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Babylon the Great (Part 2) Or, The Coming Destruction of the One World Religion

The Reformation and the Church of Rome

"And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH"
(Revelation 17:5).

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Preface

In the Apocalypse-- the Book of Revelation-- the Apostle John was directed to align Nimrod's Babylon with the finally destroyed Babylon of Daniel's 70th Week (Daniel 9:27), which indicates a **clear line of succession** for Babylon the Great. "And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (Revelation 17:5). It has always been, is, and will always be right for those who name "the Name of Christ [to] depart from iniquity" (2Timothy 2:19) by separating themselves from Babylon the Great. "Wherefore **come out** from among them, and be ye separate, saith the LORD, and touch not the unclean thing; and **I will receive you**" (2Corinthians 6:17).

Pastor Charles Chiniquy (1809-1899)-- a former Roman Catholic priest, who for 25 years zealously promoted Catholicism in Canada and the United States of America-- offered us this clue to the identity of Babylon the Great in the Dedication of his book, "Fifty Years in the Church of Rome" (1886): "**Rome is** the great danger ahead for the Church of Christ, and you do not understand it enough... The atmosphere of light, honesty, truth, and holiness in which you are born, and which you have breathed since your infancy, makes it almost impossible for you to realize the dark mysteries of idolatry, immorality, degrading slavery, hatred of the Word of God, concealed behind the walls of **that Modern Babylon** [WStS emphasis added]... It is that ignorance which paves the way to the triumph of Rome, in a near future, if there is not a complete change in your views on that subject... It is that ignorance which paralyses the arm of the Church of Christ, and makes the glorious word "Protestant" senseless, almost a dead and ridiculous word. For who does really protest against Rome today? where are those who sound the trumpet of alarm?... modern Protestants have not only forgotten what Rome was, what she is, and what she will for ever be; the most irreconcilable and powerful enemy of the Gospel of Christ; but they consider her almost as a branch of the church whose corner stone is Christ." "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Psalm 11:3). "**Nevertheless** the foundation of God standeth sure" (2Timothy 2:19). And, "I will build My Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). [Read in Chiniquy's substantial work, "Fifty Years in the Church of Rome", his firsthand insights into the workings of the Church of Rome, and **see if indeed the "leopard [has changed] his spots"** (Jeremiah 13:23).]

History of Babylon the Great: Baal Worship Confronts the Early Church

After the Jews returned from their Babylonian Captivity, Baal worship was not one of the sins with which their rebuffed Messiah would later condemn them. "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD" (Deuteronomy 6:4 and Mark 12:29). Instead, the LORD Jesus Christ cried out against the hypocrisy of a superficially righteous nation. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the **greater** damnation" (Matthew 23:14). But, with Israel's rejection of the Messianism of the LORD Jesus, the attention of the Church was turned to the conversion of the Gentiles. The Apostle Paul stated well the sentiment. "27 For the heart of this people [Israel] is **waxed gross**, and their ears are **dull of hearing**, and their **eyes have they closed**; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. 28 Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it" (Acts 28:27-28).

However, the First Century Church was already dwelling in the midst of a superstitious and idolatrous environment, which also traced much of their religious practices back to Babylon. For example, the Church at Pergamos in Asia Minor (modern Turkey) had a conflict with some adhering to the "doctrine of Balaam" (Revelation 2:14)-- remembering that Balaam introduced Baal worship to Israel. [See the "History of Babylon the Great: Baal Worship Plagues the People of God" section of our article, "Babylon the Great (Part 1)", to see Balaam's connection to Israel's Baal worship.] "I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even **where Satan's seat is**: and thou holdest fast My Name, and hast not denied My faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth" (2:13).

The Church was never intended by its Head, the LORD Jesus Christ, to coexist with the world's religions as simply **part** of the scenery of a pagan Mars Hill. Jesus affirmed, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me" (John 14:6). The Great Commission is to convert the world to the Gospel of Jesus Christ by moral persuasion through the influence of the Holy Spirit. "19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28:19-20).

Either the Church would convert the world, or the world would convert the Church. "He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad" (Matthew 12:30). It was obvious that the LORD Jesus Christ was intended from antiquity to be the Victor. "7 I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto Me, Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten thee. 8 Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the Earth for Thy possession" (Psalm 2:7-8). If the Church would not rely upon the saving and sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, then the battle must necessarily be decided in favor of the enemy, which would still be, Babylon the Great. "12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. 13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12-13).

