

Two Churches: Babylon and Jerusalem

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of living a life of dependence on God, marked by the presence of the fire of the Holy Spirit, which brings passion, devotion, and obedience to Christ, and warns against the spirit of Babylon, which is characterized by jealousy and a lack of devotion to Christ.

Duration: 57:57

Scripture: Luke 16:13, James 4:4, Revelation 17:5, Revelation 18:4

Topics: "Spiritual Deception", "Christian Obedience"

Description

This sermon delves into the concept of Babylon as a corrupt system that infiltrates Christianity, leading believers astray with worldliness, materialism, and false doctrines. It emphasizes the need to come out of this corrupt Christianity, focusing on devotion to Christ, obedience to God's word, and avoiding the traps of money, politics, and music that can lead to spiritual downfall. The message highlights the importance of being part of the true bride of Christ, ready in simplicity and purity of devotion.

Transcript

Throughout the scriptures, we see a choice that God gives to man of two ways in which he can go. You see that right in the beginning when God gave Adam a choice between the tree of knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life. That's how the story in the Bible begins of man's history.

And those two trees symbolize two ways in which we can live. One is a life of dependence upon God for knowing his will and seeking his power. And the other is independence of God.

So we need to see this difference. If we don't understand this, we can be deceived by false Christianity. Now these two trees that begin in Genesis 2, when you come to the end of the Bible, it becomes two systems.

One is Babylon and the other is Jerusalem. So we can say the Bible begins with two trees. The tree of knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life.

And it ends with two systems, Babylon and Jerusalem. And that is the result of the development of life according to these two trees. And we can see another contrast.

In Genesis 4, we read of two men, the first two children of Adam, Cain and Abel. And both came with an offering to the true God. They didn't go to a false God.

There was no false God in Genesis 4. Cain brought an offering to the true God and Abel brought an offering to the true God. God accepted one. He didn't accept the other.

They were the beginning of two streams. Cain is, we can say, the religious stream and Abel is the spiritual stream. And the difference between the two was not in doctrine.

That's the point you need to see. If you checked up Cain's doctrine of God with Abel's doctrine of God, they both got the same marks. They were both the same.

The difference was fire. Fire fell on Abel's offering and there was no fire on Cain's offering. The difference between true Christianity and false Christianity, between Jerusalem and Babylon, is not doctrine.

The doctrine can be exactly the same, correct doctrine. It's fire. The fire of the power and purity of the Holy Spirit.

And that's why it's possible for people with the spirit of Babylon to sit in any denomination, in any church. It's not in one particular church. The question is not whether your doctrine is right.

The question is not even whether you avoid evil. Because the Bible says, Adam partook of the knowledge of good and evil and he began to know what is good and evil. And that's why you have so many decent human beings in the world who don't do any evil.

There are many atheists who never committed adultery in their whole life, never murdered anybody. There are so-called believers who commit adultery. Those atheists are better than them.

The knowledge of good and evil is not restricted to Christians. The knowledge of good and evil is all children of Adam of God. They know something is wrong.

It's the fire of the Holy Spirit that makes the difference. And that's why under the law, before the fire of the Holy Spirit fell on the day of Pentecost, nobody could be spiritual. You couldn't build the true spiritual Jerusalem before the day of Pentecost.

You needed the power of the Holy Spirit. And even today, there are so many people who are still seeking to build the church without the power of the Holy Spirit. There are many people who sit in churches and are perfectly content because their lives are good.

They know what is good and evil. They avoid what's evil. They've got a good testimony in the church.

The only thing missing in their life is the fire. Have you ever considered the possibility that you can be a good person and not have the fire of God? That is so important to be baptized in the Holy Spirit and fire. I remember the days when I was seeking for it and I wouldn't rest until I was absolutely sure that God had met with me.

In fact, I used to get discouraged because I didn't seem to get an answer. I was so desperate. This is what builds Jerusalem, the fire of God.

In the Old Testament, you read of many contrasts like that. You read of Saul and David. There were two kings.

But these two kings also were part of these two streams that began with Cain and Abel that ends in Babylon and Jerusalem. Cain and Abel are two streams that end in Babylon and Jerusalem. So if we understand this, then we will understand how it ends up in Babylon and Jerusalem.

What was wrong with Saul? It wasn't his doctrine. He was a good Jewish person, Israelite. But what was the significant thing about Saul? I don't know whether you noticed this.

