
Αποκάλυψη
REVELATION
17:1-19:6 (Babylon Part 1)

OVERVIEW

From a worldview that no longer exists to its remnants in the modern world



MAIN POINT

- What we are going to do
  - Examine the world the way the ancients saw it
  - Understand religious progression across time and space with the migration of ideas and beliefs
  - Show the similarity in beliefs and structures across these groups
- Some key thoughts
  - Same system across time and culture
  - More than just religious views, but an entire worldview very distinct from our own
- Why do this?
  - If this system comes back, in reality and not just aesthetic, then we need to know what it truly is
  - If it comes back, it may not come back from the directions we think it will
  - Part of better understanding the Bible, and better understanding the yet-future period

MAGIC IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

SYMPATHETIC MAGIC
things act on one another at a distance through a secret sympathy (Frazer 29)

LAW OF SIMILARITY "like produces like" (Frazer 29)
→ **Homoeopathic (imitative) magic**

Babylon: an enemy's image in clay, pitch or wax is burned or buried; a hymn begs the fire-god Nusku to break the spell of "those who have made images of me" (Frazer 35)
Egypt: at Thebes a figure of the serpent Apepi was burned daily so Ra would beat back darkness and storm (Frazer 35–36)
Greece: eat the wakeful nightingale to stay awake; smear eagle's gall for keen sight (Frazer 72)

LAW OF CONTACT "once joined, always joined" (Frazer 29)
→ **Contagious magic**

Egypt: a drop of blood, hair, nail-parings or a rag of clothing kneaded into a wax image gave the sorcerer power over its owner (Frazer 35)
Greece: Theocritus' witch melts wax (similarity) and burns a shred of her lover's cloak (contact) (Frazer 94)
Pythagorean maxim: never pierce a man's footprint with nail or knife (Frazer 96)

Positive magic (sorcery): "Do this so that…" **Negative magic (taboo):** "Do not do this, lest…" (Frazer 54)
Women in ancient Italy were forbidden to spin, or even carry spindles openly, on the highroads, lest the crops be harmed (Frazer 55)

Status: *the two laws are a lasting classification; Frazer's claim that magic historically preceded religion is contested (see notes).*

MAGIC AND RELIGION

Magic assumes an impersonal order of nature that the adept can manipulate; **religion** propitiates conscious powers superior to man (Frazer 102, 107)
In the Near East the two fused: Egyptian magicians claimed power to compel even the highest gods (Frazer 103)
The gods themselves practised magic: Isis was famous for her spells; Ea invented magic, and Marduk was "the master of exorcism, the magician of the gods" (Frazer 110)
Durant: sympathetic magic is "the soul of primitive ritual" (Durant I, 64)

TERMS

Homoeopathic: effect by imitation
Contagious: effect through former contact
Taboo: prohibition backed by feared magic
Propitiation: appeasing a higher power

HISTORICAL RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT

ASCENT: FROM MAGIC TO ETHICAL RELIGION

Sources: Frazer, Durant I, Peterson

1 MAGIC & SHAMANISM
Man compels nature by spell (Frazer 107); the shaman heals and guides the tribe into the unknown (Peterson 365, 372)

2 ANIMISM & PROPITIATION
All things have souls; ghosts and ancestors must be fed and appeased (Durant I, 58, 63)

3 ORGANIZED POLYTHEISM
A priestly class, deified kings, gods ranked under one king (Durant I, 64, 68; Peterson 177–180)

4 ETHICAL / HIGHER RELIGION
Ritual model → story → abstract moral law (Peterson 196); the prophets' ethics (Frazer 102)

DECENT: From Godliness to Goofiness

STAGE A: Direct Relationship with God

Adam in the Garden

STAGE B: Sacrifice and Religion
Instituted after the Fall.
Man invents his own over time.
Meant to deal with sin, but sin clouds the judgment.

STAGE C: The Babel System
*Observe nature, to be aligned with it, inverting **Genesis 1:26**.*
Mass idolatry and paganism over relationship or divine ordinances.

