

The Mother of Abominations

Neil Girrard

There are those who consider it wrong to speak disrespectfully of the body of Christ, seeing her as Christ's girlfriend, fiancé and future bride. These people are certainly correct as she *is* destined to enter into some sort of participatory role in the Godhead. But from our perspective here in time, these same people have failed to see that there is also a pretender, a counterfeit, a harlot or prostitute who is seeking to draw away even the elect (if possible) from her true love of walking hand in hand with the Bridegroom and Husband. This harlot, depicted in Scripture as a completely immoral and unscrupulous "woman," through flattery and deceitful allurements, seeks to steal, kill and destroy the souls of as many believers as it can. (Prov. 2:16-20, 2 Pet. 2:18, Jn. 10:10) This being, though not to be slandered or abused (Jude 10), deserves no respect. She is altogether evil and her destined judgment (Rev. 17:16, 18:8) is well deserved.

When one approaches this subject, one can almost get lost immediately in the vastness of it. And there are those who are certain their own interpretations and speculations (correct though they may be in their own right) encompass the *whole* counsel of God concerning this strange woman. Yet, painting with a broad brush and taking an overview of what the Scriptures say about her, we find that there are *four* categories about this woman, neither of which completely exclude the other.

In one regard, the mystery Babylon is a spiritual creature, known in the Old Testament as the spirit of harlotry (see Hos. 4:12-13, etc.), whose actions reach all the way back to Cain whose way of false religion will be revamped and practiced in abundance in the last days. (Jude 11, Mt. 24:12)

In another regard, the mystery Babylon may also be a specific physical place (city? nation?) that will be burned with fire and destroyed within one hour (Rev. 18:10 - whether Babylon is a literal or figurative reference is a subject of great debate which will not be solved here. It is safer to say that neither interpretation can be completely ruled out and there may yet come an understanding that harmonizes the two views – see Dan. 12:8-10)

In yet one more regard, there is the sense that the Roman Catholic "church" is the mother of all the abominations (idolatrous, aberrant spiritual "church" practices) that plague all her prostitute (religion for profit) daughters (most commonly today called "denominations"). We will examine some of these "church" practices in more detail later in this article.

And the fourth category of descriptions of this strange woman is the spiritual characteristics that attend being part of what she represents.

Again, all the various descriptions and allusions can be seen (through eyes enlightened by the Spirit of God) to harmonize and blend rather than contradict and refute, even when one category is more in view than the others.

Perhaps the one single "bottom-line" explanation we could put to this huge picture is that there is a demonic spirit whose sole job it is to put forth, for every spiritual reality in Christ and God, some (perhaps several) physical or practical counterfeit(s) whereby men are aided in

departing from the living God. This demonic spirit has led men into multiple and various practices and misbeliefs to that end and men disobedient to God have thus created vast monolithic networks that are filled with the deceptions and schemes of the devil and the demonic.

Great Confusion

John was told,

“And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.” (Rev. 17:5)

Here we find several clues to the nature of this woman. First, there is a “mystery” surrounding her. This is the Greek word *musterion* [3466] and it refers to a “hidden or shut thing, a secret, a mystery - generally mysteries, religious secrets, confided only to the initiated and not to ordinary mortals; a hidden or secret thing, not obvious to the understanding; a hidden purpose or counsel; the secret will of men or of God: in this case, the secret counsels which govern God in dealing with the righteous, which are hidden from ungodly and wicked men but plain to the godly.” (Strongs Online) Thus only God can reveal to us any truths about this being. Any prognostications, reasonings, rationalizings, imaginings or suppositions we might make about her remain only blind men groping about in the darkness by the light of their own feeble torches fumbling with deep secrets they can only, at best, perceive dimly and in part. We are not here to force meanings out of the text but rather to take what is plainly said and apply it to what God has revealed elsewhere and by His Spirit. Mysteries, in the Bible are not riddles to be solved or deduced, they are simply spiritual realities God has not yet opened up and shared with humankind or, at least, has not fully explained the meaning behind the “cryptic” statements.

