

**Restored Truth Bible Study #17 - Mystery, Babylon the Great**  
**August 24, 2013**

The topic of this Restored Truth Bible Study centers around the first six verses of Revelation 17.

Revelation 17:1 *Then one of the seven angels, who had the seven bowls, came and talked with me saying to me, come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters (vs 2) with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication. (vs 3) So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and 10 horns. (vs 4) The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations, and the filthiness of her fornication. (vs 5) On her forehead a name was written, Mystery, Babylon the Great, Mother of Harlots and of the Abominations of the Earth. (vs 6) And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement.*

These verses describe in graphic detail Mystery, Babylon the Great. What is the mystery of Babylon? Who is its mother? Who are the harlots? What are the abominations produced on the earth? These are questions that will be answered in this study.

John writes in Rev. 17:1: *Then one of the seven angels, who had the seven bowls, came and talked with me saying to me, come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters.*

It is important to understand John gets this information from one of the seven angels responsible for pouring out the seven last plagues on the earth during the Day of the Lord.

Rev. 15:1: *And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them the wrath of God is complete.*

In Rev. 16:1: *Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, go, and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth.*

One of these seven angels provides John important information about this great harlot. The information is important because these seven last plagues contribute to the destruction of the great harlot. This destruction occurs during the Day of the Lord, when the seven last plagues are poured out.

*Rev. 6:12 I looked when he opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. (vs 13) And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs, when it is shaken by a mighty wind. (vs 14) Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up; and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. (vs 15) And the kings of the earth, and great men, and rich men, and commanders, the mighty men, every slave, every free man hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains (vs 16) And said to the mountains and rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. (vs 17) For the great day of his wrath has come, and who is able to stand?*

The seven last plagues are the wrath of God; to be poured out on the people of the earth during the Day of the Lord. Notice also that John receives information about the Bride of Christ from one of these seven angels involved with pouring out the seven last plagues on the earth. Is it the same angel of Rev. 17 or a different angel? John doesn't specify.

*Rev. 21:9 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues, came to me and talked with me saying, come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife.*

God uses these angels involved with pour out the seven last plagues to reveal prophetic knowledge to John. Knowing these details is important to understanding the identity of Mystery, Babylon the Great.

A couple of other points need to be understood in relation to the great harlot. Notice first, in Rev.17:1 the harlot is described as the great harlot. The word great in the Greek language is *megus*, from which comes the English word mega. It simply means big, literally and figuratively, in a wide use of applications. The word harlot refers to a strumpet and is simply another word for a prostitute, a woman who trades sex for money. Figuratively, this word can refer to an idolater.

In this study it will be shown that, the great harlot is both a prostitute and an idolater. The second point

deals with the identity of many waters. Rev. 17:15 provides the identity of many waters.

Rev. 17:15 *Then he said to me, the waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues.*

The many waters represent the peoples of this earth. This provides the scope and influence the great harlot over the people of this world. She sits refers to her exercise of governmental power, with connections to other governments. Notice the intimate connection she has with these governments.

(vs 2) *With whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication.*

Talk about the committing of fornication is not speaking specifically of sexual activity in the physical sense. Although historically, physical fornication is part of understand who the great harlot is, as will be shown further in this Bible Study. What the angel is speaking of is not physical fornication, but spiritual fornication.

What is fornication? Simply put, it is sex between two unmarried people. Contrasted with adultery, which is sex between married people outside the bond of marriage. The Bible talks about both spiritual fornication and spiritual adultery.

An explanation about this is provided in Ezekiel 16:15. This particular scripture deals with Jerusalem and Judah. The book of Ezekiel was written 100 years after the children of Israel had been taken captive by the Assyrians. Ezekiel was in Babylonian captivity when his book was written. God sentenced Judah to 70 years of punishment for their failure to worship Him. This is very important background information to understand in order to grasp what Ezekiel is talking about. Much of Ezekiel is prophetic in nature, dealing with events in the future, pertaining to today.

