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PROPHECY SERIES

(Proph21S_Revelation_chp17_Introduction & Background)

REVELATION 17:1-18

And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I shall show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, 2 with whom the kings of the earth committed acts of immorality, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality." 3 And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness; and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names having seven heads and ten horns. 4 And the woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality, 5 and upon her forehead a name was written, a mystery,

"BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."

And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. And when I saw her, I wondered greatly. 7 And the angel said to me, "Why do you wonder? I shall tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her which has the seven heads and the ten horns. 8 The beast that you saw was and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and to go to destruction. And those who dwell on the earth will wonder, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come. 9 "Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits, 10 and they are seven kings; five have fallen, one is the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while. 11 "And the beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth, and is one of the seven, and he goes to destruction. 12 "And the ten horns which you saw are ten kings, who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour. 13 These have one purpose and they give their power and authority to the beast. 14 These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful." 15 And he said to me, "The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues. 16 And the ten horns which you saw, and the beast, these will hate the harlot and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire. 17 For God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose by having a common purpose, and by giving their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God should be fulfilled. 18 And the woman whom you saw is the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth."

In the first six verses of this chapter, we are provided a description of a scarlet woman and a scarlet beast. In verses 7-18, we are given an interpretation that still leaves us in need of further explanation and interpretation.

Revelation 17 and 18 are probably two of the most obscure chapters in the book of Revelation. The interpretation of these two chapters varies widely depending upon the source consulted. However, in my opinion, in order to properly interpret these chapters, it is important that we first consider some other passages of Scripture. If one's interpretation of Revelation 17 &

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18 does not reconcile or synchronize with these passages, then we can be virtually certain that we have not correctly interpreted the whole of Scripture.

GENESIS 10 & 11 (BABYLON'S HISTORICAL ROOTS)

In our passage, Babylon corresponds to the city and the system that it supports that is anti-Christ in purpose. Let's examine the historical roots of this interpretation.

In Revelation 17:5-6, a better rendering of the name and description written upon the forehead of the woman would be "a name written upon her forehead – a secret [*sign*] – 'BABYLON THE GREAT,' the mother of the harlots and of the abominations of the earth." The word "mystery" is the Greek word *musterion* (Gr. μυστήριον). This word can be translated "secret" and is translated that way elsewhere in Scripture in some translations (e.g. the LXX uses this same Greek word which is translated "secret" in such passages as Daniel 2:18, 19, 27-29 just to name a few).¹

Thus, the word "mystery" or "secret" does not form a part of the name written on the forehead of the woman. It is also likely that the phrase "the mother of the harlots and of the abominations of the earth" is not part of the name written on the forehead of the woman. Rather, this is an explanatory clause for the name that is written on the forehead – "BABYLON THE GREAT."

So, in verses 5-6, the woman's name or title is a secret sign and refers to something much deeper than the name itself conveys. It is a "secret" in the sense that unbelievers who succumb to and adhere to the idolatry (implied by the terms "harlots" and "abominations" – words always closely related to spiritual idolatry in Israel's history) will not comprehend the connection between this future system and its historical roots.

The name was the name of a city (Rev 17:18), not the name of a woman per se. However, this name denotes even more than the name of a tangible, material city. It denotes the vast system of idolatry that will be connected with it. Babylon is the mother or fountainhead of all the systems of idolatry which have existed in the earth since the Noaic Flood, i.e. the post-diluvian world. Many dispensational theologians have taught and believed that the Roman Catholic Church will be the core component of the future idolatrous religion of the Tribulation era. In reality, Romanism is only one stream that has flowed from the fountainhead of idolatrous religion first established in Babylon. The future Babylon may embrace or use Romanism; however, it will be more expansive than the Roman Catholic Church.