In 1 Samuel chapter 10, we read of the time when Saul was made a king. He was a very humble man because when they wanted to make him a king, it says he hid himself. 1 Samuel chapter 10.

In the last part of verse 21, they selected Saul, but when they looked for him, he could not be found. Samuel had told him that you're going to be the king, but he hid himself. Can you imagine a man who started life so humble? And then they found him.

Because the Lord revealed where he was, he was hiding somewhere. Verse 23 says, when he stood among the people, he was taller than any of the people from his shoulders upwards. So if you have a thousand Israelites standing there, you'll see one man whose head is above all of those people.

He was much taller than all the others. Maybe he was close to seven feet. But the thing that distinguished Saul was his head.

The thing that distinguished David, you know what that was? In Acts chapter 13, we read that Acts of the Apostles chapter 13. It speaks about David. That in David, God found a man after his own heart.

A man who would fulfill all his, the entire purpose of God. We read in Acts 13 and verse 36. David, after he had served the will of God in his generation.

Verse 22, David, a man after my heart who will do all my will. The thing that distinguished David was heart. The thing that distinguished Saul was head.

Babylon is a Christianity of the head. Jerusalem is a Christianity of the heart. Head is knowledge, information, correct doctrine, so many things.

Heart is devotion, love, fervency of spirit. That is the difference between Jerusalem and Babylon. And that is why it is possible in every church for people who understand everything, who speak the right language, their heads are so perfect in their knowledge of scripture.

But there is no passion about their life. There is no passion in their devotion to Christ. There is no passion in their desire to serve the Lord.

It is sort of a sluggish, correct doctrine coming to all the meetings, dead as a corpse. Everything is correct. It is like a corpse with all the ten fingers, all the ten toes, two eyes, ears.

Lots of people like that. Lots of people like that. That is Babylon.

There is no fire. So you see, these two streams come right through. Then you come to Jesus time, you find the same stream still flowing.

The Pharisees and Jesus. Remember how it started? Tree of knowledge, the tree of life. Then it comes to Cain and Abel.

And you see that in Saul and David. And you come all the way down to Jesus time. It is the same stream, the Pharisees and Jesus.

What is it that distinguished Jesus from the Pharisees? The Pharisees knew the scriptures, Jesus knew the scriptures. The Pharisees prayed, Jesus prayed. The Pharisees fasted, Jesus fasted.

The Pharisees had missionary work, Jesus did evangelism. The Pharisees went to the synagogue, Jesus went to the synagogue. But there was a fundamental difference.

Jesus was heaven bound. The Pharisees were hell bound. In spite of all their correct doctrine, in spite of all their... There was no fire of life in them.

It was a dead religion of the head. You know, I will tell you this. The thing you have to be scared of more than false doctrine is to have right doctrine without any passion or devotion to Christ.

That is a sure pathway to Babylon. I will tell you. I am not God, but I think a lot of us are like that.

Matthew chapter 7 we read Jesus spoke about two buildings. Matthew 7 and verse 24 onwards. He spoke about two people who built two types of houses.

One is a house built on the rock. That is Jerusalem. And the other is the house built on sand.

That is Babylon. One crumbles and it says its fall, verse 27, was great. Great was its fall.

Very similar words you read in Revelation 18. Babylon the great is fallen. Here Jesus spoke about it.

But the house built on the rock remains forever. This again is a picture of Jerusalem and Babylon. But what is the difference here? The difference here is that Jesus said, The one who hears my words and does them, it's not knowledge, it's not hearing, it's not reading the Bible every day.

It's obedience. I'll tell you honestly. I am more interested in obeying God's word from morning till night than reading the Bible for 15 minutes in the morning.

If there is some area, some point during the day or night, when I did not obey something that God's words say, that would disturb me more than if I didn't read the Bible in the morning. But you know, with religious people, it's not like that. Religious people, if they don't read the Bible for 15 minutes in the morning, they get disturbed.

But if they speak a rude word to their wife, they don't get so disturbed. I would get a million times more disturbed if I spoke a rude word to my wife than if I didn't read the Bible 15 minutes in the morning. What about you? Because that's a disobedience to God's word.

He who hears my word and does it, it's obedience that builds the house of God, Jerusalem. What about the foolish man? He hears, verse 26, let's read it like this. The one who reads the Bible every morning, verse 26, and does not do what's written there, he's building on sand.

