

Surprising Facts Series 2

22. What Is Babylon the Great?

Jesus' message about Babylon is shocking and sobering. He clearly states that mystic Babylon is fallen and commands His people to come out of her or else perish. These solemn words are the second part of His three-point final message of hope for the people of planet Earth (Revelation 14:8; 18:2-5). The tragedy is that many are in Babylon but don't know it. This lesson positively identifies Babylon. What could be more important?

1. How does Jesus symbolize Babylon in the book of Revelation?

"I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters." "And I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." Revelation 17:1, 3-5.

Answer: In Revelation 17:1-6, Jesus symbolizes Babylon as a harlot dressed in red and purple. She is seated upon a scarlet-colored beast, which has seven heads and 10 horns and sits on many waters. In the book of Revelation, God calls this woman "Babylon."

2. Who is the symbolic pure woman of Revelation chapter 12?

Answer: A pure woman, clothed with the sun, is depicted in Revelation 12:1-6. We learned that this pure woman symbolizes God's pure church which is faithful to her Lover, Jesus. We will study Revelation chapter 12 in depth in our next lesson.

3. What does a harlot represent in Bible prophecy?

"Cause Jerusalem to know her abominations." "Thou didst trust in thine own beauty, and playedst the harlot." Ezekiel 16:2,15.

Answer: As a pure woman symbolizes a pure church which is faithful to Jesus, so an impure woman represents an impure, or fallen, church which is unfaithful to Jesus. **"Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." James 4:4.**

4. Can we identify the harlot (church) that is called "Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots" in Revelation chapter 17?

Answer: Yes, it is widely known that there is only one church which claims to be the mother church, the great Roman Catholic Church. A prominent Catholic priest, John A. O'Brien, said: "That observance [Sundaykeeping] remains as a reminder of the Mother Church from which the non-Catholic sects broke away." John A. O'Brien, *The Faith of Millions* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 1974), p. 401. The points used in Revelation 17 to describe mother Babylon and the beast she rides clearly fit the papacy:

A. She persecuted the saints (verse 6).

B. She was dressed in purple and scarlet (verse 4). The popes often wear the royal color of purple at important functions, and red is the color of the robes of Catholic cardinals.

C. The seven heads of the beast (verse 3) upon which the woman is seated are seven mountains (verse 9). It is well known that Rome, the world headquarters of the papacy, is built upon seven hills or mountains.

D. The beast is guilty of blasphemy (verse 3), a point which also clearly fits the papacy.

E. She ruled "over the kings of the earth." Verse 18. Alexander Flick says that by the 13th century, the pope was "at least in theory and claim ... the ruler of the whole world in temporal and spiritual affairs." *The Rise of the Mediaeval Church* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1959), pp. 575, 576. This point could fit no other earthly kingdom or government. The papacy is described in Revelation 17 too clearly for doubt.

Note: Many leaders of the Reformation (Huss, Wycliffe, Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, Melanchthon, Cranmer, Tyndale, Latimer, Ridley, and others) taught that the papacy is the power here involved." 'George Eldon Ladd, *The Blessed Hope* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956), pp. 32-34.

5. What is the literal meaning of the word Babylon, and what is its origin?

"Let us build ... a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven." "And the Lord said ... let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." "Therefore is the name of it called Babel ["confusion," margin]; because the Lord did there confound the language." Genesis 11:4, 6, 7, 9.

Answer: The words "Babel" and "Babylon" mean "confusion." The name Babylon originated at the Tower of Babel, which was erected after the Flood by defiant pagans who hoped to build it so high that no floodwaters could ever cover it (verse 4). But the Lord confounded their languages, and the resultant confusion was so great they were forced to halt construction. They then called the tower "Babel" (Babylon), or "confusion."

Later, in Old Testament days, a worldwide pagan kingdom named Babylon arose which was an enemy of God's people, Israel. It embodied rebellion, disobedience, persecution of God's people, pride, and idolatry (Jeremiah 39:6, 7; 50:29, 31-33; 51:24, 34, 47; Daniel 3 and 5). In fact, in Isaiah 14 God uses Babylon as a symbol of Satan himself because Babylon was so hostile and devastating to God's work and His people. In the New Testament book of Revelation, the term "Babylon" is used to signify a religious kingdom that is an enemy of God's spiritual Israel, His church. **"And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." "And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath." Revelation 14:8; 16:19.**

6. Who are the harlot daughters of the mother Babylon described in Revelation 17:5?

Answer: They are some of the churches which originally protested the false teachings of mother Babylon and left her during the great Protestant Reformation. But, later, they began to mimic the principles and actions of the mother and thus became fallen themselves. No woman is born a harlot. Neither were the symbolic Protestant daughter churches born fallen. Any church or organization that teaches and follows Babylon's false doctrines and practices could become a fallen church or daughter. So Babylon is a family name which embraces both the mother church and those of her daughters, who

are also fallen. The word "Babylon" dates back to the Tower of Babel. It means "confusion." Churches that adopt the false teachings of mother Babylon become "Babylon" themselves.