STAGE D: Magic Systems
*Inversion of cause and effect. God says, 'if you refuse to understand Me, then you cannot understand the world' (c.f. **Romans 1:18-25**)*

ANCIENT PERCEPTIONS & THE SACRED

A culture's root perception of the world shapes its gods, rites, number and state alike (Spengler 91, 204). Myth maps the world "as it signifies," as a place to act, not as an object (Peterson 166).

	CLASSICAL Greece & Rome · "the body"	**MESOPOTAMIAN** Babylon · "the cosmic state"	**EGYPTIAN** Nile · "the way"	**MAGIAN** Near East, c. AD 1 on · "the cavern"
Perception	Man is a body among bodies; only the near, bounded present is real (Spengler 206, 267)	Gods are forces that seize men; object and effect are not yet separated (Peterson 171–172)	Life is a set path ending before the judges of the dead (Spengler 212)	The world is a cavern in which light battles darkness (Spengler 769)
The divine	Gods are "Euclidean bodies having locality"; even foreign gods are real (Spengler 433–434)	An assembly of gods that makes Marduk king for facing chaos (Peterson 177–181)	Pharaoh embodies ma'at; each dawn Re repels the serpent Apophis (Peterson 189)	One hidden Power pours out wrath or grace; Isis becomes "million-named" (Spengler 436, 771)
Rite & sacred space	Piety is the visible cult, not dogma; mocking the cult (asebeia) was capital (Spengler 439–440)	Man exists to feed and clothe the gods; religion is correct ritual (Peterson 172; Durant I, 240)	The temple is a narrowing processional way to the chamber of the dead (Spengler 212)	Sacrament and scripture; truth is the consensus of the believing "We" (Spengler 206, 771)
Number & cosmos	Number is drawable magnitude; zero, negatives, irrationals felt as impious (Spengler 86–87)	Marduk fixes year, zodiac and stars; Babylonian astronomy reached the infinite (Peterson 182; Spengler 89)	Pure number is hidden in cubic stone architecture (Spengler 90)	Algebra, astrology, alchemy; Diophantus' undefined number (Spengler 92, 206)
State & death	The polis as "the State as statue"; the dead are burned (Spengler 212, 360)	Babylon is "the kingdom of god on earth"; the king imitates Marduk (Peterson 185)	Men built in stone for the dead before the living (Spengler 211)	Caliphate; the dome that "covers in" rather than soars (Spengler 207)

THE MESOPOTAMIAN SYSTEM

THE PANTHEON AS A COSMIC FAMILY

Apsu + Tiamat fresh waters (order) and salt sea (chaos), mingled (Durant I, 236; Peterson 141)

↓

Lahmu & Lahamu → Anshar & Kishar

↓

Anu the sky, the immovable firmament (Durant I, 234)

↓

Ea / Enki the deep; wisdom; magic (Frazer 110)

↓

Marduk son of Ea; king of the gods, god of Babylon, 50 names (Peterson 188)

GODS OF SKY, LAND AND UNDERWORLD

Shamash sun, justice, giver of law
Sin / Nannar the moon
Enlil air and storm; Nippur
Ishtar / Inanna love, war, Venus; "Queen of Heaven"
Tammuz / Dumuzi shepherd, vegetation
Ereshkigal queen of the underworld
Nabu fixes the fates with Marduk; Borsippa
(Durant I, 117–118, 235–238; Frazer 588)

CENTRAL MYTHS

Enuma Elish: Order out of Chaos

- Tiamat raises eleven monsters under Kingu
- Marduk demands kingship, splits her into sky and earth, fixes year and stars, and makes man from Kingu's blood to serve the gods
- The gods build Babylon (Peterson 174–183)

Meaning: Creation is the replacement of chaos by order (Durant I, 237); Frazer reads it as the spring retreat of the winter floods (Frazer 586)

The descent of Ishtar

Stripped at seven gates, Ishtar is held below; on earth all mating stops. Released with the water of life, she returns with Tammuz and nature revives (Durant I, 238–239; Frazer 673)

The mourning for Tammuz

In his month at midsummer an effigy was washed, anointed, robed in red and lamented to flutes, "for the corn that grows not in the ear" (Frazer 673). The women of Jerusalem wept for him at the temple gate (**Ezekiel 8:14**)

RITES AND WHAT THEY DID

Akitu / Zagmuk, the New Year (Nisan)

