

## 8.

# THE PLAN OF GOD

A first step to fleeing from the great harlot is that every believer must “get out” in their hearts. When our hearts are entwined with this world and all the things in it, whether or not we actually live in the location called “Babylon,” we in fact are in Babylon. James calls upon us to “purify our hearts” (Js 4:8). It is here in our hearts that this issue of being in love with the world and all of its security, pleasures and luxury, needs to be resolved. It is in our hearts that we first need to be set free.

The spirit of the world which is epitomized by luxurious, sensual Babylon is in direct conflict with God and His plans for the human race. You see God made man for Himself. When He created the human race, He did so

with a specific intention in mind. Part of that plan is that we would love Him supremely and put our love for Him and our service to Him in first place.

The heart of every human being is meant to be captured and held by an intimate and total love affair with our Creator. This is the position, the only position, for which we were made. He is to have the first place in our hearts and lives. So when and if the human soul becomes attached to other things, we then find ourselves in a position displeasing to Him.

This present world, with all the things in it – the flash, the glitter, the attractions and the pleasures – are a product of the devil’s kingdom. We read: “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – is not of the Father but is of the world” (I Jn 2:15,16).

Do you remember what it was that Satan offered Jesus to tempt Him to disobey His Father? He offered Him “...all the kingdoms of this world and their glory” (Mt 4:8). The devil still uses the same tactics today.

That’s right. The worldly things and pursuits which we find all around us are not neutral. They are not merely “things” which have no

bearing or influence on the Christian's or even unbeliever's life. The attraction of these things has a supernatural force behind it. It is as if there is a kind of anointing which makes them seem more desirable than they really are.

This is the power of the devil working to attract and capture the hearts of men and women. It is his evil scheme to distract us from God's intentions and bond us with the items and activities of his worldly system. In this way we will be inhibited from focusing our affections completely on God, therefore satisfying His desires. Further, we will never become any kind of a real threat to Satan's kingdom.

This loving of the world with all the things it offers is one reason that Babylon is called a prostitute. She is yielding her heart and life to any and all attractions which beckon to her. She willingly indulges every sensual appetite which comes her way. Her lust for things and pleasures is insatiable. Her passion is spent on any number of pursuits which she believes might satisfy her cravings including entertaining herself liberally and buying everything which she can possibly afford.

Thoughts about her Maker rarely, if ever, enter her mind. She is obsessed with luxury and pleasure and she gives herself with abandon to anything she thinks will provide them.

When we, who should belong wholly to God, begin to think and act like this, we too become part of the prostitute.

James, in his epistle, links this love for the things and pleasures of the world with spiritual adultery. He writes: "Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God" (Jas 4:4).

In the next verse he connects this love for the things of the world with an abandonment of our love for God saying: "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously." You see, God is jealous for our affection. His will is for our love to be focused entirely upon Him. When it is not, we become spiritual adulteresses. We become a part of the prostitute.

All believers who live today in Babylon must have a real, profound, heart-searching time before the presence of God and allow Him to purify them of all the things which would hold them back from obeying Him. They must cleanse their heart of their love for the world and all the things in it. Next they must begin to take steps to be obedient to what He is saying to them right now, today. As we repent from our involvement in this world and move toward God's goals, He will lead us.

## THE SIN OF SODOM

Very many believers who live in Babylon today do not understand why God would even think about judging their nation. They see their prosperity and comfort as blessings from God. Although the increasing sin around them troubles them, they do not consider themselves to be sinful. They just cannot imagine that their easy, prosperous, "Christian" lifestyle might be something of which God does not approve.

When reading about Sodom in the Old Testament, we encounter something very significant. God states exactly what her sin was. Contrary to what we might think, He does not list many deviant sexual sins. Although such sin certainly existed and was repugnant to Him, what God mentions as the reason for His judgment is something else.

In Ezekiel 16:49 we read: "Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. "

This is really amazing! Sodom's sin was "pride," plenty of good food and lots of spare time. This is why God judged her. Most of us probably don't see these things as bad. In fact,

we often seek after them. Yet, in God's mind these were a great offense to Him. You see, Sodom had a great abundance, but, according to this verse, she spent it on herself. She did not use her affluence to minister to those who were poor and needy.

