

A BIBLICAL MYSTERY SOLVED : PETER'S BABYLON REVEALED!

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Published On : December 14, 2010

Last Updated : December 14, 2010

Babylon The Great Is Rome Theory, Apostle Peter Went To Rome Theory, Peter And Paul Disagree In Antioch, Barnabas And Paul Disagree And Split Up, Did Peter Visit Old City Of Babylon In Mesopotamia?, Slow Demise And Eventual Desertion Of Babylon, Greek General Seleucus Nicator, Seleucia And Antioch, Syria, Flavius Josephus, Antiquities of The Jews, Seleucia Massacre, Reasons Why Peter May Not Have Gone To Babylon In Babylonia, Babylon Fortress In The Nile Delta, Coptic Cairo / Old Cairo, Mary & Joseph Flee To Egypt, Mark The Evangelist Establishes Christian Church In Alexandria, Egypt, Peter Writes Epistle From Babylon, Egypt While With Mark, Spiritual Sons, Timothy Wonderful Treasures And Mysteries Of God's Word, Conclusion

The following article concerns a Biblical mystery which has baffled me personally for a number of years now. It concerns the question of where Peter wrote his first Apostolic letter from. Do you think that you know the answer to this question? Has God already revealed this mystery to you? If not, then I invite you to join me as I reveal the information that I have uncovered, as I undertook my own journey to solve this Biblical question.

As I note in my 1998 article "Revelation's Babylon The Great Whore", one widely-embraced belief suggests that Babylon the Great -- which is discussed in the Book of Revelation -- may possibly be a coded reference to the city of Rome. According to the people who promote this particular doctrine, the name "Rome" was replaced with "Babylon", in order to protect the propagation of God's Word during the First Century era. In other words, by adopting this kind of coded system -- so it is said -- the Early Christians were able to write about and discuss different issues that were related to Rome and its evil leadership, without drawing attention to themselves, or hopefully, at least drawing less attention to themselves.

While the "Babylon = Rome" theory is interesting, and does have some degree of merit, as I explain in the series "Lies And Deceptions Of The Roman Catholic Church", currently, I am not fully convinced that it is the proper interpretation of the Scriptures. This particular theory is directly related to yet another Roman Catholic doctrine which claims that the Apostle Peter went to Rome where he was eventually crucified. However, the New Testament seems to indicate that, for the most part, the Apostle Peter traveled primarily within the borders of Israel. In reading the Book of Acts, we discover that Peter, together with the Apostles James and John, who the Lord Himself selected as His innermost circle, guided the Early Christian Church from Jerusalem, and certainly not from the city of Rome.

To my knowledge, there are only two places in the Scriptures where we are told that Peter physically left Israel. One of these instances is when he left Jerusalem in order to visit the Apostle Paul in the city of Antioch, Syria. In fact, it was during that particular visit that Peter and Paul had a

rather strong disagreement, as we see by these verses:

"But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?"

Galatians 2:11-14, KJV

Allow me to clarify what is going on in those verses, for those of you who may not understand them. As I explain in other articles, when Paul first began to win the Gentiles to Christ, there were some questions and challenges regarding what Jewish laws the new Gentile converts were required to keep, such as circumcision, for example. What Paul is saying in those verses is that prior to the Apostle James sending some brethren from Jerusalem to Antioch, Peter didn't have a problem with intermingling with the Gentile converts. But the minute that the brethren arrived from Jerusalem -- which included some Jews who still believed that circumcision was necessary -- Peter began to act very differently, even going so far as to separate himself from the Gentile brethren, as if they were an unclean thing. In fact, we are told that even Barnabas -- who was Paul's companion -- also began to do the same.

So, in those verses, Paul is saying that he stood them to the face, and accused them of acting like utter hypocrites. We know this because the word "dissembled" is derived from the Greek word "sunupokrinomai", which the Thayer's Greek Lexicon defines as meaning "to act hypocritically with". In those same verses, the word "dissimulation" is derived from the Greek word "hupokrisis", which, as you can probably tell, means dissimulation or hypocrisy.

This is not the only time that Barnabas had a falling out with the Apostle Paul. As I've mentioned before, when Paul suggested that he and Barnabas revisit some of the churches they had established, Barnabas wanted to take along John Mark, but Paul disagreed with that suggestion, and here is what happened:

"Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also. And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do. And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus; And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches."

Acts 15:35-41, KJV

Some sources suggest that after Peter visited Paul and the

Gentile brethren in Antioch, he went on to visit some of the other churches in the cities of Asia Minor, which today is a part of Turkey. This belief is based on Peter's opening lines in his first Epistle where he writes the following:

"Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied."

