

THE MYSTERY WOMAN OF BABYLON
REV. 17:1-6

Introduction:

- A. This vision is a vision of a woman on a beast.
 - 1. v3, "And I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast."
 - 2. "and the woman was arrayed in purple." v4

- B. This is the second vision of a woman.
 - 1. The woman with a child. v12:1-2.
 - 2. The scarlet woman. v3,4.

- C. These women bear a distinct contrast.
 - 1. One is the Mother of a man-child. "clothed in heaven"
 - 2. One is the mother of harlots and abominations. "made from earth and sea."

- I. AN INVITATION TO SEE GOD'S JUDGMENT OF RELIGIOUS BABYLON.
v1,2
 - A. "And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me saying unto me, come thither."
 - 1. One of the seven "bowi" angels.
 - 2. talked = laleo - to speak, hold discourse.

 - B. "I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters."
 - 1. judgment = Krima - sentence, not trial.
 - 2. great whore = megales - great; whore = pornos - harlot.
 - 3. many waters = many people. v15

 - C. "with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication."

1. kings of the earth.
 - a. fornication = porneuo - to engage in immoral acts, to engage in unlawful sex. [symbolic]
2. The inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk.
 - a. inhabitants = katoikeo - to dwell in.
 - b. drunk = methuo - to be drunk.
 - c. fornication = porneia = immorality.
3. The product of her fornication has caused the inhabitants of the earth to be intoxicated.

II. THE VISION OF THE SCARLET CLAD WOMEN. V3-5

- A. "So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness
 1. carried = apophero - to carry away.
 2. wilderness = eremos - lonely, desolate.
- B. "and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns."
 1. scarlet = kokkinos - crimson, The Roman army wore uniforms of this color.
 2. beast = therion - wild animal, beast.
 3. being filled with names of blasphemy, a veritable treasure chest of evil, an example of every form of blasphemy. An encyclopedia of evil.
- C. v4, "And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls."
 1. arrayed = peribalio - to cast about.
 2. purple = porphurans - purple - royalty.
 3. scarlet = kokkinon - magnificence.
 4. decked = chrusoo - to guild, to inlay with gold.
- D. "having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornications."

1. abominations = bdelugma - that which stinks, odor of human vomit, The word is used in the LXX of the moral and ceremonial impurity connected with idolatrous practices.
 2. filthiness = akathartos - impure, unclean.
- E. v5, "and upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery Babylon, The Great, The mother of harlots and abominations of the earth."
1. mystery = musterion = a secret, a fact, or facts that must be revealed.
 2. Babylon the great.
 - a. excerpt from "THE TWO BABYLONS."
 - b. These circumstances of idol worship did not slowly evolve, they were instituted in the days of Nimrod.
 - c. Gen. 10:8-10; 11:2-4; I Kings 11:5-8.
 3. The mother of harlots and abominations of the earth
 - a. Rom. 1:21-32.
 - b. mother = meter - a mother.
 - c. harlots = porneia - fornication, the act.
 - d. abominations = bdelussomai - to turn away through loathing or disgust.
 4. This is more than Romanism, it is the entire system of false religion, from Nimrod to the Roman Catholic Church and the daughters of Catholicism. It is any and all forms of flesh deification and will-worship.
 - a. Abraham's family, Joshua 24:2-3.

III. JOHN, WONDER OF WONDERS. v6

- A. "And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus."
1. drunken = methuo - to be drunken with wine, to enter into the state of drunkenness.
 2. saints = hagios - holy, sacred.

3. martyrs = martus - one who bears witness to Jesus and bears it unto death.

B. "and when I saw her I wondered with great admiration."

1. saw = idou - behold! see!

2. wondered = thaumazo - to wonder, marvel, to be astonished, amazed, to wonder at.

3. admiration = thaumazo - (see above #2)

C. Why was John so filled with awe?

1. He saw power and glory.

2. He saw magnitude.

3. He saw change.

a. John knew the church, poor, hunted, hounded, and despised. John sees this fruition of slow apostasy, rich, powerful, controlling governments, kings, thrones, scarlet, gold, whipping legislatures into line.

b. Is this the fruit of our labors?

4. He saw the tares!

THE REIGN OF THE SCARLET WOMAN "The Two Babylons."

One of the most amazing of all of the books that have ever come into my hands is the one entitled *The Two Babylons*, by the great British author, Alexander Hislop. He traces the development of this Mystery Babylon, the idolatry of Babylon, through the years and the centuries to this present day. Nimrod's wife (Nimrod who founded Babel and the Kingdom of Babylon) was named Semiramis. In Assyria and Nineveh she was called Ishtar. In the Phoenician pantheon she was called Ashteroth or Astarte. In Egypt she was called Isis. Among the Greeks she was called Aphrodite. Among the Latins, the Romans, she was called Venus. She became the first high priestess of an idolatrous system. In answer to the promise made to Eve that the seed of the woman would deliver the race, Semiramis, when she gave birth to a son, said he was miraculously conceived by a sunbeam, and she offered her son as the promised deliverer of the earth. His name was Tammuz. When he was grown, a wild boar slew him; but after forty days of the mother's weeping, he was raised from the dead. In this story of Semiramis and Tammuz, began the cult of worship of the mother and child that spread throughout the whole world. In Assyria she is called Ishtar and her son, still Tammuz. In Phoenicia she was called Astarte or Ashteroth, and her son, Baal or Tammuz. In Egypt she was called Isis, and her son was called Osiris or Horus. In Greece she was called Aphrodite, and her son was called Eros. Among the Romans she was called Venus, and her son was called Cupid.