Idolatry was no mere sin into which people gradually sank. It was the counterfeit religion, created by Satan, a vast system of disparate manifestations all having a common source. It was designed to evolve into the worship of Satan (the Dragon) himself – something that will occur in the Tribulation.²

Genesis 10:8-12

Now Cush became the father of **Nimrod**; he [*Nimrod*] became a *mighty one* on the earth. 9 He was a *mighty hunter* before the Lord; therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the Lord." 10 And the beginning of his kingdom was **Babel** and Erech and Accad and Calneh, in the **land of Shinar**. 11 From

¹ Sources consulted on this point include E.W. Bullinger, *Commentary on Revelation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 1984), 502-504 and Charles H. Dyer, "The Identity of Babylon in Revelation 17-18 – Part 2" in *Bibliotheca Sacra* 144 (October-December 1987): 434-436.

² Bullinger, *Commentary on Revelation*, 505.

that land he went forth into Assyria, and built **Nineveh** and Rehoboth-Ir and Calah, 12 and Resen between Nineveh and Calah; that is **the great city**.
[Italicized, bolded words and bracketed words are my mechanism used to highlight key words or concepts].

Nimrod was human who was used as the founder of this system. Babylon was the city of origin. It is possible that the city that Cain founded prior to the Flood was the city of Babylon after the Flood. In Genesis 4:16-17, we read that “Cain went out from the presence of the Lord” and had a son whom he named “Enoch” and Cain named the city in which he dwelt “Enoch” as well. The Hebrew word for Enoch means “initiated” or “dedicated.” We cannot be sure of the significance of the meaning of this city’s name, but it is noteworthy that the city was founded by a man who had departed from the presence of the Lord. It is quite possible that the city of Enoch which was founded by a man who fled from the presence of the Lord (thus a city rooted in unbelief) later became the city of Babel – the predecessor to Assyrian Nineveh and Babylon.

Nimrod is also noted in Scripture as the founder of a city, actually more than one. His life and work is characterized in such a way in Scripture that one can easily see an early manifestation of the “spirit” of anti-Christ, anti-God. He wanted to make for his people a name, so that they would not be scattered. Nimrod called his city “Babel” (Gen 10:10) – a.k.a. “Bab-El.”

Nimrod “...had a wife known as Semiramis who founded the secret religious rites of the Babylonian mysteries, according to accounts outside the Bible. Semiramis had a son with an alleged miraculous conception who was given the name Tammuz and in effect was a false fulfillment of the promise of the seed of the woman given to Eve (Gen 3:15). Various religious practices were observed in connection with this false Babylonian religion, including recognition of the mother and child as God and of creating an order of virgins who became religious prostitutes. Tammuz, according to the tradition was killed by a wild animal and then restored to life, a satanic anticipation and counterfeit of Christ’s resurrection. Scripture condemns this false religion repeatedly (Jer. 7:18; 44:17-19, 25; Ezek. 8:14). The worship of Baal is related to the worship of Tammuz.”³

Genesis 11:1-9

Now the whole earth used the same language and the same words. 2 And it came about as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. 3 And they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly.” And they used brick for stone, and they used tar for mortar. 4 And they said, “Come, let us build for ourselves a city and a tower

³ John F. Walvoord, “Revelation” in John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament* (Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books of Scripture Press Publications, 1983), 970. See also J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Academie Books – Zondervan Publishing House, 1958), 364-369. While there are many theologians who have similarly opined on this topic, it is important to note that this is a debated view since the passage does not address some of these particulars. For instance, in many sources, the work of a mid-1800’s pastor named Alexander Hislop is cited. Hislop wrote *The Two Babylons* in 1853. The interpretation that connects the fourth and fifth empire of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of a statue (Daniel 2) and the fourth beast of Daniel’s dream of four beasts rising out of the sea (Daniel 7) to Rome and the Roman empire is a sound interpretation. However, I admit that the connection of Semiramis and Tammuz to Nimrod needs more support than the work of Alexander Hislop alone (the common source cited by many commentators) in order to be more academically credible. At present, I’ve not been able to locate other ultimate sources so I can verify Hislop’s information. For the reader’s convenience, I have pasted an extract from Wikipedia in the **Appendix** to these notes.

whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name; lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.” 5 And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built, 6 And the Lord said, “Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them. 7 “Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.” 8 So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city. 9 Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of the whole earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth.