He can read every day. He can read for one hour in the morning. It's better to know 10% of the Bible and obey it than to know 100% of the Bible and not obey it.

When I was a young Christian, they never told me that obedience to the Bible was more important than reading the Bible. And I think in most churches, they'll tell you to read the Bible. They tell it so much that

you get convicted if you don't read it.

If you come here, you'll get convicted if you speak a rude word to your wife, whether you read the Bible or not. You'll get convicted if you look with lust after a woman, whether you read the Bible or not. It's obedience, obedience, obedience.

It's so easy for us to become religious like the Pharisees. I read my Bible. I pray.

I go to the meetings. I don't harm anybody. I don't commit adultery.

I partake of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. I don't do any evil. I do only good.

There's no fire in my life. I end up in Babylon. The devil's a deceiver.

How many of you are quite content to go one day, one week without the fire of God in your life? One month, one year, two years, five years? It doesn't matter. The fire of God is not in my life. That's how Cain was.

And he became jealous. Jealousy. Oh.

First sin described outside the Garden of Eden. The first sin outside the Garden of Eden was jealousy. And jealousy led to murder.

And Cain, he was not a godless man. Religious people who were jealous of spiritual people. Go back to Cain and Abel.

Cain, the religious man, was jealous of Abel, the spiritual man. You go down the stream. Saul, King Saul was the man with the clever head.

David was jealous of David, the man with the good heart. You go further down the line, you come to the Pharisees. Even Pilate said, I know these people brought Jesus before me because they are jealous of his ministry.

Jealousy is a major part of Babylon. Right? It starts with Cain. And I want to say to you, if you are jealous of another person who has a fire in his life that you don't have, your religion is the religion of Cain.

Whichever church you may sit in, whichever doctrine you may believe, it makes no difference. Remember, Cain had the right doctrine. His only problem, he was jealous of somebody else who had a fire.

Any type of jealousy. Are you jealous of somebody who has got a better job than you have? Somebody who has a gift that you don't have? Somebody who is prettier than you? Somebody whose children are doing better than yours? It doesn't matter. Somebody who got a better wife than you got? Or somebody whose children got better wives or better husbands than yours got? There is a jealousy.

Without a doubt, you are a part of Babylon. I don't care how many years you have been in this church. My brother, sister, let me tell you the truth, so that your blood is not on my hands.

You are a part of that religion which started with Cain. And which will end with Babylon. You can look very holy, speak very pious language.

I am sure Cain spoke very pious language. Still he was jealous of Cain, of Abel. So these are warnings that you see right through scripture.

You can see the spirit of Babylon all the way through if you read it. Just like you can see Christ all the way through the scriptures from Genesis 3, the seed of the woman, all the way to Revelation, you see Christ. You can see the bride and the harlot also right through scripture.

Now let's see something else. In Revelation 17, we read Babylon is called... Now many people speak about Babylon as the harlot. But here, if you read exactly what scripture says, you know, if you ask the average Christian, what is a harlot? They'll say Babylon.

Babylon is the harlot. Can you show me some scripture which says that? Well, let me show you scripture. Revelation 17 and verse 6. Babylon the great, the mother of harlots.

She's not just a harlot herself. She's known as one who produces harlots. Now there are a lot of prostitutes whose children don't become prostitutes.

Thank God for that. But here is a prostitute who is so much into her prostitution that her children are prostitutes too. Revelation 17, 5. The mother of harlots and the abominations of the earth.

Now what is harlotry? Harlotry, adultery, what is that? In contrast, you have chapter 19. You have the bride. Verse 7. Let us rejoice and be glad, because the marriage of the Lamb has come.

His bride has made herself ready. So here is the harlot, mother of harlots. And here is the bride.

And you see how the harlot is dressed up. You can see in Revelation 17, 4. She was clothed in purple and scarlet and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls and having a golden cup. Now I want you to picture this in your mind.

A woman dressed with very expensive clothes, purple and scarlet, and with gold, you know, years and chains and bangles and precious stones and pearls and everything around her neck. Picture that in your mind. Now you see another woman.

In chapter 19, verse 7. The bride has made herself ready. Who made her ready? She made herself ready. And it was given to her to clothe herself.

Now let's see her clothes. Fine linen, bright and clean. It's only a picture, but it's a very vivid picture.

There is a simplicity about the bride of Christ. I mean, you know, if you see a woman here dressed in purple and scarlet and gold and pearls and diamonds and all that, and you see another girl here who is just dressed in very simple white clothes. What is the contrast? It's a simplicity versus grandeur, trying to show off.