1 Peter 1:1-2, KJV

Please notice, however, that there is nothing definitive in those verses which indicates that Peter physically visited those places. Perhaps he did, as it doesn't seem likely that Peter would have written to the brethren there, unless they knew him personally. On the other hand, Peter does address them as strangers; so maybe He merely wrote to the Christian brethren in those cities, without having ever visited them in person. Perhaps he simply wrote a pastoral letter to them at Paul's request, or maybe at Mark's request. I write to a lot of people whom I have never met in person; don't you?

At any rate, another place in the New Testament where we find the Apostle Peter traveling outside of physical Israel is in the following verse that is found at the very end of that same Epistle; and it is this particular verse which is apparently used to try to support the Rome equals Babylon theory. Consider the following:

"The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son."

1 Peter 5:13, KJV

It seems to me that the Apostle Peter would not have written on the behalf of the Church at Babylon, or on the behalf of Marcus, unless he was actually physically with them at the time that he wrote his Epistle. In my mind, it just wouldn't make sense for him to write from that particular perspective, unless he was actually with them. Thus, in reading both the beginning and the end of his first Epistle, my impression is that he wrote to the brethren in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia while he was with Marcus -- or Mark -- in Babylon. That understanding makes perfect sense to me.

Suggesting that the previous verse is actually referring to Rome is personal speculation at best; and there are no other verses in the New Testament to support that conjecture. Until now, it's been my impression that this verse may possibly be an indication that Peter may have made an apostolic visit to a Christian Church that had been established in the ancient city of Babylon. By this time, however, Babylon would have no longer been the grand metropolis that had been established by the Babylonian kings, and which was later ruled by both the Persians and Greeks as well. In fact, there would not have been much left to it at all by the time of the 1st Century. Thus, the Greek lexicon states the following concerning the demise of Babylon:

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Cyrus had formerly captured it, but Darius Hystaspis threw down its gates and walls, and Xerxes destroyed the temple of Belis. At length the city was reduced to almost solitude, the population having been drawn off by the neighbouring Seleucia,

built on the Tigris by Seleucus Nicanor.

----- End Quote -----

Here we see that Persian kings Cyrus -- Koresh -- Darius and Xerxes all contributed to Babylon's demise; and this process was continued by Greek General Seleucus Nicanor, who was also known as Seleucus Nicator. It may interest you to know that while Seleucus Nicator first established the capital of the Seleucid Empire at Seleucia -- which had a negative effect on neighboring Babylon -- it was not long after this that the Greek general moved the Seleucid capital to Antioch in Syria. As we have already seen, Antioch, Syria eventually became an important hub for Christianity as well. In fact, as you may recall, the followers of Christ were first called Christians at Antioch, as we see by these verses that are found in the Book of Acts:

"Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."

Acts 11:25-26, KJV

Today Antioch, Syria is a the seat of a patriarchate of the Oriental Orthodox Church.

As I explain in a number of other articles, the fall of the city of Babylon was a fulfillment of some of the prophecies of the ancient Israelite Prophets, and was due to the fact that the Babylonians, under the leadership of Nebuchadnezzar, invaded, captured and destroyed Jerusalem. This included the complete destruction of the Temple of Solomon, as well as the theft of all of the holy golden objects which had been in it.

But is this really the Babylon that the Apostle Peter may have visited, as mentioned at the end of his Epistle? As I said, until recently, I had assumed that it was; but I am not so certain anymore. One reason why I have my doubts is because of something that occurred in neighboring Seleucia. In his "Antiquities Of The Jews", Jewish historian Flavius Josephus informs us of a terrible massacre that occurred in Seleucia in about the year 41 BC. Historical records inform us that as a direct result of persecution by the Greeks and the Syrians, Seleucia had become a refuge for some of the Jews, who were the descendants of the Jewish captives who had been taken to Babylon by the forces of Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar over five hundred years earlier.

In chapter nine of Book 18 of his "Antiquities Of The Jews", Flavius Josephus tells us that the Greeks and the Syrians of that time overcame the differences which divided them, and found a common enemy in the Babylonian Jewish refugees. This resulted in the massacre of about 50,000 Jews around 41 BC. In a translation of the "Antiquities" by English theologian, historian, and mathematician, William Whiston, we read the following:

