

5.

COMING PERSECUTION

Babylon is drunk with the blood of the saints and martyrs (Rev 17:6). The prostitute is bloodthirsty. She is responsible for the deaths of many men and women of God. It seems possible that before the second coming of Christ, this place Babylon will begin to kill some, or even many of God's people.

This will be especially those who are walking in intimacy with the Lord, namely the "saints" and "prophets" (Rev 18:24). It appears that there could arise a persecution, even involving killing of those who rise up to speak out against the harlot and her wanton ways. How could such a thing be possible?

Today, many of the Christian inhabitants of Babylon are working hard to try to repair their backslidden society. A good number of them

are trying to generate change through the political process. They believe that the election of Christian leaders and passing of moral laws will achieve their goals. In many ways, it seems that they are having some success.

Yet while some leaders who profess Christ are being elected, some “right wing” judges are being appointed and a few laws are being enacted, the hearts of the people in that nation are not being changed.

While the battle for an appearance of morality may seem to be being won in the political arena, the battle for true righteousness is actually being lost. The truth of this assertion is apparent when we look, not only at the increasing immorality of Babylon’s society, but also at the state of the churches within her.

It is sad but true that the behavior of a large number, if not the majority, of church attenders in Babylon is no better than the world around them. One famous preacher insists that half of the men and almost one third of the preachers in U. S. congregations who claim to be “evangelical” are addicted to online pornography.

The incidence of extra-marital sex (both fornication and adultery) in the church is the same as in the world. Statistically, divorce is more common in the church than among “worldly” people. It goes without saying that lying, jeal-

ousy, backbiting, hatred, strife and many other, less visible sins are also rampant.

So we see that, while in the political arena there is some aura of "victory" on the side of the evangelicals, the real battle for hearts is being lost. Many Christians are not truly becoming more righteous. They are not changing to be visibly more holy.

In the long run, morality can never be legislated or imposed. True holiness will only come through increasing intimacy with Jesus Christ Himself. When the majority of people in any society are brought into this kind of relationship with God, then the whole country will change. Any movement toward morality without such a spiritual revival will prove to be temporary, empty and vain. Only the gospel has the power to change lives and hearts.

In fact, the imposing of some kind of moral code upon people who are really opposed to it will eventually fuel opposition. Unless their hearts are changed through obedience to the gospel, forcing them to conform to some standard with which they do not agree will just antagonize them. They will become angry at those who are trying to force their will upon them. In the long run, if and when such enraged citizens gain the upper hand, they will act upon their smoldering hatred.

As this book is being written, there is little persecution of Christians in Babylon. Believers who live in her feel safe and secure. Yet, perhaps this aspect of her personality has not yet been manifested. Just as Babylon's sin level has not yet peaked, so too maybe such persecution has yet to emerge. What we might find today would be the seeds of this sin – a kind of prelude to murder.

What we might encounter in Babylon today is an increasing hatred on the part of the worldly inhabitants for those who truly love Jesus and try to follow Him. It could be that we might detect a rising anti-Christian sentiment, a rage on the part of the unbelievers against God and His people which is only waiting for the opportunity to express itself.

As we have mentioned, Babylon has within her some citizens who do not like the direction in which they see her going. There is within them, just as there was in Noah and Lot, a certain moral fiber and resistance to rampant immorality. Some of these folks are fighting in various ways to resist the rush of filth and decay.

Yet the tide of immorality is rising higher and higher while the resistance to it is slowly being eaten away. The population is becoming more and more decadent and inured to sin.

Their consciences are becoming more and more calloused. Perhaps there are some Christians who are even being seduced into joining in with the rest (Heb 3:13).

THE DAM MIGHT BREAK

Sooner or later the tide of evil might rise so high and the resistance to it might become so weak that the dam will break and the flood of perversion will sweep in with great force. If this were to happen, the fabric of any society could change dramatically overnight. Such an avalanche of filth in Babylon could be precipitated by a few court decisions, for example, regarding the legalizing of public nudity and sex acts.

Sudden social changes of this type have happened throughout history and can happen again, especially with the power of an evil spirit behind it. One example of this could be the rapid rise to power of Adolph Hitler and the Nazi party, along with all that was associated with his regime. The dramatic, sudden social change which occurred was almost impossible for many to believe.

So we are led to conclude that there may come a point when the dam finally breaks, precipitating a sudden flood of immorality in Babylonian society. When this happens she

could turn with a great hatred on those who speak out against her fornication. When the tide of evil within her overflows the resistance of the few with a little morality left, those who are wicked will hate anyone who opposes them. This could then unleash a great persecution and even murder of the righteous.

Some residents of Babylon might think in their hearts, "That could never happen here! We have laws to protect us." Let me be frank with you. Public opinion can change overnight. No laws are worth the paper they are written on unless there is some support for them. Also, laws can easily and quickly be changed.

For example, I have been told that Canada now has some new "hate crime" laws. If anyone speaks publicly against homosexuals they face a five year jail term. Also, I am told that Canada now considers parts of the Bible as "hate literature." You can now be jailed and/or fined for publicly reading parts of the Bible. Be warned, other countries are even now considering similar legislation.

Let me tell you as lovingly and honestly as I can, no law will protect you if and when the moral resistance finally breaks down and the flood of unrighteousness roars in. The Bible says that the prostitute has become drunk with the blood of the saints and martyrs (Rev 17:6).

This may indicate just such a disintegration of morality and a vicious turning on the righteous which we have been discussing.

Further on in this vision, we read that after Babylon is destroyed, it is revealed that not only was she guilty of the blood of the martyrs but also “of all who were slain on the earth” (Rev 18:24). How could this be? How could this end-times entity be responsible for all the murders since the beginning of the world?

This is because of the spiritual aspect of Babylon. This spirit of lust and excess, which is the spirit of the world, has always been with us. Hate, lust and jealousy have been around since the beginning. This is what inspired Cain to kill his brother Abel.

So it is this sin tendency, with the power of the spirit of this world behind it, which is responsible for all the blood shed in this world. This is what has motivated every murder and/or war throughout history. This then is why “all who were slain” since the beginning of the world can be put on her account.

At the end of the age, this spirit will come to a great fullness in Babylon just as it did six other times in history. It is certain that when this Babylon spirit rose to its zenith the last time, the killing of God’s faithful servants was also a part of its sin.

The Roman Empire definitely acted in this way. Christians were persecuted and even killed for sport. We are not going to see anything which is new to this world, just something which is new to us in our generation.

If and when the spiritual dam breaks and the flood of evil pours in unrestrained, the devil will use his people to persecute the people of God. You can count on it. This may correspond to the time we mentioned earlier when legions of evil spirits flock to Babylon.

It is also possible that Babylon will be seduced by the coming Antichrist to participate in his coming "war on the saints," a kind of Christian eradication program. Although she will not really agree with him and he hates her, due to certain economic and terroristic pressure, she might cooperate with his agenda for a time. Some of the details of this coming war are discussed at more length in the second book of this series entitled "Antichrist."

Interestingly, it seems to be that when people feel the most safe and secure, they may in fact be in the most danger. We read in I Thessalonians 5:3 that it is just: "...when they say 'Peace and safety!' then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape."