

THE FALLEN PROSTITUTE BABYLON
Revelation 17:1- 18:8; text Revelation 14:8
October 11, 2020

I. Its Unrecognizable Face

- A. Babylon is the enemy you often can't see.**
- B. It represents governmental and cultural powers under the control of the anti-Christ or the evil one.**
 - 1. That characterizes the Babylon of the Old Testament.**
 - a. Under pagan King Nebuchadnezzar it was the capital of a vast empire that had even conquered God's people Judah.**
 - b. It was the center his pagan religion.**
 - c. But it also was a great center of culture.**
 - 2. It is called Babylon the Great, because of its great power and influence.**
 - a. Certainly, in John's day Rome was a good example of such a place.**
 - b. It can also refer to any political economic or cultural authority that opposes Christ and his church.**
- C. Who would've suspected that Babylon could be here in the United States, and that in the name of compassion and justice, it would be threatening Christians?**

Questions:

- 1) How would I explain to someone what Babylon represents in our world today?**
- 2) In what way might God use some of the Babylon's in history to bless his world and his people? (Consider some of the stories in Daniel and use them to reflect on our own times.)**
- 3) What are some ways by which the Babylon's of our world are persecuting the church today?**
- 4) Do I agree that sometime government, economic, or cultural authorities in our own country sometimes act like Babylon? Did I agree with the example Pastor Dave gave in his sermon? Why or why not?**

II. Its Subtle Attacks

- A. Another reason Babylon is an enemy you can't see is that it often attacks the church in more subtle ways.**

Revelation 14:8 (NIV) A second angel followed and said, "Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great, which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries."

- B. There are two subtle ways mentioned in our scripture by which Babylon attacks the church of Christ: by intoxication and seduction, or if you will drunkenness and stirred-up passion.**
 - 1. The power and dangers of both are described in Proverbs 23:26-35**

Proverbs 23:26-35 (NIV) My son, give me your heart and let your eyes keep to my ways, for a prostitute is a deep pit and a wayward wife is a narrow well. Like a bandit she lies in wait, and multiplies the unfaithful among men. Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaints? Who has needless bruises? Who has bloodshot eyes? Those who linger over wine, who go to sample bowls of mixed wine. Do not gaze at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly! In the end it bites like a snake and poisons like a viper. Your eyes will see strange sights and your mind imagine confusing things. You will be like one sleeping on the high seas, lying on top of the rigging. "They hit me," you will say, "but I'm not hurt! They beat me, but I don't feel it! When will I wake up so I can find another drink?"

- 2. For the fleeting pleasure of one-night-stands and drunkenness, so many people destroy their lives and the lives of those they love.**
 - 3. But remember here, these are symbols of Babylon's intoxicating seductive power over people.**
- C. When our text speaks about "drinking the wine of her adulteries," it really is referring to idolatry.**

- 1. In the Old Testament prophecy of Hosea God gave the following command to Hosea:**

Hosea 1:2 (NIV) When the LORD began to speak through Hosea, the LORD said to him, "Go, take to yourself an adulterous wife and children of unfaithfulness, because the land is guilty of the vilest adultery in departing from the LORD."

- 2. Hosea actually married an notoriously adulterous woman named Gomer, who left him and became a prostitute with other men, so he could prophesy to Israel about the pain God felt because of their unfaithfulness to him when they worshipped idol gods.**
 - 3. As I think of Hosea I think of the terrible grief some of us as Christian have gone through, because of the unfaithfulness of spouses, children, and friends, who also were supposed to be Christians.**
 - 4. The God who deals with our idolatries everyday understands and grieves with us.**

- D. Idolatry has consequences.**

- 1. Remember what Jesus said to the church in Thyatira.**

Revelation 2:20-22 (NIV) Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols. I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways.