Because of this mystery – knowledge not available to carnal, fleshly men (1 Cor. 2:14), knowledge perhaps only partly available even to mature spiritual men in Christ – that surrounds this being, she is very much able to live up to the first of the names given her – Babylon. The meaning of the word “Babylon” is “confusion.” This is its spiritual connotation – an inference that cannot be completely ruled out simply because the word was also used to refer to the physical cities of Babylon and Rome. Again, for every spiritual reality, there is some physical counterfeit to deceive and misdirect men away from the truth.

The second aspect of her first name is that of “great.” The Greek word is “megas” [3173] from which we derive the word “mega” as in “mega-‘church.’” The spiritual aspect of her reality is that of great confusion, the opposite of truth and light practiced on a wide scale. As it was in the days of John the Baptist, everyone will be wondering “What shall we do that God may be pleased with us?” (see Lk. 3:10-14) because the pulpits are filled with men (and women) claiming to have (and to have the right to have) the anointing of God (Mt. 24:5) whose messages conflict with one another and with the realities of the spiritual life in Christ. Their stories, peppered with anecdotes and jokes and told in as lively a style of Greek rhetoric and eloquence as the speaker can muster up, both soothe and scratch the ears of the listeners (2 Tim. 4:3-4) as the speaker reassures them that they are wonderful examples of Christianity completely unlike the “church” down the road (even though he knows that a significant portion of his “flock” went to that “church” only a few short months ago – see Jude 16) And this is practiced on an

unimaginable scale around the globe wherever affluence (the false god *mammon* - Mt. 6:24) enables such abomination to occur. Every major city boasts of its mega-“churches” with its thousands of attendees and not a one seems to be aware of what an abomination they are in the sight of God.

The falling away from the faith is a great event inspired by the grand schemes enacted centuries ago against the body of Christ that laid a snare for the succeeding generations, the last generation of which will have the opportunity to shake off all the leaven and truly shine with the righteousness of the heavenly Father. But no spiritual reality in Christ and God is sacred to the woman, the harlot, the counterfeit pretender who seeks to draw men after herself and away from Christ. Faith, salvation, grace, knowledge, spiritual gifts, leadership, assembly, even the blood of Christ has its counterfeits in the modern apostasy that is the great falling away from the faith. Every doctrine that can be held onto as some thing apart from Christ will be a lie which ensnares those individuals who prefer that form of deception and unrighteousness more than they love the truth and the righteousness of God. (2 Ths. 2:9-12)

John was told, “And the woman which you saw is that great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth.” (Rev. 17:18) Though there may be here a reference to Rome in the day of John, one cannot rule out that it is also a “mysterious” or “cryptic” reference to both the “church” and the body of Christ as each of these, in one sense or another, rule over the kings of the earth. The former rules (in varying degrees and forms as the political climates have shifted over the centuries) in the physical realms and the latter reigns in the spiritual realms (even when the physical events in a person’s life seem to deny that reality).

Mothers Come First

When we see this being who causes great confusion about God and the way of following Christ and God, we see that in calling her the “mother” of something, God is looking at the originator, the first to produce a thing. There is nothing unusual in the Greek word here – she is the mother of abominations and prostitutes in the very same way Mary was the mother of Jesus (not of God as the Catholic “church” teaches!) and in the same way every Jewish child under the Law of Moses was to honor his father and mother. God has chosen a very ordinary word to convey the vastness of this being’s scope of activities. Those who fail to take in this basic fact will come up short on identifying the whole of mystery Babylon.

