

# UNLOCKING THE MYSTERIES OF REVELATION THROUGH BIBLE PROPHECY

## 14 Beauty and the Beast

The Book of Revelation reveals truth and exposes error. God doesn't want us to be deceived. He longs for us to be preserved and protected by His truth. In Revelation, the Apostle John tells the tale of two women. One is dressed in pure white, revealing the purity of true faith and doctrine. This pure woman of **Revelation 12** is committed to Christ. This woman represents all the faithful believers who have loved Jesus Christ, kept His commandments and been obedient to Him down through the ages. **Revelation 17** pictures *another* woman. Now we have the *opposite* picture. The Bible gives many good clues as to her identity—let's examine them briefly.

**She's a CHURCH:** In the Bible a woman symbolizes a church. See such verses as **2 Corinthians 11:2**, **Isaiah 54:5-6**, **Jeremiah 3:14**, **Ephesians 5:31-33**, *etc.* Christ is represented as the Bridegroom (**Matthew 9:14-15**, **Revelation 19:7**). An unfaithful church commits spiritual adultery (**Ezekiel 16:28, 32**).

**She's a CORRUPT church:** **Revelation 17:1, 15-16 & 19:2** call this second woman a "whore" or "harlot"—a *fallen* church teaching false doctrines.

**She's a large, WORLDWIDE church:** She sits on "many waters," explained as being many "*peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.*" **Revelation 17:1 and 15.** The very word *catholic* means "universal," and the Papal church has the largest, most widespread membership in Christendom.

**She's a RICH church:** This symbolic wicked woman—this corrupt church—is a rich one with gorgeous display. **Revelation 17:4** says she's "decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand." Which church would you say is the *richest* in the world?

**She's a church built on SEVEN HILLS or MOUNTAINS:** This identification, given in **Revelation 17:9**, is impressive and clear, for Rome is *proverbial* as "the city built on seven hills"! *Webster's* large unabridged dictionary says this under the entry "seven-hilled": "as, the Seven-hilled City, that is, Rome, Italy."

**She's a RELIGIOUS power dominating the CIVIL powers:** **Revelation 17:3 & 7** tell us the harlot, or fallen church, is riding the beast. **Daniel 7:17 & 23** tell us a beast represent a king or kingdom. When we ride a horse, we direct it and control it, so the picture God gives here is of a *church* dominating the *civil* power. For centuries, the Papacy dictated to kings. When she wanted to punish or execute any who dared to question her teaching, she'd often call on *the police power of the state.* **Revelation 17:2** describes this harlot: "with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication." She has influence over the kings of the earth, great influence over heads of state. Today, unlike other churches, the Vatican

exchanges ambassadors with every major nation on earth. They come to her city on seven mountains, and they bow before her, having “lived luxuriously with her.” **Revelation 18:9.**

**She’s a church that revives BABYLON’S pagan teachings:** “On her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT. . .” **Revelation 17:5.** Long before John wrote the Book of Revelation, the ancient city of Babylon had been completely destroyed and never rebuilt. For centuries it lay in ruins and had faded into insignificance. The apostle Peter could not have been referring to literal Babylon when he wrote in **1 Peter 5:13** that: “She who is in Babylon . . . greets you.” For there was no church or any other human institution in the desolate ruins of ancient Babylon. He was referring to Rome, as all authorities agree. It’s easy to see why early Christians used “Babylon” as a *code word* or *nickname* for Rome, for there are many striking parallels between the twin cities of literal Babylon of ancient times and figurative “Babylon” or Rome. Consider just a few: Babylon was the dominant warring power of its day—Rome was the dominant warring power of its own era. Babylon conquered Israel—centuries later, Rome also conquered Israel. Babylon destroyed the first Jerusalem Temple—Rome destroyed the second. Each carried sacred vessels from the Jewish Temple back to Babylon in the east and Rome in the west; each completely destroyed and devastated the city of Jerusalem; each carried away surviving Jews into captivity. Rome was Babylon all over again. As Babylon’s “carbon copy,” Rome provides a perfect example of *history repeating itself!* But more to the point, this woman who sits on seven hills—this church located in Rome—has revived the same pagan teachings that ancient Babylon taught ages ago. She baptizes them, sanctifies them, and brings them into the Christian church. Ages ago, when presumptuous men tried to build the Tower of Babel at Babylon, God confused their language. **Genesis 11:1-9.** So here in the last book of the Bible, “Babylon” is a spiritual term referring to *confusion*—not the confusion of languages in the Old Testament but religious confusion as the church drifted away from God’s Word.

**Image Worship:** Many false doctrines entered the church, but let’s focus on just three: image worship, immortality of the soul, and sun worship. First of all, Babylon was the center of idol worship. Everywhere you turned there were images—idols—representing the pagan gods, not just statues of Bel-Marduk, their chief god. King Nebuchadnezzar set up a huge golden idol and commanded all to bow down before it. But God’s Second Commandment in **Exodus 20:4-5** forbids using images in religious worship, forbids *bowing down before them.* Today the Papal church not only fosters those very things but also has deleted God’s Second Commandment from its catechisms.