The cult of worship of mother and child spread throughout the whole earth. She was worshiped by the offering of a wafer (a little cake) to her as the queen of heaven. And there were always forty days of Lent, of weeping over the destruction of Tammuz, before the feast of Ishtar, at which time his resurrection was celebrated. The sign of Tammuz was an Ishtar egg, a symbol of his resurrection to life. The secret of Babylonian mystery was to be found in priestly ablutions and in sacramental rites and rituals, in the dedication of virgins to the gods, in purgatorial fires, and in a thousand other things that are familiar to us today.

The prophets bitterly inveigh against that mother and child cult. In chapter 44 of Jeremiah, Jeremiah describes the idol worshipers among the children of Israel, who burn incense to the queen of heaven and who offer cakes (little wafers) in her name. In chapter 8 of Ezekiel, God takes the prophet and shows him the inner life of the people of the Lord who are not idolatrous.

"He said also to me, Turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these. Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the Lord's house which was toward the north; and, behold there sat women weeping for Tammuz." Ezekiel was beholding the forty days of Lent in which they afflicted themselves and wept for Tammuz, the child that was slain by the wild boar. But after those forty days, in commemoration of the story of his being raised from the dead, the end of weeping was celebrated with the feast of Ishtar, in which the people exchanged Ishtar eggs.

As we have observed that cult of the worship of mother and child spread throughout the whole world, from Babylon to Assyria, to Phoenicia, to Pergamos, and finally, to Rome itself. There the Roman Emperor was elected Pontifex Maximus, the high priest of all of the idolatrous systems of the Roman Empire. And when the Roman Emperor passed away, that title of high priest of the rites and mysteries of the cult of mother and child, the Babylonian mystery of idolatry, was assumed by the bishop of Rome.

There is no such thing in the Bible as the exaltation of a female deity, and least of all is there any hint or suggestion that Mary was other than what she is presented to be in the New Testament. The last time she is seen she is a humble, fellow-suppliant in the prayer meeting described in the first chapter of the book of Acts. After that she is never mentioned again, she is never seen again, she is never referred to again. This cult of the idolatrous worship of the mother and child is purely and simply, Babylonian idolatry. "And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon The Great, The Mother of Harlots [or idolatries] and Abominations of the Earth." How amazing that out of Babylon, according to the Word of God, should arise those idolatrous systems that would spread over the entire face of the civilized world! And when John saw it, he said: "Ethaumasa thauma mega," that is, "and I wondered with a great wonder."

THE TWO WOMEN OF REVELATION, A CONTRAST. Seiss, "The Apocalypse, Zondervan.

The first thing which strikes me in the study of this subject, is one which I have nowhere seen duly notice, namely: the evident correlation and contrast between the Woman here pictured and another Woman described in the twelfth chapter. There, "a great sign was seen in the heaven, a Woman;" here, it is remarked, "he bore me away in spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a Woman." Both these women are mothers; the first "brought forth a son, a male (neuter, embracing either sex) who is to rule all the nations;" the second "is the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth." Both are splendidly dressed; the first is "clothed with the sun." Her raiment is light from heaven. The second is "clothed in purple, and scarlet, decked with gold, and precious stone, and pearls." All her ornaments are from below, made up of things out of the earth and the sea. Both are very influential in their position; the first has "the moon," the empress of night, the powers of darkness, "under her feet;" the second "hath rule, or Kingdom, upon the kings of the earth." Both are sufferers; against the first is the Dragon, who stands watching to devour her child, and persecutes and pursues her, and drives her into the wilderness, and send out a river to overwhelm her, and is at war with all her seed that he can find; against the second are the ten kings, who ultimately hate her, and make her desolate and naked, and eat her flesh, and burn her with fire, whilst God in His strength judgeth her, and visits her with plague, death, and utter destruction. Both are very conspicuous, and fill a large space in the history of the world, and in all the administrations of divine providence and judgment. That they are counterparts of each other there can hardly be a reasonable doubt. The one is a pure woman, the other is a harlot. The first is hated by the powers on earth, the second is loved, flattered, and caressed by them. Where the one has sway, things are heavenly; where the other lives, it is "wilderness." The one produces masculine nobility, which is ultimately caught away to God and to His throne; the other produces effeminate impurity, which calls down the fierceness of the divine wrath. The one is sustained and helped by celestial wings; the other is supported and carried by the Dragon power, - the Beast with the seven heads and ten horns. The one has a crown of twelve stars, wearing the patriarchs and apostles as her royal diadem; the other has upon her forehead the name of the greatest destroyer and oppressor of the holy people, and is drunken with "the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all that have been slain upon the earth." The one finally comes out in a heavenly city, the New Jerusalem, made up of imperishable jewels, and arrayed in all the glory of God and the Lamb; the other finally comes out in a city of this world's superlative admiration, which suddenly goes down forever under the intense wrath of Heaven, and becomes the habitation of demons, and a hold of every unclean spirit.

These two women, thus related, and set over one against the other as opposites and rivals, must necessarily be interpreted in the same way. As Antichrist corresponds to Christ as a rival and antagonist of Christ, so Great Babylon corresponds to the Woman that bears the Man-child as her rival and antagonist.