James A. Wylie's "History of Protestantism" (1878) observed how the Church began to neglect the "Light unto [their] path" (Psalm 119:105) and slip into the corruption of Babylon the Great. "From the fourth century the corruptions of the Christian Church continued to make marked and rapid progress. The Bible began to be hidden from the people. And in proportion as the light, which is the surest guarantee of liberty, was withdrawn, the clergy usurped authority over the members of the Church" (Volume 1, Book 1, Chapter 2, p. 16). The Apostle John recorded in the Revelation that the Church at Pergamos, which was infected by the pro-Baal worship policies of Balaam, had those who were also tolerating the "doctrine of the Nicolaitans" (Revelation 2:15). "Nicolaitans" comes from two Greek words, nikao (to conquer) and laos (the people), which denote "conquering the people", i.e., through a system of priestcraft, which elevated the "clergy" above the "laity".

The human builders of the Living Body of the Church, which is the "flock of God" (1Peter 5:2), were inevitably tempted into the old, pagan ways of Babylon the Great. "While the, 'living oracles' [Scripture] were neglected, the zeal of the clergy began to spend itself upon rites and ceremonies borrowed from the pagans. These were multiplied to such a degree, that [even] Augustine complained that they were 'less tolerable than the yoke of the Jews under the law.'" (Wylie, "History of Protestantism", Volume 1, Book 1, Chapter 2, p. 18). Though the "cords of the wicked" (Psalm 129:4), i.e., pagan rites and ceremonies, may be inviting; like "whoredom and wine" (Hosea 4:11), "whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Proverbs 20:1).

As the Roman Empire declined, the power of the Bishop of Rome increased. "The [Roman] emperor saluted him as Father; foreign Churches sustained him as judge in their disputes... till at last the presbyter of Rome... raised his seat above his equals, mounted the throne of the patriarch, and exercised lordship over the heritage of Christ" (Wylie, "History of Protestantism" Volume 1, Book 1, Chapter 2, p. 18). "2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. 4 And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (1Peter 5:2-4).

History of Babylon the Great: John Wycliffe Prepares the Reformation

John Wycliffe (1324-1384) was called by James A. Wylie, the "Forerunner of all the Reformers, and the Father of all the Reformations of Christendom" ("History of Protestantism", Volume 1, Book 2, Chapter 15, p. 206). "A Good Name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold" (Proverbs 22:1). Those who are familiar with the name of Wycliffe, associate him with the translation of the Scriptures into the English tongue. "O Earth, Earth, Earth, hear the Word of the LORD" (Jeremiah 22:29). In a time in which the Church of Rome, dictated dogma and interpretation of the Word of God, the common man had no access to the Scriptures but what the priests of Rome allowed. "Now for a long season Israel hath been without the True God, and without a teaching priest, and without Law" (2Chronicles 15:3).

Though Wycliffe's name is associated with the return to the Scriptures that characterized the Reformation, John Wycliffe's initial renown was as a skilled debater and a philosopher of scholasticism-- the medieval method of thought that applied pagan Aristotelian ideas to the Church of

Rome's doctrine. "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the Truth" (2Timothy 3:7). In 1348, God providentially reorganized the affairs of Europe, England, and Wycliffe through the onslaught of the Black Death-- the bubonic plague that arose out of Asia, swept over Europe, killing as much as half the population by 1350. "I have sent among you the pestilence after the manner of Egypt: your young men have I slain with the sword, and have taken away your horses; and I have made the stink of your camps to come up unto your nostrils: yet have ye not returned unto Me, saith the LORD" (Amos 4:10). "Bradwardine [mathematician and astronomer, who had embraced the study of the Word of God, and Its doctrines of free grace] had already brought him [Wycliffe] to the Bible, the plague brought him to it a second time; and now, doubtless, he searched its page more earnestly than ever. He came to it, not as the theologian, seeking in it a deeper wisdom than any mystery which the scholastic philosophy could open to him; nor as the scholar, to refine his taste by its pure models, and enrich his understanding by the sublimity of its doctrines; nor even as the polemic, in search of weapons wherewith, to assail the dominant superstitions; he now came to the Bible as a **lost sinner, seeking how he might be saved**. Nearer every day came the messenger of the Almighty. The shadow that messenger cast before him was hourly deepening; and we can hear the young student, who doubtless in that hour felt the barrenness and insufficiency of the philosophy of the schools, lifting up with increasing vehemency the cry, 'Who shall deliver me from the wrath to come?'" (Wylie, "History of Protestantism", Volume 1, Book 2, Chapter 1, p. 104).

