

The 2nd Angel's Message - Part 1

This is the forth in a series of studies on the 3 Angels Messages of Rev. 14, primarily using the book “Daniel and the Revelation” with the Bible and Ellen's comments. In this study, we look at The 2nd Angel's Message, when it was first given, and what is meant by the term Babylon. In part2 we'll look at Babylon's fall and maybe more...

Our hopes now centered on the coming of the Lord in 1844. This was also the time for the message of the **second angel, who, flying through the midst of heaven, cried, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city.” Revelation 14:8.** That message was **first proclaimed by the servants of God in the summer of 1844.** As a result, many left the fallen churches. In connection with this message **the “midnight cry” was given:** “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him.” In every part of the land light was given concerning this message, and the cry aroused thousands. It went from city to city, from village to village, and into the remote country regions. It reached the learned and talented, as well as the obscure and humble.
-Ellen White, [CET 50.4](#)

<< [What is the “Babylon” of Rev14:8?](#) -by Uriah Smith >>

The inquiries therefore naturally follow: What is meant by the term *Babylon*? what is its fall? and how is it fulfilled? As to the etymology of the word, we learn something from the marginal readings of [Genesis 10:10](#) and 11:9. The beginning of Nimrod's kingdom was **Babel, or Babylon**; and the place was so called because God there confounded the language of the builders of the tower; and the word **means confusion**. The word is here used figuratively to designate the great symbolic city of the book of Revelation, probably with special reference to the signification of the term, and the circumstances from which it originated. It applies to something on which, as specifying its chief characteristic, may be written the word “confusion.” [DAR 601.1](#)

There are but **three possible objects to which the word can be applied**; and these are (1) **the apostate religious world in general**, (2) **the papal church in particular**, and (3) **the city of Rome**. In examining these terms, we shall first show what Babylon is not. [DAR 601.2](#)

1. Babylon is not confined to the Romish Church. That this church is a very prominent component part of great Babylon, is not denied. The descriptions of chapter 17 seem to apply very particularly to that church. But the name which she bears on her forehead, “Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth,” reveals other family connections. If this church is the mother, who are the daughters? The fact that these daughters are spoken of, shows that there are other religious bodies besides the Romish Church which come under this designation. Again, there is to be a call made in connection with this message, “Come out of her, my people” ([Revelation 18:1-4](#)); and as this message is located in the present generation, it follows, if no other church but the Romish is included in Babylon, that the people of God, as a body, are now found in the commission of that church, and are to be called out. But this conclusion, no Protestant, at least, will be willing to adopt. [DAR 601.3](#)

2. Babylon is not the city of Rome. The argument relied upon to show that the city of Rome is the Babylon of the Apocalypse runs thus: “The angel told John that the woman which he had seen was the great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth, and that the seven heads of the beast are seven mountains upon which the woman sitteth.” And then, taking the city and the mountains to be literal, and finding Rome built upon just seven hills, the application is made at once to literal Rome. [DAR 602.1](#)

The principle upon which this interpretation rests is the assumption that the explanation of a symbol must always be literal. It falls to the ground the moment it can be shown that symbols are sometimes explained by substituting for them other symbols, and then explaining the latter. This can easily be done. In [Revelation 11:3](#), the symbol of the **two witnesses** is introduced. The next verse reads: “These are the **two olive trees** and the **two candlesticks** standing before the God of the earth.” In this case, the first symbol is said to be the same as another symbol which is elsewhere clearly explained. So in the case before us. “The seven heads are seven mountains,” and “The woman is that great city;” and it will not be difficult to show that the mountains and the city are both used symbolically. The reader’s attention is asked to the following points: — DAR 602.2

(1.) We are informed in chapter 13 that one of the seven heads was wounded to death. This head therefore cannot be a literal mountain; for it would be folly to speak of wounding a mountain to death. DAR 602.3

(2.) Each of the seven heads has a crown upon it. But whoever saw a literal mountain with a crown upon it? DAR 602.4

(3.) The seven heads are evidently successive in order of time; for we read, “Five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come.” [Revelation 17](#). But the seven hills on which Rome is built, are not successive, and it would be absurd to apply such language to them. DAR 602.5

