pains associated with child birth; they come and go, they intensify, and they lessen, until finally, the intensity increases, along with the frequency, and the time in between the pain decreases. We may see a surge of glory in the world system, especially the financial world.

**But** a day will come when her cup of immorality and sensuality will be full, and God Almighty, with one fell swoop, will bring it to dust and ashes in one hour. Swiftly and decisively!

Consider the arrogant heart of Babylon.

**“To the degree that she glorified herself and lived sensuously, to the same degree give her torment and mourning; for she says in her heart, ‘I SIT as A QUEEN AND I AM NOT A WIDOW, and will never see mourning.’ “For this reason in one day her plagues will come, pestilence and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for the Lord God who judges her is strong.”**  
(Revelation 18.7-8 NASB)

She will not see calamity or ruin come upon her system; she will survive all crises; she thinks that she will prevail. But God has another word on the matter, and His word is what counts.

Babylon represents the height of the pride of man; man makes a name for himself. It represents man at the height of his rebellion against God Almighty. “I am in control! I sit as queen over my life! I will build a tower to heaven. Man rules!” It represents the lawlessness of man. It represents the cold heart of man that shakes its fist at the God who is love. For this reason, it will fall.

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Further, Babylon represents the greed of man.

**Then He said to them, ‘Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions.’** (Luke 12.15 NASB)

Jesus warned against every form of greed, but Babylon does not heed this warning. Instead, Babylon represents every form of greed, even exalts greed. Why do stock markets swing up and down like a drunken sailor? Greed!

The question is: Once we see that we are in the midst of mystery Babylon and it is no longer a mystery to us, what are we to do? We cannot leave this earth; we cannot hide in caves; we cannot run from it. What are to do?

***Set your mind above.***

**Therefore, since you were raised together with Christ, be seeking the [things] above, where Christ is, sitting at [the] right hand of God. Be setting your minds on the [things] above, not [on] the [things] on the earth. For you died, and your life has been hid with Christ in God. Whenever Christ, [who is] our life, is revealed, then also we will be revealed with Him in glory. Therefore, put to death your members, the ones on the earth: sexual sin, impurity [or, immorality], lustful passion, evil desire, and the covetous desire [or, greed], which is idolatry, because of which [things] the wrath of God is coming upon the sons [and daughters] of disobedience, in which you also at one time walked about [fig., conducted yourselves], when you were living in them.** (Colossians 3.1-7 ALT)

It is time to get ourselves into focus and that requires that we be *in* spirit as John was *in* spirit. We need to seek above where our Lord is and set our minds upon Him. We need to put to death all idolatry of heart. We need to look for the love of our life to come and rescue us. Have no doubt; He will come, even when all seems to be lost. After all, He is the Savior of the world!

It is also time to buy and sell from the Lord. As Babylon buys and sells goods with hearts in love with money, we are to be a people in love with our Lord who are storing our treasures in heaven.

**“To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this: ‘I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. Because you say, “I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,” and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, I advise you to buy from**

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**Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see. Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me. 'He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'**" (Revelation 3.14-22 NASB)

The Lord's exhortation speaks to the heart of Christendom of our day that has been seduced by mystery Babylon. He advises that all who desire to reign with Him buy from Him. It is time to trade with the Lord Himself. It is time to trade *in* spirit. It is time to engage in spiritual commerce. It is time to set our hearts above and not in Babylon.

It is time to **REPENT!**

***Come out of her, My people.***

I close with the words John heard come from heaven.

**"Come out of her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive of her plagues."** (Revelation 18.4 NASB)

I do not believe this is a command for us to leave the system that has engulfed the world. Actually, the Lord has purposefully yoked His people to this system because we have not been His light in the world, but rather have joined our hearts with the world just as ancient Israel did. Again, it is time to repent! Consequently, we cannot remove ourselves from Babylon on our own, for we would be going against God's judgment of His people. As Peter wrote, judgment begins with the household of God (1 Peter 4.17).

I believe this call to come out is the Lord's promise to His people to deliver them out of Babylon. It will fall, and we will come out of it. This is like the call to Lazarus who was wrapped in the death cloth: **"Lazarus, come out"** (John 11.43 ESV). Lazarus had no way out of death. If the Lord Jesus had not called him, he would have remained dead. In like fashion, unless the Lord calls us out and removes us from the bondage of Babylon, we will remain in it.

Of course, the most notable example of deliverance from bondage was the removal of ancient Israel from slavery in Egypt. The Lord heard the groaning of the sons of Israel (Exodus 6.5) and the call went forth: **"Let My people go, that they may serve Me"** (Exodus 9.13 NASB). And, so it will be at the end of the eon in which we live. Are you groaning to be set free? If you are, there is good news.

## **A MYSTERY, *THE GREAT CITY* BABYLON**

One day, as set by the Father, our beloved Lord Jesus will arrive for His people and the shout will go forth and the trumpet of God will sound, and all the dead in Christ who conquered will rise in the first resurrection and, along with those who are alive and remain who conquered, will be transfigured and glorified as Christ is glorified. They will put on the image of the *Celestial* (Heavenly) One. During this period of time, Babylon, *the great city*, either will have already fallen a relatively short time before or will fall the same week or day when the trumpet of God sounds; the world will be introduced to the sons of glory that will lead them to the Lord and His ways of righteousness, peace, justice, and mercy, and for the first time, they will see the true love of God manifested in and through a people in the likeness of Christ, the very Son of God's love.

With the world's system of commerce in total collapse, the leaders of the world will be ripe to hear the ways of the Lord from a people who know Him, know His ways and laws, and know His love, righteousness, justice, and mercy.

So, do not dwell on the mystery of Babylon; dwell upon our Lord Jesus, the One who loves us and the One to whom we owe all our love. Rejoice; His day is coming! Let us love His appearing!

### Scripture Abbreviations:

ALT	Analytical Literal Translation
CV	Concordant Version (Literal New Testament)
ESV	English Standard Version
NASB	New American Standard Bible

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Article #9

May, 2008