Ezekiel 16:15 *But you trusted in your own beauty, played the harlot because of your fame, and poured out your harlotry on everyone passing by who would have it. (vs 16) You took some of your garments, and adorned multicolored high places for yourself; and played the harlot on them. Such things should not*

*happen nor be. (vs 17) You have also taken your beauty, jewelry from my gold and from my silver, which I had given you; and made for yourself male images, and played the harlot with them. (vs 18) You took your embroidered garments, and covered them...[idols] and you set my oil and my incense before them. (vs 19) Also my food which I gave you, the pastry of fine flour, oil, and honey, which I fed you, you set it before them as sweet incense: and so it was, says the Lord God.*

*Eze. 16:20 Moreover you took your sons and your daughters whom you bore to me, and these you sacrificed to them to be devoured...[to the idols and images Israel made] Were your acts of harlotry of small matter (vs 21) That you have slain my children and offered them up to them, by causing them to pass through the fire. (vs 22) And in all your abominations and acts of harlotry, you did not remember the days of your youth, when you were naked and bare, and struggling in your blood...[Israel's captivity in Egypt] (vs 23) Then it was so after all your wickedness (woe, woe to you says the Lord God) (vs 24) That you also built for yourself a shrine, and made a high place for yourself in every street. (vs 25) You built your high places at the head of every road and made your beauty to be abhorred. You offered yourself to everyone who passed by and multiplied your acts of harlotry. (vs 26) You also committed harlotry with the Egyptians, your very fleshly neighbors, and increased your acts of harlotry to provoke me to anger. (vs 27) Behold, therefore I stretched out my hand against you, diminished your allotment, and gave you up to the will of those who hate you...*

God allowed the ancient kingdoms of Israel and Judah, to go into captivity for engaging in false religious practices equating to spiritual harlotry. Notice the connection between these ancient practices and the modern descendants today. God says:

*Eze. 16: 27 and gave you up to the will of those who hate you, the daughters of the Philistines...*

Who are the Philistines today? They are the Palestinians. No one would like to be dropped off in the middle of Hamas controlled Gaza today? Who thinks one would make it out alive? Who would like to be dropped off in the middle of Cairo, Egypt or Damascus, Syria today? It's highly unlikely and American or Brit would make it out alive? Notice how bad Israel's sins were and how much their harlotry was detested by those who hated them: *the daughters of the Philistines, who were ashamed of your lewd behavior.*

Imagine that? God says the conduct of his people Israel is worse than that of the Philistines. The Bible shows the Philistines' behavior was absolutely disgusting. Remember, the Palestinian onslaught against the Jewish people living on the border of Gaza on October 7, 2023

*Eze. 16:28 You also played the harlot with the Assyrians, because you were insatiable; indeed, you played the harlot with them and still weren't satisfied. (vs 29) Moreover you multiplied your acts of harlotry as far as the land of the trader, Chaldea, and even then, you were not satisfied. (vs 30) How degenerate is your heart, says the Lord God, seeing you do all these things, the deeds of a brazen harlot.*

Ezekiel provides detailed example of what spiritual fornication is and this is what God is speaking about in Rev. 17:2. Fornication is simply identified in the Bible as false religious practices. The word harlot used in Ezekiel 16 refers to one being highly fed and wanton. It means to commit adultery, and is usually spoken of the female, and less often as a simple act of fornication. Rarely does this word imply involuntary ravishing.

In other words, what is being discussed are the conscious thought-out decisions to engage in false religious practices. Figuratively, the word means to commit idolatry. According to Strong's Concordance this word refers to the Jewish people being regarded as the spouse of Jehovah. Israel is not just the Jewish people. Remember, Jacob (Israel) had 12 sons. It wasn't just Judah who was anciently married to the God of the Old Testament, but it was all 12 tribes of Israel.

Isa. 23:15 deals with Gentile peoples, those of not of Israelites descent, and how spiritual fornication is the same regardless of who is practicing it. Spiritual fornication is spiritual fornication, and it doesn't matter who and where it is being practiced. Isaiah deals with residents of Tyre, a city located in the country of Lebanon today.

It says: *Isa. 23:15 Now it shall come to pass in that day that Tyre will be forgotten 70 years, according to the days of one king; at the end of 70 years, it will happen to Tyre as in the song of the harlot. (vs 16) Take a harp, go about the city, you forgotten harlot; make sweet melody, sing many songs, that you may be remembered...[the harlot's way of getting attention] (vs 17) And it shall be at the end of 70 years that the Eternal will deal with Tyre. She will return to her hire and commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the*

*world on the face of the earth. (vs 18) Her gain...[Or pay] will be set apart for the Eternal: it will not be treasured, nor laid up; for her gain will be for those who dwell before the Eternal, to eat sufficiently and for fine clothing.*

This word fornication is the same word used by Ezekiel. It is not talking about physical fornication. Isaiah is speaking of spiritual fornication, the practice of false religion. This very important to understand in understanding who Mystery, Babylon the Great is.

