

“I heard another voice from Heaven, saying, ‘COME OUT of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues,’” Revelation 18:4.

The Babylonian Syndrome

Dear Fellow Saints of the Most High LORD,

Last week I was reading in Revelation about the destruction of *Babylon*. Now, over the years I have thought very little about Babylon, its history, current status, and future. Nor to the extent of delving into the depths of its End-Time relevance to the righteous saints and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. To tell you the truth, I really don't know a lot about Babylon as it doesn't come up in my daily thoughts or conversation. That is until the LORD planted that seed into my spirit and then I had to give it my attention. My life and ministry doesn't revolve around the events of the End of Time of this Earth but rather focuses on publishing God's Word to draw the lost to Jesus and to minister encouragement, hope, and faith to the Body of Jesus Christ. Actually, we can't put together a sequence of End-Time events until we look in the rear view mirror of time to see what God has done, unless God gives us a revelation of His Holy Word. Then, it will all make sense and we can see how it fits together. Our vision, understanding, and interpretation of God's Word is limited, at best. Even if we have been highly educated at the finest colleges and universities, we still see – think – know – and understand in the flesh. Until we are on the other side of life, we are just guessing what all of the symbolism of God's Word means and its time line. Everyone has an opinion of what *“this”* means or what *“that”* means. The only thing we need to be concerned with is **“What does God mean?”**

After doing some reading and research on Babylon, and realizing that there are a dozen different takes on Babylon during the tribulation, I quietly (but respectfully) told the LORD that I wasn't too big on writing about Babylon for the reasons given. Well, we all know how that works out. After stewing over it for a week or so, the LORD dropped a thought in my heart in the wee hours of the morning that convinced me that He had a reason for us to discuss Babylon today and it is not to argue about Babylon's past, present, or future. Instead, there is a very strong warning, call, and admonition to the Body of Believers concerning Babylon.

History – As any good Sunday School student will tell you, the term *“babbling”* came from God confounding the tongue (language) of the people who were building the **Tower of Babel**. After God confused their tongues, they were talking to one another, but not understanding each other because they had a new different language, they were said to be *babbling*, *the action of talking in an incomprehensible way*. What is not taught in Sunday School, or at least I missed it, is that the **Tower of Babel** was located in the city of **Babylon**.

The Babylonians were all descendants of Noah and settled in the area of present day **Iraq**. The exact location of Babylon and the Tower of Babel are up for debate, some say that all that is left is a giant mound of dirt as the city collapsed into the ground (much like Jericho), others say that it was never completely destroyed and is partially standing and being rebuilt, again. The city is believed to have had over 200,000 people and the “downtown” area was a four mile square metropolis split by the *Euphrates River* with the Tower of Babel in the center of town. For purpose of this writing, there are a few main points that are to be assumed: **1)** Noah's descendants spoke the same language; **2)** the Babylonians were very successful in business and trade and therefore were very powerful; **3)** their success and power led them into great sin; **4)** this greed for more power drove them to desire to reach the heavens and become as – or be gods; **5)** their actions were evil in God's sight and punishment was due, yet they were used to punish Israel for Israel's sins; and most importantly, **6)** all of this came about because of their rebellion against God. We won't go into the depths of their cruel depravity of sin, but it was pure evil!

Biblical Standing – Babylon is mentioned over 280 times in the Bible (both the Old and New Testament). In fact, it is mentioned more than any other city/country, second only to Jerusalem (Salem). It was the source of power, military strength, economic prosperity, and rebellion for almost 2,000 years in the Mesopotamian civilization after the flood. It is interesting to note that only Jerusalem

(Salem) and Babel (Babylon) are mentioned in the first and last books of the Bible. One is the epitome of God's Goodness, blessing, and *calling*, while the other is the epitome of satanic influence and all that is evil.

Babylon also known as (physical names) – **The Great City** (Revelation 18:10); **Land of the Chaldeans** (Ezekiel 12:13, Jeremiah 51:4); **Land of Shinar** (Genesis 10:10, Daniel 1:2, Zechariah 5:11); **Desert of the Sea** (Isaiah 21:1, 9); **Lady of Kingdoms** (Isaiah 47:5); **Land of Merathaim** (Jeremiah 50:1, 21); **Sheshach** (Jeremiah 25:12, 26); and **Land of Nimrod** (Micah 5:6).

Babylon's spiritual idolatry names - **The Mother of Harlots, The Great Whore** (Prostitute) (Idolatrous), **A City of Pride and Idolatry, Mysterious** (spiritually), and **The Abominations of the Earth**.

Nimrod - It is believed that Babylon was built by Nimrod, who was the great-grandson of Noah. He was a great hunter, very strong, a commanding leader (influencer), and a rebel. Some have called him the first **Hitler**.