Babylon has roots as a city founded in rebellion against God. The leader of this rebellious activity was Nimrod. His name was so well known that it became a nickname or proverb for any great rebel or apostate. The Babylon of Revelation 17 & 18 will reflect this same rebellion against God’s plan and purpose for man and the inspiration for this rebellion will be from the same source – the “Beast” or Satan who desires to retain dominion over this earth and prevent God’s purpose of redemption from being accomplished. His human agents of antiquity were men such as Nimrod. His human agents of the Tribulation, the last days of the Age of Israel will be the Antichrist and other “kings” (Rev 17:10) who align with his purpose (wittingly or unwittingly). In our passage (Rev 17 & 18), Babylon corresponds to the city and the system that is anti-Christ in orientation and nature.

Babylon was founded in rebellion against God. Nimrod was “a mighty one on the earth” (Gen. x.8). He called his city Bab-El. Some take this to mean *the court or gate of God*; for he, like his antitype, would fain thus exalt himself (2 Thess. ii.4). Others derive it from *Belus*, the name of the principle idol of the Babylonians. Sometimes written *Bel*. If so, Babel would mean – *for Bel or of Bel*.⁴

In any case we are taken back to the fountain-head, and shown the source and origin of all idolatry. Nimrod is called a mighty hunter. The targum of Jonathan (an ancient Jewish commentary) interprets this to mean that he was a mighty rebel before the Lord. The Jerusalem Targum reads it as meaning mighty in sin, lying in wait to catch and overthrow men; drawing them away from the worship of the true God, as taught by Shem, to join that taught by Nimrod. Hence, his name became a proverb for any great rebel or Apostate (Read Gen. x.9).⁵

The name “Babel” suggests “confusion” (Gen. 11:9). Later the name was applied to the city of Babylon which itself has a long history dating back to as early as 3,000, years before Christ. One of its famous rulers was Hammurabi (1728-1686 B.C.). After a period of decline Babylon again arose to great heights under Nebuchadnezzar about 600 years before Christ. Nebuchadnezzar’s reign (605-562 B.C.) and the subsequent history of Babylon is the background of the Book of Daniel.⁶

⁴ Bullinger, *Commentary on Revelation*, 507.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 509.

⁶ Walvoord, 970.

JEREMIAH 50 – 51 (PREDICTIONS OF THE DESTRUCTION OF BABYLON)⁷

The 110 verses in Jeremiah 50 & 51 most likely consist of several different messages that Jeremiah received from the Lord at different times. Jeremiah compiled these two chapters based upon that collective set of revelation given to him. Two themes are present in these two chapters: 1) the judgment coming on Babylon, and 2) the restoration of Israel and Judah to their homeland. Some of what Jeremiah records regarding the former theme (judgment of Babylon) has never occurred historically. Most, if not all, of the latter (the restoration of Israel and Judah to their homeland) has also never occurred historically.

Of course, I recognize that the reader of Jeremiah's day would have interpreted this passage as an oracle against the then-historic empire of Babylon. There are certainly aspects of this passage that are relevant to that historic entity. However, it is important to note that Jeremiah's prophecy contains a mix of references to two different destructions of Babylon.

This literary style should be very familiar to students of Bible prophecy. We have seen it employed by Hebrew prophets in our studies of various passages where we observe references to the 1st and 2nd Advent of the Messiah in such close proximity to each other that they appear to be the same event (e.g. Isa 52:13-15). We have also seen this literary style employed in descriptions of the arrogance and judgment of an earthly ruler whereby allusions and comparisons are made to the pre-historic, moral fall of Satan (e.g. Isa 14:12-16; Ezek 28:11-19). The allusions and comparisons are so intermingled that it has led some to miss or overlook the time-related distinctions. In all of these cases, there are certain aspects of these prophecies that are even today yet future in their fulfillment.

Therefore, even though portions of Jeremiah 50-51 certainly relate to the historical judgment of ancient Babylon, much of the content of Jeremiah 50-51 relates to a period of history that is yet future – i.e. the “last days” of the Age of Israel which will include the total annihilation of the enemies of Yahweh and the deliverance of the believing remnant of Israel at the 2nd Advent followed by the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom.

I will not provide a verse-by-verse exegesis of this passage since we are principally concerned with the Scriptural and historical context for Revelation 17-18. However, it is worth highlighting several key verses to support the statements previously made and to establish this passage as a part of our interpretive grid (or paradigm) for understanding Revelation 17-18.

Jeremiah 50:3

For a nation has come up against her out of the north; it will make her land an object of horror, and there will be no inhabitant in it. Both man and beast have wandered off, they have gone away!

This verse indicates that an invader was to descend on Babylon from the north and would make her an object of horror. All of Babylon's inhabitants, humans and animals, would leave her.

Elsewhere in Jeremiah the enemy that is from the north is Babylon itself. That is usually because the reference is from Israel's vantage-point in the passage.

⁷ For my analysis of the Jeremiah 50-51 passages, I consulted Thomas Constable, “Notes on Jeremiah” at www.soniclight.com and Charles H. Dyer, “The Identity of Babylon in Revelation 17-18 – Part 1” in *Bibliotheca Sacra* 144 (July-September 1987): 304-316 and Charles H. Dyer, “The Identity of Babylon in Revelation 17-18 – Part 2” in *Bibliotheca Sacra* 144 (October-December 1987): 433-448.

However, in Jeremiah 50:3, the invader of Babylon would come from the north. This is probably not a reference to the Persians who came from the east and who conquered Babylon – even if their line of attack was roughly from the north.

Also, Babylon was not totally uninhabited after the Persians took over. People did not flee because of the Persians. For example, Daniel, who had access to Jeremiah's prophecies (Dan 9:1-2), remained in the capital city during and after its fall (Dan 5:28, 30-31; 6:1-3). The city was spared and made one of the ruling centers for the Persian Empire with Daniel serving there in an administrative position.

Jeremiah 50:4

In those days and at that time, declares the Lord, the sons of Israel will come, both they and the sons of Judah as well; they will go along weeping as they go, and it will be the Lord their God they will seek.

The phrase “in those days” is almost always a reference to the events and circumstances surrounding the establishment of the Messianic kingdom. This verse indicates that at the time of Babylon's destruction, the Israelites would leave Babylon – *both Israelites and those from Judah*. They would go out weeping as they left and seeking Yahweh. Judah and Israel did not unite as one nation after the Persians took over, and most of the exiles did not return to the Promised Land. Therefore, the weeping anticipates Israel's national repentance at the second coming of Christ.

Jeremiah 50:5, 20

5 They will ask for the way to Zion, turning their faces in its direction; they will come that they may join themselves to the Lord in an everlasting covenant that will not be forgotten.

20 In those days and at that time, declares the Lord, search will be made for the iniquity of Israel, but there will be none; and for the sins of Judah, but they will not be found; for I shall pardon those whom I leave as a remnant.

According to these prophetic verses, the Israelites would seek direction in their return to Zion (almost always a title for Jerusalem of the Messianic Kingdom, i.e. the Millennium). They will go there to enjoy the benefits of the everlasting covenant with Yahweh, one that they would not forget as they had their former (Mosaic) covenant. Joining the “everlasting covenant” is a reference to the relevant provisions of the Abrahamic covenant (see table below) and its various amplifications elsewhere in Hebrew Scripture.