In 1205, King John I of England became embroiled with the English representatives of the Church of Rome as to the filling of the seat of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Consequently, both disputants appealed to the Roman pontiff, Innocent III, for resolution. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1Peter 5:8). Pope Innocent III immediately saw the precedent of a secular king appealing to the Papal See for permission to appoint to an ecclesiastical post, a post viewed second in power to only the throne of England. "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Romans 6:16). The result was that Innocent contradicted all, appointed an entirely different man, and incurred King John's defiance. Innocent responded by interdicting John and thus, the whole of England. To a nation already wrapped in the superstition of Rome, this was unbearable. After 2 years, on May 15th 1213, King John of England promised **unreserved submission** of himself to the Papal See.

The English barons recognized that they were now pledged to be the vassals or slaves of the Pope, and they revolted. On June 15th 1215, they forced King John I to sign the Magna Carta-- which was the constitutional restriction of government, and a roadblock to Papal absolutism-- at Runnymede. "The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will" (Daniel 4:25). Predictably, the Pope anathematized the rebels and declared the Magna Carta to be null and void. This resistance to the Papacy was marked by a rise in the power and wealth of England. "When the wicked rise, men hide themselves: but when they perish, the righteous increase" (Proverbs 28:28).

More than 100 years after the signing of the Magna Carta, John Wycliffe found himself a teacher and mentor of many of those who walked in the tradition of the English barons who stood against the absolutism of King John I and Pope Innocent III at Runnymede. "A man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men" (Proverbs 18:16). He was appointed a royal chaplain of King Edward III, and was singled out to reply to the claims of a monk, who defended the claims of Pope

Urban V. The monk argued that "as vicar of Christ, the Pope is the feudal superior of monarchs, and the lord paramount of their kingdoms. Thence he deduced the following conclusions: — that all sovereigns owe him obedience and tribute; that vassalage was specially due from the English monarch in consequence of the surrender of the kingdom to the Pope by John" (Wylie, Volume 1, Book 2, Chapter 3, p. 120). Wycliffe responded: "A third and more of England is in the hands of the Pope. There cannot be two temporal sovereigns in one country; either Edward is king or Urban is king. We make our choice. We accept Edward of England and refuse Urban of Rome" (Wylie, Volume 1, Book 2, Chapter 3, p. 121). Though Wycliffe's response did not face the nation of England with the sovereign claim of the Almighty over England, i.e., "all souls are Mine" (Ezekiel 18:4), as opposed to the claims of the Papacy, it did give Wycliffe the platform to later promote the Reformation. And, the foundation of that Reformation was the giving of the Scriptures to the common man in his **own** language, i.e., the "Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee **wise unto salvation** through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2Timothy 3:15).

The closing chapters of John Wycliffe's life belong to the translation of the Scriptures into the English tongue. Wycliffe's "On the Truth and Meaning of Scripture" advocated "'the supreme authority of Scripture,' 'the right of private judgment,' and that 'Christ's law sufficeth by itself to rule Christ's Church.' This was to discrown the Pope, and to raze the foundations of his kingdom. Here he drops the first hint of his purpose to translate the Bible into the English vernacular — a work which was to be the crown of his labours" (Wylie, Volume 1, Book 2, Chapter 10, p. 174). Today, as the availability of the Scriptures is so common to so much of the world-- and Its value discounted accordingly-- we find it difficult to envision a world without access to the Bible. "Thy Words were found, and I did eat Them; and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart" (Jeremiah 15:16).

As a good Latin scholar, John Wycliffe set about translating into common English Jerome's Latin Vulgate (c. 400 AD). In four years time, Wycliffe completed his work (1382); but, Johann Gutenberg's printing of the first book-- the Gutenberg Bible (1455)-- was yet to be for 73 years. Enlisting the help of many willing and skilled copyists, Wycliffe's English Bible obtained a wide circulation. "So shall My Word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: It shall not return unto Me void, but It shall accomplish that which I please, and It shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent It" (Isaiah 55:11). Though anathematized as a heretic-- to have broken into the sanctuary of God, stolen the sacred jewels, and given them to be trampled under the feet of swine-- **Wycliffe lifted the Banner of Truth, which exalts Him Who Is The Truth** (John 14:6); **and thus, took away from Rome, its monopoly on the Word of God.** This enabled the common man to be his own priest. "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him Who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous Light" (1Peter 2:9). Thus, John Wycliffe completed his earthly sojourn on December 31st 1384, "in a good old age, full of days" (1Chronicles 29:28). Only after his death was he condemned by the Council of Constance (1415), and his body was ordered exhumed and burned. But, "they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars **for ever and ever**" (Daniel 12:3).