Mystery Babylon is said to be the mother of harlots or prostitutes. Here we find the Greek word “porne” [4204] from which we derive such words as “pornography,” the display of lewd and immoral acts. The term applies to any prostitute who yields herself or her body for profit, whether for money or lust. Metaphorically then, it becomes a term that applies to idolatry, the practice of committing spiritual acts with other spirits (so-called “gods”), acts that one is supposed to reserve for the one true God alone. Solomon’s warnings about “the immoral woman” still applies to every sect and denomination that exalts its own doctrines or leaders above Christ and God:

“Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways, do not stray into her paths; for she has cast down many wounded, and all who were slain by her were strong men. Her house is the way to hell, descending to the chambers of death.” (Prov. 7:25-27)

Ignorance of the ways of God will be no excuse for those whose rooms are filled with Bibles and Bible software programs but whose hearts are filled with the traditions of men and the doctrines (teachings) of demons! Let he who has ears hear.

This phrase “mother of harlots and abominations,” when viewed literally or physically, most applies to the Catholic sect and to all her prostitute (religion for profit) daughters (denominations) throughout the centuries. There simply is no clearer application. Nearly every aberrant “church” practice (practices we will examine in more detail later) stems from the Catholic “church” in one way or another – but the practices, even to this day, are not seen as aberrant because everyone else does them too! God still says, “Come out from among the ‘Christian’ idolaters and be separate. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. Then I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters.” (2 Cor. 6:17-18) We cannot remain within the institutional “church” system that men and demons have created and hope to be sons and daughters of the Most High God who will experience and inherit His kingdom!

Mystery Babylon is also said to be the mother of the abominations of the earth. Here we find the Greek word “*bdelugma*” [946] and it refers to foul and detestable things, particularly idolatry. Jesus gives an excellent insight into this word when He says, “What is highly esteemed among men is an abomination [946] in the sight of God.” (Lk. 16:15) This statement alone should reveal to us the extent to which the “church” has erred. Men seeking the approval of other men (indeed, one must be “ordained” by the powers that be at denominational headquarters) lead the “flock” (which seeks only men they approve of themselves) into great abomination. Only when we all begin again to seek out and insist upon only that which is right *in God’s eyes* - the true righteousness – will the aberrant abominable “church” practices, especially the deep, subtle ones, disappear from our midst.

We need to understand the deep seriousness of this. In spite of all the “theological” assurances we’ve received from the ear-tickling, ear-scratching pulpits about being “once saved, always saved,” John was shown that “there shall *by no means* enter into [the city of God, the New Jerusalem] anything that defiles, or causes an abomination [946] or a lie, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.” (Rev. 21:27) The woman, the harlot, the mother, is also seen by John to have in her hand “a golden cup full of abominations [946]” (Rev. 17:4)

It is in light of these abominations that the people of Christ are warned:

“Come out of her, My people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. ...God has remembered her iniquities...in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her. In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, ‘I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.’” (Rev. 18:5-7)

Do not be deceived. What a man or group of men or an institution sows, that will he or they or it reap.

Earthly, Sensuous, Demonic

James wrote of a wisdom different from God’s divine wisdom and called it “earthly,

sensual, demonic.” (Jas. 3:15) The abominations (of which the woman, the harlot, is the mother) are said to come from the earth. The Greek word is *ge* [1093] (this is also the name the Greeks gave to their goddess “Mother Earth”) and points to the source of the activities of the woman and all those who follow her and her ways. The “church” is filled with Greek and Roman paganism and many “church” people know this and see no problem with this! But the roots of the “pastor” above the people, the pulpit, the “church” building, etc. cannot be found anywhere in the New Testament (except to be condemned as abominable!) but are the teachings of demonic spirits that migrated from Greek and Roman religion, philosophy and culture into the way of following Christ. And few see any problem with this mixture! This is a great blindness indeed!

