

# WHO IS BABYLON THE GREAT? : PART 1

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A Centuries Old Debate, A Great City Which Reigns Over The Earth: Babylon The Great, My Previous Theological Mindset, Futurist Scriptural Interpretation, Psalm 83 And Isaiah 17, Seventh Day Adventist Church And Other Modern Christians, Re-examining My Personal Understanding, Four Updates To The Series, Beware Of Internet Doctrinal Confusion, Difficulty Of Understanding Ancient Bible Prophecies, The Importance Of Spirit-Led Interpretations, Beware When They Don't Share The Word, Ask God For Wisdom And Discernment, Rightly Divide The Word Of Truth, God Knows What His Word Really Means, We Are All Human And Prone To Error, Foolishness Of Being Hasty With Our Words, Humility In Our Understanding, Beware Of Wannabe False Prophets, A Serious Responsibility To Teach Scriptures, God's Word Is Self-Interpreting, Study Diligently And Connect The Dots, Set Aside Preconceived Ideas, Think Like Original Writer, Read The Scriptures In Context, Be Led By The Spirit, God's Symbolic Bride, One Fold And One Shepherd, Garments Of Salvation And Robes Of Righteousness, Wedding Garment Parable

For literally centuries, Bible scholars and Christian laymen alike have been contemplating about and debating over certain verses which are found in the Apocalypse. That is to say, in the Book of Revelation. Upon examining this intriguing Book, we find that in a variety of verses which are found in six different chapters, the Angelic Messenger who is accompanying John the Beloved -- or John the Revelator, if you prefer -- describes a great city which reigns over the Earth. In fact, in the seventeenth chapter of the Book, we are specifically informed that the symbolic name which has been ascribed to this great city is "Babylon the Great", as we can see by the following verse:

"And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."

Revelation 17:5, KJV

So who is this mysterious woman, and to what specific city does the Book of Revelation refer? As I explain in the series entitled "Jesus Christ's Return: Have We Been Deceived?", as well as in a number of other prophecy-related articles, when I first wrote this series back in 1998, I was of a different mindset -- theologically speaking -- than I am today. Similar to many of my contemporaries, I embraced what is commonly referred to as the "Futurist" point of view, insofar as the interpretation of Bible prophecy is concerned. As a result, for some forty years of my life, my understanding of Bible prophecy was in large part filtered through a Futurist lens. In other words, like so many Christians continue to do to this day, I pushed a number of important Bible prophecies into the future -- that is to say, to our current day or beyond -- as if they had not yet been fulfilled.

Let me give you two simple examples. While I never embraced these positions myself, there are some Christians today who are firmly convinced that Psalm 83 is a prophetic Psalm which describes a great war that will occur in the Middle East at some point in the not-too-distant future. In similar fashion, there are likewise Christians today who are convinced that Isaiah 17 also describes the utter destruction of Damascus, Syria at some point in the future. But are these truly future events as these folks believe, or are they misinterpretations of Bible prophecy, due to certain political leanings which some people have? For those of you who may be interested, I discuss my own understanding regarding this subject in the series entitled "The Psalm 83 War False Doctrine Exposed!".

So as I said, like many of my fellow Believers in Christ, my understanding concerning the identity of Babylon the Great was also skewed for quite a few years. Take, for example, the Seventh Day Adventist church. If you ask one of their members who Babylon the Great is, they will immediately respond that it is undoubtedly Rome. Likewise, many other Christians will also respond without hesitation that Babylon most assuredly represents the modern city of Rome, Italy. "Who else could it possibly be?" they may ask. Such people may even point to a Bible verse or two which -- on the surface, at least -- seem to support their conclusion.

However, it is my hope that by the end of this series, you will come to see that their conclusions are based on a flawed understanding of the Holy Scriptures. This misunderstanding is based in large part on the fact that they fail to grasp the historical context in which certain verses were written.

In other words, they don't stop to consider the situation of the world during the time that the Apostle John received his revelations from the Angelic Messenger. They don't take into consideration the historical, political, religious or social conditions of the First Century, and how they directly relate to the prophecies which were given to John.

Now regarding the seismic shift in my own personal beliefs, as I amply explain in the aforementioned series, back around 2011-2012, due to a number of Bible verses which I was unable to satisfactorily explain, I began to seriously question what I had long assumed to be an accurate understanding concerning some of the ancient prophecies regarding Christ's Return, and a number of related issues. Eventually, this renewed study of God's Word led to my acquiring a new understanding regarding what I now believe is the true identity of the mysterious city, Babylon the Great.

Thus it was that in 2012, I updated this series for the first time so that it reflects my new understanding. Then, in 2019, I tightened up this series even further with a second update, adding additional Scriptural support to it, and renaming it from "Revelation's Babylon the Great" to "Who is Babylon the Great?". Then again, as I acquired even more information to support my new understanding, I began updating this series a third time in February of 2023. However, due to other facets of the Bill's Bible Basics ministry which have consumed my time and attention, I never finished the 2023 update. Thus, here I am again, in May of 2025, performing another update to the series.

But let me tell you, my friends, this series is similar to a good wine. As it ages, and as I add new information to it, it just gets better and better, and stronger and stronger. Its Scriptural basis becomes more powerful, which in turn serves to convince me even more that I am on the right track. Now the reason for this 2025 update is the fact that aside from having additional new information to add to it, it seems that despite twenty-seven years having now passed since I authored the original version of this series, there are still a lot of Christians today who remain convinced -- and who continuously promote the belief -- that the city of Rome is the symbolic Babylon the Great. There are other Christians who insist the mysterious city represents America herself. I disagree with both of these points of view. You will learn why that is as we delve deeper into this series.

When I first wrote this series over two decades ago, I chose to include about half a dozen different popular theories and interpretations regarding the possible identity of Babylon the Great. However, with this current update to this series, I am taking a different approach. Rather than confuse you with all of the different ideas which are currently espoused by Christians of different doctrinal persuasions -- which you can easily discover on the Internet anyway -- I decided that the best course of action is to take you straight to the Scriptures, and to avoid all of that confusing Internet noise. I must admit that I find it rather ironic that the name Babylon means "confusion", and that is precisely what a lot of the Internet theories and speculations will do to you. They will in fact leave a person utterly confused.

Now, before we get into actually discussing specific verses which reveal the identity of Babylon the Great, I feel that it would be helpful for us to take a few minutes to address the subject of Bible prophecy interpretation itself. It is important to realize that understanding oft times ambiguous and nebulous Biblical prophecies is no easy task; not even for those of us who have been studying the Scriptures for many years. Without the assistance and guidance of God's Holy Spirit, a good working knowledge of the Scriptures, at the very least a basic understanding of ancient history, as well as the proper resources with which to cross-reference one verse with another, it is basically an impossible task.

Perhaps this is why at this current time, there are so many different interpretations of these prophetic events. As I've mentioned before, it seems that there are as many different interpretations as there are preachers and Bible teachers. Sadly, to the hurt of the Christian body, some people have a propensity for writing books or Bible commentaries regarding these important topics, without really meeting all of these necessary requirements. The result is that they end up with an interpretation which is sometimes very distorted, totally off-base, and nowhere near the truth. Add social networks to the mix, and we have got a real mess on our hands. With so many voices coming at them from so many different directions, is it really any wonder that a lot of Christians today end up so confused?

I speak from personal observation. I can't tell you how many websites and blogs I have visited in recent years, where the author is rambling on and on regarding what particular verses mean, and her rarely -- if ever -- offers any Scriptures with

which to support his views. He just goes on and on with his own thoughts and his own words, in his own spirit, telling us that such-and-such means so-and-so. People like that are so convinced of what they are saying, that in their zeal, they expect you to believe them, just because they say so. And if you ever try to question them, they quickly become upset and offended. Folks, if you ever come across a site such as that, where the author goes on and on like a spigot that cannot be turned off, but where he never quotes the Word of God, I urge you to stop in your tracks, and go the other way as quickly as you possibly can.

I am very serious about this. I have come across websites, blogs, a plethora of YouTube videos and Facebook pages which promote nothing but absolute nonsense, New Age psychobabble, false prophecies and other extremely deceptive spiritual poison. As serious students of God's Word, we really need to ask the Lord to give us a good dose of Wisdom and Spiritual Discernment. We need to test the spirits; because the truth is that the Internet can be a very dangerous place without these Gifts from the Lord. Furthermore, we all need to follow the wise advice that the Apostle Paul offered to Timothy when he told Timothy to rightly divide the word of truth. Consider the following group of Bible verses:

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

2 Timothy 2:15, KJV

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

James 1:5, KJV

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."

1 John 4:1, KJV

You will find this subject discussed in more detail in a number of other Bill's Bible Basics articles which I will list for you at the end of this same series. Simply click or tap on the link in order to be taken to them. Now, let's be honest here. We all have a natural tendency to theorize and speculate regarding what certain Bible verses may possibly mean. However, it becomes very dangerous when we lean to our

own understanding instead of trusting in God's Holy Spirit, and end up with rather shaky interpretations which we then endeavor to promulgate as the absolute truth. In our quest to decipher these Bible prophecies, it is very wise to take heed to the following counsel which is found in the Book of Proverbs:

"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

Proverbs 3:5-6, KJV

The previous verses can not only be applied to our walk in this present life, but they can likewise be applied to our path in understanding the Scriptures. If there is one thing of which I am absolutely certain, it is that the Lord knows His Word, and He knows exactly what it is supposed to mean. After all, He both gave it and inspired it. Therefore, if there is anyone who can lead us down the right path in our understanding of the Scriptures, He is definitely the One to do it. And He will, if we are yielded to Him, and are able to receive what He shows us.

My friends, to recklessly put together an interpretation, based on a collection of randomly selected and oft times totally unrelated Bible verses, and then proclaim it to be the absolute truth above all others, is really the epitome of self-righteous pride. Furthermore, it is also being very irresponsible. Sadly, I encounter so many Christians who do this very thing today. As I said earlier, they are all over the Internet, particularly on the social networks. They are novices pretending to be experienced teachers of God's Word. I am reminded of the following Bible verses written by the Apostles Peter and Paul:

"And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know."

1 Corinthians 8:2, KJV

"From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm."

1 Timothy 1:6-7, KJV

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;"

2 Timothy 4:3, KJV

"Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

Hebrews 5:11-14, KJV

"And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest [twist, pervert], as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."

2 Peter 3:15-16, KJV

For this reason, I am very prayerful regarding how I express my opinions in my articles. If you are an avid reader of my writings, then you will notice that I am quite liberal in my usage of words and phrases such as possibly, perhaps, maybe, may, according to my understanding, it seems to me, in my view, etc. This shows the reader that while I have a lot of faith in what I say, it does not necessarily mean that I am right all the time. After all, I am only human, and thus I am prone to error, just like everyone else. I simply do not believe that anyone has a monopoly on the truth, except for the Lord Himself, of course. This is why I wrote articles such as "My Evolving Theology".

I will admit that there were times in the past, many years ago, when I was not so cautious with my words. I was a bit reckless due to people and beliefs I was associated with at the time. As a young, on-fire evangelist, I thought I knew quite a bit, and I imagine that I was probably proud of it to some degree. Thankfully, time and age have mellowed me out. Of course, I still have some very strongly-held views regarding certain beliefs and doctrines. I am reminded of Bible verses such as the following:

"In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he

that refraineth his lips is wise."

Proverbs 10:19, KJV

"A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards."

Proverbs 29:11, KJV

"Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few."

Ecclesiastes 5:2, KJV

"For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

Matthew 12:37, KJV

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:"

James 1:19, KJV

As I've advanced in years -- I'll be seventy-two this year -- and have dedicated myself to a closer and more thorough, more personal study of the Scriptures -- instead of just depending on what other folks say or teach -- I have learned how little I really know, as well as how wrong other Christians can be, despite their claims to speak the truth. This has resulted in my acquiring a humility which I imagine I did not possess in my younger years. In fact, this personal realization is what actually prompted me to write the article entitled "Humility in Our Understanding of God's Word", as well as my related companion article entitled "Should Christians Engage in Doctrinal Debates?".

Since my younger days as an evangelist, I have also learned that to say something is of the Lord when it might not be, is indeed a very grave matter, and should not be taken lightly. Sadly, as I mentioned earlier, this is precisely what we see happening all over the Internet right now. There are so many of these self-proclaimed, wannabe false prophets that it is really mind-boggling. It is unbelievable some of the things which they espouse, and the "prophecies" which they make. It is truly a time of great deception. The tragedy is that it is not just happening in the United States. It is happening in ministries everywhere, based on what I have seen on the web.

But as for me, I take the Bill's Bible Basics ministry very seriously, and I take my responsibility as a teacher of the

Scriptures very seriously. This is a topic I address in the article "The Office of Prophets and Teachers". It is very important to me that I am propagating the truth to the best of my knowledge. As I note in "My Evolving Theology", it is for this reason that I am constantly updating my articles as God reveals more to me by His Spirit. So, if He shows me that my previous understanding was not exactly on the mark, I will not hesitate to change it and update it.

In short, unlike a number of modern, rigid writers and overly confident Bible instructors who believe that their words are final and basically written in stone, as I point out in "Are You Flexible?", I endeavor to remain flexible and sensitive to the leading of the Lord's Spirit. I don't want to be found guilty by the Lord of leading anyone astray or causing anyone to stumble or fall away from the truth.

As I explain in a few other articles, that is precisely what the word "offend" means in the following verse. It is in fact derived from the Koine Greek word "skandalizo", which means to put a stumbling block or an impediment in someone's way. In regards to our faith, it means to cause someone to fall away from the truth:

"But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

Matthew 18:6, KJV

Having now thoroughly covered this subject, we are going to begin our actual discussion regarding the identity of that mysterious woman, Babylon the Great, who is described for us in the Book of Revelation. Please understand from the start that this is going to require some patience on your part as I slowly build the Scriptural case for you, and explain one Biblical concept after another, one verse after another, and one chapter after another. By the time we are done, you will have a very clear picture of exactly who Babylon is. Are you ready? So let's go! Please hold on to your seat as we begin taking a deep dive into God's amazing Word.

Now, as my longtime readers will already know, I have long believed that the Bible in large part interprets itself, if we are diligent to study it. That is in fact the key which unlocks so much of the Scriptures. The more you read God's Word, and the more you become familiar with it, the more

different passages will connect together in order to form a beautiful tapestry of Scriptural truth. I am convinced that this same approach can be applied in order to discover the identity of the mysterious Babylon the Great. So what if I were to tell you that we can know with a high degree of certainty who or what Babylon is, without resorting to all of the doctrinal confusion which is found on the Internet? Would you be interested? Obviously, you are. Otherwise, you would not now be reading this series.

In approaching this issue, one of the very first things we need to do is to set aside any preconceived ideas, beliefs or interpretations that we may have acquired outside of the Bible itself. Second, we must begin to think and see things the way that the original writers of the Scriptures saw and thought about them. We need to remove ourselves from OUR current time period, and imagine that we are living during THEIR time period. In other words, as I clearly explain in the article called "Understanding the Bible in Context", we need to read the Bible IN CONTEXT. We next to study the who, what, where, when and why of everything that we read. Who said it or wrote it? Who was it specifically addressed to? What were the conditions at the time? Etc.

Sadly, as I already mentioned, it is precisely because so many modern Christians fail to do this, that they fall into serious doctrinal error, and arrive at some of the craziest and most outlandish interpretations that you can imagine. It is enough to make your jaw drop. Last of all, as I likewise pointed out earlier, we need to ask the Lord for His Spirit of wisdom and understanding, so that we are able to truly see things as He sees them. Only in this way can we properly identify who Babylon the Great really is.

To understand the mystery of Babylon the Great, we need to first realize that throughout the Bible, God symbolically refers to His people -- in other words, both the Old and the New Testament saints -- as His wife or bride. In the case of Old Testament believers, they looked forward in faith to the revelation of Jesus Christ. In the case of the First Century Church, Jesus was present with them, and then the Apostles continued His work. In the case of the post-First Century Church, we obviously look backwards in faith to the events of two thousand years ago.

But the main point to consider here is that faith in the redemptive Blood of Jesus Christ makes us all the spiritual

wife, or bride, of Christ. As the Apostle Paul wrote in his Epistle to the Galatian Church, what we are in the flesh has absolutely no bearing. In other words, it has nothing to do with our ethnic origin. Consider the following verse:

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

Galatians 3:28, KJV

So if someone comes along and tries to convince you that God has separate plans for the Gentiles and the Jews, I urge you to watch out! If they claim that God has made certain special accommodations for the Jews, do NOT believe them! That is a divisive doctrine which does NOT conform to "ye are all one in Christ Jesus." God does NOT have two brides. He only has one. As Jesus himself clearly stated in the Gospel of John:

"And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be ONE FOLD, and ONE SHEPHERD."

John 10:16, KJV

The Bible is literally full of verses from beginning to end which serve to clarify this particular point regarding the Lord's singular bride who is clothed in her wedding garment which is also referred to as a "robe of righteousness" and a "garment of salvation". For example, consider the following words which were written by the Prophet Isaiah:

"I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels."

Isaiah 61:10, KJV

Please notice how Isaiah writes "he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness". Now, for those of you who are familiar with the New Testament teachings of Jesus Christ, the previous verses describing a bridegroom and his bride will no doubt ring a bell. Jesus was obviously quite familiar with the Old Testament Scriptures. So it should come as no surprise to us that He would incorporate them into His own Parables, such as we see in the following set of verses which are found in the Gospel of Matthew:

"Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen."

Matthew 22:8-14, KJV

Isn't that amazing? The Lord is talking about the very same bride and bridegroom, and the very same garment of salvation as the Prophet Isaiah. For anyone who may not understand this Parable, the people who participate in this marriage feast are those who have received the free gift of Eternal Life through faith in Jesus Christ. The robe or garment they each wear signifies the righteousness they have received by being washed in the Blood of the Lamb. This same white robe of righteousness is likewise mentioned in various verses which are found in the Book of Revelation. Consider the following examples:

"And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled."

Revelation 6:9-11, KJV

"After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands . . . And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These

are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Revelation 7:9, 13-14, KJV

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God."

Revelation 19:7-9, KJV

Please go to part two for the continuation of this series.

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WHO IS BABYLON THE GREAT? : PART 2

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Justified And Made Righteous By Christ Not By Our Good Works, We're Washed In And Cleansed By The Blood Of The Lamb Of God, Parable Of The Ten Virgins, John The Baptist Mentions A Bride And Her Bridegroom, The Apostle Paul Says We Are Married To Christ, The Book Of Revelation Describes 144,000 As Virgins, New Jerusalem Described As A Bride Married To Her Bridegroom, Jesus Is The Head Of The Church, One Flesh And One In Spirit With Christ, Attributes Of A Healthy Marriage Relationship, Christ's Submissive Obedient Spiritual Bride, One Wife And Voluntary Celibacy, Having Multiple Wives Often Resulted In Serious Problems, Solomon's Pagan Wives And Eventual Apostasy

Continuing our discussion from part one, as I have pointed

out many times before, this righteousness is not a result of our own supposed "good works". The Bible makes it very clear that it can only be obtained through faith in the Sacrifice which Jesus made for us all at Calvary. Faith in the Blood of Christ is the only thing which is able to cleanse us of our sins, and justify us in the sight of God. The following group of verses clarifies all of these points:

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;"  
Titus 3:5, KJV

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."  
Ephesians 2:8-9, KJV

"And by him [Jesus] all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."  
Acts 13:39, KJV

"But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."  
Romans 3:21-26, KJV

"For if by one man's offence [Adam's] death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) . . . That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."  
Romans 5:17, 21, KJV

"And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness."

Romans 8:10, KJV

"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified . . . I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."

Galatians 2:16, 21, KJV

"But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."

Ephesians 2:13, KJV

"And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:"

Philippians 3:9, KJV

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

1 John 1:7, KJV

"And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

1 John 2:2, KJV

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

1 John 4:10, KJV

"And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,"

Revelation 1:5, KJV

"And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Revelation 7:14, KJV

"Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate."

Hebrews 13:12, KJV

"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

Matthew 26:26-28, KJV

"And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many."

Mark 14:22-24, KJV

"And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you."

Luke 22:14-20, KJV

Returning to the marriage feast which was discussed by the Lord, three chapters later, in the twenty-fifth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus again compares the true Body of Believers to a multiple bride. In this case, He shares with His followers the Parable of the Ten Virgins, as we see by the following group of verses:

"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept, And at midnight there was a cry made,

Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.

Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."

Matthew 25:1-13, KJV

As you may recall, even John the Baptist was fully aware of the spiritual parallel which exists between Christ and His Church, and the role of the bride and the bridegroom. In the third chapter of the Gospel of John, we discover the Baptist saying the following, where he represents himself as "the friend":

"He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled."

John 3:29, KJV

In fact, if we go back to the ninth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, we find Jesus responding in the following manner when the disciples of John the Baptist approached Him about a certain question they had:

"Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not? And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast."

Matthew 9:14-15, KJV

Turning to the Epistles, in his Epistle to the Romans, the Apostle Paul likewise reminds us rather straightforwardly that we Believers are spiritually married to Jesus Christ, as we can easily determine by the following verse that is found in the seventh chapter:

"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law

by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."

Romans 7:4, KJV

Very similar to the Parable of the Ten Virgins, the Book of Revelation follows the exact same pattern and also describes the one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed servants of God as being spiritual virgins, as we see by the following verse:

"These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb."

Revelation 14:4, KJV

Furthermore, Revelation chapters 21 and 22 likewise describe New Jerusalem as a bride who marries her bridegroom, Jesus Christ. Consider the following verses:

"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband . . . And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lambs wife."

Revelation 21:2, 9, KJV

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

Revelation 22:17, KJV

Considering the preponderance of Scriptural evidence I have provided here, it should be evident to you by now that the bride of Christ actually represents the saved body of Christ who faithfully "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." If we truly believe the Scriptures, then in my view, there is simply no other way to understand all of these verses. In contrast, what does the Bible have to say regarding Babylon the Great? We will get to that issue in just a moment, but first, let us discuss the Bridegroom.

As some of you will know, aside from serving as a means of procreation and providing love, support and companionship to each other, earthly marriages are also meant to serve as a

reflection of our spiritual relationship with Jesus Christ. The Bible informs us that Jesus is the Head of the Church, just as the husband is the head of the human family. This point is made evident by verses such as the following:

"But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God."

1 Corinthians 11:3, KJV

"Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,"

Ephesians 1:20-22, KJV

"But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:"

Ephesians 4:15, KJV

"For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body."

Ephesians 5:23, KJV

"And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence."

Colossians 1:18, KJV

"And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:"

Colossians 2:10, KJV

"Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,"

1 Peter 2:7, KJV

As the bride of Jesus Christ, the Scriptures teach us that we are supposed to become one with Him in Spirit, just as a man and a woman also become one in the flesh through sexual intercourse. Again, consider the following group of verses which verify this point:

"And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."

Genesis 2:23-24, KJV

"And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

Matthew 19:4-6, KJV

"But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

Mark 10:6-9, KJV

"Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken."

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, KJV

"And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, THAT THEY MAY BE ONE, as we are . . . THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be ONE IN US: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; THAT THEY MAY BE ONE, even as WE ARE ONE: I in them, and thou in me, THAT THEY MAY BE MADE PERFECT IN ONE; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."

John 17:11, 21-23, KJV

"What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is

one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh."

1 Corinthians 6:16, KJV

"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh."

Ephesians 5:31, KJV

So exactly what is a marriage relationship supposed to be like? Aside from being one in the flesh through intercourse, what are its specific attributes? In other words, how are a husband and wife supposed to treat each other and comport themselves? Furthermore, how does this earthly relationship reflect on our spiritual relationship with Christ? Again, the Bible offers us a very clear answer in verses such as the following, where we are informed that the husband is the head of the relationship, and the wife is supposed to love him, reverence and respect him, and obey and submit herself to him in humility. In return, a husband is also supposed to love and cherish his wife:

"Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband."

Ephesians 5:21-33, KJV

"Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the

word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:"

1 Peter 3:1-5, KJV

"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them."

Colossians 3:17-19, KJV

"In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works. Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression."

1 Timothy 2:9-14, KJV

"Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church."

1 Corinthians 14:34-35, KJV

"Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and THY DESIRE SHALL BE TO THY HUSBAND, and he shall rule over thee."

Genesis 3:16, KJV

"Have we not POWER TO LEAD about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?"