History of Babylon the Great: The Conversion of Martin Luther

Though Martin Luther (1483-1546) came from the household of a simple working man; his father,

John Luther-- a German miner by trade-- saw to it that Martin had the opportunity of education. With great diligence on the part of the young Luther, he eventually attained graduation from Erfurt University as a Doctor of Philosophy (1505). "A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps" (Proverbs 16:9). Since Luther had taken the opportunity to avail himself of the University's library, he came into his first contact with the Bible-- an all but inaccessible Book to the common man-- still, It is "able to make thee **wise unto salvation** through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2Timothy 3:15). His attraction and fascination for the Scriptures caused him to be convicted of his own sin. "He was returning to Erfurt, and was now near the city gate, when suddenly black clouds gathered overhead, and it began to thunder and lighten in an awful manner. A bolt fell at his feet. Some accounts say that he was thrown down. The Great Judge, he thought, had descended in this cloud, and he lay momentarily expecting death. In his terror he vowed that should God spare him he would devote his life to His service" (James A. Wylie, "History of Protestantism", Volume 1, Book 5, Chapter 2, p. 365). "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD" (Proverbs 16:33).

Martin Luther described his life-- prior to his ordination into the priesthood of the Roman Catholic Church (1507)-- as an Augustinian monk (1505-1507), thus: "If ever [a] monk could obtain heaven by his monkish works, I should certainly have been entitled to it" (Wylie, Vol. 1, Book 5, Chapter 3, p. 371). "Therefore by the deeds of the Law there shall **no** flesh be justified in His sight: for by the Law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20). James Wylie described Luther's monkish struggle to find peace with God: "He shrank from the sight of his own vileness... he trembled when he thought of the holiness of God. It was not the sweet promise of mercy, but the fiery threatening of the Law, on which he dwelt. 'Who may abide the day of His Coming, and who shall stand when He appeareth?' [Malachi 3:2]" (Wylie, Vol. 1, Book 5, Chapter 4, p. 374).

John Staupitz, the Vicar-General of the Augustines in Germany, was unique in that he was one who understood God's Simple Plan of Salvation; and providentially, God led him to counsel Luther concerning that "plain path" (Psalm 27:11) of salvation. "I cannot and dare not come to God," replied Luther, in effect, 'till I am a better man; I have not yet repented sufficiently.' 'A better man!' would the Vicar-General say in effect; 'Christ came to save not good men, but sinners. ['They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick' (Luke 5:31).] Love God, and you will have repented; there is no real repentance that does not begin in the love of God ['We love Him, because He first loved us' (1John 4:19)]; and there is no love to God that does not take its rise in all apprehension of that mercy which offers to sinners freedom from sin through the blood of Christ.' 'Faith in the mercies of God!' ['**Not** by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost' (Titus 3:5).]' (Wylie, Vol. 1, Book 5, Chapter 4, p. 375). Before Staupitz departed from Luther, he gave him the gift of a Bible. Staupitz said, "Let the study of the Scriptures be your favorite occupation" (Wylie, Vol. 1, Book 5, Chapter 4, p. 375). "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).

Wylie continues the account of how Martin Luther came to salvation in "full assurance of faith" (Hebrews 10:22). "Luther's faith was as yet but as a grain of mustard-seed. After Staupitz had taken leave of him he again turned his eye from the Savior to himself; the clouds of despondency and fear that instant gathered; and his old conflicts, though not with the same violence, were renewed. He fell

ill, and in his sore sickness he lay at the gates of death. It pleased God on this bed, and by a very humble instrument, to complete the change which the Vicar-General had commenced. An aged brother-monk who, as Luther afterwards said, was doubtless a true Christian though he wore 'the cowl of damnation,' came to his bedside, and began to recite with much simplicity and earnestness the Apostle's Creed, 'I believe in the forgiveness of sins.' Luther repeated after him in feeble accents, 'I believe in the forgiveness of sins.' 'Nay,' said the monk, 'you are to believe not merely in the forgiveness of David's sins, and of Peter's sins; you must believe in the forgiveness of your own sins.'"