The word “church” offers perhaps the clearest demonstration of the scope of the work of the religious spirit aspect of “Mystery Babylon.” The modern English word “church” derived from the Old English word “chirche” (much as the Scottish word became “kirk”) but both these words trace their etymology (the “evolution” of words and linguistics) back to a Greek word *kuriakos* [2960], a word used twice in the Greek New Testament. (1 Cor. 11:20, Rev. 1:10) This word simply means “belonging to a lord” (“lord” in Greek is *kurios* [2962]) and one can still easily see the linguistic transition from *kuriakos* to “chirche” and “kirk” to “church.” Logically and rationally, one would expect to see then the English word “church” used only twice in the English New Testament. But something besides logic and rationality and even proper translation techniques are used in this instance. The word “church” or “churches” appears *114 times!* This is because the English translators, primarily those of the King James Bible, have chosen “church” to translate another Greek word and opted not to use it (because of its contemporary meanings of the time) in the only two places where it might (however marginally) linguistically belong.

The Greek word the English interpreters chose to interpret as “church” was *ekklesia* [1577]. The French and the Spanish languages have a word that evolved from that word – “eglise” and “iglesia” – and these words are used to this day, though they too have come to include the idea of a specialized building in which the people of the Lord gather for “services” (though just who is being served is never quite clearly demonstrated) but, for whatever reasons, the English language has no direct linguistic descendent or equivalent. The Greek language of New Testament times had three words – *hieron* [2411], *naos* [3485] and *oikos* [3624] – that would have been more than appropriate to use in connection with a physical building. There was also even the Jewish religious “school house” (*sunagoge* - “synagogue” [4864]) but *none* of these words were chosen to describe what Christ would be building in His people. (see Mt. 16:18) and teaching the people that God did not dwell in buildings made by human hands at any rate was a central part of the original gospel. (Acts 7:48-50, 17:24) The Greek word the writers of the New Testament did use - *ekklesia* [1577] - has *none* of the connotations of a physical building and simply refers to the *people* of Christ who have been called out of this world’s darkness to attend to the affairs of Christ’s kingdom of light. The insertion of the idea of a physical building into the truth about Christ’s people has done incalculable damage to our ability to obey Christ and perform the functions of light He requires of us.

Another instance is found in the word “pastor.” Originally a *Latin* word (just not much room for *that* in the original *Greek* text!), the word became a title. In the Greek the word is *poimen* [4166] and it is used 17 times in the New Testament, only one time is it translated “pastor” and that never in the singular. The real meaning is “one who watches or tends sheep”

and it never had any notion of ownership of the sheep or as a position above the sheep as it does in today's "church" paradigm.

Paul prophesied extremely accurately when he said, "From among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves." (Acts 20:30) Paul was speaking to the elders of the ekklesia of Ephesus. By 200 A.D., every major city in the Roman empire had a bishop standing "in the place of Christ" (Ignatius of Antioch – "Epistle to the Magnesians") over the ekklesia (assembly) of that city. From the ranks of the elders (*presbuteros* [4245]) men (*episkopos* [1985]) rose up and placed themselves in a superior, elevated position over the rest of the flock and, by practice and teaching which became inviolable tradition, demanded that the rest of the people – saints, deacons *and* the other elders – submit to their rule. That Jesus had forbidden this format of leadership was overlooked entirely. (Mk. 10:42-43)

The KJV and NKJV's usage of "perverse things" here is also somewhat misleading. That is, it paints a picture – much like the usage of "iniquity" for "lawlessness" (Mt. 24:12, etc.) – of blatant evil and sin. But the Greek word here is *diastrepho* [1294] and it simply means "to distort, turn aside, especially to oppose or plot against the saving purposes and plans of God, to turn aside from the right path, to pervert, corrupt." It is not that the bishops rose up from the ranks of the elders and began to encourage outright sin and rebellion against God but rather that the bishops rose up from the ranks of the elders (much like Korah rose up against Moses – Num. 16:2-3) and, under the deception of "benevolent leadership" and their pre-supposed "delegated authority" purportedly from God to direct the actions of the people, caused the people to depart from the right path of following God. Instead of teaching the people to hear God and obey Him for themselves (Jn. 10:27, 14:23-24, 1 Jn. 2:27), they taught most that the people needed other men to stand between them and God, men who would listen to God and then interpret for and explain and declare to the people the words they said were from God.