1 Corinthians 9:5, KJV

This then is also the type of spiritual relationship which Christ desires to have with us, His Church and bride. Jesus wants to love us. In return, He requires our love, respect, reverence, obedience and submission to His will for each of our lives. He desires that we be totally dedicated to Him, and to no other. Regarding the subject of humble submission, I invite you to read my article called "So You Really Think You Are So Humble?". You will find it listed at the end of this same series.

You may have noticed that while a number of Patriarchs and kings in the Old Testament had multiple wives and concubines -- and multiple children by them -- by the time of the First Century, the Early Church had adopted a position of either voluntary celibacy -- as the Apostle Paul recommended -- or else one-on-one marriage relationships -- again, promoted by the Apostle Paul -- as we can determine by the following set of verses:

"Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his OWN WIFE, and let every woman have her own husband."

1 Corinthians 7:1-2, 10-16, KJV

"A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of ONE WIFE, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;"

1 Timothy 3:2, KJV

"Let the deacons be the husbands of ONE WIFE, ruling their children and their own houses well."

1 Timothy 3:12, KJV

"If any be blameless, the husband of ONE WIFE, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly."

Titus 1:6, KJV

"For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it."

Matthew 19:12, KJV

"But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. For

I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn . . . But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches . . . Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called . . . Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God . . . But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife. There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband. And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction."

1 Corinthians 7:6-9, 17, 20, 24, 32-35, KJV

And with good reason the First Century Church adopted this particular position. Upon examining the Old Testament, we quickly discover that multiple wives often led to serious problems. Adam only had one wife, and her disobedience led to the downfall of man. Abraham only had Sarah and Hagar, and that eventually led to jealousy problems where he was forced to send away Hagar and Ishmael. Jacob had multiple wives and concubines, and we are all aware of how his sons became jealous of Joseph. Likewise, there appears to have been jealousy between Rachel and Leah.

King David likewise had multiple wives and concubines. This too eventually led to jealousies, infighting and betrayal between his wives and his children, as well as with David himself. Perhaps the worst of them all was King Solomon, who had many wives and concubines who sadly led him astray and into such a deep state of apostasy, that the Lord eventually rent the kingdom from his son, as we see by the following group of verses:

"But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; Of the nations concerning

which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as did David his father. Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods. And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice, And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the LORD commanded . . . Because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments, as did David his father."

1 Kings 11:1-10, 33, KJV

Please go to part three for the continuation of this series.

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WHO IS BABYLON THE GREAT? : PART 3

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God Rents The Kingdom From Solomon's Son Rehoboam, Lust And

Adultery Will Lead To Destruction Of A Marriage Relationship, The Woman Caught In Adultery, Bible Verses Regarding Adultery, Self-Righteous Hypocritical Legalistic Scribes And Pharisees, God's Virgin Wife, Without Spot And Blameless, Separate From The World, Submissive Virgin Bride Versus A Rebellious Harlot, Spiritual Whoredoms Of Israel And Judah, Writings Of Samuel Jeremiah Ezekiel And Hosea, Two Adulterous Sisters, The Lord Grants A Bill Of Divorcement, Assyrian Invasion And Diaspora

Continuing our discussion from part two, the tragedy of this situation regarding King Solomon's apostasy from the Lord is that many years earlier, when the Lord appeared to Solomon the second time, He clearly warned him of what would happen if he forsook the Lord and followed after the false gods of the nations around them. Consider the following group of Bible verses:

"That the LORD appeared to Solomon the second time, as he had appeared unto him at Gibeon. And the LORD said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually. And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments: Then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever, as I promised to David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel. But if ye shall at all turn from following me, ye or your children, and will not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them: Then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all people: And at this house, which is high, every one that passeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss; and they shall say, Why hath the LORD done thus unto this land, and to this house? And they shall answer, Because they forsook the LORD their God, who brought forth their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have taken hold upon other gods, and have worshipped them, and served them: therefore hath the LORD brought upon them all this evil."

1 Kings 9:2-9, KJV

Thus, as the following verses reveal, the Lord kept His word to Solomon, and ten tribes were ripped away during the reign of his son, Rehoboam:

"Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant. Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but will give one tribe to thy son for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen . . . And it came to pass at that time when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way; and he had clad himself with a new garment; and they two were alone in the field: And Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him, and rent it in twelve pieces: And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces: for thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee: (But he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel:) Because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments, as did David his father. Howbeit I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand: but I will make him prince all the days of his life for David my servant's sake, whom I chose, because he kept my commandments and my statutes: But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand, and will give it unto thee, even ten tribes. And unto his son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a light alway before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there. And I will take thee, and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth, and shalt be king over Israel."

1 Kings 11:11-13, 29-37, KJV

If even one aspect of our spiritual relationship with the Lord should falter, just as occurs with human marriages, the entire relationship may come tumbling down. And therein lies the problem. You see, since God first created the institution

of marriage in the Book of Genesis, the enemy has fought to destroy it. One of his primary tools of destruction has been human lust, which, sad to say, has quite often led to marital infidelity -- that is, adultery -- and the total annihilation of the marriage, leading to divorce. Because God views human marriage as a reflection of the relationship between Christ and His Church, He set down very strict rules regarding those people who would break this sacred bond. In fact, since the pages of the Old Testament, people who were caught in the act of adultery, were stoned to death. This is in fact how the scene in the Gospel of John came to take place, as we see by the following verses:

"And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them. And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."

John 8:2-11, KJV

Now, technically speaking, we can conclude that the scribes and the Pharisees were doing the right thing. After all, the Laws of Moses clearly defined what adultery was, as well as what the punishment was for those who committed it. In fact, as you may know, even Jesus spoke on this subject, as we see by the following set of Bible verses:

"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. It hath been said,

Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery."

Matthew 5:27-28, 31-32, KJV

"And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery."

Matthew 19:9, KJV

"And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter. And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery."

Mark 10:10-12, KJV

"Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery."

Luke 16:18, KJV

"Thou shalt not commit adultery . . . Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's."

Exodus 20:14, 17, KJV

"And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death."

Leviticus 20:10, KJV

"Neither shalt thou commit adultery."

Deuteronomy 5:18, KJV

While the scribes and the Pharisees were technically correct by being obedient to the Mosaic Law, nevertheless, they were still very wrong. Why was this? Quite simply, because they erroneously placed legalism, and the harsh mandates of the letter of the Law, before love, mercy and forgiveness. That is not all. They were flaunting their own self-righteousness, which is why the Lord very quickly dressed them down. In his

Epistle to the Roman brethren, the Apostle Paul also exposed the self-righteous and hypocritical nature of his own Jewish brethren when he wrote the following lines:

"Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?"

Romans 2:17-23, KJV

Of course, the Apostle Paul was merely reiterating what the Lord had said in the Gospels when He blasted those very same self-righteous, legalistic hypocrites in Matthew 23, where He boldly said the following:

"Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not."

Matthew 23:1-3, KJV

Thus far, we have firmly established through many Scriptures that the Lord's Church is symbolized as His faithful, virgin bride. Perhaps you are wondering why the Lord's spiritual wife is referred to as being a virgin bride. Well, aside from the fact that she has remained faithful to the one true God and to her Husband, Jesus Christ, she has likewise maintained herself without spot and blameless. In other words, she has not allowed herself to be besmirched by the world. She has not made herself a friend of the world. She has in fact kept herself separate from the world. You may recall that in part two, I shared the following verse with you:

"These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men,

being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb."

Revelation 14:4, KJV

When I was still a teenager -- and a very young Christian -- upon reading that verse for the first time, in my ignorance, I assumed that it was referring to physical virginity. As a result, I made a promise to myself that I would endeavor to remain a virgin for the rest of my mortal life. Of course, as I am sure you can imagine, human biological urges being what they are, I was unable to keep that promise to myself. However, quite a few years later, and after having studied the Scriptures more deeply, I finally came to realize that similar to other parts of the Book of Revelation, the verse was meant to be understood in a purely symbolic sense.

In other words, if God views the mystery city Babylon the Great as a whorish woman in the Scriptures, then it offers the distinct possibility that the women we see mentioned in the previous verse likewise represent cities of the world, or perhaps even the world in general. In my view, this seems to make perfect sense when we consider all of the following verses which speak about committing spiritual adultery with the world, keeping ourselves separate from the world, being blameless, without spot, unrebukeable, etc.:

"Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."

James 4:4, KJV

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."

1 John 2:15-16, KJV

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,"

2 Corinthians 6:17, KJV

"Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."

John 18:36, KJV

"I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil."

John 17:14-15, KJV

"If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

John 15:19, KJV

"No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."

2 Timothy 2:4, KJV

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."

Colossians 3:1-2, KJV

"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

Matthew 6:24, KJV

"No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

Luke 16:13, KJV

"And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away."

1 Corinthians 7:31, KJV

"While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

2 Corinthians 4:18, KJV

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things

declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city."

Hebrews 11:13-16, KJV

"I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall also confirm you unto the end, THAT YE MAY BE BLAMELESS in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."

1 Corinthians 1:4-8, KJV

"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Do all things without murmurings and disputings: THAT YE MAY BE BLAMELESS and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain."

Philippians 2:12-16, KJV

"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body BE PRESERVED BLAMELESS unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

1 Thessalonians 5:23, KJV

"I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; That thou keep this commandment WITHOUT SPOT, UNREBUKEABLE, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ:"

1 Timothy 6:13-14, KJV

"Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, WITHOUT SPOT,

AND BLAMELESS."

2 Peter 3:13-14, KJV

"But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content . . . I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; That thou keep this commandment WITHOUT SPOT, UNREBUKEABLE, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ:"

1 Timothy 6:6-8, 13-14, KJV

It might interest you to know that in the previous verses, the phrase "without spot" is derived from the Koine Greek word "aspilos". Pronounced as'-pee-los, This word means to be spotless, irreproachable, unsullied or free from vice. In other words, in the context of the previous verses, it is referring to being unsullied by the world. Looking at this issue from another perspective, it does not make much sense that God would say "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" to Adam and Eve in the Book of Genesis, and bless human marriage relationships -- which Jesus confirmed in the Gospels -- and then turn around and tell us that we must be physical virgins in order to enter the Heavenly Realm.

Neither would all of the New Testament verses which speak of a bishop having one wife make any sense at all if we choose to interpret Revelation 14:4 in a physical sense. I mean, my gosh. That would eliminate Joseph and Mary from the Kingdom, as well as the Apostle Peter who was married, not to mention the many saintly married couples who we find mentioned in the New Testament. So again, we can only conclude that Revelation 14:4 is referring to spiritual virgins who keep themselves separated from and undefiled by the world, and who remain faithful to Christ.

At this point in our discussion, you may be wondering what all of this has to do with Babylon the Great. Quite simply, in order for us to determine who Babylon the Great is, we need to know who she is not. Or perhaps it would be better to say who Babylon no longer is. In other words, if we can understand how Christ views His spiritual bride, and what He expects of her, it becomes a lot easier for us to grasp why Babylon the Great is viewed as a whore, as well as what she did to become a harlot in God's eyes in the first place. Are you confused? Well, please just keep on reading, and it will

all become clear to you very soon.

Now that we understand who Christ's bride is, we are going to look at a considerably darker page of ancient Bible history by exposing a proud, rebellious bride who repeatedly forsook her spiritual Husband, committed spiritual adultery through engaging in marital infidelity, and went a whoring after other lovers. That is to say, after other gods. What follows are examples of the many verses which are found in the Old Testament which depict ancient Israel's waywardness, and her rejection of the one true God. The Lord refers to such acts as spiritual whoredom, or playing the harlot. In particular, please pay special attention to the words I have placed in uppercase letters:

"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, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger . . . And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they WENT A WHORING AFTER OTHER GODS, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the LORD; but they did not so."

Judges 2:12, 17, KJV

"And it came to pass, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel turned again, and WENT A WHORING AFTER BAALIM, and made Baalberith their god."

Judges 8:33, KJV

"And they transgressed against the God of their fathers, and WENT A WHORING AFTER THE GODS OF THE PEOPLE OF THE LAND, whom God destroyed before them."

1 Chronicles 5:25, KJV

"Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? Yet my people have forgotten me days without number."

Jeremiah 2:32, KJV

"The LORD said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, AND THERE HATH PLAYED THE HARLOT . . . And I saw, when for all the causes whereby BACKSLIDING ISRAEL COMMITTED ADULTERY I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and

PLAYED THE HARLOT also."

Jeremiah 3:6, 8, KJV

"My people ask counsel at their stocks, and their staff declareth unto them: for THE SPIRIT OF WHOREDOMS hath caused them to err, and THEY HAVE GONE A WHORING from under their God."

Hosea 4:12, KJV

Turning to the Book of Ezekiel, we discover that chapter 23 is in fact titled "Two Adulterous Sisters" in some versions of the KJV Bible. As we read below, similar to the Prophet Jeremiah, Ezekiel plainly informs us that Aholah represents Samaria -- which was the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel which was the first to go into Assyrian captivity, as had been prophesied by Isaiah -- and Aholibah is her younger sister, Jerusalem -- who went into Babylonian captivity during the days of the Prophets Jeremiah, Ezekiel, et al:

"The word of the LORD came again unto me, saying, Son of man, there were two women, the daughters of one mother: And THEY COMMITTED WHOREDOMS IN EGYPT; THEY COMMITTED WHOREDOMS IN THEIR YOUTH: there were their breasts pressed, and there they bruised the teats of their virginity. And the names of them were Aholah the elder, and Aholibah her sister: and they were mine, and they bare sons and daughters. Thus were their names; Samaria is Aholah, and Jerusalem Aholibah . . . And that SHE INCREASED HER WHOREDOMS: for when she saw men pourtrayed upon the wall, the images of the Chaldeans pourtrayed with vermilion, Girded with girdles upon their loins, exceeding in dyed attire upon their heads, all of them princes to look to, after the manner of the Babylonians of Chaldea, the land of their nativity: And as soon as she saw them with her eyes, she doted upon them, and sent messengers unto them into Chaldea. And the Babylonians came to her into the bed of love, and they DEFILED HER WITH THEIR WHOREDOM, and she was polluted with them, and her mind was alienated from them. So SHE DISCOVERED HER WHOREDOMS, and discovered her nakedness: then my mind was alienated from her, like as my mind was alienated from her sister. Yet SHE MULTIPLIED HER WHOREDOMS, in calling to remembrance the days of her youth, wherein SHE HAD PLAYED THE HARLOT in the land of Egypt. For she doted upon their paramours, whose flesh is as the flesh of asses, and whose issue is like the issue of horses. Thus thou calledst to remembrance the lewdness of thy youth, in bruising thy teats by the Egyptians for the paps of thy youth."

Ezekiel 23:1-4, 14-21, KJV

Please notice that Ezekiel is describing how from the time of their youth -- that is to say, when God first made Israel a nation when Jacob went down into Egypt many years before -- she began to commit her spiritual whoredoms by worshipping the Egyptian gods. Not only that, but as I explain in other articles, when the Babylonians invaded Jerusalem for the third time around the year 587 BC, some of the Jews again escaped to the land of Egypt, where they again fell into worshipping the Egyptian gods. This, despite the fact that the Prophet Jeremiah clearly warned them not to go to Egypt, but rather to accept God's punishment. Jeremiah told them that if they escaped to Egypt, God would follow them there and destroy them; which is exactly what He did.

So this is what Ezekiel is talking about when he says "in their youth". That is to say, when Samaria and Jerusalem were one nation in the land of Egypt, during the days of Jacob and his sons. This is why even after they physically left Egypt, Egypt was still in their hearts, and they made the golden calf at the foot of Mount Sinai, also known as Horeb. Returning to Ezekiel, if we go back one chapter to chapter 22, we discover that in some versions of the KJV Bible, the chapter is actually entitled "Indictment of Jerusalem". So clearly then, both of these chapters are really describing the sins and whoredoms of the Jews of Jerusalem, who were now in captivity in Babylon.

While the previous verses are strong in content and may be offensive to some Christians, they are nevertheless a clear depiction of a nation and a bride who had rejected her true spiritual Husband. Please notice that while God is against divorce, in the previous verses from the Book of Jeremiah, we are told that the sins of the northern kingdom of Israel had become so great, and she had become so far gone in her apostasy, that symbolically-speaking, He did exactly that. The Lord divorced her. In the Book of Deuteronomy, we find the following verse:

"When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house."

Deuteronomy 24:1, KJV

Thus, God sent her out of His house. He simply abandoned His rebellious bride. As I explain in other articles such as the seven-part series "The Fruits of Disobedience", that is when the Assyrian invasions occurred which carried away the ten northern tribes to foreign lands, as we see by the following two verses:

"Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes."

2 Kings 17:5-6, KJV

Please go to part four for the continuation of this series.

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WHO IS BABYLON THE GREAT? : PART 4

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The Babylonian Invasion And Second Diaspora, Return Unto Me: God Patiently Waited For Israel And Judah To Repent Of Their Apostasy, God's Desire Is For Repentance, God Views Rebellion As Witchcraft, Verses Regarding Apostasy Of Israel And Judah, God Foresaw The Coming Rebellion, Multiple Warnings Through Moses, Moses And Joshua Knew The Israelites Would Backslide, Israelites Made A Pledge To Remain Faithful To The Lord And Yet Still Rebelled, How Is The Faithful City Become An Harlot

Continuing our discussion from part three, as the Prophet Jeremiah writes, the Lord was hoping that this divorce from the northern kingdom would wake up the southern kingdom of Judah, and bring the Jews to their senses. However, sadly,

this was not the case, and Judah sinned against the Lord just as much. Thus, God symbolically gave her a writing of divorcement as well. As I amply explain in other articles, her great punishment came in the form of three Babylonian invasions, the last one of which resulted in the complete destruction of Solomon's temple, and much destruction to Jerusalem itself. Furthermore, this led to the enslavement of many thousands of Jews in Babylon, exactly as had been prophesied by Jeremiah. As I mentioned in part three, this tragic event occurred in the year 587 BC, or approximately one hundred and fifty years after the northern kingdom of Samaria had been carried away.

The Scriptures inform us that God went as far as He possibly could with both Israel and Judah. He did NOT just suddenly abandon them at their first sign of spiritual infidelity. In His mercy, He patiently waited, and He gave them both ample time -- many years in fact -- to repent of their apostasy. He pleaded with them to return to Him as His faithful bride and wife. This fact is clearly made evident by verses such as the following:

"Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art my servant: I have formed thee; thou art my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me. I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee."

Isaiah 44:21-22, KJV

"Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion:"

Jeremiah 3:14, KJV

"If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the LORD, return unto me: and if thou wilt put away thine abominations out of my sight, then shalt thou not remove."

Jeremiah 4:1, KJV

"Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel; Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good. For I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land: and I will build them, and not pull them down; and I will plant them, and not pluck them up. And I will give them an heart to know me, that

I am the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart."

Jeremiah 24:4-7, KJV

"Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return? Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation."

Malachi 3:7-9, KJV

"Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"

Ezekiel 33:11, KJV

"For the Lord will not cast off for ever: But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men."

Lamentations 3:31-33, KJV

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

2 Peter 3:9, KJV

It should be clear to you then that while the Lord is very patient, at the same time, He considers the rebellion of His bride to be a very serious matter. When the Prophet Samuel rebuked King Saul and informed him that God had rejected him in the fifteenth chapter of the first Book of Samuel, the Prophet in fact compared Saul's stubborn, rebellious heart to witchcraft and idolatry, as we see by the following two verses:

"And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath

also rejected thee from being king."

1 Samuel 15:22-23, KJV

On yet another occasion, while prophesying against Nineveh, which was the ancient capital of Assyria -- the ruins of which are today located near the city of Mosul in northern Iraq -- the Prophet Nahum described the city as being the "mistress of witchcrafts", as we see by the following verse:

"Because of the multitude of the whoredoms of the well-favoured harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts."

Nahum 3:4, KJV

While the previous three verses are related to other events in the Bible, they are nevertheless important because they help us to better understand the Lord's attitude concerning the unfaithfulness of His disbelieving, rebellious wife. As far as the Lord is concerned, due to her rebellion against Him, she is guilty of performing witchcraft, and He will not let it go unpunished.

So what we see is that once ancient Israel rejected the Lord as her true King and Husband and went astray in building her temples to the false gods, she not only lost the Spirit, she also lost the Lord's blessings, and His protection as well. Following are some additional verses which reveal the depth of the apostasy of both the northern kingdom of Israel, and the southern kingdom of Judah. If you take the time to study the Scriptures, you will find more examples of what I have listed below:

"And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim, and Ashtaroath, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook the LORD, and served not him."

Judges 10:6, KJV

"And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee."

1 Samuel 8:7-8, KJV

"Now it came to pass, after that Amaziah was come from the slaughter of the Edomites, that he brought the gods of the children of Seir, and set them up to be his gods, and bowed down himself before them, and burned incense unto them. Wherefore the anger of the LORD was kindled against Amaziah, and he sent unto him a prophet, which said unto him, Why hast thou sought after the gods of the people, which could not deliver their own people out of thine hand?"

"2 Chronicles 25:14-15, KJV

"And in the time of his distress did he [King Ahaz] trespass yet more against the LORD: this is that king Ahaz. For he sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus, which smote him: and he said, Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, therefore will I sacrifice to them, that they may help me. But they were the ruin of him, and of all Israel. And Ahaz gathered together the vessels of the house of God, and cut in pieces the vessels of the house of God, and shut up the doors of the house of the LORD, and he made him altars in every corner of Jerusalem. And in every several city of Judah he made high places to burn incense unto other gods, and provoked to anger the LORD God of his fathers."

2 Chronicles 28:22-25, KJV

"Go, tell Jeroboam, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Forasmuch as I exalted thee from among the people, and made thee prince over my people Israel, And rent the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it thee: and yet thou hast not been as my servant David, who kept my commandments, and who followed me with all his heart, to do that only which was right in mine eyes; But hast done evil above all that were before thee: for thou hast gone and made thee other gods, and molten images, to provoke me to anger, and hast cast me behind thy back: Therefore, behold, I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel, and will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as a man taketh away dung, till it be all gone."

1 Kings 14:7-10, KJV

"For so it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods, And walked in the statutes

of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made. And the children of Israel did secretly those things that were not right against the LORD their God, and they built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city. And they set them up images and groves in every high hill, and under every green tree: And there they burnt incense in all the high places, as did the heathen whom the LORD carried away before them; and wrought wicked things to provoke the LORD to anger: For they served idols, whereof the LORD had said unto them, Ye shall not do this thing. Yet the LORD testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets. Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the LORD their God. And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that were round about them, concerning whom the LORD had charged them, that they should not do like them. And they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made a grove, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal. And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger."

2 Kings 17:7-11, KJV

"Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read: Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched."

2 Kings 22:16-17, KJV

The tragedy of this situation is that God foresaw this evil and rebellion by the Israelites many centuries before it had even happened. However, honestly speaking, if we carefully examine all of the previous Scriptures, what we see is that Jacob's descendants were really backslidden in their hearts

since the time that they were in Egypt. Unlike the virgin bride who was supposed to remain without spot and blameless, they in fact succumbed to the pleasures -- and to the false gods -- of Egypt. Not only that, but even after Joseph died, when they were forced to endure four hundred years of harsh slavery, some of the Israelites STILL wanted to return to Egypt after having been liberated under Moses' leadership. As we saw earlier, it wasn't long before they constructed the golden calf.

It is amazing how many times Moses admonished them for many years after that, to remain faithful to the Lord. The Book of Deuteronomy, for example, is literally filled with warning after warning, where Moses very directly told the Israelites exactly what would happen to them, if they were to forsake the Lord, and return to worshipping the false gods. Consider the following group of verses where this is made so clear:

"And God spake all these words, saying, I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments."

Exodus 20:1-6, KJV

"And in all things that I have said unto you be circumspect: and make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth."

Exodus 23:13, KJV

"I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. Thou shalt have none other gods before me. Thou shalt not make thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters beneath the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, And shewing mercy unto thousands of them

that love me and keep my commandments."

Deuteronomy 5:6-10, KJV

"Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name. Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are round about you; (For the LORD thy God is a jealous God among you) lest the anger of the LORD thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth."

Deuteronomy 6:13-15, KJV

"And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish. As the nations which the LORD destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the LORD your God."

Deuteronomy 8:19-20, KJV

"Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them; And then the LORD'S wrath be kindled against you, and he shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit; and lest ye perish quickly from off the good land which the LORD giveth you . . . Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known."

Deuteronomy 11:16-17, 26-28, KJV

"If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him. And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn you away from the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house

of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the LORD thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee. If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers; Namely, of the gods of the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him: But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die; because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this is among you. If thou shalt hear say in one of thy cities, which the LORD thy God hath given thee to dwell there, saying, Certain men, the children of Belial, are gone out from among you, and have withdrawn the inhabitants of their city, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which ye have not known; Then shalt thou enquire, and make search, and ask diligently; and, behold, if it be truth, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought among you; Thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly, and all that is therein, and the cattle thereof, with the edge of the sword. And thou shalt gather all the spoil of it into the midst of the street thereof, and shalt burn with fire the city, and all the spoil thereof every whit, for the LORD thy God: and it shall be an heap for ever; it shall not be built again."

Deuteronomy 13:1-16, KJV

"If there be found among you, within any of thy gates which the LORD thy God giveth thee, man or woman, that hath wrought wickedness in the sight of the LORD thy God, in transgressing his covenant, And hath gone and served other gods, and worshipped them, either the sun, or moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded; And it be told thee, and thou hast heard of it, and enquired diligently, and, behold, it be true, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought in Israel: Then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman, which have

committed that wicked thing, unto thy gates, even that man or that woman, and shalt stone them with stones, till they die."

Deuteronomy 17:2-5, KJV

"But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die."

Deuteronomy 18:20, KJV

"And thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day, to the right hand, or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them."

Deuteronomy 28:14, KJV

"Even all nations shall say, Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this land? what meaneth the heat of this great anger? Then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt: For they went and served other gods, and worshipped them, gods whom they knew not, and whom he had not given unto them: And the anger of the LORD was kindled against this land, to bring upon it all the curses that are written in this book: And the LORD rooted them out of their land in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as it is this day."

Deuteronomy 29:24-28, KJV

"But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them."

Deuteronomy 30:17-20, KJV

Despite all of the warnings which the Lord issued through

Moses during the last forty years of his life, as we have already seen, it was to no avail. The descendants of Jacob still forsook their first love, rebelled against the Lord, and followed after the false gods of the nations around them. In fact, prior to his death, God revealed to Moses that this is exactly what they would do. Not only that, but just before Joshua's death as well some years later, the Lord likewise revealed to Joshua what the Israelites would do once he was gone from the scene. Consider the following verses as evidence of these facts:

"And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; and this people will rise up, and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land, whither they go to be among them, and will forsake me, and break my covenant which I have made with them. Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not among us? And I will surely hide my face in that day for all the evils which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned unto other gods."

Deuteronomy 31:16-18, KJV

"Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all good things are come upon you, which the LORD your God promised you; so shall the LORD bring upon you all evil things, until he have destroyed you from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you. When ye have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them; then shall the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you."

Joshua 23:15-16, KJV

Ironically, when Joshua told them this, the Israelites were all in denial. "Oh no! We will never do that! We swear this day that we will remain faithful to serve the Lord! We will not worship the false gods of the nations around us!" This is made evident by the following group of verses:

"And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve the LORD. And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you the

LORD, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses. Now therefore put away, said he, the strange gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto the LORD God of Israel. And the people said unto Joshua, The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey. So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak, that was by the sanctuary of the LORD. And Joshua said unto all the people, Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us; for it hath heard all the words of the LORD which he spake unto us: it shall be therefore a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God."

Joshua 24:21-27, KJV

Sadly, as we learned in part three of this series, barely had Joshua, Caleb and the other tribal elders died, and the period of the Judges begun, when the rebellious Israelites began their slide into on-again off-again apostasy. As we have already seen, it ultimately resulted in the Assyrian invasion of the northern kingdom of Israel, as well as the Babylonian invasions of Judah to the south years later. The Lord's bride had indeed besmirched herself, become a harlot, and had gone a whoring after other gods. She was no longer without spot and blameless. She was no longer worthy to be called His bride, and thus He divorced her.

Thus far, I have presented a preponderance of verses to show the difference between God's submissive spiritual bride, and the nation of Israel which for a long time now has committed spiritual whoredoms, and become a harlot in the Lord's sight. This she has done by rejecting her true Husband -- the Lord Jesus Christ -- and loved other gods; or in the case of some modern Jews, don't believe in God at all. Early on in this series, I told you that I would not only reveal to you who I believe Babylon the Great is, but I would also explain to you exactly why God views her as a harlot, and what she did to become a whore in His sight. Thus far, we have addressed two of these three points. Now it is time to focus in on the big question: Who is Babylon the Great, and what are the signs so that we can recognize her as such?

In the beginning of his prophesying against Jerusalem and the kings of Judah, the Prophet Isaiah wrote the following. Please notice how the Lord, through Isaiah, makes a sharp contrast in the first eight words of the verse. He is in fact juxtaposing faithfulness with harlotry:

"How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers."  
Isaiah 1:21, KJV

What is particularly interesting about this verse -- aside from the sharp contrast that it presents -- is the fact that while previous verses I have shared with you describe the harlotry of Israel and Judah in general, the previous verse clearly defines Jerusalem herself as a harlot. As far as I know, this is in fact the first verse in the Scriptures which does this.

Please go to part five for the continuation of this series.

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WHO IS BABYLON THE GREAT? : PART 5

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Isaiah Jeremiah And Ezekiel All Condemn Jerusalem As Being A Harlot, In The Mouth Of Two Or Three Witnesses, Destruction Of Jerusalem And The Temple Compound In 587 BC, Thou Hadst A Whore's Forehead, Queen Of Heaven: Babylonian Goddess Ishtar, Rebellious Impudent Hardhearted Unrepentant Unashamed Harlot, City Full Of Murderers, Wicked Don't Like Their Sins Exposed, No Cloak For Their Sin, Be Sure Your Sin Will Find You Out, God Sent One Prophet After Another, Woe To The Bloody City, Wicked King Ahab And Queen Jezebel Slew God's Prophets, Jesus Outright Accused Jewish Religionists Of Being Children Of The Murderers Of Prophets, His Blood Be On Us And On Our Children

Continuing our discussion from part four, as I just noted, to my knowledge, Isaiah 1:21 is the very first verse in the Old Testament where the city of Jerusalem is clearly described as

being a harlot. The Prophet Jeremiah likewise does the very same thing, as does the Prophet Ezekiel. You will recall that in part three of this series, we discussed the two adulterous sisters, Aholah and Aholibah, who the Prophet Ezekiel told us represent Samaria and Jerusalem. So we now have three of the major Prophets -- Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel -- who are all pointing the finger at Jerusalem, and accusing her of being a harlot. As we saw in part three, this is a clear indictment against Jerusalem. Consider now the following verses. Again, please notice the words which I have placed in uppercase letters for emphasis:

"Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying . . . For of old time I have broken thy yoke, and burst thy bands; and thou saidst, I will not transgress; when upon every high hill and under every green tree thou wanderest, PLAYING THE HARLOT." Jeremiah 2:1-2, 20, KJV

"They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? but THOU HAST PLAYED THE HARLOT with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the LORD. Lift up thine eyes unto the high places, and see where thou hast not been lien with. In the ways hast thou sat for them, as the Arabian in the wilderness; and thou hast polluted the land WITH THY WHOREDOMS and with thy wickedness. Therefore the showers have been withholden, and there hath been no latter rain; and THOU HADST A WHORE'S FOREHEAD, thou refusedst to be ashamed." Jeremiah 3:1-3, KJV

"But thou didst trust in thine own beauty, and PLAYEDST THE HARLOT because of thy renown, and pouredst out thy fornications on every one that passed by; his it was. And of thy garments thou didst take, and deckedst thy high places with divers colours, and PLAYEDST THE HARLOT thereupon: the like things shall not come, neither shall it be so. Thou hast also taken thy fair jewels of my gold and of my silver, which I had given thee, and madest to thyself images of men, and DIDST COMMIT WHOREDOM with them . . . THOU HAST PLAYED THE WHORE also with the Assyrians, because thou wast unsatiable; yea, THOU HAST PLAYED THE HARLOT with them, and yet couldest not be satisfied. Thou hast moreover multiplied thy fornication in the land of Canaan unto Chaldea; and yet thou wast not satisfied herewith. How weak is thine heart, saith the Lord GOD, seeing thou doest all these things, the

work of an IMPERIOUS WHORISH WOMAN; In that thou buildest thine eminent place in the head of every way, and makest thine high place in every street; and hast not been as an harlot, in that thou scornest hire; But as a wife that committeth adultery, which taketh strangers instead of her husband! They give gifts to all whores: but thou givest thy gifts to all thy lovers, and hirest them, that they may come unto thee on every side FOR THY WHOREDOM. And the contrary is in thee from other women IN THY WHOREDOMS, whereas none followeth thee to commit whoredoms: and in that thou givest a reward, and no reward is given unto thee, therefore thou art contrary. Wherefore, O HARLOT, hear the word of the LORD: Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thy filthiness was poured out, and thy nakedness discovered through THY WHOREDOMS with thy lovers, and with all the idols of thy abominations, and by the blood of thy children, which thou didst give unto them; Behold, therefore I will gather all thy lovers, with whom thou hast taken pleasure, and all them that thou hast loved, with all them that thou hast hated; I will even gather them round about against thee, and will discover thy nakedness unto them, that they may see all thy nakedness. And I will judge thee, as women that break wedlock and shed blood are judged; and I will give thee blood in fury and jealousy. And I will also give thee into their hand, and they shall throw down thine eminent place, and shall break down thy high places: they shall strip thee also of thy clothes, and shall take thy fair jewels, and leave thee naked and bare. They shall also bring up a company against thee, and they shall stone thee with stones, and thrust thee through with their swords. And they shall burn thine houses with fire, and execute judgments upon thee in the sight of many women: and I will cause thee to cease from PLAYING THE HARLOT, and thou also shalt give no hire any more. So will I make my fury toward thee to rest, and my jealousy shall depart from thee, and I will be quiet, and will be no more angry."

Ezekiel 16:15-17, 28-42, KJV

Why would God do this? Why would He purposely have three of the major Prophets make this very same accusation against Jerusalem? If we consider how just and righteous God is in His judgments, it makes perfect sense. You see, as you may know, in the laws that the Lord gave to His servant Moses, He established that before any punishment could be executed, the crime had to be verified in the mouth of two or three witnesses; as we can determine by the following verses:

"Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of witnesses: but one witness shall not testify against any person to cause him to die."

Numbers 35:30, KJV

"At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death. The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So thou shalt put the evil away from among you."

Deuteronomy 17:6-7, KJV

"One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established."

Deuteronomy 19:15, KJV

"This is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established."

2 Corinthians 13:1, KJV

"Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear."

1 Timothy 5:19-20, KJV

"He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:"

Hebrews 10:28, KJV

Thus, once Jerusalem's sins had been fully exposed, and once the three witnesses had come forth to bear testimony against her, then it was time to execute the punishment. As I noted earlier in this series, that is precisely what happened with the final Babylonian invasion around 587 BC, at which time, Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed, and many thousands of Jews were carried away captive into Babylon to begin the Seventy Years of Captivity, exactly as had been prophesied by Jeremiah. Returning to the Book of Jeremiah for a moment, you will notice that the Prophet wrote regarding rebellious Jerusalem that she has a "whore's forehead". Let me share that verse with you again to refresh your memory:

"Therefore the showers have been withholden, and there hath been no latter rain; and THOU HADST A WHORE'S FOREHEAD, thou

refusedst to be ashamed."

Jeremiah 3:3, KJV

So exactly what does the phrase "whore's forehead" mean? It appears that there are two schools of thought regarding this term. According to Easton's Revised Bible Dictionary, it was a common practice of some nations back then to either color one's forehead, or else to impress upon it some distinctive mark, as a sign of devotion to a particular deity. If this is indeed what it means in the case of Jerusalem, then I would propose that it may be a symbolic reference to their devotion to the Queen of Heaven -- the Babylonian goddess Ishtar -- who was the goddess of love, war, fertility and sexuality.

As I explain in the series "Our Pagan World: The Easter Myth Exposed!", this deity was known by a variety of names amongst the cultures of the Middle East, southern Europe and northern Africa. These included Astarte, Ashtoreth, Isis, Aphrodite and Venus. As we previously discussed in part two, even King Solomon worshipped her. Tragically, in more modern times, as some of you will already know, the misguided Roman Catholic Church also refers to Mary, the mother of Jesus, as the Queen of Heaven. Consider the following verses where this goddess is mentioned as the "Queen of Heaven":

"Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the QUEEN OF HEAVEN, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger."

Jeremiah 7:17-18, KJV

"As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the LORD, we will not hearken unto thee. But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the QUEEN OF HEAVEN, 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: for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil. 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, and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine. 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 pour out drink offerings unto her, without our men?"

Jeremiah 44:16-19, KJV

"Moreover Jeremiah said unto all the people, and to all the women, Hear the word of the LORD, all Judah that are in the land of Egypt: Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saying; Ye and your wives have both spoken with your mouths, and fulfilled with your hand, saying, We will surely perform our vows that we have vowed, to burn incense to the QUEEN OF HEAVEN, and to pour out drink offerings unto her: ye will surely accomplish your vows, and surely perform your vows. Therefore hear ye the word of the LORD, all Judah that dwell in the land of Egypt; Behold, I have sworn by my great name, saith the LORD, that my name shall no more be named in the mouth of any man of Judah in all the land of Egypt, saying, The Lord GOD liveth. Behold, I will watch over them for evil, and not for good: and all the men of Judah that are in the land of Egypt shall be consumed by the sword and by the famine, until there be an end of them."

Jeremiah 44:24-27, KJV

There is a second possible explanation for the term "whore's forehead" which also finds strong support in the Scriptures. You will notice that the verse states "thou hadst a whore's forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed." The implication is that to have a whore's forehead means to be impudent and unashamed. Given what we know, this would certainly be an apt description for the city of Jerusalem as a rebellious, impudent, hardhearted, unrepentant and unashamed harlot. In fact, the following verses which are found in the Book of Ezekiel suggest the very same thing:

"But the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me: for all the house of Israel are impudent and hardhearted. Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads. As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead: fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house."

Ezekiel 3:7-9, KJV

So in conclusion, given the Scriptural evidence that we have uncovered, it may be that both explanations have some degree of merit regarding the phrase "whore's forehead", because she was indeed unashamed and impudent, and she did worship

the Queen of Heaven. As we continue this study, with regard to Jerusalem and Babylon the Great, you will see even more exactly how true this really is.

While we have now exposed the whorish Jerusalem's primary sin against her God -- that is to say, marital infidelity or adultery, and her worship of the pagan gods -- we have not yet exposed all of her sins. Returning to Isaiah 1:21, the second half of that same verse clearly states "it [meaning Jerusalem] was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers." Wow! A city full of murderers! If there is one thing which sinners do not like, it is having their sins exposed. As you may recall, in the Gospels, Jesus made this point rather evident when He said the following:

"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved."

John 3:19-20, KJV

"If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin."

John 15:22, KJV

". . . Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? and not to be set on a candlestick? For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad."

Mark 4:21-22, KJV

"For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known."

Luke 12:2, KJV

There are a number of other Scriptures found in the Bible which likewise inform us that nothing is hid from the face of the Lord. He knows each and every one of our sins; as we can easily determine by the following group of verses:

". . . behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out."

Numbers 32:23, KJV

"For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings."

Job 34:21, KJV

"O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee."

Psalms 69:5, KJV

"Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance."

Psalms 90:8, KJV

"The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."

Proverbs 15:3, KJV

"Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD."

Jeremiah 23:24, KJV

"He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him."

Daniel 2:22, KJV

As I said, whether we are talking about the LGBTQ crowd of our modern day, or the heartless abortionists, or the evil people of Jerusalem of thousands of years ago, the wicked simply do not like having their sins exposed. They will do everything, and resort to any means necessary, in order to prevent that from happening. They will fight back. In the case of the rebellious people of Jerusalem, as the Prophet Isaiah notes, it also included resorting to murder! As the following verses reveal, God sent those stiff-necked people Prophet after Prophet to warn them to turn away from their sins:

"And the LORD God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place: But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy."

2 Chronicles 36:15-16, KJV

"Because they have not hearkened to my words, saith the LORD, which I sent unto them by my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them; but ye would not hear, saith the LORD."

Jeremiah 29:19, KJV

"I have sent also unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, Return ye now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings, and go not after other gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land which I have given to you and to your fathers: but ye have not inclined your ear, nor hearkened unto me."

Jeremiah 35:15, KJV

Sadly, as the previous set of verses plainly reveal, rather than be convicted of their sins, and rather than return to the Lord, the people of Jerusalem viewed the Prophets as a constant thorn in their side, and as an annoyance. Thus, as the Scriptures make abundantly clear, they chose to silence many of them by murdering them. They bloodied their hands with the blood of the innocent. They cut down the just and smote the righteous. Is it any wonder then that the Lord, through the Prophet Ezekiel, referred to Jerusalem as the "bloody city"? Consider the following verses:

"Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Now, thou son of man, wilt thou judge, wilt thou judge the BLOODY CITY? yea, thou shalt shew her all her abominations. Then say thou, Thus saith the Lord GOD, The city sheddeth blood in the midst of it, that her time may come, and maketh idols against herself to defile herself. Thou art become guilty in thy blood that thou hast shed; and hast defiled thyself in thine idols which thou hast made; and thou hast caused thy days to draw near, and art come even unto thy years: therefore have I made thee a reproach unto the heathen, and a mocking to all countries."

Ezekiel 22:1-4, KJV

"Wherefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe to the BLOODY CITY, to the pot whose scum is therein, and whose scum is not gone out of it! bring it out piece by piece; let no lot fall upon it. For her blood is in the midst of her; she set it upon the top of a rock; she poured it not upon the ground, to cover it with dust; That it might cause fury to come up to take vengeance; I have set her blood upon the top of a rock, that it should not be covered. Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe to the BLOODY CITY! I will even make the pile for fire great. Heap on wood, kindle the fire, consume the flesh, and spice it well, and let the bones be burned. Then set it empty upon the coals thereof, that the brass of it may be hot, and may burn, and that the filthiness of it

may be molten in it, that the scum of it may be consumed. She hath wearied herself with lies, and her great scum went not forth out of her: her scum shall be in the fire. In thy filthiness is lewdness: because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee. I the LORD have spoken it: it shall come to pass, and I will do it; I will not go back, neither will I spare, neither will I repent; according to thy ways, and according to thy doings, shall they judge thee, saith the Lord GOD."

Ezekiel 24:6-14, KJV

After Jerusalem had fallen to the Babylonians, in the Book of Lamentations, the Prophet Jeremiah also mentioned not only the sins of her false prophets, but the sins of the priests who likewise shed the blood of the just, as we can determine by the following set of verses:

"The LORD hath accomplished his fury; he hath poured out his fierce anger, and hath kindled a fire in Zion, and it hath devoured the foundations thereof. The kings of the earth, and all the inhabitants of the world, would not have believed that the adversary and the enemy should have entered into the gates of Jerusalem. FOR THE SINS OF HER PROPHETS, AND THE INIQUITIES OF HER PRIESTS, THAT HAVE SHED THE BLOOD OF THE JUST IN THE MIDST OF HER, They have wandered as blind men in the streets, they have polluted themselves with blood, so that men could not touch their garments."

Lamentations 4:11-14, KJV

Last, but not least, while we are discussing the sins of Jerusalem, let us also not forget the sins of that wicked pair, King Ahab and Queen Jezebel, who ruled the northern kingdom of Israel from Samaria. As you may know, that vile witch slew many of the Lord's Prophets, as we see by the following verses:

"For it was so, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.) . . . Was it not told my lord what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of the LORD, how I hid an hundred men of the LORD'S prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water?"

1 Kings 18:4, 13, KJV

"And he [Elijah] said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away."

1 Kings 19:10, KJV

"And thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master, that I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the LORD, at the hand of Jezebel."

2 Kings 9:7, KJV

Turning our attention to the New Testament, as you may know, this is likewise one of the things of which Jesus accused the self-righteous religionists who also sought to slay Him. Consider the extremely harsh words which the Lord used when He exposed the sins of the Scribes and the Pharisees in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke:

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because YE BUILD THE TOMBS OF THE PROPHETS, AND GARNISH THE SEPULCHRES OF THE RIGHTEOUS, And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in THE BLOOD OF THE PROPHETS. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that YE ARE THE CHILDREN OF THEM WHICH KILLED THE PROPHETS. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore, behold, I SEND UNTO YOU PROPHETS, AND WISE MEN, AND SCRIBES: AND SOME OF THEM YE SHALL KILL AND CRUCIFY; AND SOME OF THEM SHALL YE SCOURGE IN YOUR SYNAGOGUES, AND PERSECUTE THEM FROM CITY TO CITY: That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. O JERUSALEM, JERUSALEM, THOU THAT KILLEST THE PROPHETS, AND STONEST THEM WHICH ARE SENT UNTO THEE, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Matthew 23:29-39, KJV

"Then answered one of the lawyers, and said unto him, Master, thus saying thou reproachest us also. And he said, Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers. Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres. Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute: That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation."

Luke 11:45-51, KJV

Can there be any doubt as to why the Scribes and Pharisees hated Jesus as much as they did? The Lord very pointedly told them that they were "the children of them which killed the prophets". He then said that upon them would come "all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias . . ." In other words, they were guilty of it all; from A to Z; from Abel to Zacharias. Amazing as it may seem, despite the Lord's strong rebuke of these false religionists, do you recall what they said when Pontius Pilate gave them an opportunity to release Jesus? The answer is found in the following set of verses:

"When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. Then answered all the people, and said, HIS BLOOD BE ON US, AND ON OUR CHILDREN. Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified."

Matthew 27:24-26, KJV

Isn't that just absolutely amazing? Only four chapters after the Lord dressed them down and fully exposed the heinous sins of those cold-blooded murderers, those wicked people shouted "His blood be on us, and on our children!"; thus fulfilling the very things of which He had accused them earlier.

Please go to part six for the continuation of this series.

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## WHO IS BABYLON THE GREAT? : PART 6

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The Characteristics For Jerusalem And Babylon The Great Are An Exact Match: Jerusalem And Babylon Are Both Described As Being Spiritual Whores, Jerusalem Has A Whore's Forehead And Babylon Has A Name On Her Forehead, Jerusalem And Babylon Both Killed The Lord's Prophets, Jerusalem And Babylon Are Both Described As Being Great Cities, Pliny The Elder And "Natural History", The Latin And Greek Names Of Jerusalem, By Far The Most Famous City Not Of Judaea Only But Of The East, Jerusalem Destruction In 70 AD: In Which Formerly Stood Hierosolyma, Josephus And His "Against Apion", Patriarch Abraham Knew Jerusalem As "Solyma", Peoples And Multitudes And Nations And Tongues: Jerusalem And Babylon Are International Cities And Large Commercial Centers, King Solomon And Famous Spice Trade Routes, Commercial Activity In Babylon, The Merchants Wail, The Revelation Of Jesus Christ

Continuing our discussion from part five, at this point in our discussion, we are going to take a quick review of the things we have discovered thus far regarding Jerusalem, as they pertain to the identity of mystery Babylon the Great:

1. She has been accused by God of being a harlot, or whore, due to her marital infidelity, and the spiritual whoredoms she has committed with the pagan gods of the nations around her.
2. She is impudent and unashamed, and has a whore's forehead.
3. She is guilty of murdering the Prophets and shedding the blood of the just. The Lord, through His Prophets, said that she is full of murderers, and calls her a bloody city.

It is an inescapable Biblical fact that just as all three of these characteristics pertain to Jerusalem, they likewise describe Babylon the Great to the letter as well. To begin with, we know beyond a shadow of a doubt that Babylon is a whore and the mother of harlots, as we can determine by the following verses:

"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: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication . . . And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire."

Revelation 17:1-2, 15-16, KJV

Second, just as Jerusalem had a whore's forehead -- meaning that she was proud, impudent and unashamed of her sins -- likewise, Babylon the Great behaves in the exact same way. She too has a whore's forehead, and haughtily boasts of her sins; as we plainly see by the following two verses:

"And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."

Revelation 17:5, KJV

"How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow."

Revelation 18:7, KJV

Lastly, just as Jesus and the Prophets exposed Jerusalem for her hand in slaying the Prophets which had been sent to her, the Apostle John does the very same thing in the seventeenth and eighteenth chapters of the Book of Revelation, when he exposes the sins of the mysterious city, Babylon the Great Whore. Again, consider the following group of verses:

"And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous,

O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. For THEY HAVE SHED THE BLOOD OF SAINTS AND PROPHETS, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy."