Revelation 17:2 talks about something else. The kings of the earth committed fornication with this great harlot; but this great harlot also made the inhabitants of the earth drunk with the wine of her fornication. Again, this not talking about physical drunkenness it's speaking of spiritual drunkenness.

Too much alcohol has a dramatic impact on the mind of a human being. Here is the warning about spiritual drunkenness which God gives to the priesthood of ancient Israel.

*Lev. 10:8 The Eternal spoke to Aaron saying, (vs 9) Do not drink wine, or intoxicating drink, you, or your sons with you, when you go into the tabernacle of meeting, lest you die...*

What was the tabernacle of meeting? It was the location where the priest would conduct the religious practice and worship of God in ancient Israel. It was the earthly location of God's throne. The mercy seat was established in the Holy of Holies of the Tabernacle. The priests executing the functions of the tabernacle, as a priest, were not to drink alcohol on the job. This was not a suggestion; it was codified into law. Continuing on vs 9: *and it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations...*

This statute applies to the ministry of God's Church today. God's ministers are not to drink alcohol before or during their work for God. It's perfectly fine to drink a moderate amount of alcohol once God's work is complete. Why did God implement this statute?

*(vs 10) That you may distinguish between holy and unholy, between unclean and clean...[Alcohol affects judgment. If a minister's judgment is not good, then God's Word cannot be properly taught] (vs 11) And*

*that you may teach the children of Israel all the statutes, which the Eternal has spoken to them, by the hand of Moses.*

Alcohol negatively effects judgment, and one's ability to make sound judgments in the handling of God's Word.

Now look at the context in which drunkenness is discussed as it applies to Mystery, Babylon the Great. Jeremiah writes:

*Jer. 23:9 My heart within me is broken because of the prophets; all my bones shake; I'm like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine has overcome, because of the Eternal, and because of his holy words. (vs 10) The land is full of adulterers; for because of a curse the land mourns; and the pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up, their course of life is evil... [Evil is the result of living contrary to God's law] (vs 11) For both prophet and priest are profane... [godless] yes, in my house I found their wickedness, says the Eternal.*

*Jer. 23:12 Therefore their way shall be to them like slippery ways... [This what happens when someone drinks too much. The person staggers around; like walking on a sheet of ice or in mud] in the darkness: they shall be driven on, and fall in them: for I will bring disaster on them, the year of their punishments says the Eternal. (vs 13) I've seen folly in the prophets of Samaria... [religious leaders of Israel and the impact of their work on the people they teach] They prophesied of Baal and caused my people Israel to err. (vs 14) Also I have seen a horrible thing in the prophets of Jerusalem: they commit adultery and walk in lies; they also strengthen the hand of evildoers so that no one turns back from his wickedness. All of them are like Sodom to me, and her inhabitants like Gomorrah.*

Jeremiah uses the phrase, 'because of the word of the Lord' in his writing. What does this mean?

*Jer. 13:12 Therefore you shall speak to them this word; says the Eternal God of Israel, every bottle shall be filled with wine: and they shall say to you, we do not certainly know that every bottle will be filled with wine. (vs 13) Then you shall say to them, thus says the Eternal, behold, I will fill all the inhabitants of this*

*land, even the kings who sit on David's throne, the priests, the prophets, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, with drunkenness.*

God allows for people to become spiritually drunk. Spiritual drunkenness results from false religious teaching of people. This type of teaching opens the door for people to commit spiritual fornication. God allows people to be taught false things. Once the judgment of people is impaired, the way is paved for all types of unrighteous actions.

Let's review how spiritual drunkenness led to spiritual fornication, within God's own church. The fourth era of God's church, Thyatira, was a very tumultuous period of time in the history of God's church. Here we read Christ's comments on this era:

*Rev. 2:20 Nevertheless, I have a few things against you... [Speaking of the membership of God's Church] because you allow that woman Jezebel who calls herself a prophetess ...[Jezebel is a reference to great wickedness] to teach and seduce my servants to commit sexual immorality and to eat things sacrificed to idols.*

Clearly false teaching leads to immoral action. It opens the door for it. This should provide a better understanding of what Revelation 17:2 is speaking to.