– Josephus wrote: *“Now it was Nimrod who excited them to such an affront and contempt of God. He was the grandson of Ham, the son of Noah, a bold man, and of great strength of hand. He persuaded them not to ascribe it to God, as if it were through his means they were happy, but to believe that it was their own courage which procured that happiness. He also gradually changed the government into tyranny, seeing no other way of turning men from the fear of God, but to bring them into a constant dependence on his power. He also said he would be revenged on God, if he should have a mind to drown the world again; for that he would build a tower too high for the waters to reach. And that he would avenge himself on God for destroying their forefathers.”* Nimrod's legacy is a tragic symbolization of man's attempt to gain power, fame, influence, and immortality.

In reading about Nimrod, he seemed bent (or stiff necked – or stone faced) to stand nose to nose in God's face in rebellion and resentment. Why would the great-grandson of Noah be so obsessed to stand against God instead of being thankful for his salvation from the great flood? Yes, the flood destroyed evil man, but Noah's family was saved.

“Noah was six hundred years old when the floodwaters came on the Earth. Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives entered the ark to escape the waters of the flood,” Genesis 6:6-7. I never thought about this before now for I have always heard that there were only eight people who were on that boat (ark) because that is what's mentioned in the Bible. However, [Now, this is just my thoughts] if Noah was 500 years old, I just imagine that besides his sons and daughters-in-law, he had grandchildren, great-grandchildren, even great-great-grandchildren, and who knows just how many generations (or people) of little

Noahs were on the boat with him? I mean, it is hard to think that his boys were married and had no children. I think that his sons and heirs could have also helped build the boat. The point is, if Nimrod was on that boat, he was probably an adult. If so, then he left his friends – his extended family - maybe his co-workers – his in-laws - and others to die in the flood, which could have been the basis for his resentment, along with the fear of another flood from God. Much like Lot's wife longing to return to Sodom so much that she disobeyed God in **Genesis 19:17**, looked back and was turned into a pillar of salt. Because of the long lifespan at the time of the flood, some scholars have estimated that the Earth's population was around four billion people at the time of the flood, most gathered in one area. The Bible contains history but is not a history book.

Sins of Babylon – Over and over again, the Bible speaks of Babylon's fornications, *“... all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her ...”* Revelation 18:3. While, no doubt, fornication and sexual immorality have always been associated with a sinful nature and life, fornication (Biblically speaking) begins with **IDOLATRY**, spiritual idolatry, turning away from the LORD.

What is **spiritual idolatry**? Simply put, *‘It is the worship of someone or something other than the LORD as though it were God, or even takes the place of God in a person's life.’* There is a lot of that going on in the Earth today, and it gets worse every time the sun rises. **Spiritual idolatry** is the single biggest issue that Israel has struggled with over the millennia as was seen during and after their time in Egypt. Let's admit it, **spiritual idolatry (adultery)** is man's nemesis. What is the **First Commandment**? *“Thou shalt have NO other gods before Me!”* OK, we can't leave out the **Second Commandment** – *“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.”* Just between you and me, the Second Commandment has always bothered me, not for what it says, but for what we do. I mean, is a photograph of a beautiful sunrise breaking the Second Commandment, or a statue, carving, or sculpture of a man, child, bird, fish, flower, tree, or anything count as a graven image??? I have no problem believing that there is sin when I see someone kneeling down in front of a shrine in their yard, praying to a sculpture, as I have seen so many times in Haiti [which by the way, is going through another crisis].

It was so hard for the Israelites to leave the foreign gods, their teaching, and worship in Egypt when Moses led the Israelites from food and shelter and all that they

had known into a desert of the unknowns that they took the Egyptian gods and their worship with them. Just as it was hard for Lot's wife to leave Sodom. And so it was with the Israelites to leave Babylon after 70+ years of exile. They were **CALLED** out of the sin and spiritual fornication, but they didn't leave the **spiritual idolatry** behind when they departed Babylon.

Who – What – Where – is Babylon? Revelation Chapters 17 and 18 are probably the two most confusing and at the same time, most intriguing chapters in the Bible because they are talking about several different things, events, and times frames within the same phrases or verses. **Babylon is one city but it has several facets.** You cannot read them as a traditional time line as some phrases are **historical**, some **current**, and some **prophetic**. Adding to the confusion, some phrases refer to the **physical**, some to **political**, while others are **spiritual**. Yes, Babylon was a real city and it was destroyed, and yes, there are efforts today to rebuild Babylon to its former state. Saddam Hussein's pet project was to restore Babylon as he saw himself as a neo-Nebuchadnezzar. The US Embassy in Baghdad even gave \$3 million dollars in 2018 through the World Monuments Fund to repair and restore the famed Ishtar Gate. It is extremely doubtful that the city of Babylon will never be the physical city that it once was. However, **it's political and spiritual idolatry influence has never stopped growing and spreading across the Earth.** Do not doubt or forget, **ALL** of God's prophecies will be fulfilled!