Revelation 16:5-6, KJV

"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."

Revelation 17:6, KJV

"Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye HOLY APOSTLES AND PROPHETS; FOR GOD HATH AVENGED YOU ON HER. 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. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. AND IN HER WAS FOUND THE BLOOD OF PROPHETS, AND OF SAINTS, AND OF ALL THAT WERE SLAIN UPON THE EARTH."

Revelation 18:20-24, KJV

"And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, AND HATH AVENGED THE BLOOD OF HIS SERVANTS AT HER HAND."

Revelation 19:1-2, KJV

To reiterate, the previous verses demonstrate a very striking similarity between these two cities, Jerusalem and Babylon the Great. In my view, this match-up is not simply a matter of coincidence. I am convinced that the Lord wants us to see something here. I believe He is telling us who this Babylon the Great is. But let me ask you a question: Exactly why is it that God refers to Babylon as "THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH"? In fact, her name is even in all uppercase letters in the King James Version of the Bible.

There are several different ways in which we can understand this. First of all, the fact that Babylon's full name is in all uppercase letters signifies her degree of wickedness. It is important to note that she is not just Babylon. She is in fact Babylon the Great, again signifying the degree of her wickedness. Then, in addition to being great in her level of wickedness, we are informed that she's THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. In other words, she is really beyond the pale. Her behavior is simply unacceptable, and she is the worst of the worst in her level of wickedness.

But please notice also that she is the mother of harlots. As you probably know, when we use the word "mother" in this way in our modern day, we mean the greatest of something, such as in the mother of battles, or perhaps the mother of headaches. But this Babylon is likewise a real mother in a metaphorical sense. She has given birth to her own wicked spawn, but she remains the very worst of the lot. So exactly who are these harlots?

As it turns out, in the Old Testament, one particular phrase which is frequently used is "daughter of my people". If you look up the Hebrew origin of this word, you'll discover that it is sometimes used to refer to other towns and villages. So while Jerusalem is the mother and the greatest in wickedness, there are other towns and villages in Israel -- her spawn -- which also act just like her, and who have abandoned God and engaged in wickedness. Furthermore, if you read "Vespasian, Titus and the Fall of Jerusalem", you will see that just as Jerusalem was eventually burned to the ground, as the Romans marched down from northern Israel, any town or village which did not submit to Rome was likewise burned to the ground and its people mercilessly slaughtered.

If you are not yet convinced that Jerusalem and Babylon the Great are one and the same, allow me to share some additional facts with you which I discovered while conducting research for this series. As you may know, throughout the Book of Revelation, Babylon the Great is repeatedly referred to as a "great city". This becomes evident by verses such as the following:

"And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that GREAT CITY, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."  
Revelation 14:8, KJV

"And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that GREAT CITY Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come . . . And saying, Alas, alas, that GREAT CITY, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! . . . And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this GREAT CITY! And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that GREAT CITY, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate . . . 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."

Revelation 18:9-10, 16, 18-19, 21, KJV

As it turns out, if we turn to Revelation chapter eleven, we will discover that while discussing the martyrdom of the Two Sackcloth Witnesses, Jerusalem is likewise referred to as a "great city". We know without a doubt that the following two verses are referring to Jerusalem, because we are clearly told that it was in that great city "where also our Lord was slain", as we see by the following two verses:

"And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of THE GREAT CITY, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified."

Revelation 11:7-8, KJV

This description of Jerusalem as a great city is not limited to the Bible alone. We find similar descriptions of the city in certain non-biblical works as well. For example, Gaius Plinius Secundus -- who is commonly known as Pliny the Elder -- was a first century Roman author, naturalist, and naval and army commander of the early Roman Empire. He was in fact a friend of Roman emperor Vespasian and his son, Titus, and served the emperor as an imperial administrator. Pliny is known today as the author of the rather expansive Latin work "Naturalis Historia" -- Natural History in English -- which is a thirty-seven book encyclopedic work that covers quite

an assortment of topics on human knowledge and the natural world. It is his only work that has survived to our current time.

At any rate, in Book 5 Chapter 15 of his "Natural History", under the heading "Judea", Pliny the Elder describes some of the major cities of Judea and he writes as follows:

----- Begin Quote -----

"Beyond Idumaea and Samaria, Judaea extends far and wide. That part of it which joins up to Syria is called Galilaea, while that which is nearest to Arabia and Egypt bears the name of Peraea. This last is thickly covered with rugged mountains, and is separated from the rest of Judaea by the river Jordanes. The remaining part of Judaea is divided into ten Toparchies, which we will mention in the following order: That of Hiericus, covered with groves of palm-trees, and watered by numerous springs, and those of Emmaus, Lydda, Joppe, Acrabateua, Gophna, Thamna, Bethleptephene, Orina, in which formerly stood Hierosolyma, by far the most famous city, not of Judaea only, but of the East, and Herodium, with a celebrated town of the same name.

Asphaltites [the Dead Sea] produces nothing whatever except bitumen, to which indeed it owes its name. The bodies of animals will not sink in its waters, and even those of bulls and camels float there. In length it exceeds 100 miles being at its greatest breadth twenty-five, and at its smallest six. Arabia of the Nomades faces it on the east, and Machaerus on the south, at one time, next to Hierosolyma, the most strongly fortified place in Judaea."

----- End Quote -----

Now, at first glance, you may not see the name "Jerusalem" in the above excerpts. However, I assure you that it is indeed there in both of those quotes. You see, the reason why you may not recognize it is because its Latin name is used. That is to say "Hierosolyma". I was not aware of this either until I conducted some online research. Furthermore, in the New Testament, two different Greek forms of the name are used. That is to say, "Hierosoluma" and Hierousalem.

Now that we have identified Jerusalem in the aforementioned excerpts, the most important thing for our discussion is how Pliny the Elder describes Jerusalem. He describes the city

as "by far the most famous city, not of Judaea only, but of the East" and "the most strongly fortified place in Judaea". Clearly then, even though he was a Roman himself, Pliny the Elder seems to have had great admiration for Jerusalem. He says that its fame is known throughout the East. Well, it certainly doesn't sound like Jerusalem was an insignificant backwater town, does it?

Allow me to point out one other thing that Pliny says about Jerusalem. He writes "in which formerly stood Hierosolyma." The reason for this is that he wrote his "Natural History" between 77 and 79 AD, or seven to nine years after Jerusalem and the temple compound had been destroyed by General Titus and the Romans in 70 AD. I discuss this major historic event in my lengthy series entitled "Vespasian, Titus and the Fall of Jerusalem". If you really want to understand the Roman occupation of Israel, and everything that led up to the fall of Jerusalem, you REALLY ought to read this series. You'll be given an amazing understanding regarding that tragic event.

Let me likewise mention here that noted Jewish general and historian Flavius Josephus also uses these same names in his works. For example, in "Against Apion", which he wrote as a defense of Judaism against the criticism of Egyptian author and sophist Apion, Josephus quotes one particular critic who wrote as follows:

----- Begin Quote -----

"But that the difficulties of the journey being over, they [meaning the Israelites] came to a country inhabited, and that there they abused the men, and plundered and burnt their temples, and then came into that land which is called Judea, and there they built a city, and dwelt therein, and that their city was named Hierosyla, from this their robbing of the temples; but that still, upon the success they had afterwards, they in time changed its denomination, that it might not be a reproach to them, and called the city Hierosolyma, and themselves Hierosolymites."

----- End Quote -----

As a final example, in Book 7 Chapter 3 of his "Antiquities of the Jews", while discussing how King David captured the city from the Jebusites -- who called Jerusalem "Jebus" -- Josephus likewise mentions how Jerusalem had been formerly called Solyma by the Patriarch Abraham, as we see by this

excerpt:

----- Begin Quote -----

"It was David, therefore, who first cast the Jebusites out of Jerusalem, and called it by his own name, "The City of David": for under our forefather Abraham it was called [Salem or] Solyma: but after that time some say that Homer mentions it by that name of Solyma, [for he named the temple Solyma, according to the Hebrew language, which denotes security]."

----- End Quote -----

So regardless of which language we choose to use, or which name we use, the point is that Jerusalem was regarded as a great and famous city by the ancients, exactly as the Book of Revelation describes it and exactly as Babylon the Great is also described. But there is even more. While describing Babylon the Great in the seventeenth chapter of the Book of Revelation, notice what we are specifically told in verse fifteen of this chapter:

"And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues."

Revelation 17:15, KJV

In particular, please take note of the phrase "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues". Now, if we go back to chapter eleven where the death of the Two Sackcloth Witnesses is discussed, notice how Jerusalem is likewise described in verse nine. It is rather hard to ignore the fact that in the verse below, the phrase "people and kindreds and tongues and nations" is pretty much identical to the phrase that is used to describe Babylon the Great. In my view, this isn't simply a coincidence. I am convinced that it is meant to serve as a hint regarding who Babylon the Great is:

"And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves."

Revelation 11:9, KJV

As we have already seen, Jerusalem was not just viewed as a great city by the Jerusalemites themselves. The inhabitants of other nations which surrounded it likewise viewed it as a

great and famous city as well. Furthermore, as some of you will already know, even the wise men came to the city from the area which we know today as Kuwait, to visit the young Jesus. So then, exactly who were some of these "people and kindreds and tongues and nations" who we see mentioned in the previous verses from the Book of Revelation? Once again, by conducting just a little bit of Scriptural research, we can find a very clear answer. Consider this group of verses which is found in the Book of Acts:

"And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God."

Acts 2:5-11, KJV

My friends, if anything, the previous verses from the Book of Acts clearly confirm for us once again that Jerusalem was not just viewed as an insignificant, backwater, podunk town. If it had been, I seriously doubt that the Romans would have taken much interest in it. To the contrary, if we translate all of those ancient names into their modern counterparts, what we discover is that at the very least, Jerusalem was visited by people from the countries of Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Crete, Italy, Greece, Egypt and Libya.

Who were all of these people? Luke tells us that they were devout Jews, and proselytes as well. That is to say, people who had converted to the Jewish faith. While they may have been born in foreign lands, and spoke the languages of those foreign lands, they identified as Jews by faith. This, of course, also included the many Hellenistic Jews who lived in and visited Jerusalem for the annual feasts. As I explain in a number of other articles, this diversity of nationalities and tongues who came to Jerusalem no doubt resulted in large part from the three diasporas which followed the Assyrian, Babylonian and Roman invasions. So just as Babylon the Great sat upon many waters, so did Jerusalem. It is undeniable.

In short, Jerusalem was an international city in every sense of the word, just as it is in our modern day as well. Let me also point out that Jerusalem being viewed as a great city did not begin in the First Century. It seems that its status as a great city was established centuries earlier. We find some proof of this in the Book of Jeremiah. If we turn to the twenty-second chapter, we find the Lord warning the Jews, via Jeremiah, regarding what will happen to their city, if they fail to repent of their apostasy. Please take note of the two phrases "many nations" -- just like in Revelation and the Book of Acts -- and "great city" -- again, just like in the Book of Revelation:

"And many nations shall pass by this city, and they shall say every man to his neighbour, Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this great city? Then they shall answer, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD their God, and worshipped other gods, and served them."  
Jeremiah 22:8-9, KJV

As we have clearly seen, in the Scriptures both the city of Jerusalem, as well as Babylon the Great, are described as being great, international cities into which flow multitudes from many surrounding countries. In addition to Jerusalem's religious significance to the Jews and to Jewish proselytes themselves, exactly why would so much international traffic flow through it? The fact is that Jerusalem was also quite a commercial center as well. Do you honestly believe that the money-minded Jews would not want to take financial advantage of all those multitudes of people visiting their city from eastern Asia, southern Europe and northern Africa every single year?

One good example can be found in 1 Kings 10 where the wealth of King Solomon is discussed. We are told that even the queen of Sheba -- who was very rich herself -- was very impressed by the level of Solomon's prosperity. Not only did Solomon receive great wealth from her, but he also had an agreement with King Hiram's navy which dealt in gold, precious stones, and other items. Considering Jerusalem's location, Solomon may have also had some interaction with the various spice routes which traversed near, or across, Israel, such as the Nabateans' famous "Spice Route". This particular trade route ran from Arabia, through the Negev Desert, on to Gaza. There was also the "King's Highway", and the "Incense" trade route. Consider the following verses:

"And she [the queen of Sheba] said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom. Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard . . . And the navy also of Hiram, that brought gold from Ophir, brought in from Ophir great plenty of almug trees, and precious stones . . . Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred threescore and six talents of gold, Beside that he had of the merchantmen, and of the traffick of the spice merchants, and of all the kings of Arabia, and of the governors of the country . . . And all king Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold; none were of silver: it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon. For the king had at sea a navy of Tharshish with the navy of Hiram: once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks. So king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom . . . And Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt, and linen yarn: the king's merchants received the linen yarn at a price."

1 Kings 10:6-7, 11, 14-15, 21-23, 28, KJV

"Beside that which chapmen and merchants brought. And all the kings of Arabia and governors of the country brought gold and silver to Solomon."

2 Chronicles 9:14, KJV

"And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath: and some of my servants set I at the gates, that there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath day. So the merchants and sellers of all kind of ware lodged without Jerusalem once or twice."

Nehemiah 13:19-20, KJV

So what we see then is that there was a fair amount of trade occurring between Jerusalem and the neighboring countries. In similar fashion, Babylon the Great is likewise a rather rich commercial center in which many products and services are available, as we can easily determine by the following group of Bible verses:

"And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon

the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies . . . And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all. The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate. Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her. 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. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived."

Revelation 18:2-3, 18-23, KJV

I find it so amazing how much of what we find written in the pages of the Book of Revelation regarding Babylon the Great, can be traced back to things which Jesus said in the Gospels concerning Jerusalem and the unbelieving Jews. Of course, this should not really come as a surprise to us. After all, the Book of Revelation starts out by telling us that this Book is the The Revelation of Jesus Christ, as we see by the following verse:

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew 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

So this revelation comes from Jesus Christ, and was given to Him by His Father. What we see then, is that in some regards, in the Book of Revelation, Jesus is merely reiterating to John, some of the things He told the Apostles while He was still in the flesh with them. Allow me to give you another clear example. In the eighteenth chapter of the Apocalypse, we previously read the following verse which describes some of the merchandise of Babylon the Great:

"And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men."

Revelation 18:13, KJV

Please go to part seven for the continuation of this series.

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WHO IS BABYLON THE GREAT? : PART 7

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Goods Trafficked By Babylon Include Slaves And Souls Of Men, Unbelieving Jews Prevented Souls From Entering The Kingdom Of Heaven, Similarities Revelation And James 5:1-6, "The Coming Of The Lord Draweth Nigh . . . The Judge Standeth Before The Door", Jews' Seventy Years Of Captivity, Religious Elders Kept Jerusalemites In Bondage To The Mosaic Law, Apostle Peter's Babylon, Paul Viewed Jerusalem As Being "In Bondage With Her Children", The Babylonian Talmud, Babylon The Great Rides The Beast, Physical Appearance Of Babylon The Great, Seventh Day Adventists And Other Christians Believe Babylon Represents Roman Catholic Church, Two Primary Colors Of Roman Catholic Hierarchy, 16th Century Reformers Geneva Bible And Animosity Towards Roman Catholic Church, Core Beliefs Of The SDA Church, Ellen G. White's Misguided Spirit Of Exclusivity, SDA Sabbath Legalism, SDA's Hatred Of The RCC, Sincere But Still Deceived

Continuing our discussion from part six, let me share that verse from the Book of Revelation one more time with you:

"And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men."

Revelation 18:13, KJV

What I would like to call to your attention are the last six words of the verse which state "and slaves, and souls of men." In this phrase, the word "slaves" is derived from the Koine Greek word "soma" -- or σῶμα -- which according to Thayer's Greek English Lexicon, the primary meaning of which is "the body both of men or animals". In that same phrase, the word "souls" is translated from the Koine Greek word "psuche", or "ψυχή" in Greek. Pronounced psoo-khay', this ancient word refers to the breath of life, or a living soul. In other words, we could say that Babylon the Great traffics in the bodies and souls of men. Do these words remind you of anything that Jesus said in the Gospels? How about this verse:

"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

Matthew 10:28, KJV

The previous verse uses the very same two Koine Greek words that we find in Revelation 18:13 above. So how is it possible for Babylon the Great to traffic in the bodies and souls of men? Well, believe it or not, but Jesus already told us in the twenty-third chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, when He accused the unbelieving Jews of the following wickedness:

"But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in . . . Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves."

Matthew 23:13, 15, KJV

Do you see that? By soundly rejecting the Gospel of Jesus Christ, by preventing the Apostles and Disciples from being faithful witnesses of the truth, and by keeping people under the bondage of the Mosaic Law, the Jewish religious hierarchy was in fact trafficking in the very souls of men, preventing them from entering the Kingdom of God, and in fact leading them straight to hell, just like themselves. Wow! Talk about being held accountable!

As we have seen, that is exactly how Babylon the Great is described as well. She trafficked in slaves and the souls of men, or in the bodies and souls of men. The Apostle Paul was very straightforward regarding how those unbelieving Jews prevented people from hearing the Gospel, when he wrote the following in his first Epistle to the Thessalonian brethren:

"For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews: Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men: FORBIDDING US TO SPEAK TO THE GENTILES THAT THEY MIGHT BE SAVED, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost."

1 Thessalonians 2:14-16, KJV

As we saw in part six, it is interesting to note that in the Book of Revelation, when Babylon the Great is destroyed, we are explicitly told that the merchants -- who are "the great men of the earth" who are made rich by her -- weep and wail over her destruction. Let me share some of those key verses

with you again:

"For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies . . . And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more . . . The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate . . . And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived."

Revelation 18:3, 11, 15-19, 23, KJV

While many Christians are aware of the fact that the Apostle John wrote of these things, I have come to believe that James likewise wrote of these very same events in his Epistle. Not only that, but James gave them a specific time frame as well. Consider the following verses, and notice how similar they sound to what John wrote regarding the destruction of Babylon the Great, and how the rich men weep and wail:

"Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. Ye have

condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you."

James 5:1-6, KJV

Please notice how the Apostle James specifically writes "for the last days". So he is specifically writing about the great destruction of this wealth in the last days, and how it will serve as a testimony against the rich men of the Earth. The question is, when are these last days, and what will be the culminating event of these last days? We actually find a very clear answer to this question in what James writes next. It is "the coming of the Lord", which James says "draweth nigh", as we can determine by the following set of verses:

"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door."

James 5:7-9, KJV

Please notice that the Apostle James is NOT writing to some future generation of Christians who will live two thousand years beyond his own time. He is writing to the brethren of his own time period, and telling them that all of this great wealth will be destroyed when Christ returns, which he says "draweth nigh". In fact, James very clearly writes "the judge standeth before the door". So again, I am convinced that both John and James are describing the very same events. That is, the great destruction of Babylon the Great and Jesus' Return. If you still do not understand the significance of what I've just said, then after completing this series, I encourage you to also consider reading the series entitled "Jesus Christ's Return: Have We Been Deceived?".

Returning to the issue of bondage, let me ask you something. Out of all the many names which could have been chosen, why is the code word "Babylon" used by both Jesus and John in the Book of Revelation? Likewise, why did the Apostle Peter apparently use Babylon as a code word for Jerusalem as well? In fact, the Apostle Paul alludes to the same thing, as you will see in a moment.

Well, let me answer that question with yet another question. At the time the Books of the New Testament were written, what

had the Jews of the First Century associated with Babylon for hundreds of years? In my mind, the answer can be summed up in one word: captivity. Slavery. As I amply point out in other articles such as "The Fruits of Disobedience", due to their ongoing, blatant apostasy during the Old Testament era, the city of Jerusalem and the temple compound were both destroyed by the forces of Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar around 587 BC. Furthermore, the Jews were led captive to Babylon for a period of seventy years, as had been prophesied by Jeremiah. Consider the following set of verses which confirm this point:

"Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave them all into his hand. And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes; all these he brought to Babylon. And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof. And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia: To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil THREESCORE AND TEN YEARS."

2 Chronicles 36:17-21, KJV

"And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon SEVENTY YEARS. And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations."

Jeremiah 25:11-12, KJV

"For thus saith the LORD, That after SEVENTY YEARS be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place."

Jeremiah 29:10, KJV

"In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the

Chaldeans; In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish SEVENTY YEARS in the desolations of Jerusalem." Daniel 9:1-2, KJV

"Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying, When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month, even those SEVENTY YEARS, did ye at all fast unto me, even to me?" Zechariah 7:5, KJV

So the Seventy Years of Captivity were etched into the minds and hearts of all Jews after that. But how does that relate to Jerusalem of the First Century? Again, I likewise explain this in a number of my other articles, such as "Dead to the Law: God's Laws Written on Our Hearts" and "Free From the Fear of Death: Law and Works vs Grace". I hope you will take the time to read them, as your time permits.

As I explained to you a moment ago, the religious leadership of Jerusalem purposely kept the people under the bondage of the Mosaic Law. Religion was just as powerful a force during the First Century, as it is today. Being one of the heads of the Church in Jerusalem, I have no doubt that the Apostle Peter was fully aware of this reality. He, as well as the other Apostles, were constantly in conflict with the crafty, legalistic religionists of Jerusalem, just as Jesus had been. Furthermore, the city was pretty much Satan's seat at that time. Let us not forget what Jesus said of those false, unbelieving Jews in John chapter eight:

"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." John 8:44, KJV

So because Peter was obviously very aware of how the people of Jerusalem were kept captive under the harsh mandates of the Mosaic Law, I strongly suspect that this is why he may have referred to the Jerusalem Church as being "at Babylon" at the end of his first Epistle, as we see by the following verse:

"The church that is at Babylon, elected together with

you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son."

1 Peter 5:13, KJV

To reiterate, Babylon symbolized bondage and slavery to the Jews; so it is only fitting that Peter would use this name in a symbolic sense. If you are familiar with the writings of the Apostle Paul, then you will know that he waged a very long battle when it came to the contentious issue of Grace versus works and the Mosaic Law. This is likewise something I discuss in the aforementioned articles. As I said earlier, there are indications in Paul's writings, that he too viewed Jerusalem as the spiritual Babylon, because her people were in bondage to the Mosaic Law. In particular, in the fourth chapter of his Epistle to the Galatians, we find the Apostle writing the following to the Galatian brethren, who it seems had also fallen back under the mandates of the Mosaic Law:

"My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you. Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free."

Galatians 4:19-31, KJV

Notice that Paul specifically says "For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children." Can it be any clearer than that? Paul viewed Jerusalem as being in bondage, just as Babylon represented bondage to the Jews. Thus, between

everything that Jesus said, and Peter's closing remark in his Epistle, and what the Apostle Paul writes above, I am convinced that the name "Babylon" was chosen as a code word for Jerusalem.

In addition to everything I have already stated, there is one other possible reason regarding why God symbolically refers to Jerusalem as Babylon the Great in the Book of Revelation. In case you are not aware of it, during their Seventy Years of Captivity, the Jews adopted a lot of the traditions and religious beliefs of both the Babylonians, and likewise the Zoroastrianism of the Persians. Some of these beliefs were later incorporated into what became known as the Babylonian Talmud -- or Talmud Bavli -- from about the 3rd to the 6th Century AD. The Babylonian Talmud consists of the Mishnah, and the Babylonian Gemara. It was compiled by the rabbis in Babylonia, which today corresponds to Iraq.

Jewish orthodoxy -- which is likewise known as Talmudism or modern-day Pharisaism -- is based upon this ancient set of books, which are basically the Jewish interpretation of the Old Testament Scriptures known to Christians. However, it is important to point out that the rabbinic interpretations are viewed as being superior to the actual Scriptures themselves. As you may know, orthodox Jews literally worship the words of their ancient rabbis, who wrote their interpretations in the margins of the Scriptures. While many Christians are not aware of it, to this day, the Babylonian Talmud is regarded as the most sacred book of the Jews. Furthermore, it is the teachings of these volumes, upon which all Jewish dealings with the modern world are based. Please read my series "The International Jew and the Protocols of Zion", as well as "Welcome to Greater Israel, USA!" for more details. You may be shocked.

All of this just adds to the picture of an adulterous bride who has become a whore in God's eyes, and who has constantly persecuted and killed the Lord's true children, since the pages of the Old Testament, exactly as Jesus said. Not only did Israel go a whoring after the false gods of the pagan nations around her, but as we have now seen, eventually, she was enslaved by Babylon. Then, once the Jews were allowed to return to Israel following their Seventy Years of Captivity, they brought back some of the Babylonians' pagan beliefs and took themselves strange wives from amongst the people of the land. You will find this discussed in the final chapter of the Book of Ezra.