There's a simplicity there. There's a simplicity about the bride of Christ. And what is this linen? And is a picture of the righteous acts of the saints.

Verse 8. It's not the righteousness of Christ. The righteousness of Christ is something that clothes all believers. But this is a garment that she stitched herself.

Now there is a righteousness of Christ that makes us acceptable to God. It's called justification. I'm not talking about that here.

That's just put upon everybody. But read carefully. This is a dress that she stitched herself.

It says she made herself ready. And what are these? Everything in that dress is the righteous actions she did. Of course, in the power of the Holy Spirit, for the glory of God, according to the will of God.

But she did something. Today we have a Christianity that says salvation is by faith, by grace. I believe that 100%.

You cannot do one single thing to get any of your past sins forgiven. That has to be done 100% by God. And He did it on Calvary.

We thought about that. You can't do one single thing to become righteous and accepted before God. We are clothed with the righteousness of Christ.

That is one side of the coin. Salvation is by grace, by faith, not of works. Ephesians 2.8 Not of works, lest any man should boast, it says.

But then it says in the next verse, Ephesians 2.9-10 But we are now recreated in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has ordained that we should do. When? After we are converted. There are no good works in the foundation.

There are good works in the superstructure. There are good works in the foundation. It's like saying we don't put windows into a foundation.

That's right. We don't put doors into a foundation. We don't put grills in the foundation.

But don't you put grills and windows and doors on the top? We need to distinguish. In the foundation of our salvation in Christ, there are no works, nothing you can do to make yourself acceptable to God. But in the superstructure, there's plenty.

That's the contrast in Ephesians 2.8-9-10 We are saved by grace, through faith, not of works, lest any man should boast. And then, the foundation is over now. Now we are created into Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has already ordained that we should walk in them.

That's Ephesians 2.10 Those are the righteous acts of the saints. Now, you can spend your life building one brick on this foundation, that's all. Or you can build a skyscraper.

That depends on how much you deny yourself and how much you seek to do the will of God in your life. And it's different for different people. Other foundation can no man lay, it says in 1 Corinthians 3, and Jesus Christ.

But what we build on that, it's different. So there's the difference you see. So everywhere you see this contrast, the bride and the harlot.

Now, how does a bride become a harlot? You see, a bride is not a wife. It says here, the marriage of the Lamb has come, and the bride has made us already. That's in the future.

Spiritually, according to Romans 7.4, we are already married to Christ. That means we are joined to Him. That's what it means.

But the actual marriage of the Lamb is yet to come. Until then, we are called, not the wife, but the bride. You know, just like a bride becomes a wife on the wedding day.

Now, before the wedding day, which is when Christ returns, how can the bride become a harlot? It's like this. If she's engaged to some man, and fools around with another man, she's a harlot. But if she's engaged to one man, and remains true to that man, she's a bride.

It's as simple as that. And Paul says in 2 Corinthians 11, Verse 2, I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. There is a jealousy, which is a godly jealousy.

The Bible says God is a jealous God. The Bible says in James 4, that God is jealous for our spirit. There's a godly jealousy like there's a godly anger.

That, you know, Jesus had when people were making money in the name of religion in the temple. There was a godly anger there. And there is a carnal, fleshly anger.

There's a godly jealousy, like Paul had. And there's a fleshly jealousy, like Cain had. What is godly jealousy? Godly jealousy is, I want these brothers to be pure.

I don't want anybody, I don't want them to fool around with others. I want them to be devoted to Christ. You know, in the Old Testament, there's a very beautiful picture of this.

In Genesis 24, you read about Abraham, who's a picture of God the Father. Isaac is a picture of Jesus. And Abraham's servant, Eliezer, is a picture of the Holy Spirit.

And Mesopotamia, the far country, is a picture of this earth. And Abraham tells his servant, I want you to go to Mesopotamia and get a bride for my son. On the day of Pentecost, the Father sent the Holy Spirit into the world, saying, I'm sending you to this earth to get a bride for my son.

And it was a long journey from Mesopotamia to Canaan, where Abraham lived. I don't know how many weeks it took. I'd say a couple of months.

And as they were going on the camel, if anybody tried to fool around with Rebekah, oh boy, Eliezer would be very jealous. If anybody looked at pretty Rebekah on a camel and came and tried to be friendly with her, Eliezer would drive him away and say, get away. This woman is reserved.

