

The Origins of Mystery Babylon The Great

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Last time I spoke, we looked at the whole subject of the wearing out of the Saints. When you look at that subject you realize that there is a false religious system backed by our adversary that is attempting to do that. Today I thought we could carry that concept a little further and investigate the origin of this idolatrous system. We will do this, obviously from our Father's Word and from history and from legend. Hopefully it will be interesting and helpful so that we can understand the context of how this all started. We are going to see that it exists to this very day.

With that in mind we will go to 2 Thessalonians 2:1. We know that Paul is writing here. This is out of the New Living Translation. We have to keep in mind that when Paul wrote this, he thought the end was near. We just need to keep that in mind.

2 Thessalonians 2:1 *Now, dear brothers and sisters, let us clarify some things about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and how we will be gathered to meet him.*

2) *Don't be so easily shaken or alarmed by those who say that the day of the Lord has already begun. Don't believe them, even if they claim to have had a spiritual vision, a revelation, or a letter supposedly from us.*

3) *Don't be fooled by what they say. For that day will not come until there is a great rebellion against God [God the Father] and the man of lawlessness is revealed—the one who brings destruction.*

4) *He will exalt himself and defy everything that people call god and every object of worship. He will even sit in the temple of God, claiming that he himself is God.*
(NLT)

This is going to happen and as we are going to see, this happened all the way back to the time of Cain. This is nothing new, but it is amplified and accelerated as we get closer to the end. Verse 5.

5) *Don't you remember that I told you about all this when I was with you?*

6) *And you know what is holding him back, for he can be revealed only when his time comes.*

7) *For this lawlessness ...* (NLT)

The King James says, "For this mystery of iniquity". Just hold onto the thought of the word 'mystery'.

7 continued) *... is already at work secretly, and it will remain secret until the one who is holding it back steps out of the way.*

8) *Then the man of lawlessness will be revealed, but the Lord Jesus will slay him with the breath of his mouth and destroy him by the splendor of his coming.*

[Christ is coming; therefore, we know that the scenario of this is the end time.]

9) *This evil man will come to do the work of Satan* [That is his purpose, he is inspired by Satan to do just that, but how does he do it?] *with counterfeit power and signs and miracles.*

10) *He will use every kind of evil deception to fool those on their way to destruction, because they refuse to love and accept the truth that would save them.* (NLT)

Obviously, all of us should be seeking the truth in God, about God and Christ, in scripture.

11) *So, God will cause them to be greatly deceived, and they will believe these lies.*

12) *Then they will be condemned for enjoying evil rather than believing the truth.* (NLT)

We see here that at the time Paul was writing this, an evil lawless system was already at work; it was in place. It was affecting the New Testament Church of God. We are going to see that this system will peak during our time, the end time. We see this in Revelation 17:1. Revelation 17 is talking about this same system.

Revelation 17:1 *And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:* (KJV)

We know that the word “waters” is a symbol of nations – “sits upon the throne of many nations”—it has great influence.

2) *With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication,* [There has been intercourse between this individual and this great whore and the kings of the earth.] *and the inhabitants of the earth* [great intercourse between all of them; this is not some small thing] *have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.* (KJV)

Verse 5.

5) *And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY ...* (KJV)

We just read about Mystery of iniquity that Paul wrote about; this time it's:

5 continued) ... **BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.**

6) *And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.* (KJV)

This harlot—this label—Mystery Babylon The Great, has gone after God's people since day one, as we are going to see. Both of these passages use the term *Mystery*. That is Strong's #3466 in the Greek and the Greek word is *musterion* and notice the meaning, it means "to shut the mouth, a secret or mystery through the idea of silence imposed by initiation into religious rights". A secret religious initiation or society or organization. It kind of reminds me of when I was in High School. Some friends of mine joined the Demolay, which is of a High School version of the Mason's. I joined for a couple of years and in Demolay there were secret rituals, handshakes, knocks on doors and all of that. So, I was kind of familiar with things that you kept secret because you are part of this secret society and that was kind of cool.

We see here that there is much that is secretive about this religious system. It's aims, agenda and especially who is behind it, is secret. In Revelation 17 it's called Mystery Babylon The Great. The Greek word for *Babylon* is of course from the Hebrew word *Babylon* and according to Strong's, it's "Babylon the capital of Caldea" but Strong's goes on to say, figuratively "as a type of tyranny". It is interesting that Babylon also means "a type of tyranny". The Hebrew word for Babylon is of course *Babel* and that's only three digits off from the previous Strong's number. Babel means "confusion" and that's going to come into play as we go forward. We see mystery, secret, Babylon, confusion and it says *great*. That Greek word is *mezas* where we get our English word mega and it means "mighty", but there is a twist on this because it says "mighty plus be sore afraid". So, there's a component of fear associated with this might. We are going to see that this ungodly system has grown great—yes—and it causes great fear.