That much got lost in this "translating" the words of God from the man to the people is an understatement to say the least. One reason God hates the teachings and practices of the Nicolaitans (Rev. 2:6, 15) is because it inherently distorts what He is saying to His people. Another is that the personal relationship He desires to have with His people is given to a man who is incapable of fulfilling the role he has taken on and both God and His people are robbed of the intimacy they would otherwise enjoy with one another. Let every "pastor"-pope (or whatever other title or role the Nicolaitan clergy operate under) tremble at what he has done!

And, believe it or not, the roots of the word "clergy" come to us from Peter's instruction to the elders to not be lords over the flock!

...neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. (1 Pet. 5:3 KJV)

The word rendered *heritage* (Greek *kleros* [2819]) here is rendered *lot* or *portion* elsewhere (Acts 1:26; 8:21) and refers to the portion, goods, advantage or wealth incurred through inheritance, gambling, ministry or even war. The flock, the whole flock, was God's portion or share of the prize in the New Testament. But from that Greek word, (*kleros* [2819]), within two centuries, the clergy would be "more prized" by God according to the "church fathers." The extent to which false religion has been successful in blinding men's minds to the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ is never so apparent as here. The demonic lured men

into taking the very command to not lord over the flock so as to concoct a “Scriptural” basis for lording over the flock! Not much different from the devil’s Scripture-twisting temptations of Christ! (see Mt. 4:6) Thus, it is not a rare occurrence today for a “pastor” or his assistants (all members of the clergy class) to denounce the evils of clergyism - all while they hate for anyone to call them clergy! The blind are never so blind as when they refuse to see.

The main lecture hall of the “church” building presents us with another clear case of the deceptive work of the demonic against the people of Christ. The lecture hall (what it is in reality in most “churches” today) is often called the “sanctuary.” The Greek word is “hagion” [39] and it refers to the Holy Place in the temple where God’s Presence resided. The word is used only in the letter to the Hebrews (who would have had at least some chance of seeing the similarity and grasping the differences between the physical and the spiritual temples being discussed – see Heb. 9:24, etc.) The temple was forbidden to all Gentiles (see the Jews’ reaction when some cried out that Paul had brought an Ephesian Gentile into the temple – Acts 21:28-29), and especially the Holy Place (where the ark of the covenant and some other specially dedicated articles were kept – Heb. 9:2-3) was strictly forbidden to all except the High Priest who was to go in once a year. (Heb. 9:25) God had said through the prophet Ezekiel, “No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart or uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter My sanctuary, including any foreigner who is among the children of Israel.” (Ezek. 44:9)

Yet in the “church” “sanctuary,” *all* are not merely welcome, they are *expected* to attend the lectures (“sermons”) and are, in many mega-“churches” especially, the best paying customers! The “church” staff *expects* the mixed multitude to come into their “church” “sanctuary” and sees no problem with this whatsoever and ridicules anyone who thinks an assembly of saints would ever be anything but a mixed multitude! This is how far the “church” has lowered the standards so as to make “heaven” more accessible to the multitudes. Jesus, on the other hand, rather than change the message or lower the standards, asked even His own closest disciples, “Do you also want to go away?” (Jn. 6:67) What a very *different* approach the “church” has from Jesus!

Jesus is the *only* Person said to be the Servant or Administer (Greek *leitourgos* [3011]) of the heavenly sanctuary (Heb. 8:2-3) which temple *is* the people of Christ. (1 Cor. 3:16-17) The spirit of lawlessness has been working since the time of the apostles so as to bring the devil (whether inside a man or himself in person is immaterial to this discussion) into a place where “he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” (2 Ths. 2:4) Paul instructed Timothy to “Follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” (2 Tim. 2:22) This instruction *cannot* be obeyed in the context of a mixed multitude!