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"Now the way of living of the people of Seleucia, which were Greeks and Syrians, was commonly quarrelsome, and full of discords, though the Greeks were too hard for the Syrians. When, therefore, the Jews were come thither, and dwelt among them, there arose a sedition, and the Syrians were too hard

for the other, by the assistance of the Jews, who are men that despise dangers, and very ready to fight upon any occasion. Now when the Greeks had the worst in this sedition, and saw that they had but one way of recovering their former authority, and that was, if they could prevent the agreement between the Jews and the Syrians, they every one discoursed with such of the Syrians as were formerly their acquaintance, and promised they would be at peace and friendship with them. Accordingly, they gladly agreed so to do; and when this was done by the principal men of both nations, they soon agreed to a reconciliation; and when they were so agreed, they both knew that the great design of such their union would be their common hatred to the Jews. Accordingly, they fell upon them, and slew about fifty thousand of them; nay, the Jews were all destroyed, excepting a few who escaped, either by the compassion which their friends or neighbors afforded them, in order to let them fly away. These retired to Ctesiphon, a Grecian city, and situate near to Seleucia, where the king [of Parthia] lives in winter every year, and where the greatest part of his riches are repositied; but the Jews had here no certain settlement, those of Seleucia having little concern for the king's honor. Now the whole nation of the Jews were in fear both of the Babylonians and of the Seleucians, because all the Syrians that live in those places agreed with the Seleucians in the war against the Jews; so the most of them gathered themselves together, and went to Neerda and Nisibis, and obtained security there by the strength of those cities; besides which their inhabitants, who were a great many, were all warlike men. And this was the state of the Jews at this time in Babylonia."

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Considering then that there wouldn't have been much left to Babylon at the time that Peter would have theoretically made such a journey, as well as the terrible massacre which had taken place in nearby Seleucia seventy-five to one hundred years prior to that time, I honestly don't know that Peter would have been motivated to go there. We also need to keep in mind that the Jews weren't exactly greatly loved in that part of the world; and travelling across some five hundred miles of potentially hostile territory might not have been particularly appealing to the Apostle.

On the other hand, several weeks ago, while conducting some Biblical research for a new article that I've been working on, I made an interesting discovery which I found rather surprising. This discovery sheds considerable light on the Biblical mystery which we are now discussing. In fact, I've become convinced that this new information truly reveals to us, exactly where Peter wrote hi first Epistle from. As it turns out, during the early part of the First Century AD, when Christ walked the Earth, and His Apostles were still alive, there was another city named Babylon in existence. It was located in the northeastern corner of Egypt, in the Nile Delta area. The Wikipedia website states in part:

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"Babylon . . . was a fortress city or castle in the Delta of Egypt. It was situated . . . upon the right (eastern) bank of the Nile . . . and near the commencement of the Pharaonic Canal (also called Ptolemy's Canal and Trajan's Canal), from the Nile to the Red Sea. It was the boundary town between Lower and Middle Egypt, where the river craft paid tolls when

ascending or descending the Nile . . . Josephus, with greater probability, attributes its structure to some Babylonian followers of Cambyses, in 525 BC. In the age of Augustus, the Deltaic Babylon became a town of some importance, and was the headquarters of the three legions which ensured the obedience of Egypt."

----- End Quote -----

Please notice the final part of the previous description. We are told that it was an important town during the age of the Caesars, or more specifically, Augustus Caesar, and was used as a strategic fortress to ensure Egypt's obedience to Rome. This was precisely at the time of Jesus Christ, when Roman forces occupied Israel as well. On reading this information, I was inspired to realize that I had finally begun to solve another Biblical mystery that's baffled me for years. At this point, I was already becoming convinced that this must have been the Babylon that the Apostle Peter had visited, and not some kind of mysterious Babylon/Rome, as some Roman Catholic supporters like to claim.

However, my surprise did not end there, and I soon came to realize that there was even more evidence which pointed to, confirmed and revealed this ancient city as being the real Babylon that Peter more than likely visited. As I continued my research concerning Babylon Fortress, I discovered that today it is known as Coptic Cairo, or Old Cairo, being as it is the oldest section of that ancient city. In fact, some of the ancient remains of the Roman fortress can still be seen there. But that is not all. As it turns out, it is commonly believed by the Coptic Christians of Egypt -- who are some of the oldest known Christians in the world -- as well as by other Christians, that Joseph, Mary and the baby Jesus spent some time in Babylon, Egypt, after Joseph was warned by God in a dream to flee to Egypt, in order to escape persecution from evil King Herod, as we see by these verses:

"And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son."
Matthew 2:13-15, KJV

Concerning these events, the Wikipedia website states the following:

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"It is traditionally held that the Holy Family visited the area during the Flight into Egypt, seeking refuge from Herod . . . Egypt was a logical place to find refuge, as it was outside the dominions of King Herod, but both Egypt and Palestine were part of the Roman Empire, making travel between them easy and relatively safe"

----- End Quote -----

But perhaps the most compelling reason that I have found to accept Babylon, Egypt as the Apostle Peter's destination, is that it's also directly associated with Mark the Evangelist,

the author of the Gospel of Mark. According to the Wikipedia website -- and this information can be confirmed by a number of other websites as well -- Mark became the first Patriarch of Alexandria, Egypt, which means that Babylon -- which is located some one hundred and forty miles to the southeast of Alexandria -- would have been under his jurisdiction. Please consider the following Wikipedia excerpts taken from several different pages:

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Further it is held that Christianity began to spread in Egypt when St. Mark arrived in Alexandria, becoming the first Patriarch, though the religion remained underground during the rule of the Romans.