7. In Revelation 17, why is mother Babylon pictured as riding upon the beast? What does the beast represent?

Answer: In Revelation 13:1-10, Jesus portrays the papacy as a combination of church and state. In Revelation chapter 17, Jesus depicts the church (the harlot) and state (the beast) as separate entities, though related. The woman is astride the beast, which signifies that the church is in control of the state, or government. Protestantism will join the papacy as allies in the final war against God and His followers. The beast of Revelation 17 represents the civil government.

8. What other powers unite with the papacy in fulfilling end-time events?

"And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." Revelation 16:13,14.

Answer: The dragon of Revelation 12:3, 4 and the false prophet of Revelation 13:11-14; 19:20 form an alliance with the beast of Revelation 13:1-10, or the papacy.

A. The dragon of Revelation chapter 12 represents Satan working through pagan Rome. In these last days it includes non-Christian religions such as Buddhism, Shintoism, Hinduism, the New Age, secular humanism, etc.

B. The false prophet represents apostate Protestantism centered in America, which will take the lead in urging and influencing worldwide worship of the beast.

C. The beast is the papacy allied with the civil powers.

D. These three powers: Non-Christian religions and governments, Roman Catholicism, and apostate Protestantism will become allies in Armageddon, the final war against God, His law, and His loyal followers. This coalition is called "Babylon the great" by Jesus in Revelation 18:2.

9. How will organizations with such diverse backgrounds be able to effectively unite?

"These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast." Revelation 17:13.

Answer: Revelation 16:13, 14 says "unclean spirits like frogs" which are "spirits of devils" will unite them through the miracles they will work. Spiritism; the belief that the dead are alive and can contact the living, will be the belief which will weld all together. Satan and his angels, posing as the spirits of dead loved ones, prophets of old, angels of heaven (2 Corinthians 11:13, 14), and even Christ Himself (Matthew 24:24) will convince the world that their cause is guided from heaven itself. Incidentally, all three entities believe that the dead are alive:

A. Catholicism prays to Mary and other dead saints and believes these saints bless their followers with miracles.

B. Non-Christian religions are virtually all based on belief in and worship of spirits of the dead. The New Age stresses "channeling" supposed talking to the spirits of the dead.

C. Apostate Protestantism believes that the dead are not dead but, rather, alive in heaven or hell. Thus

they are highly susceptible to deception by demons who pose as spirits of the dead. The powerful miracles of Satan and his angels (posing as spirits of the dead) will unite the world in their support of the beast.

10. For what sins does God accuse Babylon?

A. **"Babylon the great is fallen." Revelation 18:2.**

Answer: To fall means to turn away from Bible truth and true worship of the true God (2 Peter 3:17). Babylon falls because she turns from Bible truth.

B. **"And is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit." "By thy sorceries were all nations deceived." Revelation 18:2, 23.**

Answer: Here God is charging Babylon for (1) conferring personally with devils by inviting evil spirits into its midst through spiritism, and (2) for deceiving virtually the entire world through lying, demonic spirits.

C. **"The inhabitants of the earth have been "made drunk" from the wine of abomination and fornication found in her cup (Revelation 11:2, 4; 18:3).**

Answer: The word "abomination" in the Bible symbolizes something morally disgusting to God. Babylon's wine, which contains false teachings, disorients and benumbs those who drink it and makes them spiritually drunk.

D. **"The kings of the earth have committed fornication with her." Revelation 18:3.**

Answer: The church is the bride of Christ (Revelation 19:7, 8) and must love and be loyal only to Him, which Jesus said means keeping His commandments (John 14:15). The papacy is censured here for turning away from her husband, Jesus (James 4:4), and forming illicit relationships with civil governments (union of church and state) for her support.

E. **Trafficking in the "souls of men" "And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men." Revelation 18:13.**

Answer: God here denounces Babylon for treating people as merchandise rather than as precious children of God.