In the Gospels, Jesus teaches us about what it is that chokes His word and makes it unfruitful within us. Joining the various records together, there are four basic items mentioned. They are: "the cares of this world," "the deceitfulness of riches" (Mt 13:22), "the desires for other things" (Mk 4:19), and the "pleasures of life" (Lk 8:14). This could be regarded as the exact definition of Babylonian society. It is what many would call the "American dream."

It is for this reason that God is going to judge Babylon. He has given her so much but she has spent it on herself. She has used the blessings of God to lavish upon herself everything she could desire instead of spending her resources promoting the Kingdom of God. Very soon, God is going to judge that nation for the way in which she used what He gave to her.

But before this event, our Lord is urging all of His people to flee for their lives. He is instructing them to get out of that nation, culture and society which will suffer His wrath. All of us will do well to listen to His voice.

## WHAT HOLDS PEOPLE BACK

Many people love their country. Further, they love the place where they were born and raised. Perhaps they appreciate the scenery, their neighbors and their surroundings. Everything for them seems safe and familiar. Some are extremely patriotic. Their love for nation is deep rooted, strong and unbending.

Consequently, the idea of abandoning all this and going to live in another country with strange surroundings and even stranger people, not to mention trying to cope with a foreign language, is practically unthinkable for many Babylonian residents. Therefore, these human sentiments hold them back from any obedience to what God might be saying.

Such sentiments are common, normal and understandable. In and of themselves they are not sin. Most people have such feelings for their home and country. However, there are times when God might require someone to do things which do not seem safe or comfortable. Our Commander might direct them to move in some direction which is difficult, emotionally stressful and even frightening. When He does, then they must deny themselves the luxury of

following their sentiments and emotions and instead, follow Him. They must be willing to take steps which might make them uncomfortable because they know they should be obedient.

Truthfully, there is no way for someone to leave home, family and country without suffering strong emotional stress. This kind of move is easy for no one. It is against human nature which always likes the safe and familiar. What God is calling the inhabitants of Babylon to do is not going to be simple. There will be many emotional and spiritual struggles involved.

Therefore, no one should be paralyzed by these feelings. They should not let them run their life or be seduced by them into a false sense of security resulting in disobedience. Escaping Babylon will be very difficult for almost everyone. Those in this situation must adjust their minds to this fact. Leaving will not be easy. It will be an emotional and spiritual battle.

God called Abraham to leave his home, family and country. He said to him, "Get out of your country, from your kindred and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you" (Gen 12:1). Do you imagine that this move was something easy for Abraham? Do you think that it was easier for him, since he lived in

another time and place, than it will be for anyone else? Certainly not! In order to obey God, Abraham had to face all the difficulties, the battle with fears and emotions, and the dangers that any one of us would encounter today.

In fact, I believe his move was even more difficult for him since it is likely that there was no law and order to protect him in any of the places he was going. Further, he had no pictures, atlases or videos to inform him about his destination. He had no opportunity to go there on a vacation or mission trip to check it out. When he got there, he couldn't phone home to tell everyone had arrived and see if they were OK too. Abraham had to simply move in faith, leaving all the safe and familiar behind, in obedience to God Almighty. We too must be children of Abraham.

Those residents of Babylon who decide to obey God and flee then must prepare themselves to face ridicule. People are going to laugh at them. They will think they are crazy. This no doubt is the treatment which Noah received. Here he was building a large boat on dry land. There was no way to get it to water. Nothing like a flood had ever happened before. So everyone scoffed at him.

In the same way, the destruction of Babylon will be like nothing which has ever happened,

except perhaps for the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. No one in our generation has seen anything like it. So when someone begins to move out of danger, others who see no danger will ridicule them also.

To them, just as with the men and women in the days of Noah, things look safe and secure. They will believe that life will always go on as it has before. Any preparations will seem idiotic to them and they will voice their opinions often and forcefully. Anyone fleeing must prepare themselves mentally for this onslaught.