- Enuma Elish recited; the king stripped and struck by the high priest, his tears a sign of Marduk's favor
- He "takes the hands of Bel"; the gods assemble to fix the year's fates (Peterson 185–187; Frazer 589, 1356)

Meaning: The world sinks back to chaos and is created anew each year

Sacaea: the mock king

A condemned man reigned five days, then was scourged and killed, perhaps in the king's stead (Frazer 589–590)

Sacrifice, prayer, magic

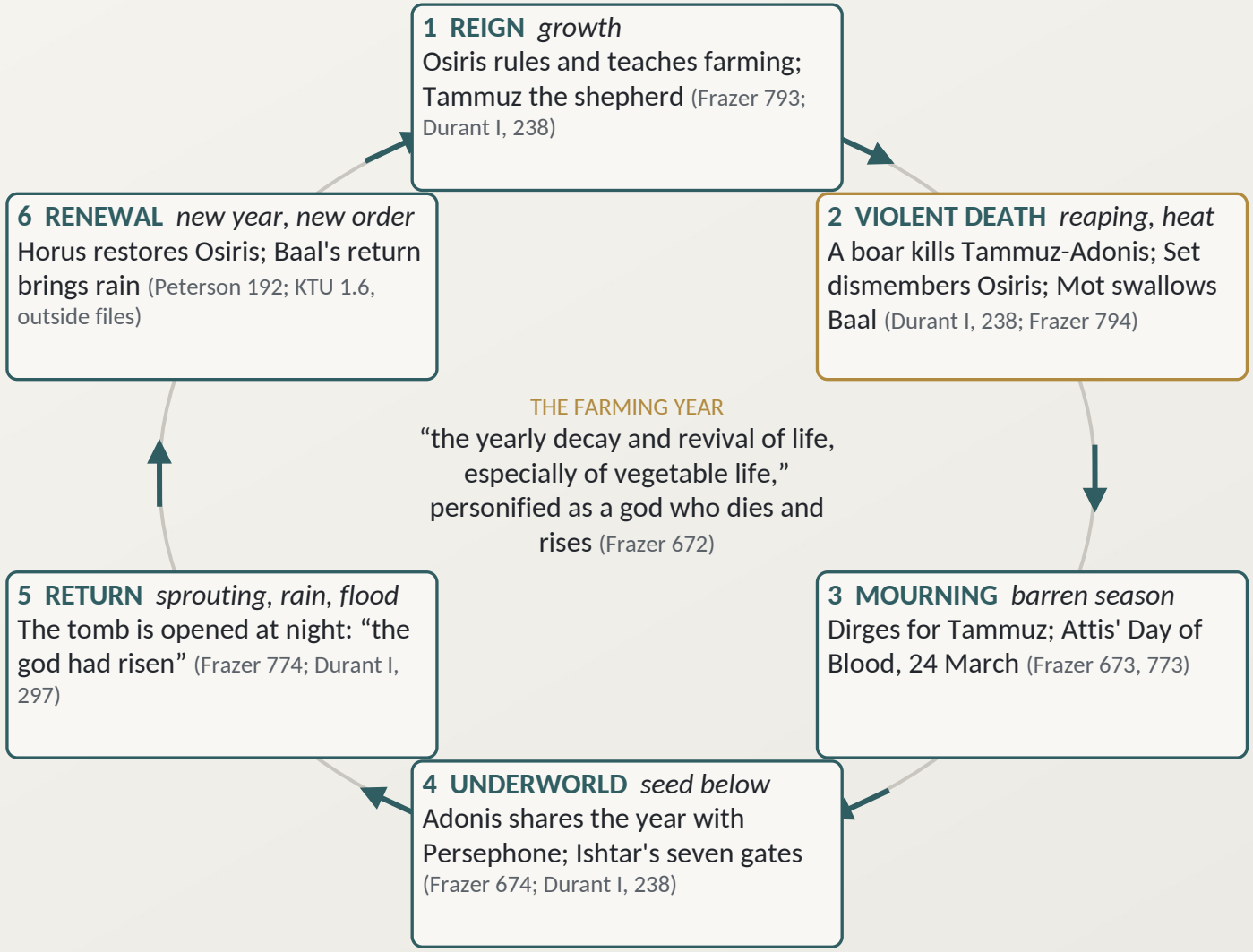
"The lamb as a substitute for a man" (Durant I, 240); penitential psalms in Sumerian (Durant I, 242); sin as a demon in the body, met by amulets, exorcism, liver-reading and astrology (Durant I, 243–244)