11. What are some of the false teachings contained in Babylon's wine that make people spiritually drunk and confused?

Answer: Amazingly, some of the most prominent doctrines of Protestantism today are not found in the Bible at all. They have been brought into the Protestant churches by the mother church of Rome, who received them from paganism. A few of these false teachings are that:

A. The law of God has been amended or repealed. God's law can never be changed or repealed (Luke 16:17).

B. The soul is immortal. The Bible mentions "soul" and "spirit" 1,700 times. Not once is either referred to as immortal. People are mortal (Job 4:17), and none receive immortality until Jesus' second advent (1 Corinthians 15:51-54).

C. Sinners burn eternally in hell. The Bible teaches that sinners will be completely consumed (put out of

existence), both soul and body, in the fire (Matthew 10:28). An eternal hell of torment is not taught in the Bible.

D. Baptism by immersion is not necessary. Baptism by immersion is the only baptism recognized by Scripture.

E. Sunday is God's holy day. The Bible teaches, without question, that God's holy day is the seventh-day Sabbath-Saturday.

Note: These false teachings, once believed, tend to bring "confusion" (which is what the term "Babylon" literally means) and make understanding Scripture much more difficult. Receiving false doctrine brings spiritual drunkenness, which makes comprehending truth extremely difficult.

A Solemn Thought: It's sobering to think that some might unknowingly be drinking Babylon's wine. Perhaps this is all new to you. If so, please ask God to guide you (Matthew 7:7). Then search the Scriptures to see if these things are so (Acts 17:11). Promise that you will follow where Jesus leads, and He will not permit you to end up in error. **"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." John 7:17. "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32.**

12. Who will be on the Lord's side in the battle of Armageddon?

Answer: In this final battle, the angels of heaven (Hebrews 1:13, 14; Matthew 13:41, 42) and God's people, the remnant (Revelation 12:17) will be allied with Jesus, who leads the armies of heaven (Revelation 19:11-16) against Satan and his supporters. The angels of heaven will be on the side of God's people in earth's final battle.

God's remnant is composed of those who refuse the falsehoods of Babylon. They are known for: (1) their love of Jesus (1 John 5:2, 3), (2) their loyalty to and faith in Him (Revelation 14:12), and (3) their firm obedience to His Word and commandments (Revelation 12:17; John 8:31, 32).

13. What will be Satan's strategy in this final conflict between God's truth and Satan's lies?

Answer: Though Satan hates God and His Son, he rarely admits it openly. In fact, he and his demons will pose as holy angels and as devoted Christian clergymen (2 Corinthians 11:13-15). What he presents as evidence for his side will seem so righteous, spiritual, and Jesus-like that nearly everybody on earth will be deceived and follow him (Matthew 24:24). He will doubtless use the Bible, as he did when tempting Jesus in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1, 11). Satan's logic is so persuasive that it deceived one-third of the angels of heaven, Adam and Eve, and (at the time of the Flood) everybody on earth except eight people. In the end time, Satan will deceive all who do not demand clear Scripture proof for every Bible doctrine. God's Word exposes Satan's strategies.

14. What is God's counter-strategy?

"To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isaiah 8:20.

Answer: God always counters Satan's lies with Bible truth. When tempted by Satan in the wilderness, Jesus repeatedly quoted Scripture (Matthew 4:1-11). Through His remnant people, God will tell the truth about the unbiblical nature of Babylon the great. He will make it clear that Babylon is presenting a false gospel (Galatians 1:8-12) which has opened the door wide for billions to be deceived and lost. God's counter-movement is outlined in the great three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-14, which

we are examining. These three fantastic messages expose and warn against Satan's lies and counterfeits and call people to worship God and obey Him, not only in spirit but in Bible truth as well.

15. Will God's end-time messages of warning and hope be effective?

"After these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory." Revelation 18:1.

Answer: In Scripture, angels represent messengers or messages (Hebrews 1:13, 14). God's end-time appeal is symbolized by a mighty angel whose power is so great that the entire world is lightened with God's truth and glory. This final, God-given message will go to the inhabitants of the entire world (Revelation 14:6; Mark 16:15; Matthew 24:14). God's end-time message will bring glorious truth and light to every person on earth.

16. What final, urgent appeal will Jesus make to those who are in Babylon?

Answer: He will say: **"Come out of her [Babylon], my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." Revelation 18:4, 5.**

Please notice that Jesus refers to many people in Babylon as "my people." There are millions of sincere Christians in Babylon who have not yet heard this urgent warning message. These people love the Lord supremely, and Jesus says they are His children.