## GOD'S COUNTRY

Another series of thoughts which might hinder those thinking about leaving Babylon goes something like this: "God loves this nation. He has blessed it greatly. There are many good Christian men and women here. How could it be that God would allow this country to be destroyed?" Perhaps we can find some answers for this by looking again in the Old Testament.

God chose the land of Israel. He led His people there. It was a good land, full of all sorts of good things. At that time, it was incredibly fertile and lush. It was "flowing with milk and honey." It was the kind of place in which it was easy and comfortable to live. The Lord blessed

His people there. He allowed them to build Him a temple in Jerusalem. It was God's chosen place, full of God's chosen people who worshipped at God's unique temple on the earth.

But these people became disobedient. They became sinful, immoral and proud. They never thought that God would judge them or destroy their land because of all the foregoing facts which we have mentioned. Yet He did. He did so because of the wickedness of the population. Their sin became so great that finally He turned His back on them and judged them. He arranged for another nation to invade them and utterly destroy them. Today's Babylon is no different and will not be treated differently from them.

So if modern Babylon is massacring millions of unborn babies every year. If they are sacrificing these children on the altar of their own convenience. If many are regularly practicing fornication and adultery, not a few of whom have different partners every night. If divorce, which God hates (Mal 2:16), is widespread, a product of people's insatiable desire for instant gratification.

If pornography is epidemic on the internet, the TV and in other places. If strip joints and sex shops are popping up like mushrooms

everywhere. If homosexuality is increasingly common and blatant. If witchcraft and every type of occult practice is on the rise, especially among the youth. And if all these and many other sins are just as common or even more so inside the “church” as they are in the world around them, will God not judge her? Certainly He will.

If and when a nation which God has previously blessed and even used for His own purposes turns her back on Him, He will also turn His back on her and judge her.

I’m sure that this sinful behavior of Babylon grieves its many Christian residents. It grieves God too. But they cannot save their country. They will not change God’s mind or alter the clear prophetic utterance of the Bible. Neither will they succeed in turning the entire nation back to God. Things have already gone too far.

The best option is to obey Him. Through obedience, they may succeed in saving themselves and some of their family from the judgment which is coming. In this way, perhaps they will become an example for others to follow.

## **MAYBE YOU DON’T LIVE IN BABYLON**

Perhaps some of you readers are under-

standing the substance of this message. You are seeing how the love for the world and all the things in it, including the luxuries, excesses and pleasures, are in opposition to the will of God and His kingdom. Possibly you are even grieved in your heart that the world in general is tending toward an increasingly promiscuous and luxurious direction. You are seeing ever more clearly how seeking the things of the world keeps the heart of man from intimacy with God.

But, you say, "Where I live does not fulfill the previous description. It does not seem that where I live is the Babylon of Revelation. My country of residence does not meet the criteria discussed in this book." For example, possibly where you live has no seaports. It might be that the wealth of your country does not match what biblical Babylon obviously has. Perhaps the worldly tendencies of the Babylonian spirit are limited by poverty, governmental considerations, etc. Consequently, there is no need for you to flee anywhere.

Yet there still is a critical question for you to consider. Are you, as a child of God, pursuing the things of the world? Do they attract and grip your heart? Even though you don't live in Babylon, *do you wish you did?* Has the wine of her fornication contaminated your being in a

manner that causes you to lust after all the pleasures and things that the world has to offer? Are your thoughts and your time consumed with the pursuit of success and money?

If so, then there is a need for a deep repentance. There is a necessity for a genuine examination of your heart before the Lord. Anything which He finds within us which is not wholeheartedly seeking His kingdom first needs to be abandoned. The involvement of our heart with the things of this world is spiritual adultery. If we are caught in this unclean, spiritually immoral relationship, we desperately need repentance.

In these last days, every child of God should be putting his relationship with God and his co-operation with His will on the earth in first place. There is only a little time left. We don't have time to waste.

Every believer who is in right relationship with Jesus should be dedicating all his time, energy and money to proclaiming the gospel and serving others. Instead of using our talents and time to accumulate wealth and things, we should invest what we have – be it little or much – in doing the work of the kingdom of God. In this way, and only in this way, will we escape His judgment when we stand before Him.