

Babylon: Looking for Love in the Wrong Places

The Biblical symbols of 'Babylon' vs. 'Jerusalem'

This seminar is an experiential application of the three angels messages to our own lives. It is motivated by these quotes from the Spirit of Prophecy.

"Several have written to me, inquiring if the message of justification by faith is the third angel's message, and I have answered, "It is the third angel's message in verity." - Review and Herald, April 1, 1890. (Evangelism p. 190).

"The thought that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, not because of any merit on our part, but as a free gift from God, is a precious thought. The enemy of God and man is not willing that this truth should be clearly presented; for he knows that if the people receive it fully, his power will be broken" (The Faith I Live By, p. 111).

The contents of the seminar are not replacements or substitutes for the traditional historical-prophetic applications of the three angels messages.

"Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves..." (Genesis 11:4) *"And another angel followed, saying, 'Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.'" (Revelation 14:8).*

The Bible describes Babylon as a harlot and Jerusalem is described as a bride. 'Babylon' is looking for love in all the wrong places, whereas 'Jerusalem' is satisfied in the love of her heavenly husband, Jesus Christ.

Babylon and Jerusalem Contrasted:

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| • Make-believe | • Transparency |
| • Cup of wine | • River of life |
| • Self-glory | • Gives glory to God |
| • Darkness | • Light |
| • Seduction | • Freedom |
| • <u>Babylon living</u> : Make a name for yourself by rejecting the identity and love God gives you through Jesus Christ. | • <u>Jerusalem living</u> : Discover the joy of being called by God's name – knowing that you are loved and cherished by Him, not because of anything you do, but just because you are. |

'Babylon' describes life without God, whereas 'Jerusalem' describes life with God.

A harlot (Babylon) rejects the covenant-love of her husband (God) and looks for and offers love in all the wrong places. Question: Where have we looked for love in all the wrong places, expecting that something/someone other than God (an idol of our own making) would fill our deepest needs?

THE ORIGIN OF THE DYSFUNCTIONS (SINS) OF 'BABYLON'

Satan's intoxicating cup of temptations contains repetitions and variations of the same lies that the serpent (Satan) told Eve in the Garden of Eden. (see Genesis 3:1-8)

- **Do not trust God.** The question "Has God said?" implies that God is not trustworthy.
- **Your life is incomplete.** God is restrictive and withholding something from you.

- **Your life can be better without God.** Why trust a God who restricts you?
- **You can be your own God.** Eat the fruit, for by so doing you will be like god and master endless opportunities for self-fulfillment that you do not now have.

Before the flood, God told the people there would be a flood.

Following the flood, God told the people there would never again be a flood.

In both instances, the people disbelieved God, and rebelled against Him.

LOOKING FOR LOVE IN THE WRONG PLACES: WHO OR WHAT FILLS YOUR CUP?

All sins are attempts to fill voids. God has created us with a God-shaped vacuum within that only He can fill. When we expect anything (or anyone) other than God to fill our empty cups, we are thereby committing spiritual adultery by looking for love in the wrong places.

Some common sources of fulfillment and their inadequacies in meeting our needs:

- **People.** The problem is that we cannot control them.
- **Places.** We get bored with them.
- **Possessions.** We never get enough.
- **Position.** We can never climb high enough.
- **Power.** Our attempts to control alienates us from others.

Some Symptoms of Babylon-like Living: Some Easy Steps to Misery for Yourself and Others –

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| • Use "I" as often as possible. | • Shirk your duties if you can. |
| • Be jealous and envious. | • Do as little as possible for others. |
| • Always be sensitive to slights. | • Never forget a service you have rendered. |
| • Think only about yourself. | • Sulk if people are not grateful for your favors. |
| • Trust no one. | • Insist on consideration and respect. |
| • Talk only about yourself. | • Demand agreement with your own views on everything. |
| • Never forget a criticism. | • Always look for a good time. |
| • Never forgive a wrong. | • Look out for your own interests – after all, no one else does. |
| • Be suspicious. | |
| • Listen greedily to what others say about you. | |
| • Love yourself first. | |

Babylon-like living places expectations and demands on others to fill our cups, and when they fail to respond we become angry, blame God, and try to take things into our own hands. This leads to a prison-like cycle of resentment, resistance, rejection, and finally rebellion. Read about this in Daniel ch. 3, and James 4:1-4.

Babylon's wine: attachment to any substance, relationship, or activity for the purpose of escaping pain, which has life-damaging consequences.

The fear of rejection by others can often be a strong motivation for a Babylon-like lifestyle. Our need for acceptance may cause us to depend on the very people whose rejection we fear.

"If I must seek an identity outside of myself, when the accumulation of wealth, power, and honors allures me...When belonging to an elite group eclipses the love of God, when I draw life and

meaning from any source other than my belovedness, I am spiritually dead. When God gets relegated to second place behind any bauble or trinket, I have swapped the pearl of great price for painted fragments of glass.” – BRENNAN MANNING

JESUS’ CURE FOR LOOKING FOR LOVE IN THE WRONG PLACES

“For My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns – broken cisterns that can hold no water” (Jeremiah 2:13)

HOW JESUS WANTS TO FILL OUR CUPS

1. Acknowledge your thirst – it is OK to have needs and to seek to have them filled.
2. Acknowledge and repent of your demands for others to fill your cup.
3. Come to Jesus – *“If any man thirsts, let Him come to Me and drink” (John 7:37).*
4. Depend on Jesus to fill your deepest needs. *“He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of His heart will flow rivers of living water” (John 7:38)*
5. Trust Jesus to make your life more than overflowing. *“My cup runneth over (Psalm 23:5).*
6. The result of God’s gift – *“You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore” (Psalm 16:11).*

The results of life with and without God – the works of the flesh vs. the fruit of the Spirit – Galatians 5:18-21.

Reject your old identity and replace it with your new identity in Jesus Christ:

Old identity: What you do determines who you are. Causes you to look for love in the wrong places.

New identity: Who you are determines what you do. Results in a life satisfied and filled with the love of Christ.

“Do not let your happiness depend on something you may lose. If love is to be a blessing, not a misery, it must be for the only Beloved who will never pass away.” AUGUSTINE

“Quit keeping score altogether and surrender yourself with all your sinfulness to God who sees neither the score nor the scorekeeper but only His child redeemed by Christ.” THOMAS MERTON

“To be loved is God’s foundational gift to us through Christ Jesus. As a Christian person your self-concept is wrapped up in God. The Lord says you have worth and beauty and intrinsic value; His opinions are the ones that count. You need to hear and respond to Him. If you are made happier because of what you have, make certain you could be just as happy with who you are and without what you have.” MARIE CHAPIAN

Bondage is anything which restricts your freedom in Christ to be and to become all that He desires for you.

To come out of bondage and captivity is to...

- let go of your dependence on your own works as a means of causing God to love you.
- to discover “who you” are by discovering “whose you are.”
- to cherish the source of your identity in belonging to Jesus, rather than by finding your identity in what you can do.

- let go of your dependence on anyone or anything other than Christ to fill your cup. Give up trying to find self-worth in people, places, positions, possessions and power, and depend instead on Jesus to fix your broken parts and fill your empty places.

*O taste and see that the Lord is good;
blessed is the man who trusts in Him! (Psalm 34:8)*

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