The astute observer will note immediately the similarity between the word *leitourgos* [3011] and the word “liturgy” which now the “church” virtually relies on (whether formal, informal, precisely detailed and written out or broad and unwritten or even mostly unspoken!) for its “order of worship.” Whereas the true body of Christ is to rely on the leading of the Holy Spirit of Christ to administrate the activities of the people of Christ (the temple of the Lord), the “church” needs a written order (most often compiled in compliance with blind tradition by professional, paid secretaries or back-room committees and Christ has nothing whatsoever to do with the process in any way). This blind substitution has not happened by accident.

And, extensive as this study has been, this list could go on . There is no pulpit, no pew, no steeple, no praise leader, no altar calls, no Sunday School, no revivals, etc. in the New

Testament. All these are modern additions, insertions, evolutions, revolutions and mixtures that have been grafted onto the pure way of following Christ. These are the earthly, sensual and demonic wisdoms that have been used by the spirit of false religion (the demonic spirit aspect of “Mystery Babylon”), the spirit of antichrist and the other “rulers of the darkness of this age” that blind the minds of men to the light of Christ’s gospel (Eph. 6:12, 2 Cor. 4:4) to draw men away from the living God.

Come Out!

The call is to “Come out from the midst of her” (Mystery Babylon – Rev. 18:4) and to “Come out from among them” (the “Christian” idolaters who in truth follow a false religion as is evidenced by their sinful deeds – 2 Cor. 6:17, 1 Cor. 5:10-11) so that we do not become like them and share in her judgments. Whether the spirit of false religion leads us to “go in the way of Cain, to run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and or to perish in the rebellion of Korah” (Jude 11) makes no difference.

The way of Cain is to bring one’s own possessions or the fruit of the cursed ground (symbolic of works of the flesh) before the holy, pure and transcendent God and expect Him to receive it as acceptable in His sight. It is to demand that God call lawlessness (the practice of what is right in one’s own eyes) righteous (what is right in God’s eyes). Lawlessness (choosing which “church” or “theology” or “pastor” we approve of) is the primary fuel for the “church.”

Greed for profit (whether financial or emotional or both) is what drives the Nicolaitan “pastors.” Balaam means “not of the people” and his name is placed right next to the deeds and practices of the Nicolaitans (which means “rule over the people”), a sin which Jesus *hates*. (Rev. 2:14-15) Lording over the people so as to make some personal gain is to follow in Balaam’s footsteps, a man viewed by the Jews as a deceiver to be abandoned and disdained and it is precisely here that one finds the main pillar of the “church,” the “pastor.”

The rebellion of Korah is not necessarily a fight for the position of “top dog” or “pack leader” (“pastor” or “bishop”) over the local assembly. It is to say to those who are truly operating in the Spirit of Christ and God, “We hear Him too – what gives you any right to be the one to speak God’s words?” Nicolaitanism furthers this by saying, “We have the approval of men and the title and credentials to prove it – what we say comes from God has more validity than what those ‘lone ranger prophets out there’ are saying!” This is a primary tool for silencing or dismissing the truth of God and keeping such “foolishness” from influencing the people to leave the “church.”

To come out from among these things means to completely abandon the “church” paradigm and all its practices. It means to practice again the agape love that makes us fundamentally different from the world and by which the world will know we belong to Jesus. (Jn. 13:35) It means to release our own opinions and be taught afresh the truth as the Holy Spirit of truth teaches and leads us into all truth. (Jn. 16:13) It means to forsake the perpetual

teachings of men (1 Jn. 2:27, Heb. 5:12-14) whereby we acquire knowledge that puffs up (1 Cor. 8:1) “line upon line, precept upon precept” (the way God *judges* people whose hearts are far from Him – see Isa. 28:9-14) and instead we must practice the things that make for sound doctrine. (see Tit. 2:1-15) “Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.” (Jas. 1:27) Everything else is just mere “church.”

Let he who has ears hear.

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