She is the bride of Isaac. She's not yet married him, but she's the bride of Isaac. And he would have fought with anyone who tried to fool around with Rebekah.

That is the jealousy of the Holy Spirit to prevent us from being polluted by the spirit of the world. Because he wants to preserve us till one day he brought Rebekah to Isaac and said, here you are. And one day the Holy Spirit will bring the bride and present the bride to Jesus.

That will be the marriage. There are so many beautiful pictures of this in the Old Testament. So he says, I'm afraid, 2 Corinthians 11, 3, that you won't be a virgin.

I'm afraid, he tells the Corinthians, that like the serpent deceived Eve by his cleverness. You know, if the devil had told Eve, why don't you go and murder Adam? There wouldn't have been anything crafty there. That would be a very childish, cheap type of thing, unworthy of the devil, who is such a clever fellow.

He tried something clever. He said, what's there? This is a good food for you. I mean, just ignore for a moment that God's forbidden it, but just look at it.

You're not harming anybody. Are you harming Adam? It's not only harming yourself, it'll do you some good. I'm sure God won't mind.

Isn't that how the devil comes to you and tells you to sin? Yeah, it's a little thing. It doesn't matter. Some small little thing.

Whether you go to some internet pornography site or you look at some dirty picture or you try to flirt around with some girl or whatever it is, the devil says, yeah, it doesn't matter. It's not so serious. By his craftiness.

He won't tell you to straightaway commit adultery or murder. That wouldn't be crafty. Crafty is in a very clever way.

I'm afraid that the serpent deceived craftiness. Your mind. It's in the mind that there is the battle, my brothers.

You are the bride if you keep your mind for Christ. It is in the mind that you become a bride or a harlot. Your minds should be led astray, corrupted from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.

That fervent devotion to Jesus. From that your mind is taken away to the routine of going to meetings, listening to messages, nodding your head and saying that was a great message. And going back and no fervent devotion to Jesus.

The devil has led you astray. How many people recognize that their devotion to Christ is gone? Their passionate love for Christ is gone. They've already gone astray.

I don't think there are many Christians who would consider themselves have gone astray just because they don't fervently love the Lord today. No. And Paul was very concerned.

Like Eliezer, Abraham's servant, to protect Rebecca, Paul was concerned to preserve these people. Now what is it that makes us harlots again? Let's turn to another verse. James chapter 4. Now I want you to see to whom James is speaking.

Many times he says, James 2 verse 1, My brothers. James 3 verse 1, My brothers. My brothers, My brothers, My brothers.

And then James 4.4, You adulteresses. How do you like that? My brothers, My brothers, You adulteresses. Can brothers be adulteresses? Yes.

In fact an unbeliever cannot be an adulteress. It's only a believer who can be an adulteress. Only a bride can be an adulteress.

What about a girl who is not engaged to anybody? How can she be an adulteress? She is not engaged to anybody. She can go around with this man or that man. That's fine.

She may be wanting to marry that man. That's fine. But what about one who is engaged to somebody who has gone on a long journey and then going around with some man? That is an adulteress.

So one who is not a bride cannot be an adulteress. An unbeliever can never be a part of Babylon. It's brothers and sisters who become adulteresses.

How? Don't you know verse 4 that friendship with the world is enmity with God. Whoever wants to be a friend of this world makes himself an enemy of God. Can a brother become an enemy of God? I mean, let me ask you honestly.

How many of you seriously consider the possibility that you might end up as an enemy of God? I don't think any of us even think of it. I don't think we even think enemy of God? Impossible! We say, I'm not an enemy of God. I'm a friend of God.

Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. My brothers and sisters, if you listen to the word of God, you will not get any surprises when Christ comes again. I don't want to get any surprises.

I know with all my heart that if I become a friend of this world system, the world doesn't mean the people of the world, the system, there's a whole system that controls this world and the one who is controlling the whole thing is the devil. He's called the God of this world, the ruler of this world. And if I become friendly with that, immediately I become an enemy of God.

If you don't believe that, just read James chapter 4 verse 4. See whether it says that in your Bible. Brethren, my brethren, so many times in James he says, my brethren, my brethren, my brethren, you adulteresses, don't you know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? That is Babylon. Babylon is this person who claims to have accepted Christ, I'm a born again Christian, but is friendly with the world system.