"[12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath **made us meet** to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in Light: 13 Who hath **delivered us** from the power of darkness, and hath **translated us** into the Kingdom of His Dear Son: 14 In Whom we **have redemption** through His blood, even the **forgiveness of sins**' (Colossians 1:12-14).] The decisive Words had been spoken. A ray of Light had penetrated the darkness that encompassed Luther. He saw it all: the whole Gospel in a single phrase, the **forgiveness of sins** — not the *payment*, but the *forgiveness*" (Wylie, Vol. 1, Book 4, Chapter 5, p. 375-376). "Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retaineth not His anger for ever, because He delighteth in mercy" (Micah 7:18). "In this cell at Erfurt died Martin Luther the monk, and in this cell was born Martin Luther the Christian, and the birth of Luther the Christian was the birth of the Reformation in Germany" (Wylie, Vol. 1, Book 4, Chapter 5, p. 376). The Kingdom of God that flowered from that Reformation in Germany "is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it" (Luke 13:19).

History of Babylon the Great: Luther vs. the Church of Rome

In 1517, a "Dominican monk, named John Diezel, or Tetzl, the son of a goldsmith of Leipsic" (Wylie, Volume 1, Book 5, Chapter 8, p. 400) declared: "Indulgences avail not only for the living but for the dead" (Wylie, Volume 1, Book 5, Chapter 8, p. 402). Pope Boniface VIII had enacted this doctrine two centuries before; but, Pope Leo X was now using it and Tetzl to restore the empty coffers of the Vatican. And, Tetzl went on to make particular application of the dogma of indulgences. "Priest, noble, merchant, wife, youth, maiden, do you not hear your parents and your other friends who are dead, and who cry from the bottom of the abyss: 'We are suffering horrible torments! A trifling alms would deliver us; you can give it, and you will not?'" (Wylie, Volume 1, Book 5, Chapter 8, p. 402). Tetzl then delivered these chilling words. "At the very instant that the money rattles at the bottom of the chest, the soul escapes from purgatory, and flies liberated to heaven. Now you can ransom so many souls, stiff-necked and thoughtless man; with twelve groats you can deliver your father from purgatory, and you are ungrateful enough not to save him! I shall be justified in the Day of Judgment; but you — you will be punished so much the more severely for having neglected so great salvation. I declare to you, though you have but a single coat, you ought to strip it off and sell it, in order to obtain this grace... **The Lord our God no longer reigns, he has resigned all power to the Pope.**" (Wylie, Volume 1, Book 5, Chapter 8, p. 402). "And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not" (2Peter 2:3).

These indulgences were **sold** by Tetzel-- "whose damnation is just" (Romans 3:8)-- in the form of a letter: "May our Lord Jesus Christ have pity on thee, N. N., and absolve thee by the merits of his most holy passion. And I, by virtue of the apostolic power which has been confided to me, do absolve thee from all ecclesiastical censures, judgments, and penalties which thou mayest have merited, and from all excesses, sins, and crimes which thou mayest have committed, however great or enormous they may be, and for whatsoever cause, even though they had been reserved to our most Holy Father the Pope and the Apostolic See. I efface all attainders of unfitness and all marks of infamy thou mayest have drawn on thee on this occasion; I remit the punishment thou shouldst have had to endure in purgatory; I make thee anew a participator in the Sacraments of the Church; I incorporate thee afresh in the communion of the saints; and I reinstate thee in the innocence and purity in which thou wast at the hour of thy baptism; so that, at the hour of thy death, the gate through which is the entrance to the place of torments and punishments shall be closed against thee, and that which leads to the Paradise of joy shall be open. And shouldst thou be spared long, this grace shall remain immutable to the time of thy last end. In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen... Brother John Tetzel, Commissioner, has signed it with his own hand." (Wylie, Volume 1, Book 5, Chapter 8, pp. 403-404).

At that time, Luther was a university professor, preacher, and confessor; since, he still ignorantly held allegiance to the Church of Rome. "One day, as he sat in the confessional, some citizens of Wittenberg came before him, and confessed having committed thefts, adulteries, and other heinous sins. 'You must abandon your evil courses,' said Luther, 'otherwise I cannot absolve you.' To his surprise and grief, they replied that they had no thought of leaving off their sins; that this was not in the least necessary, inasmuch as these sins were already pardoned, and they themselves secured against the punishment of them. The deluded people would thereupon pull out the indulgence papers of Tetzel, and show them in testimony of their innocence. Luther could only tell them that these papers were worthless, that they must repent, and be forgiven of God, otherwise they should perish everlastingly" (Wylie, Volume 1, Book 5, Chapter 9, p. 408). "In Whom [Jesus Christ] we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Ephesians 1:7). In effect, Luther differed more widely with the Church of Rome than he was aware of.