*Rev. 17:3 So he...[Referring to one of the seven angels who was going to pour out one of the seven last plagues] So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness...[Verses one and two of this chapter show John being prepared for what he's going to see. Verse three reveals to him what he needs to see and understand] So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns...[This scarlet beast represents governments and kingdoms of this world with which the great harlot has intimate relationships with. Verse four focuses back on the woman.] (vs 4) The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication...*

What do the colors purple and scarlet represent? In ancient times these colors were very hard colors to achieve. They came from the shell of a certain sea creature in the Middle East. To get a piece of clothing or to get something that was colored by purple or blue was very expensive. So, purple became a color that represented royalty. Scarlet on the other hand, which is a reddish and also a very expensive color to get, is symbolic for religious leadership. When combined together these colors illustrate the power and position this great harlot has.

What does the golden cup in her hand represent? Jeremiah 51 provides a great deal of information about Mystery, Babylon the Great.

*Jer. 51:7 Babylon has a golden cup in the Lord's hand...* [In Revelation the golden cup is in the harlot's hand. God allows this drunkenness to take place. That's why this phraseology used by Jeremiah. God allows it] *Babylon was a golden cup in the Lord's hand, that made all the earth drunk: the nations drank her wine...* [Notice the impact false doctrine has on the nations] *Therefore the nations are deranged...* [The King James Version says 'mad'. This applies to the mental faculties of people. The impact of false teaching and religious practices makes people deranged or mad in their mentality. It leads to all sorts of abominations.

This harlot is identified for John back in Rev. 17:5,

*Rev. 17:5 And on her forehead a name was written, Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots, and of the abominations of the earth.*

Consider the name of this harlot because it really sets the stage for the remainder of this Bible Study. The word 'mystery' in the Greek means a secret or mystery, through the idea of silence, imposed by initiation into religious rights. This Bible Study will show later how all this mystery takes place. The meaning of mystery has to do with information that is secret, information that is not understood by everyone. If and when one comes to understand this mystery, they are sworn to a code of silence. In other words, to be able to understand the mystery meant it couldn't be talked about it. It was hidden in secret. This is how the mystery is it maintained.

The word Babylon in the New Testament refers to the capital of Chaldea. Literally or figuratively, it can also refer to a type of tyranny. In the Old Testament the word Babylon means confusion. It also refers to the geographical areas of Babel, or the city of Babylon. It includes Babylonia, the region where Babylon was located. And it can also refer to the Babylonian Empire, which was ruled by King Nebuchadnezzar. What's interesting about the word Babylon in the Old Testament is that it comes from another word. In Strong's the number for Babylon is 894, but the word that it comes from is 1101 in the Hebrew. This word means to overflow, specifically with oil. By implication it can mean to mix. Later in this Bible Study it will be shown how this mixing plays a role in the work of the great harlot. It's important to remember this aspect of the meaning of Babylon. 1101 can mean to mix, to fodder, which is simply feed mixing the feed for cattle.

The word 'great' is the Greek word megus, which means big. The word 'mother' is simply what it says. The word mother here can be used in a literal, figurative, immediate, or remote sense. The word 'harlots' looked at earlier in this Bible Study, refers to a strumpet, or prostitute, or figuratively idolatry. What John is told is that the great harlot is a prostitute, and her daughters are prostitutes too. These daughters follow in the same trade or path as the mother. Abominations refers to a detestation, something that is detestable, specifically something that is idolatrous. Turn to Exodus for an example of abominations.

Ex. 34:13 *But you shall destroy their altars...*[Referring to the religious structures of the Canaanites, who the Israelites were going to displace when they entered into the Promised Land] *But you shall destroy their altars, break their sacred pillars, and cut down their wooden images...*[All things used in false religious practices at that time] (vs 14) *For you shall worship no other God; for the Eternal, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.* (vs 15) *Lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they play the harlot with their gods, and make sacrifice to their gods, and one of them invite you, and you eat of his sacrifice.* (vs 16) *And you take of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters play the harlot with their gods, and make your sons play the harlot with their gods.* (vs 17) *You shall make no molten god for yourself.* These are the abominations the great harlot engages in and promotes.

