Any effort to trace the origins of the myth, legend, and lore of goddess-worship will eventually lead one back to a single historical figure---Semiramis, wife of Nimrod and queen of Babylon, and this is especially true when considering the goddess/planet Venus.

Before we can begin to deal with Semiramis though, we must (as with any historical figure) gain at least a general understanding of her cultural and temporal setting. Since I have found in my researches that neither proven scientific truth nor gleanings of fact from the body of ancient legends in any way contradicts a proper understanding of biblical revelation, I will use the scriptural framework of history as a basis upon which to reconstruct the story of Semiramis the woman.

When Noah and his family left the ark after the flood, they settled first at the northern feet of Ararat facing what is today Georgia, USSR. From here, these eight souls began to spread out into the surrounding districts of northern Iran and Syria, as well as eastern Turkey. After a considerable period (perhaps 5 to 6 hundred years), the families of Noah's descendants began to scatter a bit more widely due to increasing population, and perhaps some degree of rivalry or even enmity between the families of Japheth, Shem, and Ham. In this way we find that within about half a millennium the entire "fertile crescent", as well as the Nile valley, the Anatolian and Iranian plateaus, Arabia, and Ethiopia have been sparsely settled---but with a decided majority of Noah's descendants living in the lower regions of Mesopotamia (which would come to be called Sumer and Akkad).

Modern archaeology has confirmed the fact that the first inhabitants of these areas were homogeneous in both race and culture, and the most reliable researches indicate that it was from here that population, animal husbandry, metallurgy, agriculture, and "citification" spread throughout the earth. The scientific and scriptural views are in exact agreement upon the origin and spread of races and civilization---the only point of difference is the time scale involved! Whereas the scriptures clearly indicate the existence of all these elements of civilization long before the flood; orthodox science, by it's denial of the bible is required to construct a mythical stone age several millennia long in order to account for the same phenomena.

It was in Mesopotamia that the first cities were built after the flood, and the first of these was quite naturally named after the very first city built by man before the flood---Enoch. Due to vagaries of linguistic permutation, this name has come down to us as Erech or Uruk in Sumeria. In all there were seven major cities built near the head of the Persian Gulf, leading to the name "Land of the Seven Cities" commonly found in the early mythologies of the world. These seven cities are enumerated in Genesis as those which were conquered by Nimrod, establishing the world's first empire. The earliest Babylonian legends tell of a conquering people who came up out of the Persian Gulf and established an empire from these cities. This seems to fit well with what we know of the movements of Nimrod in his early career. He was a native of Ethiopia and was widely traveled among the few populated areas of those days. When he set out to build himself an army of conquest, he recruited from his "cousins" the descendants of Sheba and Dedan who had come up through Arabia to settle on the Asian mainland at the Straight of Hormuz and on the Indus river in what is now Afghanistan (these people were the Dravidians who were driven southward into India by the later Aryan invasion). After raising his army, Nimrod ferried them up the gulf in the world's first naval armada, and conquered his empire. The best
estimates place the time of the conquest as about 4000 to 3500 BC, and about 1000 years after the flood of Noah.

In the midst of the tumult of war Nimrod and Semiramis met--and in none too savory circumstances, for tradition states that she was an inn/brothel keeper in the city of Erech---leading one to speculate upon the nature of their initial acquaintance. Semiramis was a native of Erech, which as evidenced by it's name seems to have been built by a Hamitic family (Ham's wife was said to have been descended from Cain who built the first Erech in honor of his son). The name Semiramis is a later, Hellenized form of the Sumerian name "Sammur-amat", or "gift of the sea."

The initial element "sammur" when translated into Hebrew becomes "Shinar" (the biblical name for lower Mesopotamia), and is the word from which we derive "Sumeria". This one tarnished woman then, had such a lasting impact upon world history that not only do we call by her name the land from which civilization flowed, but God himself through the sacred writer has let us know that its distinguishing characteristic was that it was "the Land of Shinar," or Semiramis. Very little has come down to us through the millennia concerning Semiramis' rise to power, but it is safe to assume that it was initially upon Nimrod's coattails that she rode, although later in life as well as throughout history her influence overwhelmingly obscured that of her husband. Of course, it would not do to have an ex-harlot upon the throne, so the "polite fiction" was invented that she was a virgin sprung from the sea at Nimrod's landing, and hence a suitable bride for the emperor (thus the title Semiramis which has totally obscured her original name).

Semiramis was the instigator in forming the false religion aimed at supporting their rule, and of course her suggestion fell upon open ears. The religion she invented was based primarily upon a corruption of the primeval astronomy formulated by Noah's righteous ancestors before the flood. In the original this system depicted by means of constellations the story of Satan's rebellion and the war in the heavens, his subversion of mankind, the fall of Adam and Eve, the promise of One to come who would suffer and die to relieve man from the curse of sin then be installed as Lord of Creation, and the final re-subjugation of the cosmos to God through Him.

