

# The Babylonian Mysteries

## The Covenant Broken

Ezekiel 8-11 describes the events surrounding the Shekinah Glory, the literal and tangible presence of God Almighty, leaving his Mercy Seat on the Ark of the Covenant. Moses had been instructed how to construct the Ark in Exodus 25, and the Glory of God had been present since leaving Egypt. During their departure from Egypt, God was physically present as pillars of either cloud or fire when moving and as the Shekinah Glory when stationary over the Mercy Seat. In 1 Kings 8, at the dedication of Solomon's temple, God sets his seat in that building "*to dwell in forever.*"

But it was not to be. Solomon himself began the decline with the introduction of foreign leaders and influences into Israel, and after his death the kingdom split into 2, Israel in the North of 10 tribes, and Judah in the south with Benjamin. Israel and Judah would not again unite, and it is why the terms 'Israelite' and 'Jew' are practically, though not technically, interchangeable.

Moses was an entirely new covenant, as was Abraham, as the people had forgotten or grown bitter of their God that they were to worship so fervently. The establishment of the Ark of the Covenant, the Tabernacle and later Temple and their associated services was intended to be a relational point that the people had with their God. However, unlike all the pagan groups which surrounded the Chosen People, their services were full of meaning and absolutely devoid of power.

In Exodus 25, the plans for the tabernacle and furniture are described by Moses as they were relayed to him on Mount Sinai. God said to Moses, "*let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.*" The Temple was not to be furnished with idols and elements of the gods, but that God himself would be present with them. The ceremonies and sacrifices had now power whatsoever, as the God to whom they reflected was ever present with them. From the Tabernacle or from the Temple, a bright light would always shine from the Most Holy Place, reminding the people he was always there. This light would never dim, never diminish and only move when the

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people in the wilderness moved; at which time it would become the pillar of cloud by day and fire by night. God was, with his people, ever present and not some pagan belief system.

That was, until Ezekiel's time. In about 580 BC, some 400 years after the Temple was build, another 400 or so years after the Exodus, Ezekiel in chapter 8-11 describes the Shekinah Glory departing from the Temple for the last time. It would not return. The Children of Israel had chosen idolatry and paganism and Josiah, the last good King of Judah, had not restored the true religion for long. The covenant made between Moses for Israel and God had been finally broken and the people would now have to face the consequences. Babylon would invade and destroy the Temple and take all the treasures to Babylon save one. The Ark of the Covenant itself. This has now been lost to history, its whereabouts to this day unknown. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Book of Maccabees, chapter 2 describes Jeremiah hiding it in a cave near where Moses spoke with the lord but also states that the wilderness tabernacle was sealed up with it, and this is known to have been pitched in Babylon. To this day nobody knows where the Ark of the Covenant is, and much blood, ink and sweat have been wasted in the search.

### **Daniel, the New, Non-Covenant**

At what seems the earliest possible opportunity, the moment that the hostages were taken into Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar's forces, God began communing with one who seems to have been trustworthy and true to the faith of this fathers. The book of Daniel is a new type of revelation, in the same style as the previous leaders like Moses but with many elements of Ezekial, Isaiah and Jeremiah that do not fit into the covenants. Moses established a new covenant and created its rules, the progressive prophets acted as safeguards and warnings from God to remind the people of their responsibilities. With their apostacy, the Shekinah Glory finally judged that their covenant had bee broken and withdrew, and the prophets turned very dark, predicting destruction of the people and Holy City. But they also started to predict the final coming messiah, despite to be freed from the bondage they had brought on themselves with their treason against God.

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Daniel's writings exist as a new type of revelation in the light of these other prophets. He is not a new covenant, the people have proven themselves untrustworthy to have a new covenant, but rather heralds a new type of relationship between God and people. As Daniel prays his lament in Chapter 9, Gabriel, the most senior created being in the pantheon of Heaven, gives him a revelation. This is neither a promise nor a warning, but simply informs Daniel of what is about to take place.