The last word to look at in connection with the name Mystery, Babylon, refers to the earth. The abominations are of the earth, in the earth, or on the earth. That's where these abominations take place. The word earth refers to soil. It can be a region, or the solid part, or the whole globe, all the land masses

on the globe. It also includes the occupants depending on the context it is used in. Whether it be a small area of the world, a much larger area of the world, or the whole world, encompasses the meaning of the word earth.

It's very important to understand the use of a female to describe Mystery Babylon the Great. In the Bible God uses a woman to describe a church. This can be His true church and the great false church of Satan the Devil. There are a number of scriptures that prove this point. A look at a couple of these scriptures will make it easy to identify who Mystery, Babylon the Great is. In I Cor. 10, Paul describes the ancient Israelites:

*I Cor 10:1 Moreover, brethren I do not want you to be unaware, that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea (vs 2) All were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea (vs 3) All ate the same spiritual food (vs 4) And all drank the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.*

Compare this verse to Acts 2:38, and it's exactly the same baptismal process, every person has to go through, to become a member of God's church.

Here we read how the Israelites are described. Ex. 12:2 *This month shall be the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year to you. (vs 6) You shall keep it until the 14th day of the same month...*[If God had never told Moses about time, if He had never established, or in this case reestablished, the Hebrew calendar for tracking time, the Israelites could never have known when to keep God's holy days. That's why verse two is very important, and it makes possible verse six] *You shall keep it until the 14th day of the same month: then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight.*

God describes Israel as a congregation. In the Hebrew language, congregation means a fixture or stated assemblage, a concourse. Generally speaking, it can refer to a family or a crowd. The point is that Israel was the Old Testament congregation, or the Old Testament church; and she is referred to as a woman. Take a look at Jeremiah.

*Jer. 3:14 God says: Return, O backsliding children, says the Eternal, for I am married to you.*

Ancient Israel was considered the Old Testament church. She was a female and there are many other scriptures that can point that out. As a matter of fact, Israel, as seen here, is married to God. God's Church is also considered a female.

*Rev. 12:1 Now a great sign appeared in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of 12 stars...[This is the Old Testament church of Israel] (vs 2) Then being with child she cried out in labor, and in pain, to give birth.*

It is from Israel, the tribe of Judah that Jesus Christ was born. That's why this description is given.

*Rev. 12:4 And his tail drew a third of the stars of heaven, and threw them to the earth...[Referring to Satan's initial rebellion against God] and the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her child as soon as it was born...[Satan was ready to kill Christ as soon as He was born] (vs 5) She bore a male child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up to God, and his throne...[Satan was unsuccessful in attempting to have Christ killed when he was born; and Christ fulfilled the purpose for why He came to this earth as a human being. Notice what it says about the woman] (vs 6) Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God; that they should feed her there 1260 days.*

This primarily applies to the era of Thyatira, the fourth era. In verses 13, 14 and 17, it can clearly be seen this woman represents the New Testament Church of God. Revelation 19:7 talks about Christ's bride, which is the Church of God and the fact that she has made herself ready to be married to Christ. Paul describes God's Church as a woman in Ephesians 5:23-32.

The harlot of Revelation 17 is a very powerful and influential religious entity that has the ability to impact governments, and the general population of people under those governments. This is what spiritual fornication is. To understand the identity of this harlot, and how she is able to deceive and influence with such a huge impact, requires going back in history, and looking at the origins of Babylon.

The origins of Babylon go back to the book of Genesis. Babylon came into existence and developed after the flood. That is an important piece of timing in order to understand who Babylon is.

Gen. 10:1 *This is the genealogy of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth: and sons were born to them...* [Notice-] *after the flood.* From these three sons of Noah the earth was repopulated after the flood. The Bible confirms this in verse 32, *These were the families of the sons of Noah, according to their generations...*[Notice-] *in their nations: and from these the nations were divided on the earth after the flood.*

After the flood there were only eight people alive on the earth. Through the sons of Noah God repopulated the earth. Every human being on the earth today came from the three sons of Noah. These sons had children and their children had children; and as the families of these sons grew, they went out to various parts of the earth to settle it and populate it. In time, Noah's descendants encompassed the whole earth. Where does Babylon fit into this migration of peoples?