We say Jesus died to save us from our sins. Let me tell you some other, another reason why Jesus died. Galatians chapter 1 and verse 4. Galatians 1 verse 4. He gave himself for our sins so that he might deliver us out of this present evil world system.

This evil age, according to the will of God our Father. So James says that, Paul says that in Galatians. And that's why he says towards the end of Galatians in chapter 6. Galatians 6 verse 14.

But God forbid, may it never be that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ through which this world system has been crucified to me. And I have been crucified to this world system. That is the Bride of Christ.

The Bride of Christ is one who has been crucified to this world system. And the world system is crucified to him. Or as the Living Bible says, I have as much interest in this world system as a dead man has.

I have as much interest in this world system as a dead man has. We need to distinguish between the world and the earth. We live on this earth, so we have to buy food to eat, we buy clothes, we build houses, we get married, we give in marriage, we eat and drink and so many things.

Because we live on this earth. Jesus also did all those things. I mean, many of those things.

He ate and drank and wore clothes and he had to buy things. When he was a carpenter, he bought and he sold. But he kept himself apart from that system.

You know, in buying and selling, for example, there's a lot of sin in buying and selling. And if a man is not careful, he can easily get caught up in that system. There's cheating in buying and selling.

You can give your word to somebody and then when you realize it, you're going to lose, pull back your word. You see, there's a lot of... The world system is like that. It doesn't take giving a word seriously.

Your yes is yes, your no is no. Have you ever had this experience where you promised to sell something to someone and you agreed with him on a price and later on you discovered that actually the price was much more. But you stuck to your word because you were a Christian.

Or did you go haggling with him? Jesus said your yes must be yes and your no is no. There's a world system. It says, ah, your word doesn't matter.

Did you sign with witnesses on a stamp paper? Then only it's... That's what the world system says. Jesus says your yes is yes, your no is no. And he keeps a promise.

It says in Psalm 15, the one who lives in the presence of God is one who keeps a promise even if he runs at a loss. He keeps his word. There are not many people on earth who live like that.

I'll tell you that. There are not many people who take the words that come out of their mouth seriously. I said it, so I'm going to keep it.

I mean, if that man releases me, that's okay. Then I'm free. But if he holds me to my word, I stick to my word even if I haven't signed it.

There are many ways and this world system is like that. You know, money is a very major factor in this world system. That's why Jesus said in Luke chapter 16, Luke 16 and verse 13, I believe he's speaking here of Jerusalem and Babylon again.

No one can serve two masters. Have you seen this two and two that you've seen right through this message? Knowledge of good and evil, and free of life. Cain and Abel.

Saul and David. The Pharisees and Jesus. Babylon and Jerusalem.

You see here, two masters. And those two are not God and the devil. It's God and money.

And I'll tell you this, there is no one on earth who is in danger of serving God and the devil. No. None of you will love God and the devil at the same time.

Some people love the devil, some people love God. But there are millions of Christians who try to love God and money. But what they don't realize is, as far as God is concerned, they only love money.

That is the other man that you fool around while you're waiting for Christ. And you know money is something that we have to handle everyday. You cannot serve God and mammon.

Or mammon means not only money, all material things. Because you will hate the one and love the other, or hold to one and despise the other. The only way to escape the love of money is by loving God with all our heart and holding on to him, according to this verse.

You say, Lord, I want to hold on to you. And I want to love you with all my heart. Otherwise I'll get, you know, pulled by this.

And I'll really become part of Babylon. Babylon, money is a major part of Babylon. And whenever Christianity tries to serve God and money, it'll end up as Babylon.

Why do you think that all these 33 years that we've been in church, we have taken such a radical stand on the matter of money, on the matter of not taking offerings, on the matter of not having paid workers, of no paid pastors, no paid elders, and we don't send any reports asking for money, or any such thing. Is it because we don't need money to do God's work? Yeah, I mean, how would we build this building if we didn't have money? But did we put pressure on any of you? Or did we send any letters anywhere saying we're building a home? No. And not only here.

Look at all those halls we've built in poor Tamil Nadu villages. Money is a very major thing. And if you don't have the right attitude to money, you'll build Babylon.

In Christian work. Do you know the amount of Christian work that goes on today where there are fervent appeals made to all types of sad stories that are told to people to make them give money? And fervent appeals for money, and money, and money, and money, and so many people sending letters, and there are big directories. You can get Christian organizations that will give you money if you contact them.