On October 31st 1517, the day before the Festival of All Saints, at noon Luther strode to the castle-church with the throngs of people, and nailed a document to the church's door-- the celebrated 95 Theses on the doctrine of indulgences. "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force" (Matthew 11:12). Luther was beginning to contend with the whole Papal system. Briefly,

- Article 6 stated: "The Pope cannot remit any condemnation, but can only declare and confirm the remission that God himself has given", i.e., "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine Own sake, and will not remember thy sins" (Isaiah 43:25).
- Article 8 declared: "The laws of ecclesiastical penance can be imposed only on the living, and in no wise respect the dead", i.e., "There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it" (1John 5:16).
- Article 37 announced: "Every true Christian, dead or living, is a partaker of all the blessings of

Christ, or of the Church, by the gift of God, and without any letter of indulgence", i.e., "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8).

- Article 51 stated: "We should teach Christians that the Pope (as it is his duty) would distribute his own money to the poor, whom the indulgence-sellers are now stripping of their last farthing, even were he compelled to sell the Mother Church of St. Peter", i.e., "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you" (2Corinthians 12:15).
- Article 52 remonstrated: "To hope to be saved by indulgences is a lying and an empty hope, although even the commissary of indulgences — nay, further, the Pope himself — should pledge their souls to guarantee it", i.e., "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers" (1Peter 1:18).

On the night before the very day that Martin Luther affixed his 95 Theses to the church door of Wittenburg, the Elector Frederick of Saxony-- where Luther abode-- had a dream, which he related the next morning to his brother, Duke John. Wylie relates that the dream was "recorded by all the chroniclers of the time" (Volume 1, Book 5, Chapter 9, p. 413). "Brother, I must tell you a dream which I had last night, and the meaning of which I should like much to know. It is so deeply impressed on my mind, that I will never forget it, were I to live a thousand years. For I dreamed it thrice, and each time with new circumstances... Having gone to bed last night, fatigued and out of spirits, I fell asleep shortly after my prayer, and slept calmly for about two hours and a half; I then awoke, and continued awake to midnight, all sorts of thoughts passing through my mind. Among other things, I thought how I was to observe the Feast of All Saints. I prayed for the poor souls in purgatory; and supplicated God to guide me, my counsels, and my people according to truth."

"I again fell asleep, and then dreamed that Almighty God sent me a monk, who was a true son of the Apostle Paul. All the saints accompanied him by order of God, in order to bear testimony before me, and to declare that he did not come to contrive any plot, but that all that he did was according to the will of God. They asked me to have the goodness graciously to permit him to write something on the door of the church of the Castle of Wittemberg. This I granted through my chancellor. Thereupon the monk went to the church, and began to write in such large characters that I could read the writing at Schweinitz. The pen which he used was so large that its end reached as far as Rome, where it pierced the ears of a lion that was crouching there, and caused the triple crown upon the head of the Pope to shake. All the cardinals and princes, running hastily up, tried to prevent it from falling. You and I, brother, wished also to assist, and I stretched out my arm; — but at this moment I awoke, with my arm in the air, quite amazed, and very much enraged at the monk for not managing his pen better. I recollected myself a little; it was only a dream."

"I was still half asleep, and once more closed my eyes. The dream returned. The lion, still annoyed by the pen, began to roar with all his might, so much so that the whole city of Rome, and all the States of the Holy Empire, ran to see what the matter was. The Pope requested them to oppose this monk, and applied particularly to me, on account of his being in my country. I again awoke, repeated the Lord's prayer, entreated God to preserve his Holiness, and once more fell asleep. Then I dreamed that all the princes of the Empire, and we among them, hastened to Rome, and strove, one after another, to break

the pen; but the more we tried the stiffer it became, sounding as if it had been made of iron. We at length desisted. I then asked the monk (for I was sometimes at Rome, and sometimes at Wittemberg) where he got this pen, and why it was so strong. 'The pen,' replied he, 'belonged to an old goose of Bohemia, a hundred years old. I got it from one of my old schoolmasters. As to its strength, it is owing to the impossibility of depriving it of its pith or marrow; and I am quite astonished at it myself.' Suddenly I heard a loud noise — a large number of other pens had sprung out of the long pen of the monk. I awoke a third time: it was daylight" (Wylie, Volume 1, Book 5, Chapter 9, pp. 413-415). Wylie then added, "The elector has hardly made an end of telling his dream when the monk comes with his hammer to interpret it" (p. 415). "What God is about to do he sheweth unto Pharaoh" (Genesis 41:28).