*“24 ”Seventy weeks are determined  
For your people and for your holy city,  
To finish the transgression,  
To make an end of sins,  
To make reconciliation for iniquity,  
To bring in everlasting righteousness,  
To seal up vision and prophecy,  
And to anoint the Most Holy.*

*25 ”Know therefore and understand,  
That from the going forth of the command  
To restore and build Jerusalem  
Until Messiah the Prince,  
There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks;  
The street shall be built again, and the wall,  
Even in troublesome times.*

*26 ”And after the sixty-two weeks  
Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself;  
And the people of the prince who is to come  
Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.  
The end of it shall be with a flood,  
And till the end of the war desolations are determined.*

*27 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week;  
But in the middle of the week  
He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.*

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*And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate,  
Even until the consummation, which is determined,  
Is poured out on the desolate.” “*

Gabriel is simply informing Daniel that events will take place whether he likes it or not. There is no debate, no discussion, it is a warning and advice. Daniel and his people can do nothing to stop or avoid these events. This is not a covenant where Israel must follow God's will, it is an announcement that these events are to take place. Instead, Daniel is told that his people have “*Seventy weeks... For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, [and] To make reconciliation for iniquity*”. After the 490 years are over, the Israelitish nation will no longer be Gods chosen people. We know this is because they will be superseded by Christianity, but for Daniel this is a notice of divorce, and a harsh one at that.

What makes this announcement so profound, and so radically different to most other recorded prophecies is the explicit nature of the pronouncement. It has a defined start point; “*the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem*” and an explicit time period. The language is clear and announces the arrival of “*Messiah the Prince*”, who the Jews have been waiting for so long. But with his arrival, a new prince is also prophesied; an “*abomination*” with destruction in his wake who “*Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary*”. In these few words, the judgement on Israel is pronounced. Israel is doomed for this power “*Shall destroy*” not only “*the city*” but the “*the sanctuary*” also. The people and their holiness will cease after this power has done his will.

Daniel does not exist as a new covenant, but a declaration of judgement.

## The Babylonian Systems

Babylon and Egypt were close allies through much of their history and shared much philosophy and science, despite their geographic separation. Although there is much debate amongst scholars about if the mysteries of Babylon were their own or were developed by older cultures, the Chaldean wisdom was perfected during the Babylonian period. The Babylonians chose to spread this throughout their empire, as

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was detailed in Chapter 1. Daniel and his associates were taken so they could learn “*the language and literature of the Chaldeans*” and support the King as a ruler in Babylon. The entire purpose of these hostages was to corrupt their people to Babylonian ways.

When we talk about the Babylonian Mysteries, we are generally discussing a series of mathematical, spiritual and philosophical principals passed down through time that still have an impact on our world today. Although the examples of Egypt are much better preserved as historical fact, the Babylonian examples are evident in our everyday lives, such as:

- The sexagesimal, or base-60 system that is still used today was developed from an earlier Sumerian system. Circles of 360 degrees can be divided into 6 equal parts and use the number 60 as a base system.
- The timing system we still use today; 60 seconds to a minute and 60 minutes to an hour was invented in Babylon.
- The study of astronomy pushed the Babylonians to develop a moon-based calendar contrasting the Egyptian sun-based one. There is some evidence of attempts to marry these two together through a crude leap year. Our modern calendars use this marriage combining a 365.25 day solar year with a 12 month lunar year.
- The Babylonians were the first civilization known to possess a functional theory of the planets. This was independent of the circular system the Greeks would use in which they studied the motion as data instead of attempting to conform it into a form they could understand.
- Babylonian astronomers developed zodiac signs, many of which are still included in constellation maps and star names today.
- The Babylonians invented the Saros system that, over about 18 years, allowed them to predict solar and lunar eclipses and other natural phenomenon.
- The first recorded form of the number 0 is found in post-Persian conquest Babylon but is referenced in such a way that most scholars believe it was extant long before.

All these systems had deep foundations in Babylonian religion. Nabu, the God of Wisdom, has been identified with the Roman Mercury, the messenger God who

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brought these wise teachings of reason and mathematics from the Gods down to humans. When the Chaldeans did mathematical functions or studied the stars, they saw it as worshiping their Gods and performing divine tasks. They, like all pagan religions, saw doing life as being in close consort with the Gods, and that every task required invocation of the divine.

