

## THE GREAT ESCAPE

### How to Come out of the Bondage of Babylon-like Living

“And I heard another voice from heaven saying, ‘Come out of her [Babylon] my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues’” (Revelation 18:4). God’s invitation to His people everywhere today is to leave behind the bondage of the life-damaging lifestyles of Babylon and to experience the freedom of new life in Christ. Take now a closer look at the symptoms of Babylon-like living.

- Self-exaltation - “Come, let us make a \_\_\_\_\_ for ourselves.” (Genesis 11:4).
- Pride and arrogance – as king Nebuchadnezzar in self-congratulation said, “Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?” (Daniel 4:30)
- Control - of the minds and consciences of others. King Nebuchadnezzar employed a variety of control devices, threats, ultimatums, intimidation, fear, and ultimately a death decree to strengthen the security of his kingdom.
- Rebellion – displayed in the defiant conduct of the kings of Babylon in desecrating the vessels of God’s holy temple.
- Captivity and bondage – as the methods that Babylon used to control others controlled her as well.

### THE BONDAGE OF UNFORGIVENESS

There is probably no area where people experience a greater loss of freedom than through unforgiveness, bitterness, and resentment arising from unsettled offenses.

- *Looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; Lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled* (Hebrews 11:15).
- *For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses* (Matthew 6:14,15).
- *And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many* (Matthew 24:10,11). Because offended people experience woundedness, then false prophets will arise to take advantage of their wounds. The wolf always goes after the wounded sheep.

### THE DEVIL’S MALPRACTICE

When someone is offended, here is what happens:

- Unresolved anger gives the devil a foothold. “Be angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath. Neither give place (foothold) to the devil” (Ephesians 4:26,27).
- Such footholds over time becomes strongholds, sometimes under the direct influence of demonic forces. “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God for pulling down strongholds; casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:4,5).
- The power of strongholds is found in the lies that wounded people believe about themselves, others and God.

Symptoms of the devil’s malpractice in dealing with offenses:

- Self-centeredness. Woundedness and the resulting pain causes the activation of a built-in defense mechanism of focusing on self in order to protect ourselves again re-occurrence of the painful event. Unresolved wounds and pains, though long forgotten, can still have a lasting effect in a self-centered disposition long after the mind has forgotten about the defense. We are programmed by our wounds.
- Inability to forgive.
- Control - guarding against further wounding.
- Negative emotions: Anger, fear, self-pity, worry, anxiety. Not all these emotions are negative, but when present in a person over extended periods of time they can wreck havoc.
- Distorted thinking about self and others. The enemy will come in and take full advantage of attaching his custom-designed lies to your wounds. These lies can be so simple - “I’m no good,” “no one cares,” “I am hopeless,” “nothing matters anymore,” “people take advantage of me,” “nothing ever changes.”
- Physical, emotional and spiritual exhaustion.
- Image-management – the need to make good impressions to avoid rejection.
- Inability to be ‘real’ and authentic.
- Fear of closeness with others.

“We curse our wounds, we nurse our wounds, we rehearse our wounds, but we cannot reverse our wounds until we let Jesus heal them.” – Robert H. Schuller.

# The Bondage Breaker – Jesus of Nazareth

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed” (Luke 4:18)

- Good news to the poor - Jesus wants to set you free to experience His abundant life of love, joy, and peace, rather than wallowing in your woundedness arising from the offenses of others. He describes your condition as ‘*poor*,’ meaning helpless, because you are stuck in a situation from which no escape without His help.
- Heal the brokenhearted - The wounds inflicted upon you by the offenses of others can be healed. Jesus understands, because He has experienced everything you are going through. When He died on Calvary’s cross it was not only for your sins, but He also carried your griefs and sorrows (Isaiah 53:4). Jesus can heal your woundedness by replacing inner lies with His truth. “*The truth shall set you free,*” and “*you shall be free indeed*” (John 8:32,36).
- Proclaim liberty to the captives - You can through the power of the Holy Spirit be set free from bitterness and unforgiveness. God’s truths can remove and replace lies of Satan that have held you in bondage.
- Recovery of sight to the blind – Your blind spots will disappear as you start seeing everything from God’s perspective. You see both the offender and yourself as precious beings for whom Jesus died. You will even see God working out good in the midst of pain.

## LEAVING THE BONDAGE OF ‘BABYLON’ FOR THE FREEDOM OF ‘JERUSALEM’ The Journey from Unforgiveness to Forgiveness -

### When we do not forgive...

We deny the pain or wallow in the pain  
We become martyrs and victims  
who carry our own griefs and sorrows

and we display our wounds  
to get mileage out of our wounds by  
soliciting sympathy and attention from  
others, thus making self our focus.

We use our past offenses to bring up the  
past to remind our offenders and ourselves  
about their offenses and thus hold them  
responsible for our bitterness.

We become losers by trying to make the  
offender look like a loser.

### When we do not forgive...

We let the offenses of others control us,  
and thus we experience bondage, because  
we have not received God’s forgiveness  
as a free gift

We guard ourselves against the recurrence  
of more pain, but we do not realize the  
pain we are continually inflicting upon  
ourselves by not forgiving.

We want to ‘crucify’ our offenders and we  
experience a living death that squeezes all  
joy out of living

We become angry and bitter,  
We attempt to control others.

We resent most in others what we are  
denying in ourselves.

We attempt to prosecute our own cases  
and become anxious lest the offender will  
not get sufficiently punished.

We become infectious carriers of  
contention and strife because we have a  
continual need to tell others about our  
wounds.

### When we forgive...

We feel the pain and we lay it on the Lamb  
Who has borne our griefs and carried our  
sorrows, and Who was wounded for ours  
the transgressions of others –  
and we do not try to get  
mileage out of our wounds by soliciting  
sympathy and attention from others, and  
avoid the pit of self-centeredness.

We do not use our wounds to bring up the  
past and using to us it against those who  
have offended us.

We may end up looking like losers, and the  
offender may look like the winner

### When we forgive...

We do not let the offenses of others control  
us, which leads to freedom because we  
have received God’s forgiveness  
as a free gift.

We may sometimes experience a  
momentary pain greater in intensity than  
that caused by the original offense.

We are crucified with Christ and we believe  
the promise that from the death to self  
comes new life in Christ.

We let go of anger and bitterness, and we  
desire to serve and love others.  
We recognize similar hidden sins  
in our own lives.

We rest our cases with God and exercise  
faith that He will judge our offenders.

We become ambassadors of reconciliation,  
a kingdom of priests, with a personal  
testimonies about the power of Christ.

## MAKE A JAIL-BREAK TODAY!

Think for a moment about the possibilities that await you when you make a jailbreak from the devil’s prison of ‘Babylon.’ It can only happen as you forgive others because forgiveness is an act of the will, not a feeling. To help accept and open yourself to a particular person, visualize him/her as being with the Lord Jesus and say to the Lord, “*I forgive and love him/her because You forgive and love him/her.*”