God and money is big business. This is not a new thing. What do you think the money changers were doing in the temple? People who sold sheep and doves.

What were the doves for? It was not to go and cook in your home. The sheep were not for cutting and having a lamb curry at home. It was for sacrifice to God.

That's why they were selling it in the temple. It was God. Then why did Jesus drive them away if they were doing a service? Because they did it for a profit.

But you say, in the marketplace in Jerusalem also there were people selling sheep for a profit. Jesus himself made stools and benches as a carpenter for a profit. Otherwise how would he have supported his family? Is it wrong to make a profit in business? No.

But that you must do in the business place. Not in the church. In the temple of God, in the house of God, you can't make profit.

That's how it is. I remember one of those Norwegian brothers who used to come here once. He told me, when he saw we were struggling in those days financially, my wife and I, he said, you're editing and publishing this magazine, monthly magazine, used to call it Hidden Treasures those days.

Why don't you pay yourself? Because you're doing some of our work. I said, pay myself? Are you serious? I was so shocked that this man whom I respected so much, I thought he was a godly man who was telling me that I should pay myself for writing an article. And that's where I began to see the hollowness of a lot of people who claimed, because he told me he pays himself when he does the same thing in Europe.

He's publishing a magazine and he pays himself. You can do that. I see where that has ended today.

You know, you don't see Babylon all of a sudden. It's a road that you make little choices. Ah, that's not a... I've got a verse to support myself.

The laborer is worthy of his hire, so I can pay myself. Uh-huh. You go along that line, and ultimately Babylon will come forth.

The devil's crafty. He's not going to show you the whole future right at the beginning how you're going to destroy yourself. Money.

Be careful of money in Christian work. The other thing we read in Revelation chapter 17 is politics. Babylon is religion plus politics.

It says here that the woman sat on a beast. Revelation chapter 17 verse 3. And the beast is the political power, and the woman, Babylon, is the religious Christianity. When religious Christianity joins up with political leaders, you have Babylon.

And you find it particularly in Western countries. You know that for the past many years, 20, 30 years at least, that I've read the papers, I see every person who wants to be the president of the United States wants to get the votes of the Christians. And says they'll go preach in churches.

What are they going and preaching in the churches for? Is it because you think they want to lead them to a godly life? Oh no, they want their votes. That's why they won't go to the little... Can you imagine a presidential candidate going to a little house group with 20 people? He won't go there. He'll go to the largest church available because he wants their votes.

This is the harlot sitting on the beast. And once they've got their votes, it says once he's got what he wanted, they destroy, it says here in verse Revelation chapter 17, they tear the verse 16, they make the harlot desolate and naked and eat her flesh and burn her up. I've finished with you.

I've got my votes now. I've become the president or prime minister or whatever it is. No, I don't need you.

It's all written here. Christianity plus politics. I mean, you see in our country, may not be Christianity, but religion plus politics.

How people use the religion card to get votes. In chapter 18, you read that Babylon is also a commercial, financial, economic system. Money, as I said a little while ago.

And the whole chapter 18 speaks about the merchants of the earth, you know, who are, verse 11, 18-11, the merchants of the earth are weeping and mourning because no one is buying their cargos anymore. Can you imagine the tremendous loss? Millions and millions of rupees and dollars and euros and everything that will happen all over the world if there was no Christmas or there was no Easter. Even here, commercial street, you'd think all the shops are Christian shops at Christmas time.

No, they're not. But they've got a star, some of them have got different things, it looks as if they're celebrating a Christian festival. They're not.

It's all business. The merchants of the earth weep if this thing is destroyed. Is this the religion, is this the Christianity of Jesus and the apostles? He who made Abraham rich.

God. Who made Job rich. Who made Solomon rich.

Who made David rich. Who made so many godly men in the Old Testament very rich. Why didn't He make Peter rich? Why didn't He make Paul rich? Why didn't He make John rich? Because in the new covenant

that would have been a hindrance to their ministry.

In the old covenant it was not. And I have seen it in the nearly 50 years that I've been a believer. How when money comes in so many times it destroys the work of God.

Dependence on it. Do you know the number of people in India, Christian workers in India who are disturbed by what? The value of the dollar is coming down. Oh, how sad.

Can you imagine a Christian worker being disturbed because the value of the dollar is coming down? Because when I don't get so much exchange, when I exchange it for rupees. This is all Babylon. Can you imagine Jesus being disturbed because the value of the denarii came down in those days or something like that? Jesus is disturbed and says, Father, what shall we do about this? You see, it's amazing how Christians don't even see this.