Name	Type	Passages
Abrahamic	Unilateral (a.k.a. “Unconditional”)	Gen 12:1-3 (confirmed and enlarged in 12:7; 13:14-17; 15:1-21; 17:1-14; 22: 15-18; 26:2-4; 28:13-14; 35:11-12)
Land (a.k.a. Palestinian)	Amplification of God’s covenant with Abraham – Unilateral (a.k.a “Unconditional”)	Deut 30:1-10
Davidic	Amplification of God’s covenant with Abraham – Unilateral (a.k.a “Unconditional”)	2 Sam 7:11-16; 1 Chron 17:10-15
New	Amplification of God’s covenant with Abraham – Unilateral (a.k.a “Unconditional”)	Jer 31:31-34 (contains term “New Covenant”); Concept found in Isa 49:8; 54:10; 55:3; 59:21; 61:8-9; Jer 32:39-40; 50:5; Ezek 11:19; 16:60-63; 18:31; 34:25; 36:22-36; 37:26; Hos 2:18-20
Mosaic	Bilateral (a.k.a. “ Conditional ”)	Ex 19:5ff; Deut 28:1-68

Israel has yet to enjoy the complete fulfillment of the blessings promised in the Abrahamic covenant (including its amplifications). She certainly did not enjoy the benefits of this covenant with God after Babylon fell to the Persians. God's complete pardon of the nation of Israel is still future – at the time of the 2nd Advent of Christ when all of the Messiah's enemies are defeated and only believers remain alive on earth (Jew and Gentile) – those in whom God sees "no iniquity" (Jer 50:20) because they have believed in Jesus as the Messiah. The Jewish believers at that time are referred to as the "remnant." It is this "remnant" that will be the subject of blessing under the terms of the aforementioned covenant's provisions.

Jeremiah 50:21

"Against the land of Merathaim, go up against it, and against the inhabitants of Pekod. Slay and utterly destroy them," declares the Lord, "and do to all that I have commanded you."

The Lord commanded the destroyers of Babylon to go up against the land of "Merathaim" – the land of double rebellion, the meaning of "Merathaim." Assyria and Babylon both came from the same general area, Mesopotamia, and both nations had rebelled against Him. He gave their land the name Pekod, meaning "punishment."

Merathaim (*Mat Marratim*) was a region at the head of the Persian Gulf where the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers met. Pekod was a region, named after a tribe, in southeastern Babylonia (cf. Ezek. 23:23). Jeremiah made a play on these names to affirm the rebelliousness and certain judgment coming on Babylon.

Divine punishment would mark Mesopotamia. The destroyer was to execute the Lord's directions exactly by slaying and completely destroying the Babylonians. The Persians did not do this. Thus, again, here is an example of a portion of this passage, the fulfillment of which, is yet future.

Jeremiah 50:39-40

Therefore the desert creatures will live there along with the jackals; the ostriches also will live in it, and it will never again be inhabited or dwelt in from generation to generation. 40 As when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah with its neighbors, declares the Lord, no man will live there, nor will any son of man reside in it.

According to this portion of the prophecy, Babylon would be inhabited only by wild animals forever, no longer by human beings. It would be as uninhabited as Sodom and Gomorrah after the Lord overthrew those cities. However, historic Babylon continued to be inhabited for many years following the Persian take-over, and the present countries of Iraq, Kuwait, and Syria currently occupy its territory. Therefore, this prophecy anticipates the future destruction of Babylon (cf. Zech. 5:5-11; Rev. 16:19; 17:1—19:3).

Jeremiah 50:41-42

Behold, a people is coming from the north, and a great nation and many kings will be aroused from the remote parts of the earth. 42 They seize their bow and javelin; they are cruel and have no mercy. Their voice roars like the sea, and they ride on horses, marshaled like a man for the battle against you, O daughter of Babylon.

These verses indicate that Babylon's invader was to be a mighty army that was to descend on her from the remote parts of the north. When historical Babylon fell to the Persians, the Persians and their allies did not come from remote regions of the north. Rather, they were

the neighbors of the Babylonians. Furthermore, according to this prophecy, this invader would come with bows and javelins and would fight cruelly and unmercifully and they were to sound like the roaring sea in their approach. Even though Cyrus' army contained a variety of vassal contingents (cf. 51:27-28), he took the city by stealth. The contrast between this prophecy and the facts surrounding the fall of historic Babylon lead to the conclusion that the destruction described here is probably a future one.