- a. Some Christian there sought to protect their standing in the trade guilds by also worshipping the idol gods of the trade guild.**
 - b. If they didn't do this they would have been expelled from the guild and could no longer pursue their trade, losing their livelihood, and facing economic ruin.**
 - c. But God considered their actions idolatry against him and promised to punish them**
 - 2. How much more today will God condemn those who claim to be his own, but commit adultery with the idols gods of power, pleasure, wealth, and popularity!**

Questions:

- 1) Who are some people I know whose lives have been ruined by alcohol or sex? When I ever felt betrayed and hurt by those who have been unfaithful to me because of their appetite for alcohol or sex? Does it help me to realize that when I pray to God about this, he understands? Why or why not?
- 2) In what ways is idolatry like adultery? Can I understand why God is so angry with his people who run after idols? Why was it fair and just that God to demand that his people in Thyatira refrain from eating meat sacrificed to idols or attending idol feasts when this would result in their losing their businesses and livelihood?
- 3) What idols have tempted me? Why are these idols so difficult for me to resist?

III. Its Certain Defeat

A. Our text also calls Babylon fallen.

1. Chapter 17: 7- 10 refers to the seven kings of Babylon, which are also called seven hills.
2. To the people of John's day they probably represented Rome, which was said to have been built on seven hills.
3. Verse 8 mentions and eighth king belonging to the seven, who is perhaps the anti-Christ who ruled through them.
4. They will be followed by ten horns which represented ten kings.
5. No matter who they may represent in the future, for us they represent all the Babylon's that have persecuted, seduced, and intoxicated God's people and who continue to do so.
6. Throughout history one Babylon often destroys another.
 - a. After seducing the church to lust after power, Rome fell.
 - b. And Babylon's have been falling ever since.
 - c. Perhaps the fall of the communist Soviet Union was an example.
 - d. But rather than cause us to be smug, we had better realize that more we have represented and continue to represent Babylon the more we here in the United States should expect a similar fate.

B. No matter how many times Babylon falls, she remains proud and confident, but she is only deceived, as are those who are seduced by her.

Revelation 18:7-8 (NIV) "Give her as much torture and grief as the glory and luxury she gave herself. In her heart she boasts, 'I sit as queen; I am not a widow, and I will never mourn.' Therefore in one day her plagues will overtake her: death, mourning and famine. She will be consumed by fire, for mighty is the Lord God who judges her.

C. There is a day coming when Babylon, all evil beasts or anti-Christ's, and the dragon Satan himself will be destroyed forever, as will all the idols any of us has worshipped.

2 Peter 3:11-12 (NIV) Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat.

Questions:

- 1) What are some Babylon's I can identify in my own time and throughout the history of the New Testament church? Can a so-called "Christian nation" actually be a Babylon? If so, how?
- 2) What are some stories of the suffering that occurred when various Babylon's fell?
- 3) Why does Babylon remain proud, even in defeat?
- 4) Why is it important for me to keep in mind how temporary Babylon's rule is, and how some day all Babylon's will fall? How does this thought help me to resist Babylon's persecutions, intoxications and seductions?

IV. Fighting Babylon Today

A. God calls us to fight Babylon today.

1. He does not call us to wage a big war that kills many people.
2. You can't fight with guns and bombs an enemy that can get inside your own mind and soul.
3. This, however, is not just a battle against enemies who seek to seduce and intoxicate our hearts and minds, but those of everyone in our world.
4. It is against enemies who seek to control our society and culture.

Ephesians 6:12 (NIV) For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

B. Babylon's exist around the world today, taking different forms in different cultures and places.

1. They have intoxicated and seduced most people, including some of our brothers and sisters in Christ.
2. Babylon also threatens us.
3. Today God calls us to battle, but not with weapons of war, but with prayer and God's Word, the sword of the Spirit.
4. It is only by the Lord's power that we can prevail.

Questions:

- 1) Why will Babylon never be defeated by weapons of war? How have efforts to try to do so only empowered Babylon? Why is it impossible to defeat Babylon by political means?
- 2) Am I truly fighting Babylon today? How?
- 3) Why is it dangerous for me to just ignore Babylon?
- 4) Why is it dangerous for me to try to fight Babylon on my own?