Then we are told in Revelation that this system had intercourse—*fornication*—with kings and inhabitants of the earth. That Greek word we are familiar with, it's *pornea*—Strong's #4202—and it means "harlotry" but figuratively it means "idolatry". That's important to remember. We have a mysterious system that leads to idolatry. So, putting all these verses together. Mystery Babylon the Great and the Mystery of iniquity is an idolatrous, religious system at work in the entire world. It was already in existence at the start of the New Testament and it will reach its peak during the end times—our time—and the being behind it is Satan the devil.

The fact is, this idolatrous religious system began a long, long time ago. Notice, Old Testament Israel worshipped this counterfeit religion. Go to Judges 2:11. The context is the fact that Joshua is already dead now and notice what Israel is doing. Moses is dead, Joshua is dead, that whole generation is gone, Israel is wide open to the influence of the devil.

Judges 2:11 *And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim:* (KJV)

We will see who this Baalim is as we go along.

12) *And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them [expressly in violation of what Yehovah told them not to do; “Don’t worship the gods of the people around you.”—how many times has that been repeated and commanded in the Old Testament, but that’s what they did.], and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger.*

13) *And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroth. (KJV)*

Baal is a Phoenician god mentioned fifty-two times in the Old Testament. This is not a small thing. Ashtaroth can be pronounced in various cultures, Ashtoreth or Astarte but Ashtaroth is a Phoenician goddess of love and increase. That occurs eleven times in the Old Testament. This is after the death of Joshua. Jump forward to the time after Judah’s destruction and Jerusalem’s destruction in Jeremiah 44. The fall of Jerusalem occurred in 586 B.C., Jerusalem was just leveled, the Temple was leveled and looted and Jeremiah was taken by Jewish zealots down to Egypt and he is writing about this in Egypt.

Jeremiah 44:1 *The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the Jews which dwell in the land of Egypt ... (KJV)*

This is the subject, and we’re going to see as we start verse 2, Jeremiah is going to reflect back on what happened in Judea and Jerusalem that caused them to flee down to Egypt.

2) *Thus, saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Ye have seen all the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, and upon all the cities of Judah; and, behold, this day they are a desolation, and no man dwelleth therein ... (KJV)*

He is reminding them of that. Now he tells them why Jerusalem was leveled and the Temple was sacked.

3) *Because of their wickedness which they have committed to provoke me to anger, in that they went to burn incense, and to serve other gods, whom they knew not, neither they, ye, nor your fathers.*

4) *Howbeit I sent unto you all my servants the prophets, rising early and sending them, saying, Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate.*

5) *But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear to turn from their wickedness, [and what was their wickedness?] to burn no incense unto other gods. (KJV)*

God told them not to do that but they just wouldn’t listen.

6) *Wherefore my fury, and mine anger was poured forth, and was kindled in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem; and they are wasted and desolate, as at this day. (KJV)*

God is not happy and He is reminding them, “You are here in Egypt because you had to flee because of your wickedness. I had to step in and Nebuchadnezzar came in and tore the city up and destroyed the Temple.”. Now Yehovah turns His attention to the Jews who were down in Egypt—verse 8.

8) In that ye provoke me unto wrath with the works of your hands, burning incense unto other gods in the land of Egypt ... (KJV)

They didn't learn, they just went into Egypt and repeated the same sins.

8 continued) ... whither ye be gone to dwell, that ye might cut yourselves off, and that ye might be a curse and a reproach among all the nations of the earth?

9) Have ye forgotten the wickedness of your fathers, and the wickedness of the kings of Judah, and the wickedness of their wives, and your own wickedness, and the wickedness of your wives, which they have committed in the land of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem? (KJV)

Notice the response in verse 15; after this condemnation and they knew Jerusalem was in ruins.

15) Then all the men which knew that their wives had burned incense unto other gods, and all the women that stood by, a great multitude, even all the people that dwelt in the land of Egypt, in Pathros, answered Jeremiah, saying,

16) As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the LORD, we will not hearken unto thee.

17) But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven ... (KJV)

Remember that term. “We don't want to worship Yehovah, we want to worship the queen of heaven.”

17 continued) ... and to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: (KJV)

The queen of heaven was the object of worship. Worshipping her was what got Judah into trouble in the first place. They said “We aren't going to learn from history, we're just going to keep doing what we're doing because that's what we want to do.”. The queen of heaven was the object of Judah's worship and it had been going on for a long period of time.

17 continued) ... for then [back in Judah] had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil.

18) But since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, we have wanted all things ... (KJV)

Since we stopped worshipping her, we're in trouble.

18 continued) ... *and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine.*
(KJV)

That was their viewpoint.

19) *And when we burned incense to the queen of heaven, and poured out drink offerings unto her, did we make her cakes to worship her, and poured out drink offerings unto her, without our men?* (KJV)

Of course, the men were involved right there with them. The fact is, we have to ask who is this queen of heaven? History shows that she is the Egyptian version of the same Ashtaroath that Israel worshipped in Judges 2. She is the same woman, the same female. Satan provoked ancient Israel into idolatry, to serve false gods in this false religious system. As we are going to see, his system has existed from the time of Cain until this very day. It is called Mystery Babylon The Great.