### **The Corruption of the Israelites in Babylon**

This way of life was dramatically different to the Israelites, who believed that God had set them aside for a purpose. The Jews always claimed to be a separated and a special people, and their activities and practices demonstrated this clearly. Abraham's descendants were aware of the principals laid down in the Ten Commandments long before Moses received the Tablets, and the book of Genesis serves as the writing of an oral history to prove these traditions. In particular, the opposition to idols and idolatry was a key distinction between Israel and the rest of the nations of the world. God was ever-present with the Israelites, speaking directly Abraham, Issac, Jacob and the old fathers and giving Joseph dreams; they had no need of idols. After the Exodus, Gods presence was clear in the pillars of cloud and fire or in the Shekinah Glory detailed above. But at the apostacy of the people became general and the last chances to return failed, this presence departed, and the decimated Israelites blamed anything and everything except themselves to explain God's abandonment.

On their arrival to captivity, the leaders who had been hostages were now indoctrinated into the Chaldean and pagan way of things. Daniel would not have been older than 20 when he went to Babylon and we can assume most were much younger; ill trained in their own religions and not equip to stand up to the intellectual onslaught. Far from home, abandoned by their God, the comforting words of their pagan teachers would have sounded like music to their ears when they began to understand that they were doing the right things, just aiming them in the wrong direction. This would have been especially comforting when one considers the Zoroastrian religion that was the core of Babylonian religious practise.

Moses had taught his children that the Tabernacle and Temple services pointed forward to events that would happen, but God's renunciation of the covenant meant

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they now needed to atone and be returned to his fold. The language of their sacrifices and ceremonies took on new meaning as they were reexplained by the pagan intelligentsia; the sin offering did not point **toward** the coming messiah, they said, it **was** the offering. The people had misunderstood the language, and their ceremonies could be performed to their God, not just in anticipation of a future. God was not upset because they apostatized, he was upset that they had not gotten the right idea in the first place.

These lies were backed up by the Babylonian sciences, clear demonstrations, it was told, that their Gods spoke to them. Predicting cosmic events and movements meant that their Gods could speak to them, and they were given the tools to understand. The tools of mathematics and reason quickly replaced the language of faith and trust that the Jews had always held tightly onto, and the Jews turned these tools to their own scriptures to see what esoteric knowledge they could find. Under the guidance of pagan leaders, the doctrines of Maaseh Breishit and Maaseh Merkavah, literally the “work of Creation” and “work of the Chariot” became the object of research for the Jewish scholars; hidden meanings within the text that were placed there for man to search for. God had now not only abandoned his people, but was actively keeping things from them.

Such research was, and remains, highly prized and secretly protected. As the language of Isaiah and, especially, Ezekiel was searched, connections with their pagan learnings became apparent and the scholars started to believe that there was value in decoding their writings. Innocent faith was replaced with a desperate desire to understand what God was really thinking, which contradicted the system Moses and Solomon had setup.

At the same time, the desperate desire for their freedom was also forefront in their minds, and it was not long before the idea of a Messiah became the focus of investigation using their newfound pagan tools. Talmudic mysticism quickly became a concept whereby the Jews believed they had some ability to influence events as God had responded to their entreaties in the past. The exceptionally personal nature of the events of Genesis became the core of the idea that the Jewish people, the Chosen People, could actually intercede with God and have him change or alter events, they were just now not in a position to do so owing to their apostacy. The orthodoxy that

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arose during the Babylonian period made a mockery of God's law, replacing faith with an ideology that keeping the law would make their universe better. While the Jews never worshiped idols, their focus on the temple services was with such passion and devotion that they put their pagan counterparts to shame, believing in what we would today call 'salvation by works'.

This dichotomy of apostatising by becoming fiercely orthodox permitted the Jews to excuse a wide variety of practices and events as they took place. Rules were changed to outlaw the death penalty, but sectarian violence was commonplace until the Roman destruction in AD70. The Ark of the Covenant was not restored and instead replaced by a block of white marble, but the Most Holy Place in the Second Temple was more fiercely protected than that of the first. When the Romans wished the Jews to worship their Emperor, the leaders who were supposed to understand the importance of protecting the faith of the people but were bought and paid for accepted the instruction while the people rioted and rebelled. A new feast, Hanukkah, was established to remember a human victory and not a divinely inspired one, where they would earlier have accepted Antiochus' attacks as a judgement from God.