We also know that Babylon the Great engages in fornication with the Beast. In the Book of Revelation, John informs us that she symbolically rides the Beast which rises up out of the sea of the world's people, and that she commits sexual infidelity with it, just as the whores of old had sexual intercourse with wild beasts. Consider the following verses which describe her fornication, as well as her appearance:

"And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy."

Revelation 13:1, KJV

"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 . . . So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication . . . And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues."

Revelation 17:1, 3-4, 15, KJV

"The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!"

Revelation 18:15-16, KJV

Before delving into Babylon the Great's relationship to the Beast, let me first address her physical appearance, because this is very important being as it also helps us to identify exactly who Babylon the Great is. Among other things, we are informed that this proud, haughty woman is "clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls". As I mentioned to you in part one, the Seventh Day Adventists -- and many other Christians -- are firmly convinced that Babylon represents current-day Rome, or more specifically, the Roman Catholic Church.

One proof such people attempt to use to validate their claim, is the fact that Babylon is arrayed in the colors purple and scarlet. For those of you who may not know much about Roman Catholic practices and traditions, allow me to inform you that purple and scarlet happen to be the primary colors of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. The usual attire of bishops is purple, while cardinals dress in red. Furthermore, purple is also used during Lent and Advent as well. Now on the surface, this fact may seem like very convincing evidence to some of you. However, the problem, in my view, is that it finds no support whatsoever in the Bible. Absolutely none.

As far as I'm concerned, this connection to Roman Catholicism is a misguided doctrine of men, which can be traced at least as far back as the Reformers of the Sixteenth Century. If you are familiar with the 1560 Geneva Bible, then you will know that it is filled with notes which are quite anti-Catholic in nature. Yet at the same time, if we consider how terribly the Reformers suffered under the RCC's cruel hand -- including being tortured and being burned at the stake -- then it would seem that their animosity towards the Pope and his church was justified.

Please note that I am NOT defending the Roman Catholics. If you have read enough of my articles, then you will already know that I'm no friend of that corrupt religious system. In fact, I expose its sins and misguided doctrines quite a bit in some of my writings. Closer to our current time -- I will probably offend some people by even daring to say this -- it seems that in addition to believing in Jesus, the Seventh Day Adventist belief system centers around three basic tenets.

The first of these -- which is also embraced and promoted by a number of other churches, organizations and cults -- is that the SDA church is the only church that is recognized by God as fulfilling His Will at this current time. As I explain in the series entitled "Elijah: Where Are the True Prophets of God?", this extreme spirit of exclusivity is misguided and just plain wrong. Yet so many people today have made this same boast. If you doubt that this belief has been taught to members of the SDA church, allow me to share with you a direct quote from their founder, Ellen G. White:

----- Begin Quote -----

"There is but one church in the world who are at the present

time standing in the breach, and making up the hedge, building up the old waste places . . . God is leading out a people. He has a chosen people, a church on the earth, whom He has made the depositaries of His law. He has committed to them sacred trust and eternal truth to be given to the world."

----- End Quote -----

The second core tenet of the Seventh Day Adventist church is that Christians are required to observe the Sabbath, not on Sunday, but on Saturday, in accordance with Jewish tradition. If you are a regular member of any of the social networks, then you will already know that Adventists like to push this belief extremely hard, even to the point of appearing rather self-righteous and condescending. For my own views regarding this topic, I invite you to read my two-part article entitled "Are Christians Obligated to Keep the Sabbath?". You'll find it listed at the end of this same series.

Lastly, the Seventh Day Adventist faith seems to emphasize their hatred of the Roman Catholic Church. Perhaps "hatred" may seem like a very strong word to some of you. However, if you take the time to visit enough SDA websites, or the pages of SDA members on the social networks, I think you will see what I mean. Please note that while I have said these things, I personally do not harbor any ill feelings towards the SDA church. To be honest, over the years, I have discovered that there are sweet, loving and even sincere people in probably all of the different branches of Christianity. However, that does not mean that I agree with all of their doctrines and practices. After all, some people are indeed very sincere, but they are also sincerely deceived with regards to some of their doctrines.

Please go to part eight for the continuation of this series.

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WHO IS BABYLON THE GREAT? : PART 8

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Futurist Theological Perspective, Things Which Must Shortly Come To Pass, All Things And Not Just Some Things, Revelation Was Directed To The First Century Church, An Urgent Message For The First Century Disciples, Roman Catholic Church Didn't Exist Yet, The Futurist Perspective Contradicts "Must Shortly Come To Pass", Jesus Says "I Come Quickly" Four Times, In The Gospels Jesus Did Not Know Yet When He Would Be Returning, In Revelation Jesus Makes It Clear That He Is Coming Very Soon, "This Generation Shall Not Pass", "Till All These Things Be Fulfilled", Same Urgent Message And Same Events In The Gospels And In The Book Of Revelation, Ready To Burst Through The Door, What City Is Described By The Appearance Of Babylon The Great? Let The Bible Interpret Itself, Led By The Holy Spirit In Our Understanding, The Design Of The Old Testament Tabernacle, A Description Of High Priest's Garments, Not Coincidental That Babylon's Colors And Description Are Similar, Harlot's Heart, Jesus' Bride And Babylon Are Opposites In Dress And Attitude

Continuing our discussion from part seven, as you may already know, one tactic which the Seventh Day Adventists and certain other Christians use to supposedly validate their belief that Babylon the Great is really a description of the modern Roman Catholic Church, is to insist that the Book of Revelation is an unfulfilled prophecy concerning the far future. In other words, said prophecies will be fulfilled in our current time. Such people adopt what is referred to in theological circles as the Futuristic perspective. Part of this belief likewise proposes that the Book of Revelation was given to the Apostle John after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. Therefore, in their minds, Babylon the Great cannot be a code name for Jerusalem, and must be referring to something else which will be destroyed in the far future; meaning in our near future.

While I will be discussing the actual dating of the Book of Revelation later on in this same series, there is actually a solid, indisputable reason why I personally reject the notion that the Book of Revelation is a prophecy concerning the far future. That is to say, regarding our current time. That reason is made perfectly clear in the following two verses:

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew 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

"And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things WHICH MUST SHORTLY BE DONE."

Revelation 22:6, KJV

Here we see God the Father Himself clearing saying that these are things "which must shortly come to pass." Let me ask you something. Why do you think God spoke that verse to His Son both at the very beginning, and at the very end of the Book of Revelation? As I thought on this matter for a moment, the answer became very clear to me. Because He wanted to make certain that the First Century Christians understood that the prophecies in this Book would SOON be upon them. That is why He has John tell them at the beginning of the Book, as well as at the end of the Book. When God repeats something, it is very important.

Please also note that when God the Father says "things", He is NOT just referring to some things, or to a few things. He is talking about everything that is written between those two verses. Those are the things which must shortly come to pass. Everything without exception, including the rise of the Beast and the False Prophet, the persecution and tribulation of the Saints, the Seven Plagues and the Seven Vials of Wrath, the destruction of Babylon the Great, the Return of Christ and the Battle of Armageddon, etc. Even if we currently do not fully understand it -- and I most certainly don't -- we are still required to accept God's Word for what it is, and for what it says. We cannot try to twist it so that it conforms to what we personally want to believe.

To reiterate, all of these events would shortly come to pass, and not two thousand years in the future. They would happen soon, from their perspective in the First Century. Why so? Because these prophecies were directed to the Church of the First Century, and NOT to us two thousand years later. That being the case, it makes perfect sense that when these two verses say "must shortly come to pass" and "must shortly be done", they are speaking in human terms, and using a human time frame which the Disciples of the First Century would certainly understand.

As I explain in the seven-part series called "Jesus Christ's Return: Have We Been Deceived?", it makes absolutely no sense that God would choose to reveal these things to the Disciples of the First Century Church, if these prophetic events were not going to happen for some two thousand years. What purpose would that possibly serve? But the fact of the matter is that there is a clear urgency in the messages and prophecies which are contained in the Apocalypse. It was important to get this message to the First Century Disciples. It was expedient that the First Century Church understood what was about to happen to them in the very near future.

So, let me ask you another question. If these prophecies are about "things which must shortly come to pass" -- meaning during the First Century -- and if God gave them to John to share with the First Century Church, how can they possibly be referring to the Roman Catholic Church, which would not even exist for several hundred more years? They obviously cannot be referring to the RCC, and they obviously were not referring to the RCC.

So, rather than accept the misguided doctrines of men which try to push these events into the far future, should we not just accept the Scriptures for exactly what they say, and not try to twist or pervert their meaning so that they fit our personal belief system? In my view, to believe and teach the Futurist point of view with regards to the Book of Revelation as many modern, Futurist-leaning Christians erroneously do -- and as I likewise did for many years as well -- is to directly contradict what God has clearly spoken at both the beginning and end of that amazing prophetic book.

In fact, it is NOT just those two verses alone which have me convinced that the Futurist perspective is incorrect. Quite simply, when Jesus very clearly states "I come quickly", not just one time, but FOUR TIMES in the Book of Revelation -- once in chapter three and three times in chapter twenty-two -- personally, I believe that He means exactly what He says. My friends, let's be honest here. "I come quickly" does not mean "I will see you in another two thousand years". Again, there is a clear sense of urgency to the message contained in the Book of Revelation. Please consider the following four verses where these words were spoken by the Lord:

"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

Revelation 3:11, KJV

"Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book."

Revelation 22:7, KJV

"And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."

Revelation 22:12, KJV

"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Revelation 22:20, KJV

Please also remember that it is God the Father who gave the revelation to His Son, Jesus, who then gave the message to the Angelic Messenger, who then passed it on to John. Thus, Jesus is speaking in these verses under the direction and permission of His Father. Why is this point so important? Well, let me remind you of something which Jesus said in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark:

"But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only."

Matthew 24:36, KJV

"But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, NEITHER THE SON, but the Father."

Mark 13:32, KJV

You see, as the previous verses make very clear, during the time that Jesus was in the flesh, He actually did not know how soon He would be returning to the Earth. Apparently, it is something which the Father even kept from Him. However, not even four decades later, in the Book of Revelation we find the Lord urgently saying "I come quickly". This is an urgent message for the First Century Church to hang on, and to get their hearts and lives right with the Lord -- as per the seven letters to the churches -- because He's definitely coming soon. What a huge change from what Jesus said in the Gospels!

Well, believe it or not, but as mind-blowing as it may be, in the Book of Revelation, the Lord is saying the very same things that He told the Apostles in three of the Gospels. I am referring to the fact that He said "This generation shall

not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." We see the very same exact message in the Gospels, and in the Book of Revelation, because it is Jesus who is actually speaking in both places. Consider the following three verses:

"So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."

Matthew 24:33-34, KJV

"So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done."

Mark 13:29-30, KJV

"So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled."

Luke 21:31-32, KJV

To clarify, the prophetic events of which Jesus speaks in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21, are the very same events which are spoken of in the Book of Revelation. That is to say, the tribulation to come, the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, the coming of the Lord, etc. But they are described in the Book of Revelation in considerably more detail.

As I explained a moment ago, in the verses I just shared with you, the Lord says that ALL THINGS would be fulfilled before that current generation passed. The phrase "all these things" in the Gospels has the same meaning as the phrase "things which must shortly come to pass" in the Book of Revelation.

Think about this. If those events were already "at the doors" -- again, an indication of urgency -- when Jesus described them to the Apostles in those Gospels around 30 AD, think how much closer those same events were a few decades later when the Apostle John received his visions and revelations. They must have been ready to burst through the doors very quickly! With good reason Jesus twice said to John "things which must shortly come to pass". What things? The events which Jesus described in three of the Gospels, and then again in the Apocalypse. They are the same events described two different

ways. And to reiterate, it is also with good reason that the Lord said "I come quickly" four times in the Apocalypse.

To really focus in on what is being said here by the Lord, let me emphasize the key words which Jesus is speaking in these various chapters. I have typed them out in the exact order in which they appear in the Gospels and in the Book of Revelation. The message is very plain to see. It just isn't possible to miss the real sense of urgency in all of these verses, unless we purposely and willfully reject what they are truly saying, because it doesn't go along with what we want to believe:

". . . it [meaning the destruction of Jerusalem and Christ's Return] is near, even at the door . . . This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled . . . it is nigh, even at the doors . . . this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done . . . the kingdom of God is nigh at hand . . . This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled . . . things which must shortly come to pass . . . Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown . . . the things which must shortly be done . . . Behold, I come quickly . . . behold, I come quickly . . . Surely I come quickly. Amen."

Yet despite such clear Scriptural evidence, these Futurist Christians purposely and insistently push these events into the future, instead of leaving them in the past where they really belong, because they have convinced themselves -- or perhaps have been convinced by others -- that the picture of the destruction of Babylon the Great represents the future destruction of Rome and the Roman Catholic Church, and that the Return of Christ is also a future event. Regarding this latter point, let me again refer you to my seven-part series entitled "Jesus Christ's Return: Have We Been Deceived?".

Now, concerning the fact that we are told that Babylon the Great is "clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls", if the Apostle John's description does not actually describe the Roman Catholic Church, as quite a few of my Christian brethren have erroneously chosen to believe, then who does it describe? Patience, my friends. I will soon be providing you with a very direct answer to this intriguing question -- that is, if you haven't already figured it out -- and it may possibly surprise some of you.

If there is one thing which I hope you recognize by now after reading the first seven parts of this series -- assuming that you've even made it this far -- it is that from part one and forward, I have continually directed you to the Scriptures -- as it obviously should be -- because it's there, in the Bible, where we will find the answers which we seek. Why should it be any different with regard to the description of Babylon the Great? After all, as I've explained a number of times before, it has long been my firm belief that the Bible in large part interprets itself. We simply have to be willing to invest the required time and diligence to seek out the answers, instead of constantly relying on the opinions and doctrines of men.

To reiterate, if we truly want to grasp the meaning of some of the mysterious prophecies which are found in God's Word -- including the identity of Babylon the Great -- rather than just blindly accept the misguided interpretations and questionable doctrines which are espoused by certain of the churches, preached by popular Bible teachers, or even shared by some of our online friends, we really need to do the work ourselves by digging into the Scriptures, and asking God to reveal the truth to us by His Spirit. We simply need to let the Bible interpret itself as much as possible. I shared a few verses with you regarding this subject in part one of this same series. Following are a few more for your personal consideration:

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

John 14:26, KJV

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come."

John 16:13, KJV

"Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."

Psalms 119:18, KJV

With regards to the appearance of Babylon the Great, to my own surprise, a number of years ago, I came across a number of Old Testament verses which not only amazed me, but which also peeled away another layer surrounding the mysterious

harlot of the Book of Revelation, revealing who she really seems to be. Not only that, but everything I've shared with you thus far in this series is further confirmed by this Scriptural discovery.

But before sharing this new information with you, allow me to remind you again that some of the key words which are used by the Apostle John in the Apocalypse -- or Book of Revelation -- to describe the appearance of Babylon the Great are the following: fine linen, gold, purple, scarlet and precious stones. Is it possible that there is something or someone else mentioned in the Scriptures which likewise matches this description? As you will now see, the answer is in fact a resounding "YES!". So let's dig into it!

What I discovered is that the Old Testament clearly informs us that the curtains, vail and hanging -- meaning a covering or screen -- over the door of the tabernacle which God had instructed Moses to build, were made of fine linen, and were blue, purple and scarlet in color. We are also told that the hanging over the gate of the court was likewise of the same fabric, and the very same colors. Consider the following group of verses which confirm these points:

"Moreover thou shalt make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and PURPLE, AND SCARLET: with cherubims of cunning work shalt thou make them . . . And thou shalt make a vail of blue, and PURPLE, AND SCARLET, and fine twined linen of cunning work: with cherubims shall it be made . . . And thou shalt make an hanging for the door of the tent, of blue, and PURPLE, AND SCARLET, and fine twined linen, wrought with needlework."

Exodus 26:1, 31, 36, KJV

"And for the gate of the court shall be an hanging of twenty cubits, of blue, and PURPLE, AND SCARLET, and fine twined linen, wrought with needlework: and their pillars shall be four, and their sockets four."

Exodus 27:16, KJV

As I was working on another important series regarding these very same events, and reading "The Wars of the Jews" by the Jewish general and historian Flavius Josephus, I discovered that in Book 5 Chapter 5, he describes how the temple is divided into two parts -- the inner part and the outer part -- by a pair of golden doors, and that in front of the doors there is a veil or curtain that is likewise blue and scarlet

and purple in color. Josephus also mentions "fine linen" as we also see in the description of Babylon the Great. Last of all, Josephus describes this veil as a "Babylonian curtain". Amazing! Consider the following excerpt:

----- Begin Quote -----

"But then this house, as it was divided into two parts, the inner part was lower than the appearance of the outer, and had golden doors of fifty-five cubits altitude, and sixteen in breadth; but before these doors there was a veil of equal largeness with the doors. It was a BABYLONIAN CURTAIN, embroidered with blue, and FINE LINEN, and SCARLET AND PURPLE, and of a contexture that was truly wonderful. Nor was this mixture of colours without its mystical interpretation, but was a kind of image of the universe; for by the SCARLET there seemed to be enigmatically signified fire, by the fine flax the earth, by the blue the air, and by the PURPLE the sea; two of them having their colours the foundation of this resemblance; but the fine flax and the PURPLE have their own origin for that foundation, the earth producing the one, and the sea the other. This curtain had also embroidered upon it all that was mystical in the heavens, excepting that of the [twelve] signs, representing living creatures."

----- End Quote -----

Furthermore, the Book of Exodus also reveals that the holy garments which were to be worn by Aaron -- the first high priest -- and his descendants were also made of fine linen. These garments included a breastplate, an ephod, a robe, a broidered coat, a mitre, and a girdle. Their colors were to be gold, blue, purple and scarlet -- the same colors as the tabernacle and the curtain in the later temple -- as is evident by the following set of verses:

"And thou shalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother for glory and for beauty. And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aarons garments to consecrate him, that he may minister unto me in the priests office. And these are the garments which they shall make; a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a broidered coat, a mitre, and a girdle: and they shall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and his sons, that he may minister unto me in the priests office. And they shall take gold, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen. And they shall make the ephod of gold, of blue,

and of purple, of scarlet, and fine twined linen, with cunning work . . . And the curious girdle of the ephod, which is upon it, shall be of the same, according to the work thereof; even of gold, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen . . . And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment with cunning work; after the work of the ephod thou shalt make it; of gold, of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine twined linen, shalt thou make it . . . And beneath upon the hem of it thou shalt make pomegranates of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, round about the hem thereof; and bells of gold between them round about:"

Exodus 28:2-6, 8, 15, 33, KJV

Exodus chapter twenty-eight likewise describes how various chains of pure gold were to be incorporated into the holy garments of the high priest. It also describes in intricate detail the design of the breastplate which was to be worn by the high priest. This holy breastplate was to include twelve precious stones, each of which was to be enclosed in gold, or surrounded by gold, and each one representing a tribe of Israel. Consider the following verses which verify these points:

"And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment with cunning work; after the work of the ephod thou shalt make it; of gold, of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine twined linen, shalt thou make it. Foursquare it shall be being doubled; a span shall be the length thereof, and a span shall be the breadth thereof. And thou shalt set in it settings of stones, even four rows of stones: the first row shall be a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle: this shall be the first row. And the second row shall be an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. And the third row a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst. And the fourth row a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper: they shall be set in gold in their inclosings. And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, like the engravings of a signet; every one with his name shall they be according to the twelve tribes. And thou shalt make upon the breastplate chains at the ends of wreathen work of pure gold. And thou shalt make upon the breastplate two rings of gold, and shalt put the two rings on the two ends of the breastplate. And thou shalt put the two wreathen chains of gold in the two rings which are on the ends of the breastplate. And the other two ends of the two wreathen chains thou shalt fasten in the two ouches, and put them on the shoulderpieces of the ephod before it. And thou shalt

make two rings of gold, and thou shalt put them upon the two ends of the breastplate in the border thereof, which is in the side of the ephod inward. And two other rings of gold thou shalt make, and shalt put them on the two sides of the ephod underneath, toward the forepart thereof, over against the other coupling thereof, above the curious girdle of the ephod. And they shall bind the breastplate by the rings thereof unto the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, that it may be above the curious girdle of the ephod, and that the breastplate be not loosed from the ephod."

Exodus 28:15-28, KJV

Later, in Exodus chapter thirty-five, Moses shares these very same instructions with the children of Israel, so that they can donate all of the supplies which would be necessary to carry out the Lord's orders concerning the construction of the tabernacle, and the design of the high priest's garments. These instructions are then carried out in Exodus chapters thirty-six through thirty-nine. Even the mitre which Aaron wore upon his head was made of gold and fine linen, and bore the colors blue, purple and scarlet. Upon doing a count, I discovered that the phrase "and purple, and scarlet" is used nineteen times in these various chapters.

Now, let me ask you something. Do you honestly believe that it is a mere coincidence that some of the key words which are used to describe Babylon the Great's appearance -- fine linen, gold, purple, scarlet and precious stones -- are the very same words which are used to describe the appearance of the tabernacle, as well as the holy garments of Aaron the high priest? Personally, I do not believe that it is just a mere coincidence. It is intentional. God was fully aware of the colors of the Jewish religious hierarchy, and no doubt John was too. Is it possible then that John actually knew who and what was being described to him in said prophecies regarding Babylon? Good question.

In fact, the Apostle Peter was likewise aware of the colors which were worn by the Jewish religious hierarchy, because as you may recall, he entered into the high priest's palace at the time of Jesus' betrayal. Furthermore, considering how many times the Apostles were dragged before the Sanhedrin, they were probably all more than aware of the colors of the high priest's garments. Consider the following set of verses as examples:

"But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest's

palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end."

Matthew 26:58, KJV

"And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest."

John 18:15, KJV

"And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes, And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?"

Acts 4:5-7, KJV

As I mentioned earlier, if we really believe that the deep prophecies which are contained in the Book of Revelation were "things which must shortly come to pass", and if the Roman Catholic Church did not even exist at that time, and would not exist for several hundred more years, then there is just no way that Babylon's description can be referring to the Roman Catholic Church. As such, it must be referring to something or somebody else which already existed at that time in history.

Do not forget that the tabernacle represented the spiritual core of the Israelites' religion, just as the high priest was the ultimate human authority within their religion. While the high priest would continue to occupy that position up to and including the New Testament era, as we know, in the days of King Solomon, the tabernacle -- or tent -- was replaced with an actual temple. But the point is, Judaism and the temple compound represented the very heart and soul of the Jewish people. And so making an annual pilgrimage to the temple in Jerusalem was the desire of all observant Jews. In fact, it was a sacred duty.

Well, that temple, as well as the high priest, along with all of the other priests, were all located within the city of Jerusalem, which God, through His Prophets, through His own Son, Jesus, and through the Apostles -- in particular John -- ultimately declared to be an unfaithful wife and a whore! In my opinion, the temple compound was in effect the spiritual heart of the harlot! I hope you can see that. On a related note, in part two of this series, I shared the

following verse with you:

"What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh."

1 Corinthians 6:16, KJV

While God's faithful bride is spiritually joined to Him, in the case of Babylon the Great, she has become one with the world instead, and is committing spiritual adultery with it. You may recall that I shared the following verse with you in part three:

"Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."

James 4:4, KJV

Even in her manner of dress and her loud, proud, haughty and defiant attitude, Babylon the Great is the exact opposite of the bride of Christ -- and Christian wives in general -- who is supposed to dress very modestly -- no fancy clothes or expensive jewelry such as gold and pearls -- and be of a meek and quiet spirit. Consider the following group of verses:

"In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works."

1 Timothy 2:9-10, KJV

"Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:"

1 Peter 3:3-5, KJV

Please go to part nine for the continuation of this series.