This is all introduction and in the remaining time we want to accomplish two things: We want to examine the history of this false idolatrous system and then see what lessons we can learn that apply to us today.

The first thing, what are the origins of this false religious system? The origins are the story of Satan attempting to turn mankind away from the Father. Remember the first eight chapters of Genesis cover a third of human history. Therefore, it only gives us the highlights—the headlines. We also need to note before we start, that looking back that far from our present-day vantage point, we have to rely on ancient texts, ancient legends and myths and attempt to weave them into a whole within the framework of God's Word. The fact is, each ancient culture and kingdom had their own legends and their own traditions of the flood and its aftermath. As you would expect, each one is somewhat different in the telling and retelling and the writing over the centuries and the millennia.

Because these events occurred so long ago, we have to accept and understand a degree of uncertainty some speculations will be involved obviously, some interpretations involved. We can see through the glass, but it is a bit dark because of the length of time that has transpired.

We know Genesis 3 is the story of Adam and Eve and Satan provoked a turning from Yehovah by the first two people. Then in Genesis 4 in the first twelve verses is the story of Cain and we covered that in a sermon on November 17 of last year. Cain was banished from the Garden in Genesis 4 and from that point on, this evil system with Satan provoking human beings began to grow and began to expand in influence.

Let me read from the book Mystery Babylon The Great, by Conder, page 7.

Historical evidence shows without doubt that between the Garden of Eden and the Flood, the religion known in post flood times as the Babylonians Mysteries was being practiced in a primitive form. [In other words, before the Flood it was practiced in a primitive form.]

Ginsburg, in his book The Legend of the Jews, Volume 1, page 125 states that the primitive Babylonian Mystery religion was the worship of the serpent, which seems totally logical knowing Satan and knowing his devices and knowing his motives. On page 116, Ginsburg says:

Cain became a great leader of men into wicked courses.

He brings out that Cain taught men to rebel against Yehovah; to make idols and worship them. He taught them his own satanic religion and historians show that part of that was the use of magic. We know where that comes from. The point is, this evil system corrupted mankind to the point that God had to intervene; Yehovah had to intervene with the Flood in Genesis 6. The fact is, just because there is a flood, doesn't mean Satan is going to give up. This evil system was carried into the Ark and there has been much speculation as to how that occurred. Some say it came through Noah's wife, others say his son Ham. Someday we will find out. The fact is, Satan saw to it that his system—Cain's system—was carried into the post flood world. Satan is not just going to give up and go away. He will maneuver and scheme to make sure his system is alive and growing and expanding.

At this juncture, we have to understand that all ancient cultures had a Flood story. Historians, most of whom are atheist, say the Bible is just one of the stories of the flood; it's not the real story of the flood, it's just one of the many. However, if the biblical account is true—think about this—if it's true, which it is, then all ancient cultures would have a Flood narrative. That is exactly the truth.

Let's start in Genesis 9:18 and start marching forward a little bit in ancient history. It tells us about the sons of Noah. We know who they are.

Genesis 9:18 *And the sons of Noah, that went forth of the ark, were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth: and Ham is the father of Canaan. (KJV)*

Let us just stop there and ask the question: If you're talking about Shem, Ham and Japheth—three sons—why would it be recorded right here that Ham is the father of Canaan? Why mention one of Ham's sons? What's the point? We are going to see. Just keep that in mind.

19) *These are the three sons of Noah: and of them was the whole earth overspread.*

20) *And Noah began to be a husbandman, and he planted a vineyard:*

21) *And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. [He was naked within his tent.]*

22) *And Ham, the father of Canaan [here's Canaan's name again], saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. (KJV)*

So, Ham saw Noah's nakedness, but his two brothers did not see it. We have to again stop and ask, why mention this incident if something important didn't occur? Why is it in the Bible?

23) *And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness. (KJV)*

In other words, these two brothers—Shem and Japheth—had great respect for their father and they would not look upon his nakedness, unlike Ham.

24) *And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. (KJV)*

Something happened--we don't know exactly what it is. Look at verse 25 out of the New Living Translation.

25) *And he cursed the descendants of Canaan, the son of Ham. (NLT)*

Why would he do that?

25 continued) *May Canaan be cursed! May he be the lowest of servants to his relatives."*

26) *Then Noah said, May the Lord, the God of Shem, be blessed, and may Canaan be his servant!*

27) *May God expand the territory of Japheth! May Japheth share the prosperity of Shem, and may Canaan be his servant."* (NLT)

So, there is this curse that was pronounced on Canaan. There has been all manner of speculation and writing over the years about this event. But to get back to the question, why record this if it's not important? Why is the curse against Canaan in these verses?