Gen. 11:1 *Now the whole earth had one language, and one speech...*[Everyone speaking the same language] (vs 2) *And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there.* (vs 3) *Then they said to one another, come, let us make bricks, and bake them thoroughly. They had bricks for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar.* (vs 4) *And they said, come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower, whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth...*[The plan was to build a huge tower that would reach up into the heavens. God was not in favor of this human plan] (vs 5) *The Eternal came down to see the city and the tower, which the sons of men had built.* (vs 6) *The Eternal said, indeed, the people are one, and they all have one language; and this is what they begin to do: now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them.* (vs 7) *Come, let us go down there and confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech...*

The King James Version uses the word confound. This word is important to remember, Strong's # (1101), means to mix. God mixed up the language, by creating a number of different languages, so Noah's descendants could not easily communicate with each other;

*(vs 8) So the Eternal scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. (vs 9) Therefore its name is called Babel; because there the Eternal confused the language of all the earth: and from there the Eternal scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.*

The word Babel means confusion. Think about it, one moment everybody is able to communicate through one language; and the next moment they can't. Nobody could talk to anybody, which immediately created confusion.

To understand the origins of Babylon one has to go back to Genesis. One would suppose there had to be a leader of the activities in Genesis 11. Someone had to organize the building of the tower of Babel. Someone had to put forth the idea to motivated people to build such a structure, and there had to be a reason behind it. Remember Gen. 10 is about the sons of Shem Ham, and Japheth. Verse 6 covers the sons of Ham.

*Gen. 10:6 The sons of Ham were Cush, Mizraim, Phut, and Canaan...* [This verse provides the origins of the people the ancient Israelites were to remove from the Promised Land. They came from Noah's son Ham] *(vs 7) The sons of Cush were Seba, and Havilah, and Sabtah, and Raamah, and Sabtechah: and the sons of Raamah: Sheba and Dedan...* [Verse eight is important to understanding Babylon. It deals with one of the sons of Cush] *(vs 8) And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one on the earth...* [The name Nimrod means rebel] *(vs 9) He was a mighty hunter before the Eternal: therefore it is said, like Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Eternal. (vs 10) And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel...* [His kingdom also included other locations in the land of Shinar. Babel was not the only place of Nimrod's scope and influence] *(vs 11) From that land he went to Assyria, and built Nineveh, Rehoboth, and Calah.*

It is important to consider these origins in connection with the Israelites, Nineveh and Babylon. It all goes back to Nimrod.

When one begins to look into Nimrod it becomes clear he was not a very nice individual. In verse eight, it says, 'Nimrod began to be a mighty one in the earth,' the word 'mighty' in the Hebrew means powerful, by implication it can refer to a warrior or a tyrant. The word 'hunter' refers to the chase or gain that is taken. It can also refer to lunch, especially in the context of that which is taken for a journey. It is also

connected to another Hebrew word, which basically means the same thing; but includes to lie alongside of, in wait. By implication it can mean to catch an animal, and figuratively it can mean to catch men. Again, it can refer to victuals for a journey. The word 'before,' refers to the face as the part that turns. Genesis 6, provides clarity on the word 'before.' Verse 11 says 'the earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.' The Companion Bible says the word 'before' means in 'defiance of.'

Genesis 10:8-9, reveals Nimrod was a mighty tyrant in defiance of God. Nimrod was an individual who was against God. Josephus', in his book *Antiquities of the Jews*, writes the following about Nimrod:

Now it was Nimrod who excited them to contempt of God. (Referring to the people of Babel) He was the grandson of Ham, a bold man and of great strength of hand. He persuaded them to believe that it was their own courage which procured happiness. (Speaking of physical happiness) He gradually changed the government into tyranny, seeing no other way of turning men from the fear of God; but to bring them into a constant dependence on his power. (This mirrors the attitude of those who support big government) He also said that he would be revenged on God. If he should have a mind to drown the world again (a second flood) for that he (Nimrod) would build a tower too high for the waters to be able to reach.

To escape another flood is the reason behind building the tower of Babel. People didn't want to be destroyed by another worldwide that would kill people on the earth again. Notice another point Josephus makes about Nimrod. He wanted to build a tower that would reach up to heaven, so "... that he would avenge himself on God, for destroying their forefathers."

Nimrod's forefather wasn't destroyed in the flood. His grandfather Ham was on the Ark. He was saved from the flood, but Nimrod set himself up as the avenger for all the people. He was going to avenge the deaths of the peoples' forefathers.

It's important to understand that Babylon, from its founding, has always been against the great Creator God. It's a real hostility against God. It's a hostility that makes God appear to be an unmerciful, mean,

uncaring, and destructive God. Nimrod was wanting to do something about that, and he was going to follow through on his desire.