(4.) According to [Daniel 7:6](#), compared with [Daniel 8:8, 22](#), heads denote governments; and according to [Daniel 2:35, 44](#); [Jeremiah 51:25](#), mountains denote kingdoms. According to these facts, the version of [Revelation 17:9, 10](#) given by Professor Whiting, which is a literal translation of the text, removes all obscurity: “The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth, and they are seven kings.” It will thus be seen that the angel represents the heads as mountains, and then explains the mountains to be seven successive kings, or forms of government. The meaning is transferred from one symbol to another, and then an explanation given of the second symbol. DAR 603.1

From the foregoing argument, it follows that the “woman” cannot represent a literal city; for the mountains upon which the woman sitteth being symbolic, a literal city cannot sit upon symbolic mountains. Again, Rome was the seat of the dragon of chapter 12, and this was transferred to the beast ([Revelation 13:2](#)), thus becoming the seat of the beast; but it would be a singular mixing of figures to take the seat, which is sat upon by the beast, and make that a woman sitting upon the beast. DAR 603.2

(5.) Were the city of Rome the Babylon of the Apocalypse, what nonsense should we have in chapter 18:1-4; for in this case the fall of Babylon would be the overthrow and destruction of the city, in fact, its utter consumption by fire, according to verse 8. But mark what takes place after the fall. Babylon becomes a habitation of devils, the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. How can this happen to a city after that city is destroyed, even being utterly burned with fire? But worse still, after all this a voice is heard, saying, “Come out of her, my people.” Are God’s people in Rome? — Not to any great extent, even in her best estate. But how many can we suppose to be there, to be called out, after the city is burned with fire? It is not necessary to say more to show that Babylon cannot be the city of Rome. DAR 603.3

3. Babylon signifies the universal worldly church. Having seen that it cannot be any one of the only other three possible objects to which it could be applied, it must mean this. But we are not left to this *a priori* kind of reasoning on this subject. Babylon is called a woman. A woman, used as a symbol, signifies a church. The woman of chapter 12 was interpreted to mean a church. The woman of chapter 17 should undoubtedly be interpreted as signifying also a church. The character of the woman determines the character of the church represented, a chaste woman standing for a pure church, a vile woman for an impure or apostate church. The woman Babylon is herself a harlot, and the mother of daughters like herself. This circumstance, as well as the name itself, shows that **Babylon is not limited to any single ecclesiastical body, but must be composed of many. It must take in all of a like nature, and represent the entire corrupt or apostate church of the earth.** This will perhaps explain the language of [Revelation 18:24](#), which represents that when God makes requisition upon great Babylon for the blood of his martyrs, in her will be found “the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that have been slain upon the earth.” The Greek Church is the established church of Russia and Greece; the Lutheran Church is the established church of Prussia, Holland, Sweden, Norway, and a part of the smaller German states; England has Episcopacy for her state religion; and other countries have their established religions, and zealously oppose dissenters. Babylon has made all nations drunken with the wine of her fornication, that is, her false doctrines; it can therefore symbolize nothing less than the universal worldly church. DAR 603.4

<< [Babylon's 3 divisions: Paganism, Romish apostasy, Daughters of that church](#) >>

The great city, Babylon, is spoken of as composed of three divisions. So the great religions of the world may be arranged under three heads. The first, oldest, and most wide-spread is paganism, separately symbolized under the form of a dragon; the second is the great Romish apostasy, symbolized by the beast; and the third is the daughters, or descendants from that church. Under this head comes the two-horned beast, though that does not embrace it all. War, oppression, conformity to the world, the worship of mammon, the creed-power, pursuit of pleasure, and the maintenance of very many errors of the old Romish Church, identify, with sad and faithful accuracy, the great body of the Protestant churches as an important constituent part of this great Babylon. DAR 604.1

A glance at some of the ways in which the Protestant church has deported herself will still further show this. Rome, having the power, destroyed vast multitudes of those whom she adjudged heretics. The Protestant church has shown the same spirit. Witness the burning of Michael Servetus by the Protestants of Geneva with John Calvin at their head. Witness the long-continued oppression of dissenters by the Church of England. Witness the hanging of Quakers and whipping of Baptists even by the Puritan fathers of New England, themselves fugitives from like oppression by the Church of England. But these, some may say, are things of the past. Very true; yet they show that when persons governed by strong religious prejudice have the power to coerce dissenters, they cannot forbear to use it — a state of things which we look for in this country under a further fulfillment of the closing prophecy of chapter 13. DAR 605.1

[Matthew 23:8](#) But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your teacher, and all ye are brethren.