**Natural Immortality:** The idea that man’s soul is naturally immortal is a pagan one! All the ancient pagan religions—without exception—had the idea that the soul, or man’s essential being, was immortal. That non-biblical concept, inherited from Babylon, was a common thread running through them all. In Egypt, for instance, the pyramids were great monuments, great houses for the dead to hold their immortal spirits. But the heathen idea of man’s soul being naturally immortal comes from Egypt and Babylon and Greece, not the Bible, whose teaching directly contradicts it. See such verses as **1 Timothy 6:15-16, Ezekiel 18:4 & 20, Ecclesiastes 9:5, Psalm 6:5 and 115:17, John 11:11-14, Psalm 13:3, Ephesians 5:14, etc.**

**Sun Worship:** The main deity of Babylon and Egypt was the Sun god. Astrology and worship of the heavens originated in Babylon. But God calls it one of the *greatest* of “abominations” in **Ezekiel 8:15-16!** Roman Emperor Constantine was a sun worshiper who never gave it up. The Roman church disregards not only the Second Commandment about image worship but also the Fourth Commandment about the Creator’s seventh-day Sabbath, substituting the unscriptural Sunday.

We need to follow both Jesus and the Bible. Jesus said, “if you love Me, keep my commandments” and we are to be faithful to Him, no matter what the cost. No wonder, He tells us in **Revelation 18:4,** “Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.” God wants us to come out of confusion and walk in His truth. He wants us to follow the Lamb wherever He goes. That may mean some tough decisions about where your spiritual home is, and where you can find truth, but God has promised that He will be with us as we do our best to follow Him.

- ◆ The book *Catholic Belief*, by Roman Catholic scholar Father Joseph Faà di Bruno, page 45, states this:
 

“Like two sacred rivers flowing from Paradise, the Bible and divine Tradition *contain the Word of God*, the precious gems of revealed truths. Though these two divine streams are in themselves, on account of their divine origin, of equal sacredness, and are both full of revealed truths, still, of the two, Tradition is to us more clear and safe.” Do you agree that tradition—the customs and practices of man—is more safe than the Bible?
- ◆ Henry Thomas Buckle, a world-famous historian, says in his book *The History of Civilization*, Volume 1, page 188: “*The adoration of idols* that is in Babylon was succeeded by *the adoration of saints*.”
- ◆ William E. Gladstone, four-time Prime Minister of Great Britain and a theologian in his own right, wrote in *Studies Subsidiary to the Works of Bishop Butler*, pp. 195-198: “The doctrine of *natural*, as distinguished from Christian, immortality . . . crept into the Church, by a back door. . . . When arguments are offered for the purely natural immortality of the soul, they are rarely, if ever, derived from Scripture. . . . The natural immortality of the soul is a doctrine wholly unknown to the Holy Scriptures, and standing on no higher plane than that of . . . philosophical opinion . . . of philosophical speculations disguised as truths of Divine Revelation.”
- ◆ Sir James G. Frazer, an authoritative scholar, makes this statement in his book *The Worship of Nature*, Volume 1, page 529: “In ancient Babylonia the sun was worshipped from immemorial antiquity.”
- ◆ Lewis Brown says this in *The Believing World*, page 112: “One cannot well refer to those cults of Babylon and Egypt and the rest as dead religions. For the *echo* of their ancient thunder is *still* to be heard reverberating in almost every form of faith existing today.” Ancient Babylonian image worship is in the church today. Ancient Babylonian sun worship is there. Ancient Babylonian belief in the immortality of the soul is there.
- ◆ Doctor Alexander Hislop, in his classic work, *The Two Babylons*, page 105, says this: “To conciliate the Pagans to nominal Christianity, Rome, pursuing its usual policy, took measures to get the Christian and Pagan festivals [that’s the Sabbath and Sunday] amalgamated, and . . . to get Paganism and Christianity—*now far sunk in idolatry*—in this as in so many other things, to shake hands.” He says further: “A glance at the main pillars of the Papal system will sufficiently prove that its doctrine and discipline in all essential respects have been derived from Babylon.”
- ◆ Catholic William Gildea, Doctor of Divinity, wrote in *The Catholic World*, March, 1894, page 809: “The Sun was a *foremost* god with heathendom. . . . The sun has worshippers at this hour in Persia and other lands. . . . The pagan Sunday dedicated to Balder, became the Christian Sunday, sacred to Jesus.”
- ◆ Cardinal James Gibbons, archbishop of Baltimore and noted writer, said in *The Catholic Mirror*, December 23, 1893: “Reason and sense demand the acceptance of one or the other of these alternatives: *either* Protestantism and the keeping holy of Saturday, *or* Catholicity and the keeping holy of Sunday. Compromise is impossible.”