In a book, entitled *Satan's Great Deception*, by C Paul Meredith, Mr. Meredith says the following about Nimrod. He provides a broader view of Nimrod, his motivations and actions:

Nimrod kept growing in power; but the inborn desire for people to worship must be satisfied. Nimrod and his followers had turned against the true God. They wanted to glorify God in their own way. They changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like creeping things (reference to Rom. 1:23) the snake and other things God had created. With the civil power he wielded, Nimrod set himself up as the priest of the things worshiped by the people, to obtain a still stronger hold on them, and gradually put himself in the place of God.

Tradition holds, Shem, one of Noah's sons, and Nimrod warred against each other because of what Nimrod was doing. Shem supposedly killed Nimrod; and after his death, Nimrod's wife went to work preserving his legacy. Notice what C Paul Meredith writes about her:

Nimrod had been a man of unbounded ambition, but the ambition of his wife, Semiramis, the future queen of heaven (reference to Jeremiah 17:18.) her ambition exceeded even his. Nimrod, her husband, had become the greatest and most powerful figure in the world. He was dead. She clearly saw that if she were to continue to have the great position and power, which she had exercised by being the ambitious wife of the most powerful man on earth, something must be done to assure continuance of her power. Nimrod's kingdom, which consisted of most of the populated world at that time, had fallen to her. Much of Nimrod's power had come from his having set himself up as the human representative of the sun god. She must retain this world rule by any and all means. The religious control, which had given so much power to her husband, must be used by her also if she were to retain the maximum hold on her subjects. She would combine or fuse (remember the word mix) She would combine, fuse or mix the sun-

serpent worship, which her dead husband had furthered, with the teachings of the Eternal God concerning a coming Savior of mankind.

Semiramis mixed truth with error to retain her position of power.

She planned to make her dead husband Nimrod this savior; and thus procure for herself power over her subjects, by posing as the mother of a supernaturally conceived and reborn Nimrod. A factor of great aid to Semiramis was the popularity of Nimrod, and the desire of the people to keep him in their memory.

How was she able to pull this deception off?

She first deified Nimrod herself, and their son; and due to opposition, gave him secret forms known only to the initiated; and these were worshiped.

In other words, not everybody accepted Semiramis' plan. So, in order to carry through with it, she gave Nimrod, herself, and her son, different identities, identities that were part of the creation of God. If Nimrod represented a tree, which was a big thing in pagan worship, people would worship the tree, knowing that it was Nimrod; but not telling anybody else. This explains God use of the word mystery to describe Babylon the Great.

So, she gave Nimrod, herself, and their son secret forms, and these then were the mysteries. Those on the outside of these new religious practices could not see that these new practices of worshiping these symbols, such as a calf or a tree, were actually the same as the worship of Nimrod or Semiramis, who represented the sun and serpent (which is Satan the Devil) and were actually the worship of the same things which Shem had suppressed, sun-serpent worship. Shem opposed the false religious practices of Nimrod.

One might ask: why is the serpent such a big deal? It's because people came to believe the serpent, who deceived Eve, knew what he was talking about. That's why the serpent was worshipped. Once Semiramis

had developed her plan, she then went and had sex with the kings of her day to help her install her system of belief into the nations of the world at that time. This where the fornication with the kings originated from. The priests who did the initiation of new members into this mystery religion, explained the mysteries to people and were called interpreters, or peters, anciently, long before Christ made Peter the human head of God's church in 27 AD. This explains the connection to Peter. Remember, Satan is a counterfeiter. He appears as an angel of light. He 'looks' the part, but he is not. Continuing on, C Paul Meredith writes:

At Babel, Nimrod and Semiramis founded a civilization based on a false way of life, man's rule without God. They were used as Satan's pawns to counterfeit Christ's teachings over 2000 years in advance.

What this shows is Satan knows the word of God too. The Bible demonstrates Satan knows what God's word says, what it means, and how it applies, but he refuses to accept it. Satan knows what the plan of God is. He counterfeits God's Truth for the specific purpose of deceiving people. Satan utilized his knowledge of God's word to produce and promote his counterfeit through Nimrod and Semiramis, and through everybody since who has followed this mystery religion down through the ages. Very few people question the tenets of this mystery, blindly accepting what they have been taught.

