

7.

COME OUT OF HER MY PEOPLE

Getting back to our original theme, it may be that some reading this book live in, or know someone who lives in, the opulent, sensual Babylonian nation which we have been describing. It is possible that they have been seeing the substance of what it is that constitutes the great prostitute and realize that they are right in the middle of her.

But, just as Lot was in Sodom, perhaps they are very secure where they are. They have a comfortable, safe, easy life. The salaries are good, the standard of living is high. Goods of every description are plentiful and easily accessible. Food is abundant and public services are reliable. Hospitals, health services, medicines

and other such things are close at hand. Perhaps their friends and family are there and life is great. True, just as Lot also was, they are bothered about the rising tide of immorality and filth which appears daily all around them. But they perhaps just turn off the TV, shrug their shoulders and continue on with their life.

However, if where they live is in fact the very place about which the Bible is speaking, if anyone makes their home smack in the middle of modern day Babylon, then one day something is going to happen. Someday Jesus is going to say: "Get out."

It is quite clear in Revelation that our Lord, whom we are required to obey, gives a clear command to His children concerning the place called Babylon. He says: "Come out of her, my people" (Rev 18:4). Here we encounter a very difficult thing. In fact, this is a word which is so hard to hear that it is probable that the vast majority of God's people will not be able to hear it.

Imagine that God might call someone to one day leave all that is near and dear to them, to abandon their home, their friends and their relatives, to leave the comfort and security of their job and surroundings, and to go someplace which is difficult, foreign and unfamiliar. Will they go? Will they actually hear such a com-

mand from their Savior? Or will they find one thousand and one reasons why this could not possibly be Jesus speaking to them?

My honest opinion is that even if angels appeared by the bedside of every believer in Babylon tonight and clearly spoke to them to get up and leave, only a very, very small number of them would actually go.

Two angels came to Sodom. They plainly spoke the word of the Lord to Lot. They urged him to leave immediately saying: "whomever you have in the city – take them out of this place!" "Arise, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be consumed in the punishment of this city" (Gen 19:12,15).

But Lot had a lot of trouble hearing this word. He felt happy and comfortable where he was. All his possessions and his family were there. His surroundings were familiar and therefore he felt secure. So, he "lingered." He was very reluctant to leave and he was very afraid of what he might encounter "in the mountains" (Gen 19:19).

Most of his relatives refused to come with him. They thought he must be joking (Gen 19:14) or perhaps he had lost his mind. At last, the day of judgment began to dawn and still he was delaying. Finally, the angels had to drag him, together with his wife and daughters, to

safety. My, how the word of God still speaks to us today!

Many, many of God's people are today living in Babylon. They feel safe and secure. They are prosperous and content. But there are two serious problems. God warns them of two consequences of remaining in Babylon.

Firstly, they begin little by little to "share in her sins" (Rev 18:4). The influence of the immorality in this place is tremendous. The inhabitants are bombarded constantly, principally through the media, with every kind of perversion and uncleanness.

Increasingly, perhaps without even realizing it, they lower their own moral standards. They are slowly being influenced to adopt the values of the world around them. Even more than that, the children of these residents are, just as the daughters of Lot were, heavily influenced by the rampant immorality.

Secondly, God warns them that He will judge this "city." She will be destroyed by "plagues," namely, "death and mourning and famine." "And she shall be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her" (Rev 18:8). God is calling for His people to come out of Babylon because He is going to bring judgment. Anyone who lives in Babylon should take this fact very seriously.

Let me warn you clearly: God will not withhold this judgment on Babylon just because some believers are still there. If they do not respond to His word and take the steps necessary to remove themselves from that place, they will suffer the horrible consequences which God has foretold.

We will be detailing what sort of things these might be later in this writing, but for now, it is sufficient for us to simply know that God is speaking and each one must be obeying.

PREPARATION

So what should anyone do? If they begin to see that they, or someone they love, lives in a place which is soon to be destroyed, what steps should be taken? This author does not think that this judgment will happen today, only that it will be “soon” from a biblical standpoint. Therefore, it seems prudent for all Christians in Babylon to begin to take some steps to prepare themselves for what is coming.

Noah was told by God of impending judgment. Next he was instructed to take some very concrete steps to prepare for the future. This man responded in faith to the word which he heard. He “moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household” (Heb 11:7).

In the same way, believers who find themselves residing in the great prostitute can begin right now to prepare themselves to flee. They can make some preparations, moving in the fear of God, to save themselves and their household from what is coming. Thus, they will not be taken unawares without knowing which way to turn.

Let us suppose that someday someone will have to flee from where they are. Let us imagine that this could happen to you. There are many questions which should be decided beforehand such as: "Where will I go?" "How will I get there?" "How would I survive?" "What about the language?" "Will I need a visa?" These are questions that must be addressed before the crisis hits.