Jeremiah 51:11-12

Sharpen the arrows, fill the quivers! The Lord has aroused the spirit of the kings of the Medes, because His purpose is against Babylon to destroy it; for it is the vengeance of the Lord, vengeance for His temple. 12 Lift up a signal against the walls of Babylon; post a strong guard, station sentries, lace men in ambush! For the Lord has both purposed and performed what He spoke concerning the inhabitants of Babylon.

The fall of historic Babylon to the Medes (of the Mede-Persian alliance) was a fulfillment of this prophecy, but it did not fulfill all of the prophecies about the fall of Babylon that are found in chapters 50-51. The Medes did live north of Babylon (in northwest Iran, Iranian Kurdistan). They had been allies of the Babylonians in the destruction of the Assyrian capital – Nineveh in 612 B.C. Later, they joined with the Persians to defeat Babylon in 539 B.C. (cf. Dan. 5:28, 31; 8:20). Jeremiah described the invasion using the siege related terminology that was typical of that era. However, when the Medes overthrew Babylon, they did not have to use those methods.

Jeremiah 51:26

And they will not take from you even a stone for a corner nor a stone for foundations, but you will be desolate forever, declares the Lord.

Total desolation was not the condition of Babylon after Cyrus took the city. He left it virtually intact. Therefore, this must refer to a future destruction of Babylon.

Summary of Jeremiah 50-51 – There are several yet unfulfilled elements of this prophecy – elements that will be fulfilled in a future destruction of Babylon and that were not fulfilled in the fall of historic Babylon. The importance of examining Jeremiah 50-51 is to document the Scriptural basis and consistency with our interpretation of Revelation 17-18 where we will see a future Babylon destroyed in final fulfillment of these prophecies.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE “BEAST” OF REVELATION 17 & 18 TO HEBREW PROPHECY

In order to understand the “beast” mentioned in Revelation 17 & 18, we must relate our passage to two other historical passages in Hebrew Scripture. In both Revelation 13:1 and 17:3, we are provided parallel descriptions of the “beast” of the future Tribulation period – a vision of a creature with “seven heads and ten horns.” Revelation 13:1 includes the additional note that there are “ten crowns” and Revelation 17:3 indicates that these are “ten kings.”

In Daniel’s interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, the fourth empire that is depicted by the legs of iron in the statue (Dan 2:33a, 40) is the then-future Roman Empire. The fifth empire that is depicted by the feet (with ten toes) made of iron and clay (Dan 2:33b, 41) is interpreted as a yet future empire – an empire that we associate with the last days of the Age of Israel or the Tribulation.

Later, as recorded in Daniel 7, Daniel has a dream of four beasts rising out of the sea which represent four different empires. The fourth beast (Dan 7:7-8) is described as having iron teeth and having ten horns. In this vision, another little horn emerges and rips three of the ten horns from their roots. The “little horn” is described as having eyes like a man and a mouth that

spoke pompous words. In Daniel 7:11, the beast is destroyed and cast into the burning flame. In verses 21-27, the little horn rises after the ten horns and rules for three and ½ years.

The “beast” that John describes in his vision of Revelation 17 & 18 is none other than the beast that Daniel’s vision reveals in Daniel 7 and which is also revealed in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of Daniel 2.

So, from these passages, we see that there is a strong Scriptural correlation between the Babylon of Nimrod with its anti-Christ orientation, the Babylon of prophecy (Jer 50-51), and the idolatry of the Tribulation period that will be used for a while by the “beast” to accomplish Satan’s strategy of attempting to thwart the plan of God. We shall examine Revelation 17 specifically in the next session.

APPENDIX – ALEXANDAR HISLOP

The following information was extracted from Wikipedia for information purposes only and in support of footnote 3 above. I do not consider Wikipedia to be an authoritative source – only a helpful reference. For more information, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_Hislop .

Alexander Hislop (Born at [Duns, Berwickshire, 1807](#); died [Arbroath, 13 March 1865](#)) was a [Free Church of Scotland minister](#) famous for his outspoken criticisms of the [Roman Catholic Church](#). He was the son of Stephen Hislop (died 1837), a mason by occupation and an elder of the [Relief Church](#). Alexander’s brother was also named Stephen Hislop (lived 1817–1863) and became well known in his time as a missionary to India and a naturalist.