As is the norm for such systems, the basic measurements of time and calendar; different to those Moses established, were taught to new children and appropriate adjustments were made to the old festivals to accommodate them into the new order. While these, fundamentally, retained the purpose set down by their fathers, God, through Moses, had warned *"32 Therefore you shall be careful to do as the Lord your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. 33 You shall walk in all the ways which the Lord your God has commanded you, that you may live and that it may be well with you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which you shall possess."* Deuteronomy 5. But the devil attacks through the small, mundane things like the time of day or the names of days of the week; things that can be easily explained. It is inefficient to have every day with two names or two dates, and when trade and commerce is done in only one of those, it is easy for that to become the dominant system. God's times and laws were sacrificed for the everyday necessities of life and with it went the deeper respect for God's right as master of the universe.



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The Jews did not notice their new apostasy and by the time they did, nobody was alive that could explain the rationale. In the past the Levites had remained pure, but now the Levites were the ones actively apostatising. There was no safety net anymore and the Jewish nations would never again be the same. This corruption is why John the Revelator used Babylon and not Rome as his focal point of corruption in his book.

### **The Babylonian System and Religion Spreads**

The fall of Babylon was not the end of their religious practices as cultures are generally permitted to exist beyond their political falls. The same was true of Babylon. As we know, many elements of Babylonian practices like the structure of time and basic mathematics were all preserved through to the present day. At this point Babylonian religion and practise divide from the Jewish influences as they return back to Jerusalem for the reconstruction. The Babylonian practices that are a part of the Jewish culture are preserved while Babylon itself falls to Persia who have little respect for their teaching and ideologies. The Persian conquest of Babylon in 539 BC saw them overtake the Babylonian systems but they were generally indifferent to what they took. They ruled as the head of Zoroastrianism but only nominally.

While the Persians did not persecute the Babylonian religion, it did generally ignore it and, as time continued, started to see it as a source of taxation. As would happen today, this caused widespread dissatisfaction and unrest prompting widespread revolts shortly after Xerxes became King in 484BC. Two Babylonians, Bel-shimanni and Shamash-eriba were both, separately, recognised by the rebels as King of Babylon and began movements to overthrow the Persian rule. By October both uprisings had been crushed. Xerxes himself is supposed to have written the Daiva inscription, a set of tablets that describes his intolerant approach toward foreign religions, including this piece about a rebellion assumed to reference Babylon:

*“... when I became king, there was among these countries one that was in rebellion. Ahuramazda bore me aid. By the grace of Ahuramazda I smote that country and put it down in its place.*

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*And among these countries there was a place where previously demons (daiva) were worshipped. Afterwards, by the grace of Ahuramazda I destroyed that sanctuary of demons, and I proclaimed: 'The demons shall not be worshipped!' Where previously the demons were worshipped, there I worshipped Ahuramazda at the proper time and in the proper manner. And there was other business that had been done ill. That I made good. That which I did, all I did by the grace of Ahuramazda. Ahuramazda bore me aid until I completed the work."*

To try and keep the Babylonians in check, the city of Uruk was reorganised to become the home of Babylonian religion, however the priests themselves were not willing to participate. Instead, *"the defeated Chaldeans fled to Asia Minor, and fixed their central college at Pergamos, and took the palladium of Babylon, the cubic stone, with them. Here, independent of state control, they carried on the rites of their religion"*. (William B. Barker, Lares and Penates: or, Cilicia and Its Governors, Ingram, Cooke and Co., London, 1853, pp. 232–233). In Pergamos (Modern day Bergama in the İzmir Province of Turkey), the Attalid Dynasty flourished and shared its knowledge amongst the Greek-speaking world with a highly respected library, and great altar being a pilgrimage place for scholars across the world. The Babylonian mysteries that the priests had brought after their destruction in Babylon became a central part of the Greek world, with the system of numbers for angles and time continuing from Babylon into the Greek scientific world.