If you go back and look at the [Encyclopedia Britannica](#), the eleventh edition, before the edition came to be modernized, in Volume 12 on page 868, referring to verse 22, the scholars who wrote this portion of the [Encyclopedia Britannica](#) wrote, "...and Ham the father of [that phrase] should be deleted", they claim. Indicating that Canaan saw Noah's nakedness, it wasn't Ham. That would explain the curse on Canaan. There is some uncertainty about who actually committed whatever was done to Noah. Was it Ham or was it Canaan? From our viewpoint, thousands of years later, we don't know for a certainty. But whatever happened was serious enough to warrant a curse. The fact is, it speaks to the character of Ham and his descendants.

T.H. Leale in his book, [Preacher's Homiletic Commentary: Genesis](#) says, on page 162:

The expression implies something more than carelessness of omission and suggests the idea of some positive act of shame or abuse.

We don't know what it was. But it is interesting that some writers now bring in the narrative from the mythology of pagan religions which have adopted or have their own Flood narrative and events after the Flood. Walker, in his book, Women's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets on page 69, associates Greek mythology with this very event. He says that the Greek god Cronus castrated his own father Uranus. That's a legend—don't know. Cavendish in his book, Man, Myth and Magic in Volume 2, page 546 says the Indian god, in India, Shiva—this is their tradition, their myth, their legend—was castrated by his son immediately after being saved from a worldwide flood in a ship. Is there some truth to that? We don't know.

Kevin James Aaron, who wrote the book Journey from Eden, on page 58, notes that a highly respected Jewish commentator who lived from 1040 A.D. to 1105 A.D. states that it was an ancient Jewish tradition that Ham castrated his father Noah. There again, we don't know. I am not saying this is true, I'm just saying this is what other sources say. We will never know what actually happened until the Father and His Son return. We don't know if Noah was marked or abused in some way, but it was clear that something drastic happened. We don't know what it is.

Why would Ham or Canaan do this? It was a common practice in those days that if you wanted to remove the power of your master or somebody you wanted to overthrow; you would remove his power to reproduce. That is a record of history. It's just something to keep in mind; we don't know for sure but something drastic did happen. Otherwise why was it recorded?

What this account does give us is a glimpse into the character and morals and degeneracy among some of Noah's descendants which had come into existence in a relatively short time after the Flood. There were some bad things that happened and it shows their mentality and their morals and the fact that they were degenerate. We do know that there was something evil within the family of Ham. Notice Genesis 10.

Genesis 10:1 *Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth: and unto them were sons born after the flood.*

Verse 6.

6) And the sons of Ham; Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan. (KJV)

Verse 19. Notice this.

19) And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon, as thou comest to Gerar, unto Gaza; as thou goest, unto Sodom, and Gomorrah, and Admah, and Zeboim, even unto Lasha. (KJV)

We know the story of Sodom and Gomorrah; we know the degeneracy of the people in Sodom and Gomorrah and it gives us a further indication of the degeneracy of the line—the family—of Ham.

Now we come to a son of Cush, who is given special attention by the Bible. Genesis 10:8, out of the NIV.

Genesis 10:8 *Cush was the father of Nimrod, who became a mighty warrior on the earth.* (NIV)

The Hebrew word for *warrior* can also mean “tyrant”.

9) *He was a mighty hunter before the Lord;* (NIV)

The Hebrew word *before* can also mean “against”.

9 continued) ... *that is why it is said, Like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the Lord.*” (NIV)

From Cain on, down to this time, there were people who were against Yehovah and everything Yehovah stood for.

10) *The first centers of his kingdom were Babylon ...* (NIV)

So, we see that we are leading up to the founding of Babylon and it was done by this son of Cush, Nimrod. We know there's been many estimates that after the flood, the animal population was increasing two to three times per year. This was far faster than the human population. Regarding verse 9, some scholars claim that the name *Nimrod* means “emancipator” or “deliverer”. Could it be that he gained original fame by protecting people from the increase in vicious animals? We will also understand, as we go further into this, that the name *emancipator* or *deliverer* has an additional importance and a different meaning.

Two sources say that Nimrod was a hunter of men. Ginsburg, in his book Legend of the Jews, and Dickey in his book, The Bible and Segregation, both say he was a hunter of men. Remember Genesis just gives us the headlines of what happened 4300 years ago so we do indeed, peer through a glass darkly.

Remember Judges 2:13 where Israel worshipped Baal. Let me read from Condor's book, Mystery Babylon The Great, on page 13:

Cush would be called by the name he is better known by in history, Baal. Which is spelled in various ways. Baal is simply a title meaning “lord”. This does at times, cause some confusion, because it was applied first to Ham, then to Cush and later to his son, Nimrod.

We see here that each followed in the footsteps of his father Ham, perpetuating this false religious system invented by Satan himself. Nimrod is known in history and in mythology. In Egypt he's known as a Osiris, the lord of the underworld or the judge of the dead. In Greece he is known as Adonis; in Rome as Saturn and one of the meanings of *Saturn* is "emancipator". He is also known as the god Ninus who was the founder of Nineveh. This is all in the legends of these cultures.