[Psalm 111:9](#) He hath sent redemption unto his people; He hath commanded his covenant for ever: Holy and reverend is his name.

Mark also **how far they have departed from the teachings of Christ** in other respects. Christ forbade his people to seek after the treasures of this world. But the popular church, as a body, exhibits greater eagerness for wealth than do worldlings themselves. In how many churches does mammon bear rule! Christ says, “Be not ye called Rabbi,” that is, master, or doctor; “for one is your Master, even Christ.” To do this is to partake of that same spirit which has led aspiring men to assume to be the head of the church, the successors of St. Peter, the vicegerent of Christ, and a god upon earth. Yet how many in the Protestant church, in imitation of

the Romish, adopt the title of “Reverend,” which in our version of the Scriptures is applied to God alone: “Holy and reverend is his name.” But not content with this, some become “Very Reverend,” and “Right Reverend,” and “Doctors of Divinity.” The New Testament speaks in the most decided terms against adornments and extravagance in dress; yet where shall we look for a display of the latest fashions, the most costly attire, the most gaudy adornments, the richest diamonds, and the most dazzling jewelry, except in a fashionable assembly in a Protestant church on a pleasant Sunday? Such is now the state of the religious world, that many, in pursuit of their vocation as lawyers, doctors, politicians, merchant kings, etc., seek through the avenue of church connection success in business, honor in society, high offices in the nation, and lucrative positions everywhere. And much more of this will be seen, when, as already explained, church and state shall be united in America, and a religious profession shall become a qualification for political office. To adopt the form of godliness from such motives must be most abominable in the sight of God; yet these very classes are welcomed by the churches, because it will make them still more popular. DAR 605.2

Babylon is represented as trafficking in the souls of men. A custom common in the Church of England would seem to come under this head. There, vacant livings are sometimes set up for sale, and the highest bidder, regardless of his moral qualifications or religious standing, becomes the possessor of the revenue belonging to the position, and the pastor of the people of that parish. To come to the United States, look at all the arts and devices resorted to, to draw the multitude, not to convert and save them, but to gain their patronage and influence. The most disastrous result of all this is that the minister must preach smooth things, and tickle fashionable ears with pleasing fables. DAR 606.1

It was the will of Christ that his church should be one. He prayed that his disciples might be one, as he and the Father were one; for this would give power to his gospel, and cause the world to believe in him. Instead of this, look at the **confusion that exists in the Protestant world**, the many sectional walls that divide it up into a network of societies, and the many creeds, discordant as the languages of those who were dispersed at the tower of Babel. God is not the author of all these. It is just this state of things which the word *Babylon*, as a descriptive term, appropriately designates. It is evidently used for this very purpose, and not at all as a term of reproach. Instead of being stirred with feelings of resentment when this term is mentioned, people should rather examine their position, to see if in faith or practice they are guilty of any connection with this great city of confusion, and if so, separate at once therefrom. DAR 606.2

[2 Corinthians 11:2](#) For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy: for I espoused you to one husband, that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ.

[Jeremiah 31:32](#) not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them, saith Jehovah.

The true church is a chaste virgin. [2 Corinthians 11:2](#). The church that is joined with the world in friendship, is a harlot. It is this unlawful connection with the kings of the earth that constitutes her the great harlot of the Apocalypse. [Revelation 17](#). Thus the Jewish Church, at first espoused to the Lord (Jeremiah, chapters 2, 3, and 31:32), became a harlot. [Ezekiel 16](#). This church, when thus apostatized from God, was called Sodom ([Isaiah 1](#)), just as “the great city” (Babylon) is so called in [Revelation 11](#). The unlawful union with the world, of which Babylon is guilty, is positive proof that it is not the civil power. That the people of God are in her midst just before her overthrow is proof that she is professedly a religious body. For these reasons, it is not very evident that the Babylon of the Apocalypse is the professed church united with the world. DAR 607.1

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