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## WHO IS BABYLON THE GREAT? : PART 9

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Temple Mount Faithful, Jewish Plans To Build Third Temple On Mount Moriah In East Jerusalem, Serious Temple Preparations Rome: City of Seven Hills, Vatican City Doesn't Sit On Any Of The Seven Hills, Babylon The Great Sits Upon Seven Mountains, False Claim Of Seventh Day Adventists And Other Christians, Roman Catholic Church Didn't Exist Yet When John Received His Visions, "Things Which Must Shortly Come To Pass", Importance Of Reading The Scriptures In Context And Comparing Verse With Verse, Let The Bible Interpret Itself, Unbelieving Jews Have Had 2,000 Years To Bury The Truth, Jews' Attempt To Hide The Resurrection, Jebus And Jebusites, Israelites Led By Joshua Defeat Adonizedek The King Of Jerusalem And Kill Five Kings, King David Conquers Jerusalem And Begins Expanding Its Area, Ancient Jerusalem Sat Upon Seven Mountains At The Time John Wrote The Book Of Revelation, Rome Sits On Seven Hills While Jerusalem Sits On Seven Mountains, Five Of The Mountains Are Specifically Mentioned In The Bible, First Book Of Maccabees And Flavius Josephus Mention The Mountains Bezetha And Acra

Continuing our discussion from part eight, if the previous sets of verses regarding the description of the tabernacle and the high priest's garments still aren't enough to fully convince you that Babylon the Great was in fact the secret code name for Jerusalem, and by extension, the temple and the Jewish religious leaders which reigned over the common people of ancient Israel, then perhaps you'll consider the following additional information. As some of my readers will already know, there has been talk of a third temple being built on Mount Moriah in East Jerusalem, at least since the late 1960s. I remember reading about such plans decades ago. If I recall correctly, not only did the Jews have blueprints for the actual temple, but they also had prefabricated stone blocks stored in warehouses in Jerusalem. I am not sure, but I may have possibly read this information in the now defunct

"Look" magazine.

In more recent years, the Orthodox Jews -- such as the Temple Mount Faithful -- also known as the Temple Mount and Land of Israel Faithful Movement -- the Temple Institute, and similar groups have been even more adamant about constructing a third temple on the summit of Mount Moriah, where the Muslim Dome of the Rock and the al-Aqsa Mosque now stand. In fact, if you visit the website of the former, you will find the following notice plainly posted on their home page:

----- Begin Quote -----

"The goal of the Temple Mount and Land of Israel Faithful Movement is the building of the Third Temple on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem in our lifetime in accordance with the Word of G-d and all the Hebrew prophets and the liberation of the Temple Mount from Arab (Islamic) occupation so that it may be consecrated to the Name of G-d."

----- End Quote -----

On a related note, I recall that a number of years ago, a group of radical American Zionist Christians made plans to blow up the Dome of the Rock, so that the temple could be built on top of Mount Moriah -- which is also known as the Temple Mount to the Jews, and as the Noble Sanctuary to the Muslims. As I recall, those misguided people were caught before they could actually carry out their plan, and the Dome of the Rock was spared any damage. However, imagine if they had been successful. It would have surely resulted in immediate war with all of the Arab nations which surround Israel.

As you may already know, these radical Orthodox Jews are not just stating their intentions. They're in fact in the process of making physical preparations for what they are convinced will eventually occur in the land of Israel: the construction of a third temple. For example, a number of years ago, I can recall reading how attempts were made to transport the temple foundation stone to Mount Moriah, which, had they succeeded in doing so, would have clearly resulted in a new eruption of violence on the part of the Muslims. But that is not all. In addition, attempts have been made to breed a pure red heifer, the ashes of which are used in the ritual of purification.

In addition to this, at latest report, the Orthodox Jews have

already constructed the sacrificial altar for the courtyard, made the various furnishings for the interior of the temple, created the sacred vessels that will be used in actual temple services, completed making the priestly garments according to the Old Testament specifications, trained hundreds of Jewish men -- who are supposedly descended from the tribe of Levi -- to serve as priests in the newly-constructed temple, and I am not sure what else. According to what I've read, these items are on display at the Treasures of the Temple exhibition in Jerusalem. So as I said, the Orthodox Jews are very serious about this, and are just waiting for the right time when they will be able to carry out their plans.

Returning to the connection between the description of Babylon the Great in the Book of Revelation, and the description of the tabernacle and the priestly garments in the Book of Exodus, you will discover that these very same colors have been used in the new priestly garments which are currently stored in Jerusalem. Below is a list of links which will confirm everything I have just shared with you. Please note that I cannot guarantee that they will still be available at the time you read this series. They were last checked on May 28, 2025:

<https://www.jpost.com/jewish-world/jewish-news/third-temple-preparations-begin-with-priestly-garb>

<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2014/04/third-temple-jerusalem-priest-offering-rituals-al-aqsa.html>

<https://free.messianicbible.com/feature/the-temple-vessels-are-ready-for-the-rebuilding-of-jerusalems-third-temple/>

<https://free.messianicbible.com/feature/the-red-heifer-and-the-third-temple-in-end-time-prophecy/>

<https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3564897,00.html>

<https://templeinstitute.org/priestly-garments/>

<https://templeinstitute.org/priestly-garments-2/>

While I have now shared considerable Biblical evidence which clearly points to first century Jerusalem being Babylon the Great, there is still more compelling information. If you're already familiar with the debate surrounding the identity of Babylon the Great, then you may possibly know that another factor which the Seventh Day Adventists and other Christians

use to validate their claim that Babylon the Great represents the modern-day Roman Catholic Church, is that topographically speaking, the city of Rome sits upon seven hills. It is for that reason that it is also referred to as "The City of Seven Hills".

According to the information I've read, the original ancient city of Romulus sat upon the Palatine Hill. The names of all seven hills are as follows: Palatine, Capitoline, Quirinal, Viminal, Esquiline, Caelian, and Aventine. Romulus served as the capital of the Roman Kingdom which preceded the advent of both the Roman Republic, as well as the later Roman Empire.

However, what the SDA church -- and those other Christians -- may not realize, is that Vatican City does NOT actually sit on any of those seven hills. It is actually situated on a SEPARATE hill called Vatican Hill, which is located across the Tiber River from the traditional seven hills of Rome. If you doubt that this is so, you can confirm it for yourself simply by conducting some quick online research. At any rate, in describing the location of Babylon the Great, the Book of Revelation states the following in chapter seventeen:

"And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth."  
Revelation 17:9, KJV

Now, as far as the Seventh Day Adventist church and certain other Christians are concerned -- which may also include the Jehovah Witnesses as well -- Revelation 17:9 is indisputable proof that John is referring to the city of Rome, and thus to the Roman Catholic Church, even though Vatican City itself does NOT sit on any of those seven hills -- as I have already explained to you -- and even though the Roman Catholic Church did NOT yet exist at the time that John was given his visions and prophecies. Remember again that John was told that these were "things which must shortly come to pass" -- Revelation 1:1 and Revelation 22:6. His revelations were NOT far future prophecies, as these misguided Christians wish to believe.

Furthermore, there is something else which is very important, which these Futurists are overlooking. In fact, to be honest, before I discovered the information I'll now be sharing with you -- this was when I still embraced a heavily Futuristic interpretation of the Book of Revelation -- I also considered the possibility that the city of Rome might be represented by Babylon the Great in the Apocalypse. So whether it is due to

their own ignorance or due to intentional omission of certain historical facts on their part as a means to strengthen their own argument, I honestly do not know. All I can tell you is that the information I will now be sharing with you totally changes Revelation's prophetic picture, in my opinion. I hope you will agree.

Let me remind you again that in order to truly understand the prophetic passages which we find in the Bible -- which of course includes the Book of Revelation -- rather than rely on the doctrines and interpretations of fallible men, we need to look to the Scriptures themselves for the truth. We need to compare Scripture with Scripture, and allow the Bible to interpret itself as much as possible.

As I first mentioned to you in part one of this series, in addition to this, we also need to read the Scriptures in the proper context in which they are written. In this particular case, that means that we need to take into consideration the historical, political, religious and social conditions of the First Century, and how they directly relate to the prophecies which were given to John. We also need to consider who he was writing to, when he wrote to them, and what their attitudes were. Lastly, we also need to take note of the geographical and topographical factors that existed at that time.

So what does all of this have to do with Babylon the Great, and how does it relate to Babylon sitting upon seven hills? Well, the first thing you need to realize is that the Jews who reject Christ as the Messiah have had about two thousand years to bury the truth. As I mention in a number of other articles, from the moment that Jesus rose from the dead, the unbelieving Jews sought to destroy the evidence, and pervert the truth. As some of you will already know, this they began to do when they denied Jesus' Resurrection, and even bribed the soldiers who guarded His tomb, so that they would begin to spread a false narrative. Matthew tells us as much in the following set of verses:

"Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governors ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this

saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day."  
Matthew 28:11-15, KJV

From that point forward -- and even before -- they began to fight against the new-found faith as much as they possibly could. As you may know, those unbelieving devils constantly mocked, harassed, persecuted, tortured, jailed and killed the followers of Jesus Christ. They spread false narratives, tried to place new Disciples under the bondage of the Mosaic Law, worked to sow division amongst the First Century Church, and I suspect wrote false gospels as well to confuse the new Disciples. In short, they did everything within their power to slow down the propagation of the Gospel. As I shared with you in part seven, Paul exposed their wicked machinations in his first Epistle to the Thessalonian brethren when he wrote the following:

"For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews: Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men: Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost."  
1 Thessalonians 2:14-16, KJV

Considering what we know about these Jewish antichrists, is it difficult for us to believe that they have continued doing these things down through the centuries? Is it possible that there is a hidden truth regarding the identity of Babylon the Great of which most people are simply not aware, because it has intentionally been hidden or purposely buried? With the information I am going to share with you now, I will let you be the judge.

You see, as it turns out, thousands of years ago, when the city of Jerusalem was first mentioned in the Bible, it was referred to as belonging to the Jebusites, and was actually known as Jebus, as we can determine by the following group of verses:

"And the border went up by the valley of the son of Hinnom unto the south side of the Jebusite; THE SAME IS JERUSALEM: and the border went up to the top of the mountain that lieth before the valley of Hinnom westward, which is at the end of the valley of the giants northward:"

Joshua 15:8, KJV

"And Zelah, Eleph, and Jebusi, WHICH IS JERUSALEM, Gibeath, and Kirjath; fourteen cities with their villages. This is the inheritance of the children of Benjamin according to their families."

Joshua 18:28, KJV

"But the man would not tarry that night, but he rose up and departed, and came over against Jebus, WHICH IS JERUSALEM; and there were with him two asses saddled, his concubine also was with him. And when they were by Jebus, the day was far spent; and the servant said unto his master, Come, I pray thee, and let us turn in into this city of the Jebusites, and lodge in it."

Judges 19:10-11, KJV

It is in Joshua chapter ten that we learn that Adonizedek, the king of Jerusalem, is beginning to fear Joshua and the Israelites, because the Israelites are conquering one place after the other. In fact, the great city of Gibeon had chosen to make peace with the Israelites, rather than fight against them. As a result, Adonizedek made a confederacy with four other kings, in the hope of defeating Gibeon. However, the Israelites came to the aid of Gibeon; and not only were the armies of the five kings defeated, but the five kings -- who had hidden in a cave -- were slain by the Israelites as well. Consider the following verses which confirm these points:

"Now it came to pass, when Adonizedek king of Jerusalem had heard how Joshua had taken Ai, and had utterly destroyed it; as he had done to Jericho and her king, so he had done to Ai and her king; and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel, and were among them; That they feared greatly, because Gibeon was a great city, as one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai, and all the men thereof were mighty."

Joshua 10:1-2, KJV

"Then said Joshua, Open the mouth of the cave, and bring out those five kings unto me out of the cave. And they did so, and brought forth those five kings unto him out of the cave, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon. And it came to pass, when they brought out those kings unto Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said unto the captains of the men of war which went with him, Come

near, put your feet upon the necks of these kings. And they came near, and put their feet upon the necks of them. And Joshua said unto them, Fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong and of good courage: for thus shall the LORD do to all your enemies against whom ye fight. And afterward Joshua smote them, and slew them, and hanged them on five trees: and they were hanging upon the trees until the evening. And it came to pass at the time of the going down of the sun, that Joshua commanded, and they took them down off the trees, and cast them into the cave wherein they had been hid, and laid great stones in the caves mouth, which remain until this very day." Joshua 10:22-27, KJV

"And these are the kings of the country which Joshua and the children of Israel smote on this side Jordan on the west, from Baalgad in the valley of Lebanon even unto the mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir; which Joshua gave unto the tribes of Israel for a possession according to their divisions . . . The king of Jerusalem, one; the king of Hebron, one;" Joshua 12:7, 10, KJV

While Judges 1:8 informs us that the Israelites had taken the city of Jerusalem militarily and set it on fire, according to the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus, the Israelites had only taken the Lower City, and not the Upper City, which was much better fortified. It was for that reason that centuries later, when King David fought against Jebus, the Jebusites were quite confident that they could hold back the Israelites. How wrong they were! Consider the following group of verses:

"Now the children of Judah had fought against Jerusalem, and had taken it, and smitten it with the edge of the sword, and set the city on fire." Judges 1:8, KJV

"And the king [David] and his men went to Jerusalem unto the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land: which spake unto David, saying, Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither: thinking, David cannot come in hither. Nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion: the same is the city of David. And David said on that day, Whosoever getteth up to the gutter, and smiteth the Jebusites, and the lame and the blind, that are hated of Davids soul, he shall be chief and captain. Wherefore they said, The blind and the lame shall not come into the house. So David dwelt in the fort, and called it the city of David.

And David built round about from Millo and inward. And David went on, and grew great, and the LORD God of hosts was with him."

2 Samuel 5:6-10, KJV

"And David said, Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites first shall be chief and captain. So Joab the son of Zeruiah went first up, and was chief. And David dwelt in the castle; therefore they called it the city of David. And he built the city round about, even from Millo round about: and Joab repaired the rest of the city. So David waxed greater and greater: for the LORD of hosts was with him."

1 Chronicles 11:6-9, KJV

As you can see, King David began to build up Jerusalem; and eventually, Jerusalem proper came to occupy SEVEN HILLS, or mounts, just like ancient Rome. In fact, as you may know, the city of Jerusalem both shrank and expanded in physical size at different times during its history, and eventually stretched beyond its original retaining walls. This is NOT just a crazy, wild conspiracy theory. Jerusalem sitting on seven mounts is both historical and documented fact. There are in fact maps of ancient Jerusalem which show all seven of these mounts, which I will be sharing with you shortly. These seven hills were named as follows, based on online sources, as well as on information that is found in the Bible itself:

Mount Acra - a.k.a Akra, "the citadel"

Mount Bezetha

Mount Gareb - a.k.a. Giv'at Garev, Gibeat Gareb, Leper's Hill

Mount Goath - a.k.a. Gibeat Goath, Hill of Death, Golgotha

Mount Moriah

Mount Ophel

Mount Zion

As both the Bible and historical documents confirm, over the decades and centuries, some of these mounts were lowered or raised in height, enclosed in walls at different times, and the areas between some of these mounts were even filled in, as a way to create better construction sites by the various forces which controlled Jerusalem. These forces included the Israelites themselves, the Seleucids, the Romans, etc. Some of them, such as Mount Acra and Mount Moriah, had fortresses built on their summits. Again, this is all verifiable fact.

The main point I want you to consider here is that all seven

of these hills pertained to the city of Jerusalem. They were all partially or completely located within the confines of Jerusalem during the First Century which, as we know, is when the Apostle John wrote the Book of Revelation. As such, in my view, this is yet more strong, historical evidence that John was talking about Jerusalem, and NOT about the city of Rome, and much less about the Roman Catholic Church, which did not even exist back then. So again, I am convinced that Babylon the Great was a code name for the whorish Jerusalem who had forsaken her true God.

Regarding whorish Jerusalem, that's another very clear reason regarding why Rome cannot possibly be Babylon the Great. You see, as we've already amply discussed earlier in this series, the reason why God accuses Jerusalem of being a whore and a harlot is because at one time she had been His faithful bride until she abandoned Him. In contrast, absolutely nowhere in the Scriptures is Rome ever referred to as God's bride and wife. Therefore, she cannot possibly be the bride who turned against Him in marital infidelity, thus becoming a whore. At any rate, returning to our discussion concerning the seven hills or mountains, even the Psalmist -- meaning King David -- talks about these same mountains. Consider the following verse that is found in Psalm 125:

"As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the LORD is round about his people from henceforth even for ever."  
Psalm 125:2, KJV

Directly related to this issue is the fact that while Rome is referred to as "The City of Seven Hills", in Revelation 17:9, we are clearly told that Babylon the Great sits upon seven MOUNTAINS, just as Psalm 125:2 indicates. While I was researching this same issue, I was led to look up the word "mountains" in Thayer's Greek English Lexicon. Upon doing so, I discovered that "mountains" is derived from the Greek work "oros", which it defines as "a mountain". In fact, in the sixty-five times that this Koine Greek word is used in the KJV New Testament, it is translated forty-one times as "mountain", twenty-one times as "mount", and only three times as "hill". Furthermore, in the three places where it is translated as "hill", it is not even talking about the city of Jerusalem.

What is particularly interesting about this is the fact that there is a word in the Koine Greek language for "hill". It is the word "bounos". John was probably aware of this word, and

he could have used it. That is, if he meant to say hills. But he didn't. Is it possible that he used "oros" instead because he wanted his readers to know that Babylon the Great sits on mountains, or mounts, and NOT just on hills? So in my view, this may very well be just more coded language being used by John, because he wanted his readers to know he was actually referring to Jerusalem.

For the sake of transparency, allow me to inform you that as of this writing, I have not been able to find Mount Acra or Mount Bezetha specifically mentioned by name in the accepted canon of the KJV Bible. I am not sure why this is. However, the fact that I have found specific mention of the other five hills -- meaning Mount Gareb, Mount Goath, Mount Ophel, Mount Moriah and Mount Zion -- is sufficient evidence for me, and likewise a confirmation, that John is speaking of Jerusalem in the Book of Revelation.

In fact, I have also discovered that while providing readers with a description of Jerusalem, Jewish historian Flavius Josephus referred to Bezetha as the "New City", and to Acra as the "Lower City", in Book 5 Chapter 4 of "The Wars of the Jews", as we see by the following excerpts:

----- Begin Quote -----

"Of these hills, that which contains the upper city is much higher, and in length more direct. Accordingly it was called the "Citadel", by king David; he was the father of that Solomon who built this temple at the first; but it is by us called the "Upper Market-place". But the other hill, which was called "Acra", and sustains the lower city, is of the shape of a moon when she is horned; over against this there was a third hill, but naturally lower than Acra, and parted formerly from the other by a broad valley. However, in those times, when the Asamoneans reigned, they filled up that valley with earth, and had a mind to join the city to the temple. They then took off part of the height of Acra, and reduced it to a less elevation than it was before, that the temple might be superior to it. Now the valley of the Cheesemongers, as it was called, and was that which we told you before distinguished the hill of the upper city from that of the lower, extended as far as Siloam; for that is the name of a fountain which hath sweet water in it, and this in great plenty also. But on the out-sides, these hills are surrounded by deep valleys, and by reason of the precipices to them belonging, on both sides they are

everywhere impassable.

It was Agrippa who encompassed the parts added to the old city with this wall, which had been all naked before; for as the city grew more populous, it gradually crept beyond its old limits, and those parts of it that stood northward of the temple, and joined that hill to the city, made it considerably larger, and occasioned that hill which is in number the fourth, and is called "Bezetha", to be inhabited also. It lies over against the tower Antonia, but is divided from it by a deep valley, which was dug on purpose, and that in order to hinder the foundations of the tower of Antonia from joining to this hill, and thereby affording an opportunity for getting to it with ease, and hindering the security that arose from its superior elevation, for which reason also that depth of the ditch made the elevation of the towers more remarkable. This new built part of the city was called "Bezetha", in our language, which if interpreted in the Grecian language, may be called "The New City".

----- End Quote -----

Also in Book 5 Chapter 5 of "The Wars of the Jews", where he describes the temple, Josephus again mentions Bezetha, as we see by the following excerpt:

----- Begin Quote -----

"There was also a peculiar fortress belonging to the upper city, which was Herod's palace; but, for the hill Bezetha, it was divided from the tower of Antonia, as we have already told you; and as that hill on which the tower of Antonia stood, was the highest of these three, so did it adjoin to the new city, and was the only place that hindered the sight of the temple on the north."

----- End Quote -----

In Book 6 Chapter 2 of "The Wars of the Jews", I also found a small footnote pertaining to the Mount of Olives which is interesting in that it provides us with a comparison between the different heights of five of these seven mountains. It reads as follows:

----- Begin Quote -----

"The Mount of Olives, or Mount Olivet, is the ridge facing

the Temple Mount at Jerusalem on the east and separated from it by the deep ravine called Kedron. It rises to a height of 2682 feet, surpassing in altitude Zion, 2529 feet, Bezetha, 2527 feet, Mount Moriah, 2440 feet, and Acra, 2179 feet."

----- End Quote -----

Concerning Acra, being as it was a fortress which was built on the summit of one of Jerusalem's seven hills, there are some theologians who remain convinced that when the first book of the Maccabees uses the phrase "the citadel", it is actually referring to Mount Acra, as we see by the following group of verses:

"Then they fortified the city of David with a great strong wall and strong towers, and it became THEIR CITADEL. And they stationed there a sinful people, lawless men. These strengthened their position;"

1 Maccabees 1:33-34

"Jerusalem was uninhabited like a wilderness; not one of her children went in or out. The sanctuary was trampled down, and the sons of aliens held THE CITADEL; it was a lodging place for the Gentiles. Joy was taken from Jacob; the flute and the harp ceased to play."

1 Maccabees 3:45

"And Simon decreed that every year they should celebrate this day with rejoicing. He strengthened the fortifications of the temple hill alongside THE CITADEL, and he and his men dwelt there."

1 Maccabees 13:52

Please go to part ten for the continuation of this series.

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WHO IS BABYLON THE GREAT? : PART 10

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John Fulton's 1891 "The Beautiful Land", Bible Verses Which Mention Five Of The Seven Mountains, the Jewish Encyclopedia Also Mentions Mount Acra And Mount Bezetha, Hand-Drawn Maps Of Ancient Jerusalem Which Likewise Show The Seven Mountains, It Is A Challenge To Identify Locations Due To Name Changes As History Progresses, The New List Of Seven Mountain Names, Mount Scopus And The Mount of Corruption, King Solomon Built Altars To The Heathen Gods, Mount of Olives On The East Side, Romans Cestius And General Titus Camped Out On Mount Scopus Prior To Starting Their Sieges Against Jerusalem, Two Maps Of Ancient Jerusalem Which Show The Seven Mountains, Ancient And Modern Maps Confirm First Century Jerusalem Did Sit On Seven Mountains, Controversy Regarding Correct Date Of The Book Of Revelation, Everything Easily Falls Into Place When We Accept Pre-70 AD Date For Book Of Revelation, Spirit Of Urgency In John's Writings, "I Come Quickly" And "This Generation Shall Not Pass", "The Time Is At Hand", The Jewish Temple Was Still Standing When John Wrote Revelation Proving A Pre-70 AD Date

Continuing our discussion from part nine, in addition to the aforementioned information, in his 1891 book entitled "The Beautiful Land", the Episcopal priest and church historian, Reverend John Fulton, DD, LLD -- who was the editor of the New York Churchman, as well as one of the founding editors of "The Living Church" magazine -- goes into considerable detail concerning the physical layout of ancient Jerusalem, some of the ongoing construction work which occurred there, and the location of the aforementioned mounts. Furthermore, if you visit the two web links below, you will be able to confirm for yourself that both Bezetha and Acra were built on hills, as a part of ancient Jerusalem:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acra\\_\(fortress\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acra_(fortress))

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bezetha>

Regarding the five mounts -- or hills -- which I was able to find in the KJV Bible, following are the various verses where they are mentioned. Please note that Zion -- or Sion -- is in reality mentioned 154 times throughout the Bible.

"For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that

escape out of mount ZION: the zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do this."

2 Kings 19:31, KJV

"And the measuring line shall yet go forth over against it upon the hill GAREB, and shall compass about to GOATH."

Jeremiah 31:39, KJV

"Now after this he built a wall without the city of David, on the west side of Gihon, in the valley, even to the entering in at the fish gate, and compassed about OPHEL, and raised it up a very great height, and put captains of war in all the fenced cities of Judah."

2 Chronicles 33:14, KJV

"Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem in mount MORIAH, where the Lord appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite."

2 Chronicles 3:1, KJV

"And thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold [Hebrew = OPHEL] of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem."

