

Finishing Well

Lesson #37 The Goodly Babylonian Garment Nov. 9, 2022

Achan, an Israelite under Moses and Joshua, had lived during the time of the wilderness wanderings of the Israelites. He had witnessed an untold number of funerals of those who refused to enter the Promised Land and possess it due to their rebellion and unbelief. He had stood at the bank of the Jordan River for 3 days [Joshua 3:2] and was obedient to Joshua's commands. Joshua 3:5 And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves: for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you.

Achan experienced the miracle of the crossing of the Jordan River. He understood the memorial stones set up at Gilgal where a covenant of commitment was initiated.

Achan submitted to circumcision. He was privileged to participate in Passover. He must have been filled with wonder when he saw how God had provided for their needs when they entered the Promised Land. He listened and obeyed God's commands for the supernatural victory at Jericho. He heard Joshua inform the people: Jericho is under a ban. Specific items are to be consecrated to the LORD and taken into the treasury of the LORD. [Joshua 6:17-19]

However, while experiencing the supernatural victory at Jericho, Achan sinned.

Joshua 7:19-20 And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give,

I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession unto Him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me.

➤ He confessed: Indeed, I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel,

Joshua 7:21 When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish Garment, [beautiful robe from Shinar] and 200 shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of 50 shekels weight,

then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.

- I Saw looked among the spoils
- I Coveted
- Took Them
- Concealed Them in the midst of his tent

What happened? Achan's heart was infected with the Spirit of Babylon.

As we examine Babylon's place in Scripture and in history, we find it represents the best that man can do and be. It is a combination of human rebellion and demonic activity.

The spirit of Babylon is man exalting himself to God, and even above God.

➤ Babylon represents man's efforts to replace God with himself!

The "spirit of Babylon" motivates human organization and building with man at the head.

- It is the root behind all the world religions trying to reach heaven by human effort.
- It is easy to mix the spirit of Babylon into our organization, church or business, and not realize it.

Babylon has its roots in the book of beginnings, *Genesis*. It is one of the earliest societies of mankind. Its path continues through the centuries and is found in the Book of Revelation at the demise of mankind's societies.

Babylon, founded by a man named, Nimrod [*Genesis 10*] is more than just a city in the Bible. It is a spirit: the spirit of Nimrod. It is a rebellion against all that is good; against God Himself. It is self-glory, a narcissistic elevation of one's own worth. It is a spirit of enslavement.

The spirit of Babylon: A desire to afflict others with the same corrupt practices and thoughts as has afflicted one's own self.

Not content to be corrupt alone, this spirit seeks to entice and enslave others who willingly submit to its seduction.

The First Recorded Sin of Babylon The first corporate sin that manifested itself after the Flood took place on the plains of Shinar, the sight of Babylon.

- Nimrod, a mighty ruler, built a tower that reached to the heavens.

Genesis 10:8-10 Cush was the father of Nimrod [let us rebel]

, who grew to be a mighty warrior on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord; that is why it is said,

"Like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the Lord."

The first centers of his kingdom were Babylon, Erech, Akkad and Calneh, in Shinar.

The Sin of Nimrod and his subjects: Seeking to minimize God's place in their lives.

- Seeking to exalt themselves above God; Seeking to take God out of their lives
Seeking a guarantee that God could never destroy them by a flood again.

- ❖ They would simply go into their 'tower' of escape!

Gen. 11:4 they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth."

Key Point: They wanted a God whom they could control.

"Let us reach heaven" and permeate Christians' activity with legalism or religious effort.

Man wanted to make a name for himself through the work of his hands and recognition for what he could accomplish.

John 6:28 Then they said to Him, What shall we do that we might work the works of God?

Jesus said to them, This is the work of God, that you believe on Him whom He has sent.

God had the last laugh: Genesis 11:6-8 And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. ⁷ Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. ⁸ So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.

What is so dangerous about Babylon and being infected with "the spirit of Babylon"?

The Babylonian Garment represents three things that are a danger to our love for God.

They are seemingly innocent things, things that we all need and appreciate and even desire.

- *But the seduction of these 3 things will work their way into our lives until they minimize our need for God. [My heart becomes infected with this spirit.]*

The Babylonian Garment Represents: SPLENDOR

a. King Ahasuerus reigned from India to Ethiopia. In the third year of his reign, he hosted a feast for all his officials, servants, nobles and governors which lasted 180 days.

He displayed the riches of his royal glory and the splendor and pomp of his greatness.