Continuing in Satan's Great Deception:

Satan has continued to use these same teachings to deceive the earth down to this very day.

Then C. Paul Meredith goes into the identity of Mother Babylon:

In papal Rome only is it now found nearly pure and entire. (The mystery religion) The system is a mystery as we have seen. How does it masquerade? It (Rome) admits Christian terms and names, (use of Christian terminology) but all that is apparently Christian in the system is more than neutralized by the malignant paganism that it embodies.

So, Mother Babylon is the Roman Catholic Church, headquartered in Rome, Italy, in the Vatican. What about the harlots, the daughters of the mother? C. Paul Meredith writes the following:

The Protestant churches, come out from papal Rome, where the system first concocted in old Babylon is now found nearly pure and entire. (still in existence, with all of its original parts) By protesting against certain doctrinal tenets, they, the Protestants, claim to get back to the teachings of the New Testament; but they did not do so.

There was a paper in the late 1800s titled "Rome's Challenge. At the time, Protestants protested about shops and booths being kept open on Sunday at the World's Fair, because they thought Sunday was the biblical Sabbath. The Catholics wrote a paper and said, look Protestants, if that's the position you're going to take, here is the biblical case against you. They made the same points God's Church makes to prove Saturday is the true original Sabbath day. The paper's Catholic authors admit Saturday is the true Sabbath, debunking the Protestant's position that Sunday is the Sabbath.

Reading through the opening verses of Rev. 17 again should now provide a clearer, better, and deeper understanding of what John saw in vision, concerning Mystery, Babylon the Great.

*Rev. 17:1 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls, came and talked with me saying to me, come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters (vs 2) with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication (vs 3) So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, which was full of names of blasphemy having seven heads and ten horns. (vs 4) The woman was arrayed in purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold, and precious stones, and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. (vs 5) And on her forehead a name was written, Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots, and of the abominations of the earth. (vs 6) And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, and when I saw her I marveled with great amazement.*

With the identity of Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother, and her harlots revealed, it's not hard to understand who is responsible for the abominations on this earth.

When a person leaves the truth of God's Word, the only way to travel is back to Babylon; and that's exactly what God's Church following the death of God's late apostle, Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong.

An example of how God's people return to Babylon is found in a letter by David Hunsberger, an employee of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) in the Personal Correspondence Dept. He wrote the following in a letter dated November 30, 1992, about the Catholic Church:

We do not consider the Roman Catholic Church to be pagan or polytheistic. (an organization that worshipping several gods.) One could say that it is a form of idolatry to place reason above revelation in determining God's will. However, in generally accepted speech, without that particular context being given, it would not be correct to say that the Catholic Church practices idolatry. We do believe that some teachings of the Roman Catholic Church were borrowed or adapted from pagan religious practices. However, this does not mean that it would be correct in general discussion to refer to the Catholics as pagans.

Take note, this letter was written near the end of 1992. From an article in the Plain Truth, dated September 1993, entitled *Miracle at Ashley Down* the following was written:

In 1825 George Mueller entered the University at Hall. His aim was to become a minister of the Lutheran Church. Mueller began to fellowship with members of the Brethren Movement and was offered a position as pastor of a local church. The orphanages at Ashley Down in Bristol, England, were George Mueller's testimony to the continuing work of Jesus Christ, in and through the church (the Lutheran Church, a daughter of Mother Babylon).

From an article in the Plain Truth dated February 1994, by Greg Albrecht the following is said about the Salvation Army:

Groups such as the Salvation Army epitomize the Christian mission to participate, by standing together against forces that are eroding and destroying our society, and families.

Then from the Australian Ministerial Conference on February 21, 1994, Joseph Tkach Jr. said the following concerning the church's position and identity.

If you were to get out a chart of where we are, would you put us with the Catholics? No. Would you put us with the Buddhists? No, you wouldn't put us there. You wouldn't put us with Islam. You wouldn't put us with Judaism. No, you would put us among the broad spectrum of Protestantism. Some Protestant leader has held nearly every position we hold doctrinally in the past. Did we not know this? I think we did. We just didn't want to realize that or acknowledge that. No, we're not slowly turning Protestant; we've always been there.

The final Restored Truth Bible Study will appropriately tie everything together that has been covered in this bible study series. God's Church must never forget its responsibility to maintain these restored truths and prevent them from being compromised until Jesus Christ returns.