17. How will Jesus' people, who are in Babylon, respond when they hear His appeal to come out?

Answer: Jesus gives the answer. **"Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." John 10:16, 27.**

Jesus recognizes His children who are in Babylon. Further, He promises to call them out of Babylon before it is destroyed. And, most glorious of all, Jesus promises that His people who are yet in Babylon will hear and recognize His voice and come out to safety. When Jesus' end-time appeal is given to all the world, His true people will come out of Babylon and follow Him.

18. If you are in Babylon, are you willing to heed Jesus' urgent appeal to come out of her?

Your Answer: _____

Your Thought Questions Answered:

1. Shouldn't I remain in Babylon and try to reform her instead of coming out?

ANSWER: No. Jesus says Babylon is going to be destroyed, not reformed. She will become hopelessly drunk with her wine (identified as false doctrine in Revelation 18:5, 6). It is for this reason that He calls His people out (Revelation 18:4).

2 Who are the kings of the east of Revelation 16:12?

ANSWER: The kings of the east are the Kings (Father and Son) of heaven. They are called kings of the east because that is the direction from which heavenly beings approach the earth. Note the following, for example:

A. Jesus' second coming will be from the east (Matthew 24:27).

- B. God's glory comes from the east (Ezekiel 43:2).
- C. Revelation's sealing angel comes from the east (Revelation 7:2).
- D. The sun, symbolizing Jesus, rises in the east (Malachi 4:2).

3. Does the warning about the fall of Babylon imply that Babylon has not always been fallen?

ANSWER: Yes, it does. Many of the churches comprising Babylon have stood strong, tall, and loyal to Jesus in the past. The founders were outstanding men of God who were searching the Bible diligently to discover all of its truth. Not all churches are fallen today. However, any church that teaches mother Babylon's false doctrines and follows her practices could become one of her fallen daughters.

4. When called out of Babylon, where should a Christian go?

ANSWER: Find the people who keep God's commandments, have the faith of Jesus, and are preaching the three angels' messages worldwide, and join them (Revelation 14:6-12).

5. What do the 10 kings of Revelation 17:12-16 represent?

ANSWER: The 10 kings symbolize the nations of the world as organized into a 'New World Order' just before the end of time. It is related to the United Nations, which is part of the 'dragon power'. These kings are not the same as the horns of the terrible beast in Daniel 7, where three were plucked up. But they are the same as the toes of the image in Daniel 2, because the text says 'they have received no kingdom as yet', also they rule one kingdom not ten. This power has divided the world into 10 sections, with a ruler over each section. The Horns in Daniel 7 ruled ten kingdoms. And it is at the time of these ten 'toe kings' we see this: **"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."** Daniel 2:44.

Notice the text carefully. **"And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast."** Also later they will actually attack Rome. **"And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire."** Revelation 17:12, 13, 16

6. What does the symbolism of 'frogs', mean in Revelation 16:13,14?

ANSWER: 'Frogs' here has reference to the plagues of Egypt where frogs swarmed over the land and were everywhere! Interesting that the 'magicians' were able to produce frogs but could not get rid of them! This shows that miracles, including the gift of tongues, prove only one thing, supernatural power. But the Bible informs us that supernatural power can be from either God or Satan. It further explains that Satan, posing as an angel of light from heaven (2 Corinthians 11:13-15), will utilize supernatural miracles so effectively that almost the entire world will be deceived and follow him. (Revelation 13:3). Some suggest that the false 'gift of tongues' is used by these frogs to deceive also.

We Must Test the Spirits: The Bible warns that we must test the spirits (1 John 4:1). If they do not agree with the Bible, they are counterfeits (Isaiah 8:19, 20). Further, the true gifts of the Holy Spirit are never given to anyone who deliberately and knowingly disobeys God (Acts 5:32). There is a true gift of tongues. It is a miraculous enabling to fluently speak foreign languages previously unlearned and unknown by the speaker (Acts 2:4-12). God uses this gift when needed to present His end-time message to those of other languages. It was needed at Pentecost because 17 language groups were in

the crowd and His disciples probably knew only one language.

7. Will the New Age movement play a major role in the final end-time conflict between good and evil?

ANSWER: Without a doubt! It is strongly involved with the occult, psychic phenomena, and spiritism. Spiritism will certainly be a major factor in the closing drama of earth. Combined with the power of the New World Order and allied with the end-time worldwide coalition of churches, spiritism will sweep the globe. The New Age belief in spirit communication and reincarnation is simply old-time paganism in new garb. Its belief in an immortal, undying soul that can communicate with earth-people is the same old falsehood Satan told Eve in Eden: **"Ye shall not surely die." Genesis 3:4.**

8. It's obvious that God reveals activities of the Antichrist or papacy in Daniel chapter 7 and Revelation chapters 13, 17, and 18. Is the Antichrist mentioned elsewhere in Scripture?