Luther the Reformer began to develop doctrinally as he carefully considered the Word of God. "I am a stranger in the Earth: hide not Thy commandments from me" (Psalm 119:19). As many of Luther's old friends began to melt away, new acquaintances came to his aid. When told that Luther's life was in danger, powerful German barons, i.e., Sylvester of Schaumburg, Francis of Sickingen, and Ulrich of Hutten, offered Luther their sword of protection-- as well as opposition to Papal tyranny. Ulrich even proposed to crush the fury of the devil by the force of arms-- to which Luther recoiled. Luther said, "I will not have recourse to arms and bloodshed in defense of the Gospel. It was by the Word that the Church was founded, and by the Word also it shall be re-established" (Wylie, Volume 1, Book 6, Chapter 1, p. 474). "Jesus answered, My Kingdom is not of this world: if My Kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight" (John 18:36).

On June 15th 1520, a papal bull of excommunication was issued against Martin Luther. Within the space of 60 days, any town where Luther resided would be interdicted. Luther was to be banished by all princes and magistrates, or sent to Rome. "Whom have I in Heaven but Thee? and there is none upon Earth that I desire beside Thee" (Psalm 73:25). Pope Leo X sent a letter to the Elector Frederick of Saxony, hoping to gain his support against Luther; but Frederick had now rejected Romanism and determined to protect Luther. "The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever He will" (Proverbs 21:1).

While waiting for the papal bull to reach him, Luther published "The Babylonish Captivity of the Church" on October 6th 1520. Luther wrote, "I denied that the Papacy was of Divine origin, but I granted that it was of human right. Now, after reading all the subtleties on which these gentry have set up their idol, **I know that the Papacy is none other than the kingdom of Babylon, and the violence of Nimrod the mighty hunter** [WStS emphasis]. I therefore beseech all my friends and all the booksellers to burn the books that I have written on this subject, and to substitute this one proposition in their place: The Papacy is a general chase led by the Roman bishop to catch and destroy souls" (Wylie, Volume 1, Book 6, Chapter 2, p. 489). **Luther understood that Romanism is identified with Babylon the Great.** "Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right" (Proverbs 20:11).

About this same time (October 1520), Luther wrote a letter to Pope Leo X. The following are excerpts of that letter: "It is true that I have attacked the court of Rome; but neither yourself nor any man living can deny that there is greater corruption in it than was in Sodom and Gomorrah, and that **the impiety that prevails makes cure hopeless.** Yes, I have been horrified in seeing how, under your name, the

poor followers of Christ were deceived... You know it. Rome has for many years been inundating the world with whatever could destroy both soul and body. **The Church of Rome**, formerly the first in holiness, **has become a den of robbers, a place of prostitution, a kingdom of death and hell; so that Antichrist himself, were he to appear, would be unable to increase the amount of wickedness.** All this is as clear as day... You should perish by poison even before you could try any remedy. It is all over with the court of Rome. The wrath of God has overtaken and will consume it. It hates counsel—it fears reform—it will not moderate the fury of its ungodliness; and hence it may be justly said of it as of its mother: **We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed—forsake her** [Jeremiah 51:9]" (Wylie, Volume 1, Book 6, Chapter 2, pp. 491-492).

Girolamo Aleander, a special envoy of the Papal See, was delegated the task of looking after the affair of Luther. Aleander asked for and received an audience from Frederick of Saxony. Quickly, Aleander pointed out the necessity of the Elector punishing Luther. To this Frederick pointed out that no one had yet refuted Luther, and it would be scandalous to punish a man uncondemned. This was reminiscent of the Apostle Paul's case before Festus, i.e., "It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him" (Acts 25:16). The stage was set for Luther to appear before the Diet of Worms.

Luther was summoned on March 6th 1521 to appear within 21 days before the Diet of Worms, the assemblage that had the power to burn him at the stake. "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28). On his journey to Worms, he passed through Erfurt, the place of his conversion at the Augustinian monastery. To give you an idea of how mature this former monk had become, hear an excerpt of a sermon from John 20:19- "Peace be unto you." He states: "Philosophers, doctors, and writers have endeavored to teach men the way to obtain everlasting life, and they have not succeeded. I will now tell it to you. There are two kinds of works—works not of ourselves, and these are good: our own works, they are of little worth. One man builds a church; another goes on a pilgrimage to St. Iago of Compostella, or St. Peter's; a third fasts, takes the cowl, and goes bare-foot; another does something else. All these works are nothingness, and will come to naught, for our own works have no virtue in them. But I am now going to tell you what is the true work. God has raised one Man from the dead, the Lord Jesus Christ, that he might destroy death, expiate sin, and shut the gates of hell. This is the work of salvation. Christ, has vanquished! This is the joyful news! and we are saved by his work, and not by our own... Our Lord Jesus Christ said, 'Peace be unto you! behold my hands'—that is to say, Behold, O man! it is I, I alone, who have taken away thy sins, and ransomed thee; and now thou hast peace, saith the Lord." (Wylie, Volume 1, Book 6, Chapter 5, pp. 519-520). Amen, and Amen!

