



Article 4: BABYLON TODAY

THE PAGANISM & IDOLATRY OF BABYLON

If we are to clearly see the characteristics of Babylon and trace its present position in the world we need to understand the Babylonian empires of history.

THE FIRST BABYLONIAN EMPIRE:

The first Babylonian empire began soon after the world flood of Noah's time.

In the early generations after the flood of Noah's time, men would have remembered this judgement of YHWH. They would have taken very seriously the things Noah and his sons taught them. Particularly Noah's righteous son called Shem.

Then we read in Genesis 9:7 of the son of a man called Cush. His son was named Nimrod.

From what historical and archaeological records we have about Nimrod we can piece together a picture of what he was like. Nimrod set himself up against Noah's righteous son Shem. Little by little Nimrod's actions turned men's hearts away from YHWH and onto various religious practices which were not of YHWH.

Nimrod set up a religious system that was designed to bring men under his control. Nimrod himself was the high priest of this religious system and had many priests under his authority. The main elements of worship in this religion were the sun, water and earth.

This system was at first about worship of the snake, sun and fire. Later it also included worship of Dagon (later to be the god of the Philistine people) – a god of water and sea. It was from this water god that many pools, lakes and rivers were considered holy and that they had healing or purifying effects. Aspects of this worship can still be seen in some cultures even today.

The worship of fire came from the sun worship because the fire was considered to be the sun's presence on earth. Under Nimrod the sun became called 'Baal' which meant 'The Lord'. So men began to worship the creation instead of the creator.

It is claimed that these Babylonian (also called Chaldean) priests had many magic powers and could make lamps to be lit by themselves, make statues wink or cry or even rise off the ground. This priesthood believed in a three-person god and this was often symbolised by an equilateral triangle. People had to go through a confession time and take several oaths to belong to the priesthood. The circle was also a very important symbol and represented the sun.



As head of the Babylonian priesthood – Nimrod had the title **Pontifex**

Maximus. This title was only given to the highest priest of the Babylonian priesthood when it was operating.

In his position as king and ruler of Babylon he also had other titles such as:

Ninus

Bel or Belus = which meant Lord of Heaven

Molk – Geber = mighty king

Alorus = god of fire

Zoroasater = head of priests

According to scripture Nimrod began to be mighty on the earth. In Genesis 10:10 we are told Asshur went out and built the city of Nineveh. In the Babylonians (Chaldean) language Asshur means 'to make strong' and the name 'Nineveh' means 'the inhabitation of Ninus'.

The historian Justin wrote 'Ninus subdued all nations as far as Libya' which means his influence went as far as Egypt and North Africa.

All of these characteristics would have put Nimrod directly in conflict with Shem the righteous son of Noah. The book of Yasher gives some indication that Nimrod may have been killed by Shem.

When Nimrod died his Babylonian wife (Queen Semiramis) became ruler. She had a son which she claimed was Nimrod returned. The son was named Tammuz. In Babylon Semiramis became known as Rhea which means 'the queen of heaven' or 'the mediator'. She was also known as Semele which was Babylonian for 'The Image'.

She was often worshipped as a mother with a child on her knees or in her arms. Pictures of these two had sun-like halos drawn around their heads and sometimes light rays coming from their heads which connected them with the sun worship of Babylon.

Over many centuries this worship of Rhea (Semiramis) and Nimrod (or Tammuz) – the mother and child, was to spread through many different nations and through many different times. Some of these were:

In Egypt = Isis and Osiris were worshiped as mother and child of the sun just as in Babylon.

In India = as Isa an Iswara

In Asia = as Cybele and Deoius

In Greece = as Ceres and Plutus or Irene and Bacchus

In Rome = as Fortuna and Jupiter

In China = as Shing Moo the mother with child.

Similar pairs were also worshipped in Tibet, Nepal and Japan.

So this Babylonian empire and its religions influenced not only the Assyrian empire that came after it but also many empires to come later.

Semiramis herself became called Astarte, Aphrodite or Venus in many other cultures.



Babylon's religious system also had a god called NEBO who was supposed to come out of the earth. This name in the Babylonian religion means 'the prophet'. It was claimed that this god could tell fortunes and would use the stars to tell such fortunes.

This same god was seen later in other nations such as:

Egypt where it was called Nub or Num

Around the Italian area it was called Tages

In Persia (Iran & Iraq) it was called Mithra

In Rome it was called Numa

So some of the important characteristics of the first Babylonian Empire were:

1. They believed that what people did (as they were told by the priests) gave the people merit so they would be accepted by the particular god concerned.
2. They used purification by fire ceremonies along with child sacrifices.
3. Had an altar to the goddess Rhea which used small round thin wafers or cakes.
4. Had priestesses whose daily duty was to watch the sacred fire. These priestesses had to stay virgins.
5. Used certain pools, rivers and lakes as 'purification' waters.