Micah 4:8, KJV

While I wasn't able to specifically find Mount Acra and Mount Bezetha in the Holy Scriptures, please note that in addition to what Josephus wrote about them, they are both mentioned in the "Jewish Encyclopedia" under the listing for "Jerusalem" at the following URL. In fact, this page confirms the fact that Acra was known as "the citadel", just as we saw earlier in 1 Maccabees:

<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=242&letter=J>

As I mentioned a moment ago, there do exist topographical drawings of ancient Jerusalem which show these seven mounts at the time that John wrote the Book of Revelation. In fact, the first drawing I discovered while conducting my research, is found in the aforementioned book by John Fulton. It isn't a very good drawing, but if you are reading this series on the Bill's Bible Basics website, you can see it below. You'll need to look really hard to make out the names of the various mountains. By the way, this is the same drawing that is found on the Jewish Encyclopedia website as well. The fact that even

the Jewish Encyclopedia displays this same map, is clear proof that the Jews know that ancient Jerusalem sat upon these seven mountains:

[7-hills-jewishencyclopedia 800x334]

Below is yet another hand-drawn map of ancient Jerusalem, which I found on the christianforums.com website. While it too is not of very good quality, nevertheless, you can see the seven named mountains in the somewhat circular portion in the center of the map, which is Jerusalem proper.

[7-hills-christianforums.com 800x451]

Something else which makes this whole issue a bit confusing is the fact that over the course of time -- meaning years, decades and even centuries -- as different military forces rose to power and took over lands and countries, they not only sometimes altered the physical landscape to suit their purposes, but they also changed the names of some locations as well. As a result, for a modern Bible researcher such as you and I, this can make discovering the truth even more challenging and difficult, but not totally impossible if we research diligently.

For example, while my original research years ago revealed the names of the seven mountains upon which Jerusalem of the First Century sat -- which I have already shared with you -- when I conducted my research for the 2023 update of this same series, I discovered a NEW list of seven names, one of which -- Mount Scopus -- is not even found in the KJV Bible. To give you an example, the biblestudy.org website names the seven mountains on which Jerusalem sat at that time as being the following. Please note that I am assuming that they mean Mount Moriah when they employ the name "Hill on which the Antonia Fortress was built". It is also known as "The Rock", which again leads me to believe that the name shown below is referring to Mount Moriah:

Hill on which the Antonia Fortress was built  
Mount of Corruption  
Mount Olivet (Mount of Olives)  
Mount Ophel  
Mount Scopus  
New Mount Zion  
Original Mount Zion

Below is a map I found on the aforementioned biblestudy.org website. Again, please excuse the poor quality of the map. I can only share with you what I've actually been able to find on the web, and that in itself can be a very difficult task.

[7-hills-biblestudy.org 800x450]

This same list of seven names is found on the Wikipedia site under the title "List of cities claimed to be built on seven hills". Please note that while the "Mount of Corruption" is mentioned by name in the KJV Bible, Mount Scopus -- which is also known as Lookout Mountain -- is not. While the Mount of Corruption and Mount Scopus are both found on the Wikipedia website -- being as they are situated on the same ridge and to the north and south of the Mount of Olives -- only Mount Scopus appears to be mentioned in the Jewish Encyclopedia; unless I just haven't been able to locate any mention of the Mount of Corruption in the encyclopedia yet.

Also, the Jews today refer to the Mount of Corruption as the Mount of Anointment, which is odd, considering what occurred there. The Mount of Corruption is also known as the Mount of Offence. The following verses explain that this mountain is so named because it was there where King Solomon constructed altars to the false gods. Please also note that "the hill that is before Jerusalem" and "the mount of corruption" are referring to the same mountain. That is to say, the southern flank of the Mount of Olives, which consists of three main summits on the same ridge:

"Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in THE HILL THAT IS BEFORE JERUSALEM, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon."  
1 Kings 11:7, KJV

"And the high places that were before Jerusalem, which were on the right hand of the MOUNT OF CORRUPTION, which Solomon the king of Israel had builded for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon, did the king [meaning King Josiah] defile."  
2 Kings 23:13, KJV

As we have seen, sometimes, these various mountains on which the ancient city of Jerusalem sat are not mentioned by their actual names in the Scriptures. They are described in some other way. For example, the Jews believe that the following

verse which is found in the Book of Ezekiel is referring to the Mount of Olives. This seems to be confirmed by the fact that the Prophet Zechariah specifically tells us that the Mount of Olives is to the east of Jerusalem proper:

"And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon THE MOUNTAIN WHICH IS ON THE EAST SIDE OF THE CITY."

Ezekiel 11:23, KJV

"And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, WHICH IS BEFORE JERUSALEM ON THE EAST, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south."

Zechariah 14:4, KJV

Regarding Mount Scopus, While Flavius Josephus does not seem to mention the Mount of Corruption in any of his works -- it is again possible that I simply have not found it yet -- he does mention Mount Scopus by name in several places in his works. For example, In Book 2 Chapter 19 of "The Wars of the Jews", while describing how Cestius made his approach to the city of Jerusalem in order to lay siege against it, Josephus mentions that the Roman general encamped on Mount Scopus, as we see by the following excerpt:

----- Begin Quote -----

"But now Cestius, observing that the disturbances that were begun among the Jews afforded him a proper opportunity to attack them, took his whole army along with him, and put the Jews to flight, and pursued them to Jerusalem. He then pitched his camp upon the elevation called Scopus, [or watch tower,] which was distant seven furlongs from the city; yet did not he assault them in three days' time, out of expectation that those within might perhaps yield a little; and in the meantime he sent out a great many of his soldiers into the neighbouring villages, to seize upon their corn.

But when the robbers perceived this unexpected retreat of his, they resumed their courage, and ran after the hinder parts of his army, and destroyed a considerable number of both their horsemen and footmen: and now Cestius lay all night at the camp which was at Scopus,"

----- End Quote -----

In similar fashion, in Book 5 Chapters 2 and 3 of "The Wars of the Jews", Josephus describes how General Titus -- who was the son of then emperor, Vespasian -- also established his camp on Mount Scopus, which gave him a clear view of Jerusalem, before they began their siege against the city in 70 AD. You will find these historic events discussed in detail in my lengthy series "Vespasian, Titus and the Fall of Jerusalem":

----- Begin Quote -----

"But now, as soon as that legion that had been at Emmaus was joined to Caesar at night, he removed thence, when it was day, and came to a place called Scopus; from whence the city began already to be seen, and a plain view might be taken of the great temple. Accordingly, this place, on the north quarter of the city, and joining thereto, was a plain, and very properly named Scopus, [the prospect]; and was no more than seven furlongs distant from it.

But Titus, intending to pitch his camp nearer to the city than Scopus, placed as many of his choice horsemen and footmen as he thought sufficient, opposite to the Jews, to prevent their sallying out upon them, while he gave orders for the whole army to level the distance, as far as the wall of the city. So they threw down all the hedges and walls which the inhabitants had made about their gardens and groves of trees, and cut down all the fruit-trees that lay between them and the wall of the city, and filled up all the hollow places and the chasms, and demolished the rocky precipices with iron instruments; and thereby made all the place level from Scopus to Herod's monuments, which adjoined to the pool called the Serpent's Pool."

----- End Quote -----

The Wikipedia website also confirms that Mount Scopus served as a lookout point for both Jewish and Muslim pilgrims, and also for the invading armies which sought to take Jerusalem. Please note, however, that as the second paragraph below explains, there is some debate regarding whether or not the ridge which is today identified as Mount Scopus, is the same ridge that Josephus refers to in his "The Wars of the Jews":

----- Begin Quote -----

"The Hebrew name, Har HaTzofim, "Lookout Mountain", is not mentioned in the Hebrew Bible. It first appears in the form of the Greek "ὁ Σκοπός" (skopós) in the works of Josephus (The Jewish War)"

"The ancient name Har Hatzofim or Mount Scopus has been affixed to this particular mountain and its peak in the 20th century without the certainty that it corresponds precisely to what Josephus had referred to as Mount Scopus."

----- End Quote -----

Below are two more maps I found online which show the seven mountains upon which ancient Jerusalem sat. You may have noticed that I have used the term "Jerusalem proper" several times now. My purpose is to designate the city itself which sat on the original seven mountains which I first shared with you, and which was confined within the retaining walls which were built during different times. In contrast, as you can see by these two maps, Mount Scopus, Mount Olivet and the Mount of Corruption -- or Mount of Offence -- sat OUTSIDE of Jerusalem proper, and across the brook of Kidron and the Kidron Valley, also known as Cedron. In fact, these three ridges were higher than, and overlooked Jerusalem proper, which sat upon the aforementioned seven mounts.

[7-hills-pakpeaks.com 800x721]

[7-hills-steemit.com-01 800x903]

Regarding all of the various maps I have been sharing with you, on one particular Roman Catholic website forum called "Phatmass - A Vintage Catholic Website", I discovered the following explanation regarding the seven hills upon which First Century Jerusalem sat:

----- Begin Quote -----

"The City of Jerusalem as it existed in the time of Christ Jesus was also reckoned to be the "City of Seven Hills." This fact was well recognized in Jewish circles. In the Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer, an eighth century midrashic narrative (section 10), the writer mentioned without commentary (showing that the understanding was well known and required no defense) that "Jerusalem is situated on seven hills" (recorded in The Book of Legends, edited by

Bialik and Ravnitzky, p. 371, paragraph 111). And, so it was. Those "seven hills" are easy to identify. If one starts with the Mount of Olives just to the east of the main City of Jerusalem (but still reckoned to be located within the environs of Jerusalem), there are three summits to that Mount of Olives. The northern summit (hill) is called Scopus [Hill One], the middle summit (hill) was called Nob [Hill Two], the highest point of Olivet itself, and the southern summit (hill) was called in the Holy Scriptures the "Mount of Corruption" or "Mount of Offence" [Hill Three] (II Kings 23:13). On the middle ridge between the Kedron and the Tyropoeon Valleys there was (formerly) in the south "Mount Zion" [Hill Four] (the original "Mount Zion" and not the later southwest hill that was later called by that name), then the "Ophel Mount" [Hill Five] and then to the north of that the "Rock" around which "Fort Antonia" was built [Hill Six]. And finally, there was the southwest hill itself [Hill Seven] that finally became known in the time of Simon the Hasmonean as the new "Mount Zion." This makes "Seven Hills" in all."

----- End Quote -----

While all of these different maps and different names may be confusing to some of you, there is one very important point I want you to remember from all of this information. That is the fact that regardless of which sources we use, which maps we rely on, or what names are applied to these different mountains, they all agree to the fact that the ancient city of Jerusalem sat upon seven mountains; and that is exactly what the Apostle John writes in the Book of Revelation. There can be no mistake about this, being as there are multiple sources which prove this point, as I have now explained to you.

Yet sadly, as I mentioned to you in part nine, today there exist quite a few Christians who either remain completely unaware of this important information, or else who purposely choose to ignore it -- or perhaps even conceal it? -- simply because the information outright contradicts what they want to believe. That, of course, is their misguided belief that the Roman Catholic Church is Babylon the Great which sits on seven hills. Some of these people can be vehement regarding this issue, and will act quite obnoxiously, in their efforts to defend their point of view.

As I briefly mentioned in part eight, another tactic which

these same people use is to insist that the Apocalypse is a prophecy of the far future, and can't possibly be referring to Jerusalem, because they are convinced that the Book of Revelation was given to the Apostle John about two decades after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. Therefore, in their minds, Babylon the Great can't be a code name for the city of Jerusalem. They claim that it must be referring to some other city which will be destroyed in the far future, which according to their belief, means Rome and the Roman Catholic Church.

Not too long ago, I engaged in a brief online discussion with a particular individual who embraces the positions I have just described to you. This person had a very haughty know-it-all attitude. At one point, they remarked, "Who else could it be?", as if there are no other options that we can or even should consider. When I respectfully tried to let them know that there is in fact another option -- a very Bible-based one at that -- they immediately shot back with something like "The Book of Revelation was written after 70 AD." In fact, I think they may even have stated 90 AD or 95 AD.

This is in fact the standard answer which is given by the people who embrace this Futurist position. For them, there simply is no other possible date; and by adamantly sticking to that date, they convince themselves further that ancient Jerusalem is not Babylon the Great. They will not consider any other date. Period. They are very close-minded about it. So exactly what is the truth of the matter?

Well, if you conduct some serious online research of your own, you will quickly discover that the date of the Book of Revelation has been debated for literally centuries. While 90 AD to 95 AD is the date which is firmly embraced by the Futurists who want to place the fulfillment of the various prophecies in Revelation in the future, it is by no means the only school of thought regarding this issue. There is another camp which believes that the Apocalypse -- or Book of Revelation -- was revealed to John BEFORE the fall of Jerusalem, around 66 AD to 68 AD. This is in fact the camp with which I personally identify. In fact, I have wondered if the Book might have possibly been written even a little earlier than that.

From my perspective, just by accepting the earlier date, a number of prophetic events in the Book of Revelation easily

fall into place and can be understood, beginning with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 AD, and the period known to modern students of the Bible as the Great Tribulation. In fact, by accepting a pre-70 AD date as the true time when John received the Book of Revelation, as I mentioned in part eight, what you will likewise discover is that the amazing prophecies of Daniel, what Jesus said in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21, and even certain things the Apostles wrote about in the Epistles, all fall into place, and are easier to understand, without trying to force them to fit into our modern times, which is foolishness.

But how can we convincingly prove which of these two dates is correct? Speaking truthfully, there are no clear-cut verses in the Bible which provide us with an actual, specific date for when the Book of Revelation was written. However, as I will now point out to you, there is certainly circumstantial evidence in the Scriptures which does suggest that the 66 AD to 68 AD time frame is probably correct, or at least close to it. The very first piece of circumstantial evidence -- which I already discussed in part eight -- is the actual spirit of extreme urgency in which Revelation is written.

My friends, there is simply no mistaking that John writes as if the events he is describing are just about upon them. As I mentioned in part eight, in FOUR different verses in this amazing book, Jesus says "I come quickly." Likewise, let us not forget that John was twice told that the prophecies and visions are "things which must shortly come to pass". I do not view 2,000 years in the future to our current time as accurately fulfilling those two verses. Do you? But that is not all. In the very first chapter of the Book of Revelation, as well as in the very last chapter, we are also told that "the time is at hand". My friends, you simply don't say that two times if something is still many centuries away. Consider the following two verses:

"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: FOR THE TIME IS AT HAND."

Revelation 1:3, KJV

"And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: FOR THE TIME IS AT HAND."

Revelation 22:10, KJV

Furthermore, as I also noted in part eight, in three of the

Gospels Jesus said "This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." This is a topic which I discuss more at length in the aforementioned series called "Jesus Christ's Return: Have We Been Deceived?". Thus, to reiterate, Jesus is talking about the very same events that we find in both the Book of Daniel, and in the Book of Revelation.

Another strong piece of circumstantial evidence is found in the fact that at the time John receives his revelations from the Lord, the temple in Jerusalem is STILL standing, and has not been destroyed just yet, as Jesus had prophesied in the Gospels. This is a clear indication that John wrote his book BEFORE 70 AD. Consider the following group of Bible verses:

"And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months."  
Revelation 11:1-2, KJV

"And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."  
Matthew 24:1-2, KJV

"And as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here! And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."  
Mark 13:1-2, KJV

"For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."  
Luke 19:43-44, KJV

"And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said, As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not

be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

Luke 21:5-6, KJV

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, YOUR HOUSE IS LEFT UNTO YOU DESOLATE. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

Matthew 23:37-24:2, KJV

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, YOUR HOUSE IS LEFT UNTO YOU DESOLATE: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Luke 13:34-35, KJV

The fact that the destruction of the temple is not explicitly mentioned in the Book of Revelation is very much worthy of note. Why? Because given that the Apocalypse -- or Revelation -- focuses so strongly on divine judgment, one would think it highly relevant for said event to be mentioned if it actually had already been destroyed. So this notable silence is very telling in my view and strongly suggests that the destruction of the temple is not included, because the event had simply NOT happened yet when John wrote his book. That is why we see the still-standing temple mentioned in Revelation 11:1-2.

Please go to part eleven for the continuation of this series.

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## WHO IS BABYLON THE GREAT? : PART 11

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First Century Apostles Had Same Spirit Of Anticipation As The Apostle John In The Book Of Revelation, The Eight Kings List, Julius Caesar, 1st And 2nd Triumvirates, From Roman Republic To A Roman Empire, Julio-Claudian Dynasty, Nero Was The Sixth King And A Proof Book Of Revelation Was Written Before 70 AD, Roman Beast Makes War With The Saints, Nero And Great Roman Fire, First Roman Persecution Against Christians, Emperor Nero Sends Vespasian And Titus To Quell Rebellion In Judea And The First Jewish-Roman War Begins, Revelation And History Aligned, Both Political And Religious Leadership Silenced The Prophets, Herod Dynasty, Babylon A.K.A. Jerusalem Rode The Roman Beast, Chief Priests And Pharisees Plot To Murder Jesus, The Voice Of The Bridegroom And The Voice Of The Bride, Jerusalem Prophet Warns Of Coming Siege, Woe Woe Woe, Jerusalemites Sacrificed Their Children To False Gods, A List Of Jerusalemites' Sins, God Warned Jerusalem He Would Punish With Fire And Nakedness

Continuing our discussion from part ten, as I mentioned to you a moment ago, it is difficult to ignore the spirit of urgency and anticipation in which the Book of Revelation is written. We see this very same spirit and attitude of strong anticipation in the writings of the Apostles as well. They clearly write as if they are expecting the Rapture of the Saints and Jesus' Return to occur in the near future, and in their lifetimes. They do NOT write as if it is some far-off event which will occur in the distant future long after they are dead. If you doubt that this is so, then please consider the following group of verses, paying particular attention to the words I have placed in uppercase letters. I include a personal explanatory note after each set of verses:

"But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass IN THE LAST DAYS, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days

of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:"

Acts 2:16-18, KJV

NOTE #1: In Acts 2:16-18, the Apostle Peter -- who had just been filled with the Holy Spirit -- is clearly saying two things: Joel's prophecy was being fulfilled at that time during the First Century, and that period was also the Last Days. The phrase last days does NOT mean from 30 AD to the 21st Century, as some modern, Futurist-leaning Bible teachers erroneously teach. That is a false doctrine of men.

"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that WE WHICH ARE ALIVE AND REMAIN [meaning Paul and other First Century Christians] unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then WE WHICH ARE ALIVE AND REMAIN [meaning Paul and other First Century Christians] shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

1 Thessalonians 4:14-18, KJV

NOTE #2: The fact that in 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18, the Apostle Paul includes himself by saying "we" is clear proof that he was fully expecting Christ's soon return, and he was hoping to still be alive to witness it himself.

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath IN THESE LAST DAYS spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;"

Hebrews 1:1-2, KJV

NOTE #3: In Hebrews 1:1-2, the phrase "lasts days" refer to the very end of the Prophet Daniel's 70 weeks -- or 490 years -- prophecy. It has nothing to do with our modern times, as Futurists claim.

"For yet a little while, and he that shall come [meaning Jesus] WILL COME, and WILL NOT TARRY."

Hebrews 10:37, KJV

NOTE #4: In Hebrews 10:37, the phrase "a little while" does

NOT mean 2,000 years in the future as the Futurists claim. We are also told that Jesus will not tarry. The writer is obviously expecting Christ's soon return.

"Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together FOR THE LAST DAYS . . . Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for THE COMING OF THE LORD DRAWETH NIGH."

James 5:2-3, 7-8, KJV

NOTE #5: In James 5:2-3, 7-8, the Apostle James is likewise confirming that it was the Last Days, and he was convinced that Jesus would be returning soon.

"But the END OF ALL THINGS IS AT HAND: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer."

1 Peter 4:7, KJV

NOTE #6: 1 Peter 4:7 confirms the phrase "in these last days" mentioned in Hebrews 1:1-2 above.

"Little children, IT IS THE LAST TIME: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby WE KNOW THAT IT IS THE LAST TIME."

1 John 2:18, KJV

NOTE #7: In 1 John 2:18, not once, but twice, the Apostle John tells his readers that it is the Last Time, or the very end of the Prophet Daniel's 70 weeks prophecy. Notice how very sure that John is about this. That is why he uses the words "We know that it is the last time." And then John is given the amazing Book of Revelation.

Personally, I can only arrive at one conclusion, and that is that Peter, James and John -- who were the Lord's inner circle -- as well as the Apostle Paul, were all convinced that Jesus would return during their lifetimes, exactly as He had promised them in the following group of verses:

"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And

if I go and prepare a place for you, I WILL COME AGAIN, AND RECEIVE YOU unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also . . . I will not leave you comfortless: I WILL COME TO YOU."

John 14:2-3, 18, KJV

How can so many modern, Futurist-leaning Christians continue to resist the plain truth of the Scriptures? So as you can hopefully see, the spirit of urgency and anticipation that we see in the Book of Revelation, is likewise reflected in the writings of the Apostles as well. While I'll be writing a separate article regarding the next piece of evidence, it is interesting to note that the Apostle John does provide us with a clue concerning when he wrote his book. Allow me to call your attention to the following verses:

"And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition."

Revelation 17:10-11, KJV

While there has been considerable debate over the centuries with regard to properly identifying the kings who are being mentioned in the previous verses, after much personal study and research, which I have pondered for many years, I hold to the view that the Apostle John is describing eight Roman leaders or kings. John specifically tells us that five of these kings have already fallen, one is currently reigning at the time he receives his revelations, while the seventh and the eighth are yet to come, from John's perspective. So who are these kings? I believe they are as follows:

1.	Julius Caesar	49–44 BC	"Fallen"
2.	Augustus	27 BC – AD 14	"Fallen"
3.	Tiberius	AD 14–37	"Fallen"
4.	Caligula	AD 37–41	"Fallen"
5.	Claudius	AD 41–54	"Fallen"
6.	Nero	AD 54–68	"One is"
7.	Vespasian	AD 69–79	"Not yet come"

Regarding Julius Caesar, let me state the following for the sake of anyone who may question his placement on this list. The "First Triumvirate" of the Roman Republic was formed in 60 BC by Julius Caesar, Crassus and Pompey. Caesar and Pompey eventually had a falling out. In fact, Caesar defeated Pompey during the Battle of Pharsalus in 48 BC. Pompey then fled to Egypt where he was assassinated. Regarding Crassus, he died even earlier in 53 BC shortly after engaging in the Battle of Carrhae against the Parthian Empire. Today, Parthia is known as Iran. At any rate, the deaths of both Crassus and Pompey opened the way for Julius Caesar to become the first dictator of the Roman Republic in 49 BC. As is very well known, due to his lust for power, and desire to be dictator for life, he was assassinated in 44 BC by Brutus and company.

Now while Julius Caesar was never officially a Roman emperor, being as, technical speaking, the Roman Empire did not begin until the reign of Gaius Julius Caesar Augustus -- commonly known as Augustus or Octavian -- nevertheless, Julius Caesar was viewed as the de facto first imperial ruler, and he was regarded as the first emperor by some Roman historians such as Pliny the Younger, Suetonius, and Appian. This is because Octavian was named in Julius Caesar's will not only as his adopted son, but also as his heir, and Octavian -- Augustus -- inherited Caesar's name, estate, and the loyalty of his legions as well. So Augustus became the first emperor of the Julio-Claudian Dynasty, and the founder of the Roman Empire in 27 BC.

To clarify, from Julius Caesar's death in 44 BC to Augustus' rise to power in 27 BC -- a seventeen-year period -- Rome was NOT ruled by a single individual. It was in fact caught up in a rather tumultuous period of civil war, shifting alliances, and basically political chaos. During this period, Octavian, along with Mark Antony and Marcus Lepidus, formed a Second Triumvirate which was a very powerful three-man dictatorship. It was not a republic, but neither was it yet an empire. But eventually, Octavian did consolidate his power, and thus he emerged as Rome's first emperor in 27 BC, becoming known as Augustus. In this way, the Roman Republic transitioned into the Roman Empire.

So that is how we arrive at the aforementioned emperor list. So the complete Julio-Claudian Dynasty included Augustus,

Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius and Nero, the last of whom, as we all know, committed suicide in 68 AD. The Julio-Claudian Dynasty was then followed by the Flavian Dynasty, which was founded by Vespasian, and included his two sons, Titus and Domitian. As I mentioned earlier, Vespasian and Titus are mentioned in considerable detail in other BBB articles such as my lengthy and in-depth series called "Vespasian, Titus and the Fall of Jerusalem".