These eternal truths were corrupted by her (rather, quite obviously, by the evil one controlling her) into a mythic cycle wherein the great dragon is depicted as the rightful lord of the universe whose throne has been temporarily usurped by One whom we can recognize as the God of the Bible. The serpent creates man in his present miserable state, but promises that a child would one day [be] born of a divine mother----which child would supplant God, become a god himself, and return rulership of the Earth to the serpent. These fables were based upon the then widely-known story of the constellations, and were introduced under the guise of revealing the hidden esoteric knowledge concealed in them (regardless of the fact that the original was quite straightforward).

Although this esotericism was the second element in Semiramis' cult, it only masked the actual goal which was the worship of the "heavenly host," which the Bible equates with Satan's army of fallen angels. Satan was quite willing to receive worship "by proxy", hence the third major element of the mystery religion was emperor-worship. This religion was propagated by a hierarchy of priests and priestesses, to whom were assigned the task of initiating the populace at large into it's ascending degrees of revelation, culminating at the highest level in both direct worship of Satan and demon-possession.

Although Nimrod was a brilliant strategist, he made a fatal blunder when he allowed Semiramis to retain full control over this religious hierarchy, and through it the minds and hearts of the people; for when a schism occurred between them, she was able to turn it from a tool of support into a deadly weapon. The rift between husband and wife occurred when the queen bore an illegitimate son, and the king threatened her with both dethronement and exposure of her true origin. Semiramis, of course
would not allow this to take place, and devised a plot to overthrow Nimrod.

During the course of the New Year's festivities at which the advent of Nimrod's rule was celebrated, there was a certain feast exclusively for the royal family and the upper echelons of the priesthood. During this feast, which included "courses" of psychedelic and hallucinogenic drugs, a year-old ram was traditionally sacrificed by being torn limb-from-limb while still alive, and it's flesh eaten raw. This ram symbolized the old year passing into the heavens to allow room for the new year. A new-born lamb was then presented which, symbolizing the new year, would be kept and fattened for the next year's ceremonies. This year Semiramis directed the ritual according to the formula, with the exception that when the time came for the ram to be slaughtered, it was the king who was torn to pieces at the hands of the drug-crazed priesthood and Semiramis' bastard son was installed as king. Thus Nimrod, the mighty hunter, died a horrible death as a trapped beast himself.

Semiramis named her son Damu (from the Sumerian "dam," or blood), which in the later Babylonian language became Dammuzi, in Hebrew Tammuz, and in Greek Adonis. Of course, Semiramis assumed the regency for her infant son, and ruled as absolute monarch for 42 more years. In order to avoid having to kill her son on the next New Year's Day, she instituted an annual nation-wide sports competition, the winner of which would have the "honor" of taking Damu's place and ascending into heaven to become a god.

Semiramis was not unopposed in her arrogation of the regency, however, or her rule as a woman. The military arm of the government was divided into two camps for and against her, and a short war ensued which ended when the populace (roused by the priesthood) not only refused to support the "rebels" but actively opposed them. In the course of this war, though, things became so close that Semiramis was forced to build a system of walls, towers, and gates around Babylon to defend herself. She was thus the first to build fortifications and her crown afterwards was in the form of the turreted walls of Babylon. To oppose the accusations of "mere" womanhood laid against her, she had herself deified as the mother of the god Damu (since only a god can beget a god), and installed as "The Queen of Heaven" pictured in the constellation Cassiopeia, which the ancients had intended as a corporate representation of those people faithful to God who will be enthroned by Him after the end of the age.

In spite of her cleverness, though, she also sowed the seeds of her own destruction. As she raised her son, she imbued him with divinity in the eyes of the priests and people as the means of retaining control as the divine mother without seeming to aggrandize herself. As Damu grew he became used to having every whim instantly gratified by a subservient, indeed groveling, populace. For safety's sake he had a personal bodyguard/companion group which he was never without, and which formed an elite corps of soldiery loyal and accountable to him alone. Upon coming to maturity and demanding of his mother to be installed as king, she not only refused him this--but, seeing him now as a challenge to her rule, slated him for the same death she had meted to his father. Damu caught on to her scheme, and preempted his "assumption" by slaying his mother with his own sword, and putting down any priestly protests by purging the hierarchy of all who would not vow allegiance to him. Thus Semiramis died after reigning as queen over Babylon for 102 years.

These events laid the groundwork for all of the pagan religious systems of antiquity, as well as many alive today. Semiramis, in particular was the model and original of every goddess and female cult figure in the ancient and modern worlds (either directly or by derivation); and thus it is essential to know her story in order to discern what is factual legend and what is merely myth.