Temples and priests

The king was only the city god's agent; temples were the chief landlords, bankers and courts (Durant I, 232–234)

WORLDVIEW Man was made to serve the gods; the state copies heaven; safety lies in ritual more than ethics; all the dead go down to dark Aralu (Durant I, 240; Peterson 183–185)

THE DYING GOD CYCLE



ONE GOD, MANY NAMES

Tammuz · Sumer, Babylon
Lover of Ishtar; mourned in his month at midsummer (Frazer 673; Durant I, 239)

Adonis · Byblos, Cyprus
Lover of Astarte; "gardens" of sprouting grain cast into water (Frazer 761; Durant I, 297)

Attis · Phrygia, Rome
Lover of Cybele; pine-tree rite, 22–25 March (Frazer 772–774)

Osiris · Egypt
Husband of Isis; the Nile and the corn; Khoiak corn-effigies (Frazer 827; Durant I, 200)

Baal · Ugarit (outside files)
Anat cleaves, winnows, burns, grinds and sows Mot like grain; El dreams the heavens rain oil (KTU 1.6)

Deeper reading Order decays and falls into chaos; the son descends, recovers the father and returns renewed (Peterson 190–194)

THE DYING & RISING GOD

	Figure	Goddess	Death → return	Domain	Rite & season	Deeper meaning
Babylonian	Tammuz (Dumuzi); Marduk "shut up in the mountain" (Peterson 186)	Ishtar, "Queen of Heaven" (Durant I, 236)	Gored, goes down to Aralu; Ishtar brings him back (Durant I, 238–239)	Flocks, plants, fertility (Durant I, 117)	Midsummer laments over his effigy (Frazer 673)	Love stronger than death; all life hangs on the goddess (Durant I, 239)
Assyrian	Tammuz; Ashur takes Marduk's role in the ritual battle (Peterson 187)	Ishtar of Nineveh and Arbela (outside files)	Same descent myth, copied at Nineveh and Assur (outside files)	Ashur: solar, warlike (Durant I, 276)	New Year kept in Assyria; "substitute for the king" (Frazer 590; Peterson 187)	The king suffers for his people's sins (Peterson 187)
Egyptian	Osiris, with his son Horus	Isis, "the thousand-named" (Frazer 839)	Set kills and scatters him; Isis gathers him; Horus revives him (Durant I, 200; Peterson 190–192)	The Nile, the corn, judge of the dead (Durant I, 200–202)	Khoiak: corn-effigies; "Osiris is found" (Frazer 826–827)	Every soul may become Osiris and conquer death (Peterson 195)
Greek	Adonis (from Syria); Dionysus-Zagreus; Persephone	Aphrodite; Persephone; Demeter	Boar kills Adonis; year split above and below (Frazer 674); Zagreus torn and restored (Frazer 917)	Grain, wine, the seed	Gardens of Adonis (Frazer 761); Eleusis (Frazer 948)	Persephone is "the fecundity of the seeds" (Varro) (Frazer 948)
Persian	Mithra (not a dying god); Haoma (Durant I, 365)	Anahita (Anaita) (Durant I, 371)	No death; Durant calls Haoma a bull-god who "dying, rose again" (Durant I, 365)	Sun and light (Durant I, 371)	Sun's birthday, 25 December (Frazer 785; Durant I, 372)	Light against darkness (Spengler 769); in the Roman cult the bull's death renews life (outside files)
Roman	Attis (from Phrygia); Virbius at Nemi	Cybele, the Great Mother; Diana	Attis dies under the pine, rises 25 March; Diana has Virbius revived (Frazer 773–774, 15)	Vegetation, sacred tree, king of the wood	Day of Blood, Hilaria; Diana's torches, 13 August (Frazer 13, 773)	"they too would issue triumphant from the corruption of the grave" (Frazer 774)