Alexander was for a time parish schoolmaster of [Wick, Caithness](#). In 1831 he married Jane Pearson. He was for a time editor of the *Scottish Guardian* newspaper. As a [probationer](#) he joined the [Free Church of Scotland](#) at the [Disruption of 1843](#). He was ordained in 1844 at the East Free Church, [Arbroath](#), where he became senior minister in [1864](#). He died of a paralytic stroke the next year after being ill for about two years.

He wrote several books, his most famous being [The Two Babylons: Papal worship Revealed to be the worship of Nimrod and His wife](#).

Main article: [The Two Babylons](#)

This book was initially published in [1853](#) as a [pamphlet](#), then greatly revised and expanded and released as a book in [1858](#).

He claimed the Roman Catholic Church was a Babylonian [mystery cult](#), and pagan, whereas Protestants worshipped the true [Jesus](#) and the true [God](#). He contended that Roman Catholic religious practices are actually pagan practices grafted onto true [Christianity](#) during the reign of [Constantine](#). At this point, he alleged, the merger between the Roman state religion and its adoration of the mother and child was transferred to Christianity, merging Christian characters with pagan mythology. The Goddess was renamed [Mary](#), and Jesus was the renamed [Jupiter-Puer](#), or "Jupiter the Boy".

Hislop’s theory was that the goddess, in Rome called [Venus](#) or [Fortuna](#), was the Roman name of the more ancient Babylonian cult of [Ishtar](#), whose origins began with a blonde-haired and blue-eyed woman named [Semiramis](#).

According to Hislop, Semiramis was an exceedingly beautiful woman, who gave birth to a son named [Tammuz](#), was instrumental as the queen, and wife of [Nimrod](#) the founder of [Babylon](#), and its religion, complete with a pseudo-[Virgin Birth](#). This he called a foreshadowing of the birth of

Christ, prompted by Satan. Later, Nimrod was killed, and Semiramis, pregnant with his child, claimed the child was Nimrod reborn.

Hislop claimed that the cult and worship of Semiramis spread globally, her name changing with the culture. In Egypt she was [Isis](#), in Greece and Rome she was called Venus, [Diana](#), [Athena](#), and a host of other names, but was always prayed to and central to the faith which was based on Babylonian mystery religion.

Then, according to Hislop, Constantine, though claiming to convert to Christianity, remained pagan but renamed the gods and goddesses with Christian names to merge the two faiths for his political advantage, under Satan's guidance.

The book has been severely criticized by many of being insidiously hateful, and in much of it supporting evidence being found in ante-nicene testimonies, as well as Josephus, and other ancient verifications as some existing evidence: for instance, the Roman state religion before Christianity did worship a central Mother Goddess, Venus and Cupid. Yet many women named Semiramis lived centuries after Nimrod, and not all could be the famed original, and some legend seems to mix them. Hislop also makes some questionable linguistic connections and fanciful word plays, e.g. the letters IHS on [hosts](#) in [Catholic Holy Communion](#) are alleged to stand for Egyptian deities [Isis](#), [Horus](#) and [Seth](#), but in reality they are an [abbreviation](#) for Ihsous, the Latin spelling of Jesus's name in Greek (Ἰησοῦς), although popularly, they stand for the Latin *Iesus Hominum Salvator* meaning [Jesus](#), Savior of Mankind.

Despite this, and the fact that his book, if proven true, would discredit Christian traditions as a whole, since the concepts that it attacks in Roman Catholicism are shared uniformly by [Eastern Christianity](#) and by some Protestants, this book was, and still remains in some circles, a staple of [anti-Catholic](#) polemic. Hislop is a favorite source of [Jack Chick](#), who published reprints of his book, and [Dave Hunt](#), who on occasion alludes to his work. While strong criticisms of this book have been published, it is still considered by many as a definitive work of Protestant Christian [apologetics](#).