

# THE TWO BABYLONS

By Ralph Woodrow

Article ID: DC187<sup>1</sup>

This article first appeared in the volume 22, number 2 (2000) issue of the *Christian Research Journal*. For further information or to subscribe to the *Christian Research Journal* go to <http://www.equip.org>.

In my earlier Christian experience, certain literature fell into my hands that claimed a considerable amount of Babylonian paganism had been mixed into Christianity. While the Roman Catholic Church was the primary target of this criticism, it seemed the customs and beliefs with which pagan parallels could be found had also contaminated other churches. Much of what I encountered was based on a book called *The Two Babylons* by Alexander Hislop (1807–1862).

Over the years *The Two Babylons* has impacted the thinking of many people, ranging all the way from those in radical cults (e.g., the Jehovah's Witnesses) to very dedicated Christians who hunger for a move by God but are concerned about anything that might quench His Spirit. Its basic premise is that the pagan religion of ancient Babylon has continued to our day disguised as the Roman Catholic Church, prophesied in the Book of Revelation as "Mystery Babylon the Great" (thus, the idea of *two* Babylons — one ancient and one modern). Because this book is detailed and has a multitude of notes and references, I assumed, as did many others, it was factual. We quoted "Hislop" as an authority on paganism just as "Webster" might be quoted on word definitions.

As a young evangelist, I began to preach on the mixture of paganism with Christianity, and eventually I wrote a book based on Hislop, titled *Babylon Mystery Religion* (Ralph Woodrow Evangelistic Assn., 1966). In time, my book became quite popular, went through many printings, and was translated into Korean, German, Spanish, Portuguese, and several other languages. Hundreds quoted from it. Some regarded me as an authority on the subject of "pagan mixture." Even the noted Roman Catholic writer Karl Keating said, "Its best-known proponent is Ralph Woodrow, author of *Babylon Mystery Religion*."<sup>2</sup>

Many preferred my book over *The Two Babylons* because it was easier to read and understand. Sometimes the two books were confused with each other, and once I even had the experience of being greeted as "Reverend Hislop"! As time went on, however, I began to hear rumblings that Hislop was not a reliable historian. I heard this from a history teacher and in letters from people who heard this perspective expressed on the *Bible Answer Man* radio program. Even the Worldwide Church of God began to take a second look at the subject. As a result, I realized I needed to go back through Hislop's work, my basic source, and prayerfully check it out.

As I did this, it became clear: Hislop's "history" was often only an arbitrary piecing together of ancient myths. He claimed Nimrod was a big, ugly, deformed black man. His wife, Semiramis, was a beautiful white woman with blond hair and blue eyes. But she was a backslider known for her immoral lifestyle, the inventor of soprano singing and the originator of priestly celibacy.

He said that the Babylonians baptized in water, believing it had virtue because Nimrod and Semiramis suffered for them in water; that Noah's son Shem killed Nimrod; that Semiramis was killed when one of her sons cut off her head, and so on. I realized that no recognized history book substantiated these and

---

<sup>1</sup> This article was taken from <http://www.equip.org/articles/the-two-babylons/>.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Keating, *Catholicism and Fundamentalism* (San Francisco: Ignatius Pree, 1