But what is important to our current discussion is the fact that regarding the eight kings which arise, when John writes that "five are fallen", I am convinced that he is referring to Julius Caesar, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula and Claudius. Furthermore, when John writes "one is", he is referring to Nero who had not yet committed suicide at the time that John received his revelations. So this is very clear historical proof that the Book of Revelation was written before 68 AD when Nero committed suicide. Now regarding the role of Nero, Vespasian and Titus in the Book of Revelation, I do have a lot more to say about them. However, this will be discussed in other related articles.

Another strong piece of circumstantial evidence is the fact that John very clearly describes how the Roman Beast makes war against the Saints, persecutes them, and even beheads them. Why does the Beast make war against them? If we assume that Emperor Nero himself was the Beast, there is historical evidence which suggests why this is so. In July of 64 AD, a fire broke out in the merchants shops which were around the Circus Maximus. This was Rome's famous chariot stadium. The fire is commonly referred to as "The Great Fire of Rome".

So great was the fire that it took six days to finally bring it under control. However, even before the damage could be properly assessed, the fire reignited and burned for another three days. When all was said and done, nearly three quarters of the city had been destroyed. Exactly how the fire actually began has been a topic of debate for centuries. Certain Roman historians -- such as Roman senator Publius Cornelius Tacitus -- believed that it was started by Nero himself -- or perhaps by someone under Nero's orders -- in order to make space for a new palace that Nero wanted to build -- which he eventually did build -- called Domus Aurea.

History records that Emperor Nero was quite a tyrant, and a violent and bloody man. As proof, consider that he murdered his very own mother, Agrippina. So, when suspicion began to

fall on him that he may have started the fire, Tacitus states that Nero cast the blame on the Christian population in Rome. This decision in fact initiated the first Roman persecution against the Christians. But that is not all. Revelation says specifically that the Beast made war with the Saints, as we see by the following verse:

"And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations."

Revelation 13:7, KJV

As I explain in my series "Vespasian, Titus and the Fall of Jerusalem", two years after "The Great Fire of Rome", due to serious rebellion in the Roman province of Judea, Nero sent General Vespasian and his son, Titus, to subdue the Zealots, Sicarii and other violent and murderous riffraff which had risen up against the Roman occupation. This seven-year war raged from 66 AD to 73 AD, and it was right in the middle of it in 70 AD -- or two years after Nero committed suicide -- that Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed by Titus, just as had been prophesied by Jesus and the Prophet Daniel. This war resulted in as many as 1,100,000 dead Israelites. Thus, as John wrote, the Beast truly overcame the Saints.

So once again we see how events which are described in the Book of Revelation perfectly align with actual historical events which transpired prior to 70 AD, thus proving again the time frame when John wrote his amazing book. In my view, it is only by ignoring this perfect alignment, and likewise by purposely twisting the meaning of the Scriptures, that one can claim that the Book of Revelation was written by John sometime after 70 AD.

As we learned earlier in this series, ever since the times of the Old Testament when both the Israelite political and spiritual leadership hardened their hearts, and refused to listen to the voices of the messengers God sent, or repent of their stiff-necked rebellion and apostasy, they began to silence them by persecuting them and killing them. As we've seen, the Jewish political and religious leadership of the New Testament continued this same trend, and even more so. Why did they do this? Because spiritual Babylon -- meaning Jerusalem -- had corrupted herself with the Beast, and had committed adultery and fornication with it, when she began to court the rulers of the Roman Empire.

We saw earlier how the Herod Dynasty themselves were in fact appointed by Rome as their obedient proxies. In turn, Herod and his descendants appointed each new high priest. So thus indeed Babylon the Great was riding the beast. But another problem was emerging which greatly troubled the leadership in Jerusalem. As if dealing with the Zealots, Sicarii and other violent troublemakers wasn't already enough to cause them alarm, now a new rabbi from the north named Jesus was claiming to be the long-awaited Messiah. Herod and the high priests knew that Rome was watching them closely, and that they needed to get the situation under control before Rome decided to do it for them. Thus we come to the following scene in the Gospel of John:

"Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death."

John 11:47-53, KJV

And so began the persecution of the Early Church, beginning with the false charges which were brought against Jesus that ultimately resulted in His crucifixion. Why did they resort to this vile deed? Quite simply, to prolong Babylon's life a while longer. As you may recall from part five, the Prophet Jeremiah prophesied for forty years until the day that King Nebuchadnezzar came and destroyed Jerusalem and the temple. As a part of his stiff warning from the Lord, Jeremiah said the following:

"Then will I cause to cease from the cities of Judah, and from the streets of Jerusalem, the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, THE VOICE OF THE BRIDEGROOM, AND THE VOICE OF THE BRIDE: for the land shall be desolate."

Jeremiah 7:34, KJV

"Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the

voice of gladness, THE VOICE OF THE BRIDEGROOM, AND THE VOICE OF THE BRIDE, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle."

Jeremiah 25:10, KJV

What is amazing about this is the fact that more than six hundred years later, in the Book of Revelation, John also described the coming destruction of Babylon the Great in very much the same manner. Consider the following verses:

"And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; AND THE VOICE OF THE BRIDEGROOM AND OF THE BRIDE SHALL BE HEARD NO MORE AT ALL IN THEE: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived."

Revelation 18:22-23, KJV

In my view, there is simply no way to dismiss the fact that these two Prophets, who lived hundreds of years apart, used almost the same exact words to describe the destruction of Jerusalem, and the fall of Babylon the Great. Clearly, this was no accident. These prophecies were inspired by one and the same Spirit. As the Apostle Peter wrote in his second Epistle:

"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

2 Peter 1:21, KJV

Well, earlier today, while reading more of Josephus' "The Wars of the Jews", I made another very surprising discovery. As it turns out, Jeremiah and the Apostle John were NOT the only two people to use this kind of language with regard to the destruction of Jerusalem, or spiritual Babylon. As it turns out, in Book 6 Chapter 5, Josephus describes a Saint of God who prophesied against Jerusalem, and warned of her coming destruction, for just over seven years, right up to the time of the 70 AD siege, until he was finally killed. Please carefully notice the words I've placed in uppercase letters in the following excerpt:

----- Begin Quote -----

"But, what is still more terrible, there was one Jesus the son of Ananus, a plebeian, and an husbandman, who four years before the war began, and at a time when the city was in very great peace and prosperity, came to that feast whereon it is our custom for every one to make tabernacles to God in the temple," began on a sudden to cry aloud, "A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the holy house, A VOICE AGAINST THE BRIDEGROOMS AND THE BRIDES, and a voice against this whole people!" This was his cry, as he went about by day and by night, in all the lanes of the city. However, certain of the most eminent among the populace had great indignation at this dire cry of his, and took up the man, and gave him a great number of severe stripes: yet did not he either say anything for himself, or anything peculiar to those that chastised him, but still went on with the same words which he cried before.

Hereupon our rulers, supposing, as the case proved to be, that this was a sort of divine fury in the man, brought him to the Roman procurator; where he was whipped till his bones were laid bare; yet did not he make any supplication for himself, nor shed any tears, but turnings his voice to the most lamentable tone possible, at every stroke of the whip his answer was, "Wo, wo to Jerusalem!" And when Albinus (for he was then our procurator), asked him, "Who he was? and whence he came? and why he uttered such words?" he made no manner of reply to what he said, but still did not leave off his melancholy ditty, till Albinus took him to be a madman, and dismissed him.

Now, during all the time that passed before the war began, this man did not go near any of the citizens, nor was seen by them while he said so; but he every day uttered these lamentable words, as if it were his premeditated vow, "Wo, wo to Jerusalem!" Nor did he give ill words to any of those that beat him every day, nor good words to those that gave him food; but this was his reply to all men, and indeed no other than a melancholy presage of what was to come. This cry of his was the loudest at the festivals ; and he continued this ditty for seven years and five months, without growing hoarse, or being tired therewith until the very time that he saw his presage in earnest fulfilled in our siege, when it ceased; for, as he was going round upon the wall, he cried out with his utmost force, "Wo, wo to the city again, and to the people, and to the holy house!" And

just as he added at the last, "Wo, wo to myself also!" there came a stone out of one of the engines, and smote him, and killed him immediately; and as he was uttering the very same presages, he gave up the ghost."

----- End Quote -----

Aside from the fact that this Saint of God used very similar words as Jeremiah and John -- meaning "a voice against the bridegrooms and the brides" -- he repeatedly says "Wo, wo" just as we see with this Angelic Messenger in the Book of Revelation:

"And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!"

Revelation 8:13, KJV

As I point out in other articles such as the series "The Fruits of Disobedience", in the Old Testament, the blood of which Jerusalem was guilty of spilling was not only that of her Prophets. During the height of their apostasy, they also sacrificed their young children on the fiery altars of the false god, Molech, in the Valley of Hinnom. This was a steep gorge that was located to the south of Jerusalem. I discuss the Valley of Hinnom in more detail in the series "Hell, the Lake of Fire and Universalism". Of course, they sacrificed to other pagan gods on other high hills throughout Israel as well. Consider these sample verses:

"For the children of Judah have done evil in my sight, saith the LORD: they have set their abominations in the house which is called by my name, to pollute it. And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart."

Jeremiah 7:30-31, KJV

"They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind:"

Jeremiah 19:5, KJV

So, my dear friends, just look at their record up until the time that the First Jewish-Roman War began in 66 AD. This is precisely why God's harsh judgments finally fell upon them:

01. They sacrificed to the pagan gods.
02. They persecuted and killed the Prophets.
03. They sacrificed their own children.
04. They killed John the Baptist.
05. They crucified Jesus.
06. They persecuted and killed the Apostles.
07. They were in bed with the Romans.
08. They financially oppressed the common people.
09. They rebelled against the Roman occupation.
10. They polluted and defiled the temple with repeated violence and murder, and appointed false priests.

Regarding point number ten, this is something which I amply discuss in the series "Vespasian, Titus and the Fall of Jerusalem". At any rate, in light of her many sins, is it really any wonder that the Lord finally sent Vespasian and Titus to punish Jerusalem? Over six hundred years earlier, the Lord had warned the Jerusalemites that as a result of their apostasy, stubbornness and whorish infidelity, He would leave them naked and burn Jerusalem with fire, as we see by the following group of sample Bible verses:

"Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: LEST MY FURY COME FORTH LIKE FIRE, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings."  
Jeremiah 4:4, KJV

"Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee; lest I MAKE THEE DESOLATE, A LAND NOT INHABITED."  
Jeremiah 6:8, KJV

"Then will I cause to cease from the cities of Judah, and from the streets of Jerusalem, the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride: FOR THE LAND SHALL BE DESOLATE."  
Jeremiah 7:34, KJV

"And I will make Jerusalem heaps, and a den of dragons; and I WILL MAKE THE CITIES OF JUDAH DESOLATE, WITHOUT AN INHABITANT."  
Jeremiah 9:11, KJV

"Behold, the noise of the bruit is come, and a great commotion out of the north country, TO MAKE THE CITIES OF JUDAH DESOLATE, and a den of dragons."

Jeremiah 10:22, KJV

"And I will make thee to pass with thine enemies into a land which thou knowest not: FOR A FIRE IS KINDLED IN MINE ANGER, which shall burn upon you."

Jeremiah 15:14, KJV

"And thou, even thyself, shalt discontinue from thine heritage that I gave thee; and I will cause thee to serve thine enemies in the land which thou knowest not: FOR YE HAVE KINDLED A FIRE IN MINE ANGER, WHICH SHALL BURN FOR EVER . . . But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath day; THEN WILL I KINDLE A FIRE IN THE GATES THEREOF, AND IT SHALL DEVOUR THE PALACES OF JERUSALEM, AND IT SHALL NOT BE QUENCHED."

Jeremiah 17:4, 27, KJV

"For I have set my face against this city for evil, and not for good, saith the LORD: it shall be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and HE SHALL BURN IT WITH FIRE. And touching the house of the king of Judah, say, Hear ye the word of the LORD; O house of David, thus saith the LORD; Execute judgment in the morning, and deliver him that is spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, LEST MY FURY GO OUT LIKE FIRE, AND BURN THAT NONE CAN QUENCH IT, because of the evil of your doings."

Jeremiah 21:10-12, KJV

Please go to part twelve for the conclusion of this series.

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WHO IS BABYLON THE GREAT? : PART 12

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Babylon The Great Will Be Burned With Fire And Made Desolate

And Naked, One Reason Why God Judged Jerusalem Was To Avenge "The Blood Of His Servants", Vespasian, Titus And The Fall Of Jerusalem, Temple In Jerusalem Was The Very Heart And Soul Of Jewish Life, Babylon Shall Be Found No More At All, Temple Has Never Been Rebuilt In Almost Two Thousand Years, Jerusalem Was Thoroughly Demolished By The Romans, Contributing Factors That Explain Why Significant Temple Building Ruins Have Never Been Found, Political And Religious Concerns Which Prevent Temple Mount Excavation, Point-By-Point Review Of Why I Am Convinced That 1st Century Jerusalem Is Babylon, Suggested Reading List

Continuing our discussion from part eleven, as we have seen, prior to the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by King Nebuchadnezzar in 587 BC, the Lord warned the Jerusalemites via the Prophet Jeremiah, that He would send both spiritual and physical fire upon them, and leave their land desolate, if they failed to repent and return to Him as His faithful bride. Sadly, as we know, they did not do that, and the Word of the Lord was fulfilled against them. If we turn again to the Book of Revelation, we find similar pronouncements being made against Babylon the Great, who would also be burned with fire and made desolate and naked. Consider the following set of Bible verses:

"And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast . . . And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her DESOLATE AND NAKED, and shall eat her flesh, and BURN HER WITH FIRE. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth."

Revelation 17:12, 16-18, KJV

"Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and SHE SHALL BE UTTERLY BURNED WITH FIRE: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her."

Revelation 18:8, KJV

"For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand."

## Revelation 19:2, KJV

Please notice again that in the previous verses, we are told that one of the reasons why the Lord is going to so strongly judge Jerusalem -- or Babylon the Great -- is to avenge "the blood of his servants at her hand". This key phrase reflects back on everything else we have already discussed previously. Regarding exactly how Jerusalem and the temple compound were destroyed by fire, and by whom, is something I discuss in my companion series entitled "Vespasian, Titus and the Fall of Jerusalem". Trust me when I tell you that if you have a deep interest in understanding exactly when and how the Romans first occupied Israel in 63 BC, how the Romans invaded Judea and the rest of Israel in 66 AD, who the key players were on both sides of the battles which were fought, the routes that were taken, which cities were defeated or submitted willingly to Rome, and similar information, that series will teach you a lot. I learned so much just from writing it!

While throughout this series I have referred to Jerusalem as Babylon the Great, let me emphasize again -- as I did in part eight of this series -- that the temple in Jerusalem was the very heart and soul of Jewish life. All devout Jews, whether those Jews who lived in Israel itself, or those who had been dispersed in other lands due to the various diasporas, were obligated to visit Jerusalem and the temple compound at least once a year. So in my mind, the temple was the very heart of Babylon the Great herself. Why is this point important? Well, because of the following group of verses:

"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. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard NO MORE AT ALL in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard NO MORE AT ALL in thee; And the light of a candle shall shine NO MORE AT ALL in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard NO MORE AT ALL in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived."

Revelation 18:21-23, KJV

God specifically said in the previous verses that Babylon the Great would be found no more at all. Personally, I take Him at His word. Thus, while the actual city of Jerusalem itself

was eventually rebuilt and repopulated in later decades and centuries, there is something else which has not been rebuilt in almost 2,000 years. That, of course, is the temple itself. In fact, try as the modern Jews might, even today, they still cannot find the remains of the temple despite all the various excavation projects they have been conducting. So do you know why not?

First of all, in Book 7 Chapter 1 of "The Wars of the Jews", Josephus explains that following the completion of the 70 AD siege of Jerusalem, Titus ordered his soldiers to demolish the entire city, including what remained of the burnt temple. This included removing the surrounding retainment walls down to their foundations. The only parts which were spared were three of the towers, as well as the western wall so that that the Romans would have a safe, shielded place to encamp. In fact, Titus' soldiers did such a thorough job of scraping the surface, that Josephus notes that if someone were to pass by, they would never believe that the site had actually once been inhabited. Consider the following excerpt:

----- Begin Quote -----

"Caesar [meaning Titus] gave orders that they should now demolish the entire city and temple, but should leave as many of the towers standing as were of the greatest eminency, that is, Phasaelus, and Hippicus, and Mariamne, and so much of the wall as inclosed the city on the west side. This wall was spared, in order to afford a camp for such as were to lie in garrison, as were the towers also spared, in order to demonstrate to posterity what kind of city it was, and how well fortified, which the Roman valour had subdued; but for all the rest of the wall, it was so thoroughly laid even with the ground by those that dug it up to the foundation, that there was left nothing to make those that came thither believe it had ever been inhabited. This was the end which Jerusalem came to by the madness of those that were for innovations [meaning the Jewish seditionists]; a city otherwise of great magnificence, and of mighty fame among all mankind."

----- End Quote -----

In addition to the above, following the great destruction, the Romans pushed the rubble -- meaning the stone blocks and other debris and burnt remains -- down into the Tyropoeon Valley, and possibly into other adjacent ravines such as the

Kidron Valley. The Tyropoeon Valley -- which is also known as the "Valley of the Cheesemakers", is a ravine which separated the Temple Mount from the Western Hill -- meaning Mount Zion -- in first century Jerusalem. You may recall from part nine that in Book 5 Chapter 4 of "The Wars of the Jews", Josephus refers to it as the Valley of the Cheesmongers and explains that it separated the Upper City from the Lower City. Here again is a part of the excerpt from part nine:

----- Begin Quote -----

"However, in those times, when the Asamoneans reigned, they filled up that valley with earth, and had a mind to join the city to the temple. They then took off part of the height of Acra, and reduced it to a less elevation than it was before, that the temple might be superior to it. Now the valley of the Cheesmongers, as it was called, and was that which we told you before distinguished the hill of the upper city from that of the lower, extended as far as Siloam; for that is the name of a fountain which hath sweet water in it, and this in great plenty also."

----- End Quote -----

Thus, while the Temple Mount platform itself remained largely intact -- including the Western Wall -- as far as the actual temple building is concerned, it was completely demolished. To complicate the situation even further, over the centuries, other factors have contributed to making it difficult to find any remains of the temple building itself.

This includes the natural sedimentary deposits which slowly accumulated on top of the original rubble; as well as other periods during which construction and destruction occurred. For example, during the Crusades and Islamic rule when the Ottomans added layers of earth and architecture on top of the original Temple footprint. To be clear, archaeologists have found some massive stones at the southwestern and southern areas of the Temple Mount which have since been partially excavated. Likewise, some charred beams, stone fragments and mikvehs -- ritual baths -- have also been discovered. But as far as major ruins of the actual temple building itself, to my knowledge, none have ever been discovered. Thus, it seems that God's Word that Babylon "shall be found no more at all" has indeed been fulfilled.

The thoroughness of the original 70 AD destruction, the slow

accumulation of sediment, and the centuries of construction which has occurred since that time have not been the only challenges which have contributed to finding actual temple debris. There is also the problem that there are limitations on the excavation of the most relevant area, that of course being the top of the Temple Mount platform itself. This is because such excavations are forbidden due to the obvious religious and political sensitivities which exist with both the Israelis, as well as with the Muslims.

To be specific, on the Muslim side, the Jerusalem Islamic Waqf is a Jordanian-funded Islamic religious trust which currently manages the Temple Mount, which is also known to Muslims as Haram al-Sharif, or Noble Sanctuary. As I point out in other articles, following the 1967 Six-Day War, while Israel took control of East Jerusalem -- which included the Temple Mount -- as part of a mutually agreed upon status quo arrangement, Israel immediately permitted the Waqf to retain administrative control over the site.

Ever since that time just under sixty years ago, the Waqf has consistently opposed Jewish or Israeli archaeological endeavors to excavate on the Temple Mount platform, viewing such excavations as a threat to the sanctity of the Islamic holy sites, meaning the Al-Aqsa Mosque, and the Dome of the Rock. In fact, excavation -- or even minor disturbance -- is viewed by the Waqf to be a violation of Islamic sovereignty and sacred space.

Now regarding Israel's position, while it is the sovereign authority over the Temple Mount -- by both military and civil control -- in order to avoid any major flare-ups, it has chosen to uphold the religious status quo. It is for the very same reason that the Israeli Antiquities Authority does not conduct or authorize any excavations on the Temple Mount platform. Considering the animosity which exists between the Israelis and the Muslim world, it is easy to understand how any attempt to excavate on the Temple Mount would lead to widespread unrest, and how it could expand and evolve into a major Middle Eastern war. In short, the Islamic Waqf objects to excavations on religious grounds, while Israel objects on political grounds and security considerations.

Before concluding this lengthy series, let's review the main points which explain why I am personally convinced that first century Jerusalem -- and more specifically the temple itself -- was symbolized in the Book of Revelation by the mysterious

## Babylon the Great:

1. Jerusalem and Babylon the Great are both accused by God of being spiritual harlots who have abandoned their husband -- meaning God -- and committed fornication with the false gods in the case of 6th century BC Jerusalem, and with the Roman Beast in the case of 1st century AD Jerusalem.

2. Jerusalem and Babylon the Great both have a whore's forehead and are proud, impudent and totally unashamed of their sins.

3. Jerusalem and Babylon the Great both murdered the Prophets and Saints of God.

4. Jerusalem and Babylon the Great are both described as being great cities.

5. Jerusalem and Babylon the Great are both international cities.

6. Jerusalem and Babylon the Great are both financial centers.

7. Jerusalem and Babylon the Great both traffic in the bodies and souls of men.

8. First Century Jerusalem sat upon seven mountains, all named in the Bible, or else mentioned by other sources such as Jewish historian and general, Flavius Josephus.

10. The primary colors of the tabernacle, the temple, and the priestly garments were blue, purple and scarlet, and were made of fine linen, and adorned with precious stones and gold laces, very similar to Babylon the Great.

11. Apostle Peter referred to Jerusalem as Babylon in his Epistle.

12. Apostle Paul wrote that Jerusalem was in bondage with her children -- to the Mosaic Law -- just as the Jews of the 6th century BC served Seventy Years of Captivity in physical Babylon.

13. The sixth king who reigned during the time of John's revelation was Emperor Nero, proving that Revelation was written prior to 68 AD, and making it very possible that

first century AD Jerusalem was the Babylon the Great which was set on fire and destroyed by the Roman Beast under orders of Nero himself.

14. Nero persecuted the Christian Church, and sent Vespasian and Titus to subdue the rebellion in Israel, resulting in the utter destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 AD.

While there are a few other lesser reasons why I'm personally convinced that first century Jerusalem was symbolized as the mysterious Babylon the Great in the Book of Revelation, the aforementioned list of points represents the most important reasons. If you have wondered about this issue yourself, it is my hope that the Scriptural and the historical evidence I have presented in this series will assist you in coming to the proper conclusion.

With these thoughts I will bring this series to a close. I trust that you have found it informative and enlightening, and I pray that it has been a blessing in your life. If you have an account with Facebook, Twitter or Google+, I would really appreciate if you would take the time to click on the corresponding link that is found on this page. Thanks so much, and may God bless you abundantly!

For additional information, you may want to refer to the list of reading resources below which were also mentioned in this series, or which are related to this series, and which are likewise located on the Bill's Bible Basics web server.

Abomination of Desolation: Explained!

Are Christians Obligated to Keep the Sabbath?

Beholding the Evil and the Good

Dead to the Law: God's Laws Written on Our Hearts

Elijah: Where Are the True Prophets of God?

Five Foolish Virgins: Don't Procrastinate!

Free From the Fear of Death: Law and Works vs Grace

Greater Works Than These Shall He Do . . . and Satan Too

Humility in Our Understanding of God's Word

In the Ages to Come

Jesus Christ's Return: Have We Been Deceived?

Oh Israel, Why Will Ye Die?

Once Upon a Time: A True Story

Pontifex Maximus: Pagan High Priest to Roman Catholic Pope

Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth

Rise of the False Church

Satan: King of Tyrus, King of Empires

Should Christians Engage in Doctrinal Debates?  
So You Really Think You Are So Humble?  
The Fruits of Disobedience  
The Great Tribulation and the Rapture  
The International Jew and the Protocols of Zion  
Vespasian, Titus and the Fall of Jerusalem  
Welcome to Greater Israel, USA  
The Marriage of the Lamb  
The Psalm 83 War False Doctrine Exposed!  
Tradition or Truth? Old Wine or New Wine?  
What About the Poor?  
When Was Satan Cast Out of Heaven?  
Who Hindered the Antichrist?  
You've Got It Wrong: Submit and Live!

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