Ginsburg says in his book, Legend of the Jews, Volume 1, page 178, referring to Nimrod:

Not enough that he turned men away from God, he did all he could to make them pay divine honors to himself. [Nimrod did.] He set himself up as a god and made a great seat for himself in imitation of the seat of God.

Just as Cush had done, just as Cain had done and just as we see in modern religions today, there is God's throne on earth and there is the vicar of Christ who speaks for God. There is nothing new under the sun. It has happened millennia after millennia, century after century.

Sarah Sharp in her book, Idolatry: Its Origins and Developments on pages 6 and 7 says:

Mankind became corrupt and they felt the service of a holy God to be an intolerable yoke. [Because there were laws to be obeyed.] Nimrod, the son of Cush, emancipated his followers. [Hence one of the meanings of Nimrod is "emancipator".] He emancipated his followers by separating those around him from holy influences. He, by degrees, obliterated from their minds the spirituality of God's laws and taught them that sinful pleasures might be freely enjoyed without fear.

Is that extant today? Just give your heart to the Lord—you can do whatever you want. God understands, He'll forgive you. Ginsburg in his Legend of the Jews, again on page 178 says that Nimrod's plan was to convert the entire world to his religion and to obliterate the true religion of our Father, Yehovah.

At this juncture now, when this is getting into a boil and Nimrod is in control and he is pushing his religion, Yehovah has to step in—Genesis 11:1. This out of the NLT.

Genesis 11:1 *At one time all the people of the world spoke the same language and used the same words.*

2) As the people migrated to the east, they found a plain in the land of Babylonia and settled there.

3) They began saying to each other, Let's make bricks and harden them with fire." (In this region bricks were used instead of stone, and tar was used for mortar.)

4) *Then they said, Come, let's build a great city for ourselves with a tower that reaches into the sky. [The vanity and the pride of human beings.] This will make us famous and keep us from being scattered all over the world."*

5) *But the Lord came down to look at the city and the tower the people were building.*

6) *Look!" he said. The people are united, and they all speak the same language. After this, nothing they set out to do will be impossible for them!*

7) *Come, let's go down and confuse the people with different languages. Then they won't be able to understand each other."*

8) *In that way, the Lord scattered them all over the world, and they stopped building the city.*

9) *That is why the city was called Babel, [Babel means "confusion"] because that is where the Lord confused the people with different languages. In this way he scattered them all over the world. (NIV)*

In various legends and myths and histories it is interesting that:

The Greek god Hermes is called the divider of speeches.

Mercury has the same meaning in Rome.

Baal, the prime god of Babylonia is called the confounder.

Chaos, another Babylonian god, is the god of confusion and in Chaldean it means to scatter abroad.

We get the truth of this narrative of Babylon from the Bible. But it is also in the myths and legends of various cultures all over the world. The biblical account of Babylon is part of ancient history and mythology as one would expect. If it really happened, you would expect, down through history that there would be a narrative of that.

At this point, things change because a mysterious woman arrives on the scene. We read about Ashtaroth in Judges 2—remember we read that earlier. As I said, she is also known as Ashtoreth or Astarte and she was the goddess worshipped by the Canaanites, and a descendant of Ham. She was later called the queen of heaven five times in Jeremiah—we read a part of that earlier. She is known by many other names in history and mythology. She is known as Diana; remember in Acts 19, the people were shouting, great is Diana of the Ephesians. She was this woman.

In Egypt she was known as Isis.

In Babylon she is known as Ishtar and that's where we get our English word Easter.

In Greece she is known as Venus and in Assyria she is known as Semiramis. According to the early church historian Eusebius, Semiramis was the wife of Nimrod.

In the Sumerian language her name is Sammur-amat. Sumer is the site of the earliest known civilization; it's located between the Tigris and Euphrates River. It's an area that later became Babylon. Today, it is in southern Iraq from Bagdad all the way over to the Persian Gulf. We see that this woman arrives on the scene and she is the wife of Nimrod. According to legend and tradition, Nimrod killed his father Cush. Then he took his father's wife—this Ashtaroth or Semiramis as his own. So now she was his mother and his wife. Students of history know that kings often married close relatives in order to retain power. That often happened to keep it within the family.

Some sources say Semiramis was also the daughter and wife of Cush, which would make Nimrod her son, her brother, (because they had the same father) and her husband. Does that sound confusing? Guess what the name of Babylon is? "confusion". Satan sows confusion. Who is the author of confusion? It is certainly not God the Father.

Let's investigate what happened to Nimrod. Hislop wrote a book called The Two Babylons. Let me read from page 62 and 63.

When the false prophet named Thammuz [which is another name for Nimrod] preached to a certain king that he should worship the seven stars and the twelve signs of the Zodiac, that king ordered him to be put to a terrible death.

If Nimrod was pushing this religion, who is this king that had him put to a terrible death? He goes on:

Who, then, was most likely to head the opposition to the apostasy from the primitive worship? [referring to the true worship of Yehovah] If Shem was at that time alive, as beyond question he was, who so likely as he? In exact accordance with this deduction, we find that one of the names of the primitive Hercules [in Greek mythology] in Egypt was "Sem".