CONCRETE STEPS TO TAKE

To begin, I strongly urge every Christian in Babylon to get a passport for themselves and every member of their family. This is essential. Do it today! Once persecution begins or things become chaotic, no one will not be able to get a passport. Without a passport it will be extremely difficult to leave. Have one ready.

This will cost a little time, effort and money and may be a little difficult if someone has

never done it before, but do it anyway. Do it today. Don't put off this decision!

The next question is: Where shall that person go? Well, God is not specific about this. It seems that each one should seek His guidance for themselves. [By the way, Zoar – the nice, safe “little village nearby” – does not seem to be a good choice (Gen 19:20,23)].

After seeking God's direction, these believers could go visit places which seem to be a possible refuge. It is essential that they begin to visit some different countries. Attend some Christian meetings. Make some friends. Begin to learn a few essential words of the language. For example, words like “food,” “water,” “toilet paper,” etc. are very useful.

Once someone has been somewhere several times and gotten to know a few people, if they speak a few words of the language, it will not be so hard to go again when they must. Also, they may be able to sense if this is a good place for them to flee. But if someone has never been to another place, if they know no one and if they do not speak a word of the language, it will be almost impossible for them to go there when they have to flee.

Once someone has a good idea where to go, there are some further steps they can take. One is to open a bank account in that other country.

When times become desperate and believers are under great pressure to flee Babylon, they will probably not be able to take much money with them. Anyone who has some financial resources should strongly consider placing some money outside the “city” right now in a place they can reach by phone, fax or letter.

There are many “offshore” locations which might work. There is nothing illegal about an American resident putting money in a bank in another country, as long as they have paid their taxes. Many millions of people and businesses do it every day. Also, once Babylon is destroyed, its currency will be worthless. These people should consider keeping some money in another form of currency.

Another thing many current Babylonian residents could afford to do, if they wished to, would be to buy real estate in the place to which they might want to flee. Many countries allow foreigners to own land or houses within their borders. Often property overseas is available for a small fraction of the price they might have to pay in Babylon. If they wish to make their transition easier, they should do this too.

Still another thing they might consider while they are visiting other countries and planning their exodus from Babylon is how they might make a living in this new place. Pray about this.

If God is leading anyone to move, He will also show them where to go and what to do to survive there. Although these things may seem very remote and difficult today in their present context, as they move in a faith response to what Jesus is leading them to do, He will show them how to meet all their practical needs.

LOT MADE NO PREPARATION

Lot was a rich man. In fact, he was extremely wealthy. When he lived with Abraham their possessions were so great that the land could not support them both. So Lot moved to Sodom. We know that the sin of that place grieved him, but he took no steps to leave (II Pet 2:7,8). He and his family were very comfortable there.

Since he had made no plans to leave, his flight came upon him unexpectedly. He had no time to gather up any stuff or any way to transport it. All of his wealth and possessions had to be left behind. He escaped with only the shirt on his back, so to speak.

It may be that the time will come when God will take drastic measures to help His children leave Babylon. Those who have not heeded His word before, may need some kind of last minute push. But, like Lot and his daughters,

they may lose all they have and end up living in some cave in the mountains.

The scriptures are crystal clear. Anyone beginning to understand these things, should be wise and begin to take some appropriate steps for what is coming. They should use the “little time” which they have been given to make preparations for the future.

We read: “A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself. The simple pass on and are punished” (Pr 22:3; 27:12). The simple ones here are those who made no preparation and therefore suffer the consequences of their ignorance.

This verse appears two times in the Holy Scriptures. God must mean something by not only saying it once but repeating it. This “something” is that when we see that there is trouble coming, we should make some logical, sensible plans and preparations for it. Noah did and others can too. If they do not, they will be “punished” by the coming judgment which will impact all the inhabitants of Babylon.

The Bible also teaches us that when someone begins to take steps to leave Babylon, they will become examples for others to follow. “Move from the midst of Babylon. Go out of the land of the Chaldeans; and be like rams before the flock” (Jer 50:8). Obedience will also help others see what they too could and should do.

REMEMBER LOT'S WIFE

Coming out of Babylon will not be easy. In fact, it will be so difficult for many that it will prove to be almost impossible. Babylon is a location which seems very safe and secure. It is a place of all conceivable types of luxury, ease and pleasure.

It is somewhere that offers everything which the natural man could desire. Consequently, it has a tremendously strong hold on the hearts of those who live there. The idea of going somewhere else is almost unthinkable.

But Jesus urges us to: "Remember Lot's wife" (Lk 17:32). Her heart was really attached to Sodom. It was there that her home and all her possessions were. Some of her children and all of her grandchildren were there too. And so her heart remained there also. As she was being dragged to safety, her eyes and heart were looking back and so she suffered God's judgment and became a pillar of salt (Gen 19:26).

For their own sake and the sake of their family, Babylon's Christian residents should begin to prepare their heart and their future now, today. When the situation becomes critical, they will not be able to "go back to get [their] stuff" (Lk 17:31).