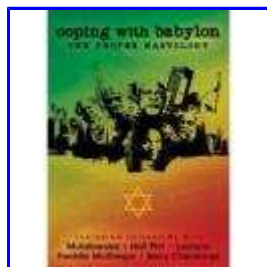


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Coping With Babylon

April 9th, 2008



Title: [Coping With Babylon: The Proper Rastology](#)

Artist: Various

Format: DVD; Region 0 ; NTSC ; Dolby digital surround sound

Label: MVD Visual

Catalog No.: MVD4617

Date: 2007

Coping with Babylon is an intriguing documentary that presents a fresh perspective of Rastafarian worldview. Directed by Oliver Hill, this film attempts to shatter the stereotypical pop culture imagery of modern Rastas. Framed in historical context, *Coping with Babylon* features a mixture of celebrity [Rastafarians](#), leaders and every day Rasta's discussing their "levity" and how it is affected by modern society.

The film opens by deconstructing the concept of Babylon through visual images of material excess and interview excerpts from celebrity Rastafarians including Mutaburka, Luciano, Beenie Man, and Freddie McGregor. After quickly assessing reggae's contribution in spreading Rastafarian philosophy, the film briefly discusses the evolution of Rasta ideology, crediting Marcus Garvey, Leonard Howell and His Imperial Majesty Emperor Haile Salassie as the key figures in the development of the belief system.

What sets *Coping with Babylon* apart from other documentaries on Rastafari is that it goes beyond the historical and musical connection and dives deep into the belief system by addressing the divisions amongst the different orders of Rastafari. The film features a discussion of the more established orders of Nyahbinghi, 12 Tribes and Bobo Ashanti, citing a lack of unity as the central problem facing modern Rastas. Barry Chavannes, professor at the University of the West Indies and noted Rasta scholar, provides the lone academic perspective and only non-Rasta point of view. Also featured is Dermot Fagan, leader of the School of Vision. Fagan presents an interesting example of how Rastas assimilate current events into their worldview. His insight on the microchip, freemasons and the Illuminati binges on conspiracy theory and unfortunately dates the film.

Coping with Babylon: The Proper Rastology is a solid documentary with a run time of 80 minutes. The DVD contains a subtitle option that makes the Jamaican Patois easier to understand. By no means does this film present a definitive explanation of Rasta ideology; however, Hill's approach to the belief system sets *Coping with Babylon* apart from other films on the subject.

Posted by Heather O'Sullivan

Review Genre(s): [Reggae](#)

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