One mention of Babylon in Revelation refers to the physical city, another Babylon is refereeing to its political influence and power, while still another is a pure **spiritual idolatry** Babylon, which makes understanding Babylon a whole lot more confusing. There are many arguments on who or what the political is, and there are good arguments (with Scriptural to support) for each. [Now – I'm not pointing my finger at any of the following – only reporting what others have taught.] Such as calling Rome the new Babylon because of its power, influence, and history of Christian persecutions. The second prominent candidate is the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christian Churches as many of their teachings and traditions are said to have come directly from Babylon. Yet, the United States fits many of the sins and characteristics of the Babylon of Revelation. I have read that some say Jerusalem and even "Christian Rock" is the new Babylon. There are many other interpretations. All of the above have some part or portion of **spiritual adultery or idolatry** and abandonment of God's commandment to follow and worship Him and Him alone. But God makes several things crystal clear in the end Judgment – one thing is for sure, the judgment of sin will be swift and complete.

"I will punish Bel in Babylon, and I will bring forth out of his mouth that which he hath swallowed up: and the nations shall not flow together any more unto him: yea, the wall of Babylon shall fall," Jeremiah 51:44;

"Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judges her," Revelation 18:8;

"[Kings] Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour is thy judgment come," Revelation 18:10;

"For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off," Revelation 18:17.

Whenever man has entered into sin, God is there to help and redeem. God **CALLS** His children from sin to righteousness. ***"The LORD God CALLED unto Adam, and said unto him, 'Where art thou?'"*** Genesis 3:9;

"The LORD said unto Cain, 'Where is Abel thy brother?'" Genesis 4:9;

"The LORD had said unto Abram, 'Get thee OUT of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee," Genesis 12:1;

Today, God is **CALLING** us, His True Church, the Body of Christ out of our favorite sin, out of our compromising life style and back to His Righteousness – ***"My people, go ye out of the midst of [spiritual unrighteousness], and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the LORD,"*** Jeremiah 51:45;

"I heard another voice from Heaven, saying, 'COME OUT of her [spiritual adultery], My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues," Revelation 18:4.

God is **CALLING** us out of darkness, sin, and spiritual bondage because we ***"... are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him Who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light,"*** 1 Peter 2:9.

God is **CALLING** us into His righteousness in these Last Days. Are we hearing the Gentle, Loving Voice of our Heavenly Father?

"But wait!" You say, ***"I'm not living in darkness, much less spiritual idolatry – or adultery – or unrighteousness!"*** Let me ask you a question, one that I have had to deal with myself. **Are you complacent – unconcerned – or even apathetic towards the sin around you?** ***"There came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom..."*** Genesis 19:1. Sitting in the city's gate is very symbolic. It meant that Lot was sitting in a place of high



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honor, much like an elder, prophet, city official, or judge. Not a good example of righteousness. Regardless of how righteous Lot was, he and his family were so comfortable living in a city of sin, with sinful people, that they would rather face death as to leave the doomed city. After being told that Sodom was going to be destroyed, ***“Lot went out, and spoke unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, ‘Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city.’ But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law,”*** (14). Neither Lot, nor his family living at home, wanted to leave, ***“While he lingered, the men (angels) laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters,”*** (16a). [Note: Two angels, four hands, Lot in one hand, his wife in one hand, and each daughter held by the hand of the angel. **No one wanted to leave the sinful city!**]

Are you comfortable – complacent – unconcerned or apathetic to the sin (or the sinful nature) that is around us? Are you at ease with TV shows, movies, reality programs, and songs that have profanities, nudities, brutality, animal abuse, explicit sexual acts, or adultery as entertainment? Are you convicted when you watch programs or listen to music that condones or promotes a perverse lifestyle – killing – disrespectful of government - homosexuality – gender identity – or a sinful nature? Would you have to change channels, turn off your computer, or close your book if Jesus walked into the room? Many times you will find me switching channels when my spirit is offended by these sinful acts being thrown in my face. I don't have to sit there and watch it, and neither do you. I choose not to. **How about you?**

God is **CALLING** His Family out of sinful Babylon. He is **CALLING** us into His Righteousness. He is **CALLING** us away from dirty jokes and lewd conversations. He is **CALLING** us away from apathy to sin. He is **CALLING** us to be His Vessel full of His Holy Word, ready for His service. He is **CALLING** us to walk closer to Him in these last days!

Your Covenant Brother In The Love of Jesus Christ,

Phillip Buttram

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