The other thing in Babylon is music. Verse 22. The sound of harpists and musicians.

1822. And flute players and trumpeters and boy. Music is a very good gift of God.

Music is such a good thing that the devil could not have invented it. That's for sure. God invented it, but that's like saying who made the atom? Did the devil make the atom or God make the atom? What do you think? Oh, there's no doubt about it.

God made the atom. But who made the atom bomb with something that God has created? What about all these harmful drugs like marijuana and cocaine and all that? Did the devil create these things? A lot of things on earth which God has created for a certain purpose and man has used it and abused it. So, music.

The first people who we read of, we read of music and the devil had some of it before he became the devil in Ezekiel 28 you read about it. You read about the sons of Cain who practiced music. The name of Jubal and all that.

And then you read here about music. There's music in the temple. But it's very interesting.

In the Psalms you read about so much about Psalm 150. All the instruments are mentioned. But in the New Testament, why is it you don't read in any of the episodes about instruments? It's not that they're wrong.

It means they're not important. That's what I'm saying. But what is not important has become a major force in Christendom today.

And it's leading Christendom towards Babylon. Money and music. You see the connection here in Babylon.

It's all in Revelation 18. Politics. Connection get the big political leaders to come and preach in the pulpits.

Ask and ask for money. Improve the music. It doesn't matter if people are not godly.

There are churches where they get an unconverted musician to play the music to glorify Jesus Christ. It happens. Because the music must be good.

I tell you. Can you imagine Jesus telling Peter to go and hire some good musicians? Because we're going to have a meeting tomorrow. And Peter says, the only fellow I can find is some atheist.

Never mind. Get him. If he's a good musician, Jesus, get him.

Can you imagine Jesus doing that type of thing? Can you see how far Christianity has gone from the faith of Jesus and the apostles? One day, Babylon falls. It crashes. Let me ask you a question.

Where is the first time in the New Testament that the word Hallelujah comes? We say it so often. Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah. Here's a good quiz.

Where in the New Testament does the word Hallelujah come for the first time? And in what connection? I'll tell you. Hallelujah! Babylon has fallen. Chapter 19, verse 2, 3, and 4. And the second time they said, verse 3, her smoke rises up forever and ever.

Is that why you say Hallelujah? Because Babylon is falling? Or you want Babylon to be destroyed? Is that why you say Hallelujah? That's why they say Hallelujah in Heaven. I saw a loud voice of a great multitude, chapter 19, saying, Hallelujah! Because, verse 2, he has judged the harlot who was corrupting Christendom with his immorality. And a second time, Hallelujah again.

What for? Same thing. Same thing a second time. That's right.

And the 24 elders say, Amen! Verse 4, Hallelujah! Because Babylon is destroyed. I tell you, we need to read the Bible afresh. We've got all types of wrong concepts in our head.

Heaven rejoices when Babylon is destroyed. This corrupt system that led believers into worldliness and godliness and the honor of this world and seeking after money and position and power and glory and all these earthly things. It can come to you.

I fear for the younger generation growing up in our churches that the spirit of Babylon will grip them and they will lose grace. Grace is the power in God's kingdom. That money is on this earth.

Dear brothers and sisters, listen to the call of God. Come out of her, Revelation 18, 4. Who? You. My people.

You are my people. I don't deny that, God says. But you need to get out of that system.

You need to get out of a corrupt Christianity that does not lead you to holiness, that does not lead you to devotion to Christ, that does not challenge you in every single meeting to be devoted to Christ. You need to come out of a corrupt Christianity where you think the most important thing is good music, and good choirs, and good songs, and a lot of money, and good buildings, and good jobs, and big salaries. Devotion to Christ.

I fear that the devil would lead you astray. Let's take that warning. Let's bow our heads in prayer.

Stop for a moment and think about what God has spoken to you. And say, Lord, I don't want this to be just another message. You've opened my eyes to see something.

It's very easy for me to become an enemy of God, to be a harlot. Lord, help me. Preserve me in these last days as your coming approach is so near that I shall not follow in the stream of Cain, and Saul, and the

Pharisees and end up in Babylon.

I want to follow in the footsteps of Abel, and David, and Jesus and be a part of that bride that's made herself ready in simplicity of devotion to you. Thank you, Father.

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