If "Sem", then, was the primitive Hercules, who overcame the Giants, and that not by mere physical force, but by the power of their gods, that entirely agrees with his character; and more than that it remarkably agrees with the Egyptian account with the death of Osiris. The Egyptians say that the grand enemy of their god, Osiris, overcame him and then cut his dead body into pieces and sent different parts to so many different cities through the country.

We can see that in Egypt and in Greece there are accounts of this. Obviously, the narrative is according to their gods, but there is a kernel of truth here. Going on, page 66 and 67.

Now when Shem had so powerfully wrought upon the minds of men as to induce them to make a terrible example of the great Apostate [Nimrod, who is pulling people away from the truth of God Almighty] and when that Apostate's dismembered limbs were sent to the chief cities, where no doubt his system had

been established, it will be readily perceived, that, in these circumstances, if [notice this] idolatry was to continue, if above all, it was to take a step in advance, it was indispensable that it should operate in secret.

In other words, that system had to go underground in order to survive.

In these circumstances, then, began, there can hardly be a doubt, that system of “Mystery”, which having Babylon for its center, has spread over the entire world.

As the result of the death of Nimrod, most likely by Shem, this false Babylonian system indeed had to go underground in order to survive and it became what is called this Mystery Babylon The Great—or the Babylonian Mystery religion. According to various legends, Semiramis—at one point the wife of Nimrod—became pregnant. Some sources say by Nimrod, some sources say she had an adulterous affair. Who knows, someday we will find out. This is around the same time that Nimrod met this violent death and had his body cut into pieces. Probably by the hand of Shem. Going on with The Two Babylons by Hislop, page 58.

If there was one who was more deeply concerned in the tragic death of Nimrod, than another, it was his wife Semiramis. What, in the emergency shall she do? [Remember she has been in power because she was wife to Nimrod’s father, so she has been in power a while and she wants to hold onto that power]. Shall she quietly forego the pomp and pride to which she has been raised? No. Though the death of her husband has given a rude shock to her power, yet her resolution and unbounded ambition were in nowise checked. On the contrary, her ambition took a still higher flight. In life, her husband had been honored as a hero; in death she will have him worshipped as a god.

In an effort to retain power after her husband Nimrod’s death, she claims that upon his death he was resurrected into heaven, he became a god and then he inseminated her miraculously. Semiramis claimed she became pregnant by god in heaven himself—her former husband. As we would say in modern religious terms, an immaculate conception. Her new baby is now the son of god, since she was impregnated by god; one of his names in mythology is Horace. We see right here, long before Christ ever walked the earth, that Satan is counterfeiting Christ’s birth. What does she become? If her son is the son of god, what is she? She is the mother of god. We see that perpetuated to this day.

Condor in his book, Mystery Babylon The Great on page 19 says:

In all these places and in a hundred more besides, the queen of Babylon was the goddess of the moon and the mother of the sun. She was queen of heaven [that we’ve read about in the Bible] the virgin mother of the savior and yet she was still Semiramis.

She is whom Israel worshipped, mentioned five times in Jeremiah. This account is the genesis of the Catholic worship of Mary. It continued all the way up until the early New Testament Church and infiltrated the New Testament Church and then the mother of Christ was deified as the mother of God. Those of you with a Catholic background know this. At this juncture, the story takes many turns.

Christmas—the birth of the son of god—the Egyptian god Horace. Easter—the worship of the mother of god. Ishtar, where we get our English word Easter. The trinity—you have the father who is Nimrod, the son who is Horace and of course you have the holy spirit, but Semiramis claimed to be the power of god so before Christ walked the earth, the trinity already existed in pagan mythology. As perversion entered the New Testament Church, they adopted that pagan mythology. We need to understand that in many cases, the legends and myths do lump together because of the characters of Ham, Cush, Nimrod. Their respective wives, mothers and daughters have a slightly different narrative, depending on what culture you investigate and that would be expected with the telling and retelling and rewriting down over the thousands of years. The point is, this false religious system was firmly in place in Christ's day.

Remember we mentioned earlier the account of Demetrius, the silversmith in Acts 19. He was making idols to Dianna and Paul interrupted the business and all the silversmiths in Ephesus. For two hours, the crowd cried out, "Great is Dianna of the Ephesians". That's how entrenched it was and that was what Paul had to oppose. It was very entrenched in Christ's day.

The system is extant today in the three branches of modern Christianity. 1.2 billion Catholics, 1 billion Protestants and 260 million Orthodox. That system is firmly in place in one form or another in all three major branches of Christianity. Aspects of that system are found in the Hindu religion and in Buddhism and you put those together and you have another 2 billion people on the face of the earth. The result is with 7.8 billion people on the earth today, over half have been deceived by this idolatrous, Babylonian system. It is just amazing.