The Greeks search for knowledge also connected them to the Jewish scriptures, as the Septuagint demonstrates. Ptolemy II Philadelphus asked 72 rabbinic translators to convert the Jewish scriptures from their best Hebrew through to Greek which forms the best basis of translations that we have today. The Greeks wished to understand all philosophies they could, or at least have access to them, and especially Athenian and Ephesian philosophers enjoyed debating the problems of the universe from different perspectives.

## The Little Horn

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When the Babylonian scholars and priests came to Pergamum, they freely taught their new Greek allies all that they knew and Greek traditions adapted where possible to incorporate these ideologies. This set was not just the Babylonian Gods, but also the Chaldean and Zoroastrian cultures that the Greeks also began to incorporate. After Alexander the Great's Empire was split amongst his four generals, the Babylonian Mysteries came under the prevue of Lysimachus until one of his lieutenants, Philetaerus, rebelled and founded the Pergamum Kingdom in 281BC. This is the connection where the "*little horn*" came "*out of one of*" the four that arose after Alexander. Skipping Persia entirely, the corrupting influences that had perverted Israel now came into Lysimachan Pergamum until Attalus III died in 133 BC. He bequeathed his territory and his treasure to the city and people of Rome. This included his titles, one of which being the Senior Pontiff of the college of Priests – the Pontifex Maximus. To be clear, this was also a title that existed in Rome before 133 BC, but the spread of philosophical ideologies also meant that the Roman College of Pontiffs were heavily influenced by the Babylonian ideologies. The overlordship of them, however, was passed first to the Greeks and then to the Romans.

The Babylonian Mysteries were spread around the Greek world through their philosophical trade lanes, and infected the Greek empire somewhat naturally, as described in Daniel 8.

They were bequeathed to Rome where the senior religious role became analogous of the head of the Babylonian Mysteries, as detailed in Daniel 8.

## **Christianity**

This Babylonian attitude of adopting cultures and philosophies to new purposes became a hallmark of the Roman Christian Church. During Constantine's mastery especially, the adoption of a variety of Pagan ceremonies to Christianity to make the religion more palatable to Pagan believers was a hallmark of the early Christian Church. A myriad of different pagan ceremonies and practices, not limited to Sunday observance, Easter, Christmas, Marian and Saint worship, priestly intercession and many others followed in direct contradiction to God's instructions to the Jews to be a chosen people.

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God had instructed his followers to not have anything to do with Paganism, but after the Babylonian Captivity, this was ignored in favour of making interacting with their neighbours much easier, while retaining an aloof attitude. Within a very short space of time after Christ's death and resurrection, the Christian church was stripped of this guiding influence without any opportunity to learn from their arrogance. The Babylonian Mysteries and their focus on compromise and adapting philosophies to their own advantages became a cornerstone of the Roman Church and, like the Jews earlier, their attempt to avoid the apostacies they had already engaged pushed them to a conservative and orthodox philosophy that they today hold so dear.

*“when the teachers of the Babylonian mystery religions later moved from Pergamum to Rome, they were influential in paganism Christianity and were the source of many so-called religious rites which have crept into ritualistic churches”*  
- John Walvoord, chancellor of Dallas Theological Seminary (The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Revelation).

The earlier compromises produced a fundamental set of beliefs that are now unquestionable in the Roman Church despite their clearly being incompatible with the Jewish Scriptures they inherited. From the Sabbath to indulgences, the philosophical underpinning of the Babylonian Mysteries are why the Protestant Reformation failed, with the Roman Church simply attempting to adjust and make the best of their situation. In 2016, Pope Francis praised Luther's approach and all but said he was correct, saying *“today Lutherans and Catholics, Protestants, all of us agree on the doctrine of justification. On this point, which is very important, he did not err. He made a medicine for the Church”*. (<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/34103/full-text-pope-francis-in-flight-press-conference-from-armenia>) The Roman Church is still demonstrating its dichotomy of attempting to remain relevant and fundamental at the same time. It is still demonstrating the philosophy of the Babylonian Mysteries and, so far as we read in Daniel and Revelation, this will continue until the Time of the End.