Luther entered Worms on the 16th of April, 1521. Some say he sang a hymn as he approached the city, a hymn which he composed two days earlier-- "'A strong Tower is our God' ['A Mighty Fortress Is Our God']" (Wylie, Volume 1, Book 6, Chapter 5, p. 521). The next day, Luther was summoned to appear before the Diet. "But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak" (Matthew 10:19). Upon entering the crowded assembly of dignitaries of the states of the Holy Roman Empire, Luther was implored to acknowledge his authorship of some 20 books and retract his opinions. Luther respectfully admitted authorship, but he asked for another day to consider his reply. His opponents felt he was ready to

recant, but Luther was desirous of circumstances that would make his reply all the more weighty and irrevocable. "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" (Matthew 10:16).

On the April 18th 1521, Luther made his final reply to the Diet of Worms. He began by admitting again to the authorship of his books on faith and morals, on the exposure of papal usurpations and degeneracy, and against the defenders of error. He invited all to point him to Scripture that would or could correct him. "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the Common Salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the Faith which was once delivered unto the Saints" (Jude 3). Luther then turned the tables on his judges. "In conclusion, he warned this assembly of monarchs of a judgment to come: a judgment not beyond the grave only, but on this side of it: a judgment in time. They were on their trial. They, their kingdoms, their crowns, their dynasties, stood at a great Bar. It was to them the day of visitation; it was now to be determined whether they were to be planted in the earth, whether their thrones should be stable, and their power should continue to flourish, or whether their houses should be razed, and their thrones swept away in a deluge of wrath, in a flood of present evils, and of eternal desolation" (Wylie, Volume 1, Book 6, Chapter 6, p. 534). Again, like the Apostle Paul, Luther pricked the conscience of his judges. "For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner" (Acts 26:26).

To this, the impatient question returned, Would he, or would he not retract? Luther responded: "Since your most Serene Majesty, and your High Mightiness, require from me a direct and precise answer, I will give you one, and it is this. I cannot submit my faith either to the Pope or to the Councils, because it is clear as day they have frequently erred and contradicted each other. Unless, therefore, I am convinced by the testimony of Scripture, or on plain and clear grounds of reason, so that conscience shall bind me to make acknowledgment of error, I can and will not retract, for it is neither safe nor wise to do anything contrary to conscience.' And then, looking round on the assembly, he said—and the words are among the sublimest in history — 'HERE I STAND. I CAN DO NO OTHER. MAY GOD HELP ME. AMEN'" (James A. Wylie, "History of Protestantism", Volume 1, Book 6, Chapter 6, pp. 535-536). "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in Truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" (1Thessalonians 2:13).

Conclusion

Historical proofs such as Alexander Hislop's "The Two Babylons: Or, The Papal Worship Proved to be the Worship of Nimrod and His Wife" (1853) demonstrate to the willing mind the certain connection of Ancient Babylon to the final form of the One World Religion ruled by the False Prophet, who "causeth the Earth and them which dwell therein to worship" (Revelation 13:12) the Antichrist. Hislop's classic work focuses on "Rome [i.e., the Roman Catholic Church] as the Apocalyptic Babylon". He concludes, "Let every Christian henceforth and for ever treat it as an outcast from the pale of Christianity. Instead of speaking of it as a Christian Church, let it be recognised and regarded as the Mystery of Iniquity, yea, as the very Synagogue of Satan." "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (18:4).

However, though Hislop accurately followed the evolution of Babylon the Great through the history of the Roman Catholic Church, his perspective from the mid-1800's did not foresee the modern development of a one world religion in its final form-- the United Religions, a type of spiritual United Nations, whose charter is scheduled to be signed in June 2000. "And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it" (Isaiah 28:18).

To those who can be warned of the coming judgment and destruction of Babylon the Great: "4 Because of the multitude of the whoredoms of the wellfavoured harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts. 5 Behold, I am against thee, saith the LORD of Hosts; and I will discover thy skirts upon thy face, and I will shew the nations thy nakedness, and the kingdoms thy shame" (Nahum 3:4-5). Your professed love for the LORD Jesus Christ should plead for immediate separation from Babylon the Great. "15 Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. 16 What? **know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body?** for two, saith He, shall be one flesh" (1Corinthians 6:15-16).