This first Babylonian empire was destroyed when the people were given all different languages at the tower of Babel. Up till this time all men had only one language. Once these many languages happened at the tower of Babel – the people scattered. The Babylonian priesthood secrets moved to the nation of Assyria, then to Phoenicia and Northern Israel, and on to Egypt. Eventually the location of the city Pergamos (see Rev 2:13) was a place where many of these secrets were taught. This city later was to become part of the Roman Empire. This is why this place is called the 'seat of satan' by the disciple John in the book of Revelation.

This influence of all Babylon's ways have not only come into all empires and nations since the time of Babylon but have become part of many cultures even down to this day. Often we do not recognise it and often its influence remains hidden under the surface of cultures and religions of today. It is important to understand THAT IT STILL EXISTS!!

THE SECOND BABYLONIAN EMPIRE:

The city of Babylon had been ruled by Assyria for several 100 years. In 626BC the death of the last strong king of Assyria allowed king Nabopolassar of the city of Babylon to rebel against Assyria and set up the new Babylonian empire.

This new Babylonian empire set up most of the same ways of living that the first empire had established. One of the strongest parts of this culture was the original religious system



including the temple of Bel. Several of the kings of this second Babylonian empire are mentioned in scripture. Kings such as Nebuchadnezzar II.

This second Babylonian empire had to keep good relationship with the new empire of the Medes /Persia in the north. Eventually this empire of Babylon was taken over by this northern empire.

THE MODERN BABYLONIAN EMPIRE :

A short time after the Roman empire was established by defeating the Greek Empire, it inherited the city of Pergamos mentioned earlier. This meant that the Roman Emperor also inherited the title and position of **Pontifex Maximus.**

When the Roman Emperor called Constantine came to power he was being greatly troubled by the new believers of Yahshua in many places in his empire. He thought to solve this problem by creating a new 'universal' religion which everyone would be part of.

This religion was made by combining a mixture of the beliefs of the Netzarim (believers in Yahshua) and the beliefs of the sun worship system already present in Rome. This same sun worship religion had of course begun with Nimrod. By the time of the Roman empire this sun worship had spread through all nations of the earth.

The word 'universal' is also the meaning of the word 'Catholic'. So what was established by Constantine was a 'Universal' ie 'Catholic' religion of Rome. This became the Christian religion in its many forms and through all known countries today.

Many believe that Constantine converted to this 'Christian' religion, however history shows this was never the case. Constantine continued to be a 'sun worshipper' until his death.

The Bishop Iraneous who lived and wrote in 2AD wrote the following about the Babylonian religion and which also applies to the universal religion established by Rome.

'Error is never set forth in its naked deformity lest it being thus exposed it should be detected; but it is craftily decked out in attractive dress so as by its outward form to make it appear to the inexperienced, more truth than truth itself.'

Iraneous is saying here that things that are wrong are not shown for everyone to see clearly but are presented in such a way as to appear attractive and to make it appear to be the truth.

Scripture also speaks in a similar way about people who:

2Ti 3:5 *Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.*



The prophet Jeremiah later spoke about a 'cup' which was drunk by all the nations of the earth (Jer 51:7) which is again mentioned in Revelation (17:4; 18:3). This was the cup of the Babylonian empire.

We can see the religious importance of the Roman Emperor inheriting the title and position of **Pontifex Maximus** when we realise that this Roman Emperor became the leader of the hidden Babylonian religious system.

Today we can still see remnants of this Babylonian religion in the religious practices of many cultures or countries. Religions in such countries and areas such as Asia, India, Europe, America, the Pacific, China, Japan, Africa all show elements of the original Babylonian religion as well as some elements – although greatly distorted - of the true worship of YHWH given to Israel.

Even today we can still also see many practices in the many different denominations of the 'Universal' ie 'Christian' religion that still belong to the Babylonian system. While many denominations have moved away from some of these Babylonian practices they have not moved towards the true worship of YHWH as YHWH has shown Israel He should be worshipped.

Like the Babylonian system mankind still tries to worship their gods in a manner that man has decided was best. Yet YHWH shown Israel that He is the ONLY LIVING Elohim (god) and has given mankind the ONLY way to worship him.

As long as man worships idols as gods or makes up his own ways of worshipping YHWH then man will never know and come close to YHWH. The Babylonian system continues to stop man from becoming close to YHW even today.