This entire story demonstrates the power and the persistence of Satan. He does not give up; he increases his efforts and look at the result today. His effort is opposing the one true God. That is his whole effort; to deceive people into not knowing who the one true God is. Who is the one true God? Go to John 17:3; Christ is speaking. No greater authority—any human being on the face of the earth, Christ is speaking and He is going to tell us who the one true God is.

John 17:3 *And this is life eternal, [our antenna is up because we want to know what life eternal is] that they might know You [His Father] the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You hast sent. (KJV)*

So we see this narrative starting at the Garden of Eden, then Cain killed his brother and then it spread through the Ark, the end of the post Flood world with Nimrod and Babylon and then Israel worshipping foreign gods and all of that to this present day that affects

every major religion on this earth. The point is, Satan is on a mission to deceive any human being about knowing the truth. And especially those in the Church of God.

The second point—we only have two—in the remaining time we are just going to ask, what great lessons can we learn from this historical account? That would be another sermon of course but we are going to talk about two. If you like to outline, A—the first one. The obvious lesson is:

A. Never underestimate the power of Satan.

Look at what he has accomplished over the millennia, when you think about it. He's created a counterfeit of every major biblical reality or biblical event. He's created a counterfeit in advance. Historians, scholars and educators can say that this was extant before the Bible, so the Bible isn't the originator of this, it's not the true source.

He counterfeited the reality of the Father and the Son with the trinity. A trinity doctrine was core to ancient Greeks before Christ ever lived on this earth as a human being. He counterfeited creation by evolution. That is a substitute for creation. He counterfeited the flood by claiming the Bible is just one of the many myths in ancient cultures of an imaginary flood. It's just a story, just a myth. He counterfeited Christ's birth with Christmas—the birth of the Son. He counterfeited Christ's death and resurrection with Ishtar or Easter. He has scattered and destroyed God's people down through the millennia and he has come after God's church. He led ancient Israel into idolatry, as we read. He perverted the New Testament church while the apostles were still alive, as we have read. He blew up the Worldwide Church of God by coming into the inside of it—the very leadership of it and blowing it apart. And he attempts to destroy any group that teaches the truth about God the Father—Yehovah—and His Son. Especially people who teach the truth or groups that teach the truth or people who believe the truth. The point is, in not underestimating the power of Satan, we delude ourselves if we think we are immune to the influence, the provocation, of Satan—in our minds, in our thoughts, in our feelings and emotions.

Jude verse 9 is a familiar scripture—we don't often go there—but I think everybody knows this. This is out of the New King James—right before the book of Revelation. It's talking about a fight that occurred between two spirit beings, but notice what happened.

Jude 1:9 Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, [so we have Michael who is an angel from Yehovah and the devil, who is in rebellion against Yehovah, contending, fighting] when he disputed about the body of Moses ... (NKJV)

If the devil could get control of the body of Moses, he would have the body of Moses worshipped as an icon. People would bow down and fall down before the body of Moses. God would not allow that to happen.

9 continued) ... dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke you!" (NKJV)

Michael called on a higher power to rebuke Satan and Satan had to obey. Even the mighty Michael—as powerful as he is and he is a warrior angel—didn't have the power to go against Satan. If Michael didn't have the power, we surely do not have the power in and of ourselves. The only way that we can resist Satan is through having the power of the Holy Spirit living in us—the Father and the Son—living in us. We have to understand, that of ourselves—we can't think of ourselves as being too strong, that we can resist Satan. That is a deception, that is a delusion. Some people in God's church think that I'm just a member sitting out in a seat or just home watching this on my computer, I'm not important, I don't count so why would Satan come after me? Because you are a child of God and you have eternal life offered to you and Satan doesn't want that to happen.

My point is, none of us are immune to the provocations, to the power, to the influence of Satan and we must never, ever underestimate his power; we just cannot do that. We do it to our own peril if we underestimate Satan and his ability to influence us.

The second big lesson we need to learn is:

B. The being behind Mystery Babylon The Great, is our personal enemy.

Emphasize the word personal. Our personal enemy who wants to destroy us completely. He wants to sever us from God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. He wants us to get off track in our thinking, in our words and our behavior. 1 Peter 5:8, a very familiar scripture in this regard. Think of this. If this being has done what he's done with Mystery Babylon The Great, what could he do if he focused his attention on any one of us as individuals. Peter gives us some help in this regard.

1 Peter 5:8 *Be sober, [it's not talking about being sober after you binge on alcohol; the Greek means "to be calm and collected in spirit"] be vigilant [the Greek means "cautious, take heed, be careful what you say, where you put your foot, the direction you go"]; because your adversary ['your' individually—us] the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: (KJV)*

Do we have a weakness, do we have a crack in our armor that he can penetrate and come in and begin to provoke us and influence us? If we do, he will do that—it is guaranteed. In John 10:1, Christ is teaching His disciples using the parable of the sheepfold. Everyone understood a sheepfold in those days was made out of rock. It was thick enough and high enough that the sheep couldn't get over it and it had a gate.

John 10:1 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. (KJV)*

He is not after your best interests. Verse 10.