ANSWER: Yes, the beast or Antichrist power (or its activities) are referred to in at least nine prophecies of the Old and New Testaments: Daniel 7; Daniel chapters 8, 9; Daniel 11; Revelation 12; Revelation 13; Revelation 16; Revelation 17; Revelation 18; and Revelation 19. Surely, when God stresses the same power nine different times, He wants us to listen.

9. Did Satan's kingdom called "Babylon" originate at the Tower of Babel?

ANSWER: No, it originated when Satan rebelled against God in heaven. In fact, the prophet Isaiah symbolizes Lucifer at the time of his fall from heaven as the king of Babylon (Isaiah 14:4, 12-15). God has looked upon Satan's kingdom as Babylon from the very beginning of sin. Satan's avowed aim is to conquer God, wipe out God's kingdom, and establish his own rebellious kingdom of Babylon universe-wide. Jesus said there are only two sides. **"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Matthew 7:13, 14.** Every soul on earth will finally line up on the side of either Jesus or Babylon. It is a matter of life and death. Those who serve and support Jesus will be saved in His heavenly kingdom. Those who support Babylon will be destroyed by fire. And there is very little time left for decision making. This is why heeding Jesus' end-time warning against Babylon is so extremely crucial and urgent.

10. In Revelation 16:12, what is meant by the waters of the Euphrates River being dried up to prepare the way for the kings of the east?

ANSWER: Before the ancient kingdom of Babylon was captured by the Median general Darius, the water of the river Euphrates, which passed underneath the walls of the city, was diverted into a man-made lake bed. This diversion permitted Darius' army to capture the city at night by entering from underneath the walls through the empty riverbed. In the prophecies of Revelation, "water" symbolizes people (Revelation 17:15). Thus, the waters of the river Euphrates refer to the followers of "Babylon the great," whose support dries up when they turn against Babylon with intent to destroy her (Revelation 17:16). This drying up of support for "Babylon the great" assures victory for the kings of the east, the heavenly Father and Son.

Summary Sheet. Place a check beside the correct answers.

1. What is the meaning of the word "Babylon"?

Confusion.

Rebellion.

Deceiver.

2. Who does mother Babylon symbolize in Bible prophecy?

The United States.

The papacy.

Mary, the mother of Jesus.

3. Who are the daughters of mother Babylon?

New Testament ladies Priscilla, Elizabeth, and Dorcas.

The queens of Europe.

Churches that follow mother Babylon's false doctrines and practices.

4. What is symbolized by mother Babylon sitting upon the scarlet beast?

The church in control of the state, which closely supports it.

Women make good animal trainers.

Women should ride and not walk.

5. What false doctrines of Babylon will make people spiritually confused?

Sanctity of marriage.

Death is a sleep.

Sinners burn eternally in hell.

Sunday as God's holy day.

Spirits, or souls, are immortal.

Baptism by immersion.

Law of God repealed or amended.

6. "Babylon is fallen" means that:

An angel fell from heaven.

Babylon has been hit by an earthquake.

The mother church and other churches who embrace her false teachings have fallen away from Bible truth and true worship of the true God.

7. Babylon will decide to kill sincere Christians because:

They won't cooperate in the worldwide false revival.

The world is overpopulated.

They won't accept Sunday, the counterfeit holy day.

Christians won't fight back.

They refuse the mark of the beast.

Babylon needs their homes and automobiles.

8. Babylon is a family name that includes nearly all religions and churches.

Yes. No.

9. Who really calls people out of Babylon?

Angels.

The 10 kings.

Lucifer.

Jesus.

10. Wouldn't it be better to try to convert a fallen church rather than come out?

Yes. No.

11. When Jesus calls His people out of Babylon, will they come out?

Yes. No.

12. What does it mean to be drunk on Babylon's wine?

To be an alcoholic.

To join her in partying.

To be physically ill.

To be confused by her false doctrines.

13. What three powers unite to fight against Jesus and His people in the end time?

Non-Christian religions.

Apostate Protestantism.

Spacemen.

The papacy.

14. Many people are in Babylon but do not know it.

Yes. No.

15. If you are in Babylon, are you willing to heed Jesus' urgent appeal to come out of her?

Yes. No.