Under the Romans, St. Mark and his successors were able to convert a substantial portion of the population, from pagan beliefs to Christianity."

According to ancient tradition, Christianity was introduced to the Egyptians by Saint Mark in Alexandria, shortly after the ascension of Christ and during the reign of the Roman emperor Claudius around 42 AD. The legacy that Saint Mark left in Egypt was a considerable Christian community in Alexandria. From Alexandria, Christianity spread throughout Egypt within half a century of Saint Mark's arrival in Alexandria, as is clear from a fragment of the Gospel of John, written in Coptic, which was found in Upper Egypt and can be dated to the first half of the 2nd century, and the New Testament writings found in Oxyrhynchus, in Middle Egypt, which date around the year 200 AD. In the 2nd century, Christianity began to spread to the rural areas, and scriptures were translated into the local language, today known as the Coptic language (which was called the Egyptian language at the time). By the beginning of the 3rd century AD, Christians constituted the majority of Egypt's population, and the Church of Alexandria was recognized as one of Christendom's four Apostolic Sees, second in honor only to the Church of Rome. The Church of Alexandria is therefore the oldest church in Africa.

Saint Apostle Peter wrote his first epistle from Babylon (north of Old Cairo), when visiting Mark (1 Peter 5:13). When Mark returned to Alexandria, the pagans of the city resented his efforts to turn the Alexandrians away from the worship of their traditional Hellenistic gods. In AD 68 they placed a rope around his neck and dragged him through the streets until he was dead.

----- End Quote -----

A word of caution: Please realize that some of the previous information is based on Coptic Church traditions, and Roman Catholic Church traditions, and finds no actual support in the Bible. You'll notice, however, that the final paragraph does confirm exactly what I suggested earlier; that is, that Peter must have been physically with Mark in Babylon, Egypt at the time that he wrote his first Epistle. What makes this evidence even more convincing in my mind, and persuades me that this is the answer to our Biblical mystery, is that it seems that the historical record agrees with the Biblical record. Let me share that verse with you one more time:

"The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son."

1 Peter 5:13, KJV

So to reiterate, this verse makes it very evident that if Peter was physically in Babylon, Egypt at the time that he wrote his Epistle, Marcus was with him as well. Please note that the phrase "my son" does not necessarily mean that Mark was Peter's biological son. Peter could have been speaking in a spiritual sense, just as the Apostle Paul referred to Timotheus as his son as well, as we see in this verse:

"For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church."

1 Corinthians 4:17, KJV

In other words, the word "son" was likewise used as a way to express brotherly affection between fellow Christian believers during the First Century. What you may also find interesting is the fact that in his first Epistle to his "beloved son" Timothy, Paul asks Timothy to bring Mark with him, because he can use him in the ministry, as we see by this verse:

"Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry."

2 Timothy 4:11, KJV

I noted earlier that the distance from Jerusalem to Babylon in Babylonia was over five hundred miles; which would have made it a long, potentially-dangerous journey for Peter. In contrast, the distance from Jerusalem to Babylon, Egypt -- or Coptic Cairo as it is known today -- would have been just over two hundred and fifty miles. Not only that, but a large part of that distance would have been through Israel itself, and both Israel and Egypt were controlled by Rome, which would have made it a much safer journey for Peter.

Considering all of the evidence which has been revealed by way of this article, I have pretty much forsaken the idea that Peter went to Babylon, Babylonia, and am now fairly well convinced that this Biblical mystery has been solved. I believe that Peter may in fact have gone to Babylon, Egypt, where he then proceeded to write his first Epistle. Regarding Mark the Evangelist, I propose that either Peter met up with him there, or maybe Mark even accompanied Peter on his trip to Babylon, Egypt. Of course, these thoughts are merely my personal speculation, which is based on the evidence which I have been able to uncover. So, what do you think? Has this Biblical mystery been solved in your view? Has the truth been revealed?

I hope that you have enjoyed reading this short article as much as I have had the pleasure in writing it. Truly, the Bible is a very fascinating Book; and personally, I really delight in unraveling some of its many mysteries, as well as uncovering some of its treasures. How about you? I am reminded of these verses:

"Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."

Psalms 119:18, KJV

"Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it."

Psalms 139:6, KJV

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge
of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways
past finding out!"
Romans 11:33, KJV

"Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is
instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man
that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his
treasure things new and old."
Matthew 13:52, KJV

With these inspiring verses, I will bring another article to
its conclusion. Thank God for His Word!

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