THE CONSTANT A fertility goddess, her young lover or son, a violent death, mourning, a return, and a rite that helps the season along. By late antiquity worshipers wrote the names as one: "Isis-Magna Mater-Juno-Astarte-Bellona" (Spengler 437)

THE ROMAN TRANSITION

	ROMAN AND NEAR-EASTERN ORIGINAL		ROMAN CATHOLIC FORM
Priesthood & titles	Emperor as Pontifex Maximus, head of the pagan priesthood (Hunt 30, 130); Isis' shaven, tonsured priests singing matins and vespers (Frazer 840)	→	Papal title pontifex maximus, "a legacy from pagan Rome" (Durant IV, 745; Hunt 31); tonsure, matins, vespers (Frazer 840)
The Mother	Isis suckling Horus; Artemis of Ephesus; Astarte and Ishtar as Queen of Heaven (Frazer 840; Durant I, 236)	→	Statues of Isis and Horus renamed Mary and Jesus; "Mother of God" at Ephesus (431); Queen of Heaven; Star of the Sea (Durant IV, 75, 746; Frazer 840; Hunt 278)
Feasts	Birth of the Sun, 25 Dec; Saturnalia; Attis dies and rises, 24–25 Mar; Diana, 13 Aug; Celtic feast of the dead, 1 Nov; Floralia (Frazer 13, 785–787, 825; Durant IV, 75)	→	Christmas and its revels; Passion dated 25 Mar, Easter; Assumption, 15 Aug; All Saints and All Souls; Pentecost (Durant IV, 75, 746; Frazer 14, 825)
Gods into saints	Virbius (Hippolytus) at Nemi; Castor and Pollux; Dea Victoria; Asclepius' dream cures; Romulus and Remus	→	St Hippolytus, 13 Aug; Sts Cosmas and Damian; St Victoire; Peter and Paul as Rome's patrons (Frazer 16; Durant IV, 75, 745; Hunt 265)
Rites & apparatus	Incense, lights, flowers, processions, vestments, hymns; lustral water against spirits; blood sacrifice; votive lamps (Durant IV, 745; Frazer 13)	→	The same, "domesticated and cleansed"; holy water; the Mass as spiritual sacrifice; holy candles (Durant IV, 75, 745; Frazer 13)
Sacred places	Juno's temple on the Capitol; Apollo's oracle-grotto at Marsala; holy springs, oaks, stones	→	St Mary in Aracoeli; a church of St John where girls still drink the prophetic water (Frazer 272, 765); blessed wells, a dolmen chapel (Durant IV, 745)
Underlying ideas	A god who dies and rises in spring; eating the god; amulets and relics (contagious magic); salvation by initiation (Frazer 784; Durant I, 67)	→	Passion and Easter; the Eucharist; the cult of relics; sacraments used popularly as charms (Durant IV, 75, 985)

HOW IT HAPPENED "It was not the priests who corrupted the people, but the people who persuaded the priests" (Durant IV, 75). If this standard view is true, then why did the Church not hold the line?

LESSONS FOR US

- The pagan worldview is fundamentally (though not functionally) the same as the scientific worldview
  - Observe the world to better live in it without reference to God
  - Underlying chaos or origin point underlying mythology as analogous to the undirected evolution or Big Bang
  - Magic and science both assume unchanging, known, natural laws which preclude Divine intervention
  - The idea of human sacrifice can still be seen today, even with many of its ancient ideas intact (e.g. military, abortion), but without even the spiritual context
  - Becoming like the gods we worship (**Psalm 115:4-8**)
- God has implanted in us and our narratives and meta-narratives things which point to Him
  - The more our stories do that, the better they are likely to be and the more likely they will last
  - God has done everything He can to point everything to Jesus (**Romans 1:18-20**); all we have to do is look and listen
  - Examples in **Psalm 19:1-4**
- What makes our faith unique?
  - I have found references to many of the ideas and doctrines of Christianity in other religions
    - The Trinity; the indwelling of the Holy Spirit; the Resurrection; the Word and/or an Avatar, etc.
  - The thing that we have is Christ; that is the real difference and without Him there is little to no difference
  - **John 14:6** is one of the most profound statements imaginable