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Resources:

- *SEMIRAMIS: Legendary Mysterious Great Queen of Assyria, edited by George E. Foryan*
- *Legend of Semiramis, by George E. Foryan*
- *Worship of Semiramis, (Bahai)*
- *The Original Goddess: Semiramis of Babylon, by Yisrayl Hawkins, House of Yahweh*
- *Semiramis, Queen of Assyria, (Amazon Nation)*
- *The Two Babylons, The Mother of the Child, Alexander Hislop*
BABYLONIAN RELIGION
By Harry A. Ironside

As we go back into the dim twilight of history with Scripture, we learn that the founder of Bab-el, or Babylon, was Nimrod, of whose unholy achievements we read in the 10th chapter of Genesis. He was the arch-apostate of the patriarchal age. He is described as a "mighty hunter before the Lord" -- "a hunter of the souls of men," the rabbis said. Going out from the presence of the Lord, he impiously sought to gather a multitude about himself, and in defiance of the express command of God to spread abroad upon the face of the earth, he persuaded his associates and followers to join together in "building a city and a tower which should reach unto heaven."

Not surely as some of us were taught in our childhood, a tower by which they might climb up into the skies to escape another possible flood, but a tower of renown, rising to a great height, to be recognized as a temple or rallying center for those who did not walk in obedience to the word of the Lord. With all the effrontery of our modern apostates, they called their city and tower Bab-El, the gate of God; but it was soon changed by divine judgment into Babel, Confusion. It bore the stamp of unreality from the first, for we are told, "they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar." An imitation of that which is real and true has ever since characterized Babylon in all ages.

Nimrod, or Nimroud-bar-Cush, as he is called on the monuments, was a grandson of Ham, the unworthy son of Noah, whose character is revealed in his exposure of his father's shame. We know that Noah had brought through the flood the revelation of the true God, for he was a preacher of righteousness, and his utterances on more than one occasion show that he had the prophetic gift. Ham on the other hand seems to have been all too readily affected by the apostasy that brought the flood, for he shows no evidence of self-judgment, but the very opposite. His name, as spelled out upon Egyptian monuments is Khem, and this agrees with the literal sound of the Hebrew word rendered Ham in our Bibles. It means "swarthy," "darkened," or more literally, "the sun-burnt." The name indicates the state of the man's soul. For what is a sun-burnt person? One who is darkened by light from heaven. Ham had been granted wonderful mercies; he was saved from the flood because of his father's faith, but he abused his privileges and "turned the grace of God into lasciviousness." He was actually darkened by the burning rays of light that God caused to shine upon his soul. Thus his conscience became seared as with a hot iron, and he became the founder of a race that departed from the living God and led the way into idolatry, worshipping and serving the creature more than the Creator.

We know something of what this means. We speak of people today who have become, as we say, gospel-hardened. They too have been darkened by the light, and are often the ringleaders in apostasy: "If the light that is in thee becomes darkened, how great is the darkness." There are many in the world tonight who used to listen with tears in their eyes to the story of the matchless grace of God as revealed in the cross of Christ, but are unmoved now though that story be told ever so tenderly; they have become hardened in their sins, and their seared consciences no longer feel the Spirit's breath. It is a most dangerous thing to trifle with the light from heaven.

But to proceed with our theme, Ham became darkened by the light. We know his failure and sin. But when Noah had recovered himself and knew what his son had done unto him he pronounced, by the spirit of prophecy, a curse upon Canaan, not on Ham. Do you wonder at that? I did, until I saw that God had already pronounced a blessing upon all three sons of Noah – Shem, Ham, and Japheth. So Noah passes over his unworthy son and utters a curse upon Canaan, who we can well believe was, as we say,
"a chip off the old block." Ham begat a son named Cush, "the black one," and he became the father of Nimrod, the apostate leader of his generation.

Ancient lore now comes to our assistance, and tells us that the wife of Nimrod-bar-Cush was the infamous Semiramis, the First. She is reputed to have been the founder of the Babylonian mysteries and the first high-priestess of idolatry. Thus Babylon became the fountainhead of idolatry, and the mother of every heathen and pagan system in the world. The mystery-religion that was originated there spread in various forms throughout the whole earth, and as we shall see in a few minutes, it is with us today. It is identical with the mystery of iniquity which wrought so energetically in Paul's day, and shall have its fullest development when the Holy Spirit has departed and the Babylon of the apocalypse holds sway.