10) *The thief cometh not, but for [three things] to steal, and to kill, and to destroy:* (KJV)

If he can turn us away so we go into the lake of fire—steal, kill and destroy.

10 continued) *I am come [look at the difference] that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.* (KJV)

The Greek word for *abundantly* means “beyond measure”. How can you measure eternity? It’s beyond measure—you can’t measure it. Christ says, I am offering to those who follow Me, eternity. What Satan wants, despite the attractiveness of it is, you can do whatever you want, you can believe whatever you want, you can behave however you would like, do what is right in your own eyes—the result of that is being stolen, being killed and being destroyed.

Now in 2 Timothy 2:24, Paul is writing about what a servant of God Almighty should be like, a servant of Christ should be like and of course we should pay particular attention because we all want to be servants of our Father and His Son. After all, we are in The Church of God and Christ is the Head of that Church.

2 Timothy 2:24 *And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient ...* (KJV)

Why? Because our Father is patient with us, Christ is patient with us, forbearing with us so he’s saying be patient with your brothers and sisters.

25) *In meekness [not with authority and haughtiness and arrogance] instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;*

26) *And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, [snare can be “a trap”, something that trips you up and causes you to fall and stumble] who are taken captive by him [the NIV says “to do His will”] at his will.* (KJV)

Here’s the dichotomy; here’s where the rubber meets the road. Do we do Satan’s will or do we do our Father’s will? We have to be careful that when thoughts come into our mind, emotions come into our hearts, words come into our mouth--are these from Satan or are they from our Father and His Son. We have to be very careful about that. We are told “Trust no man.”—that means me. Be careful what we think, what we say, what we do--it has to be vetted by God’s Word.

My point in this second big lesson is, we have to learn that we have a personal enemy who will do anything to destroy us. We have to be aware of that. We are deceived if we think somehow, we are immune because we are in God’s Church or we are immune because we have God’s Holy Spirit in us or we are immune because I’m a spiritual giant

and this is not going to happen to me. Or immune because I'm just a nobody and Satan's not going to pay attention to me. All of those are deceptions so we let down our guard. So, let's understand these two lessons.

Let's just conclude now and wrap things up. George Santayana who was a philosopher and author, he lived from the mid 1800's to the mid 1900's says:

Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.

Isn't that true? Hegel's paradox says this:

Man learns from history that man learns nothing from history.

Look what Israel did over and over and over. Look what happened in the New Testament Church—learned nothing from history. We are in deep trouble if we don't learn lessons from the history in God's Word—that's why it's there. It is for our teaching. Our Father's Word is written for our admonition; 1 Corinthians 10:11 tells us that. That was referring to the Old Testament because at the time it was written, the New Testament had yet to be Canonized. So, both the Old and New are for our admonition and our learning.

In Matthew 24:37 Christ is speaking. We have talked about Noah; we have talked about the Flood today.

Matthew 24:37 *But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. [No different]*

38) *For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,*

39) *And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. (KJV)*

Then he goes on to describe people being in the field and being taken, people grinding at the wheel taken and then verse 44.

44) *Therefore, be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. (KJV)*

Then verse 50.

50) *The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of ... (KJV)*

Notice verse 51, kind of scary.

51) *And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (KJV)*

In summary, we know also that those who follow Mystery Babylon The Great are going to reap what they sow. Look at Revelation 18:21.

Revelation 18:21 *And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. (KJV)*

Then verses 22 and 23 tell us that the sounds of people will not be there, the working sounds will not be there, the candles will not be lit by people there because they are all going to be gone. The end of verse 23.

23) *... for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. (KJV)*

That is happening now, it will get worse as time goes on.

24) *And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth. (KJV)*

The Father is not mocked—we reap what we sow—Galatians 6:7 tells us that. Here we are at the end of a long chain of events that began at the Garden of Eden, where Satan has attempted to pervert the truth, to pervert the people that the Father has called down through the millennia. This attempt at perversion has existed as long as humans have been on the face of the earth. Now, today, Satan knows he has a short time and his attempt to deceive is accelerating in force and in frequency. His attempt to pervert the truth and to pervert the Ecclesia is something that all of us have to anticipate day by day in our lives. Every second we have to be on guard against wrong thoughts, wrong motives, wrong words, wrong deeds.

As was quoted earlier, let's learn the lessons from history. That's why they are there. There has been a false religious system that began with Cain. It polluted the pre-Flood world, is polluting the post Flood world and in our time will reach a peak before the Father and Son return. Many miracles, many wonders in heaven will occur. This system was instituted in the beginning by Satan, backed by Satan and we ignore him to our own peril because he personally wants to destroy us.

Here's the good news, as we close with one final scripture, 1 John 4:4. This is the good news for all of us. Despite Satan's power, despite what he has done, he does not have to win in our lives.

1 John 4:4 *Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them [talking about false prophets]: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. [meaning Satan] (KJV)*

So, let's take heart and understand that if we follow God Almighty and put Him first, there is no power in the spirit world or in this physical world that can keep us from the Kingdom of God.