
A City Called Confusion

HOW MUCH black ink on a bride's white dress is too much? How much anthrax powder in your oatmeal is too much? How many malignant cancer cells in your body is too many? Add the tiniest portion of something toxic, and water becomes deadly.

Mixing something good with something bad can be lethal. Could it be the same when truth is mixed with just a little error?

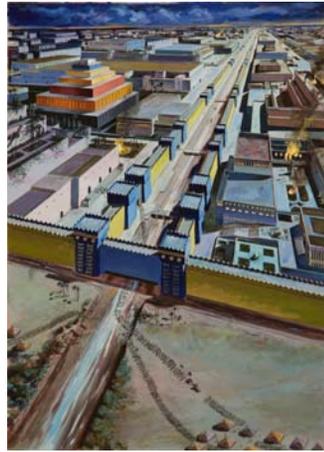
Thoughts to Remember:

- ♦ The book of Revelation unmasks Satan's final deceptions and reveals the plan of God. Revelation is a book of contrasts. Revelation 12 introduces two different women, symbols of the true church and the false church. "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars" (Revelation 12:1). A woman is the Bible's symbol for a church. This particular woman has not prostituted herself with other gods and false beliefs, but has remained loyal to God.

- ♦ "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication" (Revelation 17:1, 2). The contrast makes it clear this woman represents the false church. "Kings of the earth" refers to earthly leaders; she has not remained loyal to God alone. She has prostituted herself by allowing God's position to be taken by mere human beings and by partaking of their false beliefs.

- ♦ "And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (Revelation 17:5). Because of this, we refer to false belief systems as Babylon. The ancient word *babylon* means "confusion." This is what happens when false beliefs are mixed with truth.

- ♦ **First deception: The sole authority of God's word was replaced by the authority of human beings.** Ancient Babylonians worshiped the sun god. Their king's word was considered to come directly from the sun god, so the king had full religious authority. Further along, a historian has described the church of the Middle Ages: "Christianity had now become popular; a large portion, perhaps a large majority of those who embraced it, only assumed the name. They were as much heathen as they were before. Error and corruption now came in upon the church like a flood" (Whaley, *Church History*, 54). Church councils and human authority took the place rightfully held only by God and His Word.



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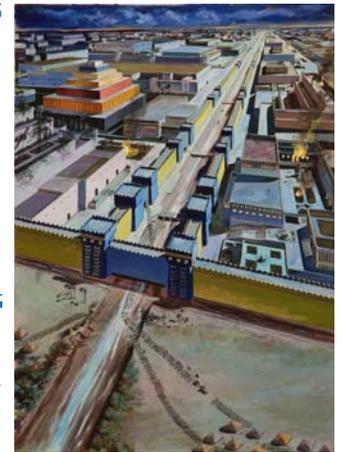
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• Second deception: Salvation by faith was replaced with salvation by works. "Being justified freely by grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24). This simple gospel of grace was replaced by penances, indulgences, and human works, rather than falling at the foot of the cross, repenting, and accepting God's grace.

• Third deception: Our direct approach to God was replaced by approaching God through human intermediaries. Images, church leaders, and saints took God's place as the object of people's prayers and the dispenser of forgiveness. "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image...Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them" (Exodus 20:4, 5).

• Fourth deception: The seventh day Sabbath of the Bible was changed by human beings to Sunday. "...At the door of the temple of the Lord...were about five and twenty men with their backs to the temple of the Lord, and their faces toward the east; and they worshiped the sun toward the east" (Ezekiel 8:16). Even in Babylonian times, people profaned God's house by sun worship, and the same thing happens today. Father O'Brien wrote: "The sun was a foremost god with heathendom...There is, in truth, something royal, kingly about the sun, making it a fit emblem of Jesus, the Sun of justice. Hence the church in these countries would seem to have said, 'keep that old pagan name. It shall remain consecrated, sanctified.' And thus the pagan Sunday...became the Christian Sunday sacred to Jesus" (*The Catholic World*, March 1994).

• "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy; six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work...For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it" (Exodus 20:8-11). "I am the Lord and I change not" (Malachi 3:6). God made Sabbath at creation, and it has never changed.

• Acceptance of evolution is an attack on the Sabbath: if a Creator does not exist, then there are no moral absolutes—including the Ten Commandments. The pope's acceptance of some form of evolution in recent years has influenced many. Catholicism considers itself the mother church of all churches. "But since Saturday, not Sunday, is specified in the Bible, isn't it curious that non-Catholics who profess to take their religion directly from the Bible and not from the Church observe Sunday instead of Saturday?...They [Protestants] have continued to observe custom even though it rests upon the authority of the Catholic Church and not upon an explicit text in the Bible. That observance remains the remainder of the Mother Church from which non-Catholic sects broke away" (O'Brien, *The Faith of Millions*).

• Fifth deception: The error of the immortality of the human soul came into the church. "For the living know that they shall die; but the dead know not any thing" (Ecclesiastes 9:5). We created beings are mortal: "Christ has the keys to hell and the grave and death" (Revelation 1:18).

• The Babylon system rests upon man's authority and traditions. In contrast, the divine system is based on God's authority and love. God says to those in the Babylon system, "Come out of her, my people...lest you receive of her plagues" (Revelation 18:4).

The "take-home" message for you . . .

• Let your faith in Jesus be based on the Bible. Find salvation at the cross: accept Jesus as your High Priest: keep the Bible Sabbath holy; and find the truth about death; and you will know you have chosen Christ with all your heart, with all the difficulties you may face. He is faithful!

Just between you . . . and God:

• God is reaching out to you who are honestly seeking and willing to follow Him. Join the long history of courageous men and women who have heard God's call and have taken the step of faith, putting their lives in God's hands.

• Second deception: Salvation by faith was replaced with salvation by works. "Being justified freely by grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24). This simple gospel of grace was replaced by penances, indulgences, and human works, rather than falling at the foot of the cross, repenting, and accepting God's grace.

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