Building on the primeval promise of the woman's Seed who was to come, Semiramis bore a son whom she declared was miraculously conceived, and when she presented him to the people, he was hailed as the promised deliverer. This was Tammuz, whose worship Ezekiel protested against in the days of the captivity. Thus was introduced the mystery of the mother and the child, a form of idolatry that is older than any other known to man. The rites of this worship were secret. Only the initiated were permitted to know its mysteries. It was Satan's effort to delude mankind with an imitation so like the truth of God that they would not know the true Seed of the woman when He came in the fullness of time. To this Justin Martyr bears definite witness.

From Babylon this mystery-religion spread to all the surrounding nations, as the years went on and the world was populated by the descendants of Noah. Everywhere the symbols were the same, and everywhere the cult of the mother and child became the popular system. Their worship was celebrated with the most disgusting and immoral practices. The image of the queen of heaven with the babe in her arms was seen everywhere, though the names might differ as languages differed. It became the mystery-religion of Phoenicia, and by the Phoenicians was carried to the ends of the earth. Ashtoreth and Tammuz, the mother and child of these hardy adventurers, became Isis and Horus in Egypt, Aphrodite and Eros in Greece, Venus and Cupid in Italy, and bore many other names in more distant places. Within 1,000 years, Babylonianism had become the religion of the world, which had rejected the Divine revelation.

Linked with the central mystery were countless lesser mysteries, the hidden meaning of which was known only to the initiates, but the outward forms were practiced by all the people. Among these were the doctrines of purgatorial purification after death, salvation by countless sacraments (such as priestly absolution), sprinkling with holy water, the offering of round cakes to the queen of heaven (as mentioned in the book of Jeremiah), dedication of virgins to the gods (which was literally sanctified prostitution), weeping for Tammuz for a period of 40 days prior to the great festival of Istar (who was said to have received her son back from the dead); for it was taught that Tammuz was slain by a wild boar and afterwards brought back to life. To him the egg was sacred, as depicting the mystery of his resurrection even as the evergreen was his chosen symbol and was set up in honor of his birth at the winter solstice, when a boar's head was eaten in memory of his conflict and a yule log burned with many mysterious observances.

The sign of the cross was sacred to Tammuz, as symbolizing the life giving principle and as the first letter of his name. It is represented upon vast numbers of the most ancient altars and temples, and did not, as many have supposed originate with Christianity. From this mystery-religion, the patriarch Abraham was separated by the divine call, and with this same evil cult the nation that sprang from him had constant conflict, until under Jezebel, a Phoenician princess, it was grafted onto what was left of the religion of Israel in the northern kingdom in the day of Ahab, and was the cause of their captivity at the last. Judah was polluted by it, for Baal-worship was but the Canaanitish form of Babylonian mysteries, and only by being sent into captivity to Babylon itself did Judah become cured of her fondness for idolatry. Baal was the Sun-God, the Life-giving One, identical with Tammuz.
When Christ came into this world the mystery of iniquity was everywhere holding sway, save where the truth of God as revealed in the Old Testament was known. Thus, when the early Christians set out upon the great task of carrying the gospel to the ends of the earth, they found themselves everywhere confronted by this system, in one form or another; for though Babylon as a city had long been but a mystery, her mysteries had not died with her. When the city and temples were destroyed, the high-priest fled with a company of initiates and their sacred vessels and images to Pergamos, where the Symbol of the serpent was set up as the emblem of the hidden wisdom. From there, they afterwards crossed the sea and immigrated to Italy, where, they settled on the Etruscan plain.

There the ancient cult was propagated under the name of the Etruscan Mysteries and eventually Rome became the headquarters of Babylonianism. The chief priests wore mitres shaped like the head of a fish, in honor of Dagon, the fish-god, the Lord of life-another form of the Tammuz mystery, as developed among Israel's old enemies, the Philistines. The chief priest when established in Rome took the title Pontifex Maximus, and this was imprinted in on his mitre. When Julius Caesar (who was an initiate like all young Romans of good family) had become the head of the States, he was elected Pontifex Maximus, and this title was held henceforth by all the Roman emperors down to Constantine the Great, who was at one and the same time, head of the church, and high priest to the heathen. The title was afterwards conferred upon the bishops of Rome, and is borne by the pope today, who is thus declared to be, not the successor of the fisherman-apostle Peter, but the direct successor of the high priest of the Babylonian mysteries, and the servant of the fish-god Dagon, for whom he wears, like his idolatrous predecessors, the fisherman's ring.

During the early centuries of the church's history, the mystery of iniquity had wrought with such astounding effect, and the Babylonian practices and teachings had been so largely absorbed by that which bore the name of the church of Christ, that the truth of the Holy Scriptures on many points had been wholly obscured, while idolatrous practices had been foisted upon the people as Christian sacraments, and the heathen philosophies took the place of gospel instruction. Thus was developed that amazing system which for a thousand years dominated Europe and trafficked in the bodies of souls of men, until the great Reformation of the 16th century brought in a measure of deliverance.