- We love to display our splendor and glory- whether in our clothes, our car, our home, our possessions.

b. Satan was all about BLING!

Ezekiel 28:13 Satan is an amazing being to behold: "You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created".

- Splendor is seductive. It lured Lucifer into rebellion. It lured David into deep sin. It lured the wisest man on the earth into committing unspeakable acts against his God.

c. Nebuchadnezzar:

Daniel 4:29-30 At the end of the twelve months he was walking about the royal palace of Babylon. ³⁰ The king spoke, saying, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?"

- God had the last word. Immediately a voice came from heaven:

Daniel 4:31-32 While the word was still in the king's mouth, a voice fell from heaven: "King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom has departed from you!

³² And they shall drive you from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. They shall make you eat grass like oxen; and seven times shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses."

d. Israel:

Hosea 2:11-13 I will also cause all her mirth to cease, Her feast days, Her New Moons, Her Sabbaths— All her appointed feasts. ¹² "And I will destroy her vines and her fig trees, Of which she has said, 'These are my wages that my lovers have given me.'

So I will make them a forest, And the beasts of the field shall eat them.

¹³ I will punish her for the days of the Baals to which she burned incense.

She decked herself with her earrings and jewelry, And went after her lovers;

But Me she forgot," says the LORD.

The Babylonian Garment Represents: STATUS

Tradition: This was a priestly robe used in worship to the Canaanite gods.

- This robe was not only beautiful, it represented power, standing and status.
- This robe granted its wearer access to the power people of Jericho and Canaan.

Satan began it all by saying "I will be as the Most High".

- The status of God himself Adam & Eve ate the forbidden fruit>they wanted to be as God.
- Lot chose the well-watered plains of Sodom and Gomorrah, and instead of hating the sin, he became enmeshed in it, even becoming a man of 'status' a judge at the gate.
- Aaron and the Levites set out to worship God in the Tabernacle.
- The spirit of Babylon inspires hidden idolatry in God's people. When Israel was released from captivity, the priests copied the idolatry of Babylon. They painted unclean images on the inner rooms of the temple and took "idols in their hearts" [Ezekiel 14:3].
- But by the time of Christ, the High Priest had become a perverted, corrupt institution motivated by power and status.

Status is very important in our world.

Ministry today is often corrupted by a pursuit of ratings and donations and status.

Pastors focus their efforts on the Four "B's" - Building Size, Budget Size, Number of Baptisms, and Number of Bodies. Spiritual growth and Character growth are not emphasized, because they do not build the churches 'status' as far as the world is concerned.

Focus upon STATUS is PRIDE! There is no room for pride in God's Kingdom.

Mark 9:35 And

he sat down and called the twelve.

And he

said to them, "If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all."

The Babylonian Garment Represents: SUCCESS

You name it; we'll wear it or drive it as long as it makes us look successful!

I can just see Achan trying on that shiny robe. He couldn't wait to be seen wearing it.

Everyone would be jealous of his apparent success!

Daniel 4:4 I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and prospering in my palace.

Look at America. We are swimming in debt, but we still consume, charge and buy our way into success. We trade our souls for stuff to show our success. Possessions and money are things we rely on. Our future is secure if we have money.

The First Recorded Sin of the Promised Land

Joshua had warned the people. Joshua 6:17-19 Now the city shall be doomed by the LORD to destruction, it and all who are in it. Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all who are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. ¹⁸ And you, by all means abstain from the accursed things, lest you become accursed when you take of the accursed things, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. ¹⁹ But all the silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, are consecrated to the LORD; they shall come into the treasury of the LORD."

Joshua 7:11-13 Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff.

Therefore, the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they have become doomed to destruction.

Neither will I be with you anymore, UNLESS you destroy the accursed from among you.

¹³ Get up, sanctify the people, and say, 'Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow, because thus says the LORD God of Israel: "There is an accursed thing in your midst, O Israel; you cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the accursed thing from among you."

Jericho, an evil city, full of evil inhabitants, was dedicated to God for destruction. Achan, checking out the spoil of one of his victims, saw and was attracted to this snazzy Babylonian garment. It was fit for a King! Actually, that garment was fit for destruction.

It represented man's pride in his accomplishments; accomplishments made apart from God!

Joshua 7:21 When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.

The First Recorded Sin of the Church

Acts 5:1-4 Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. With his wife's full knowledge, he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet. Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? It was your money to do with as you wanted but why did you lie and say you had given it all? You have not only lied to us but also to God."

Key Point: Ananias, in lying to the church, embraced all the sins of Babylon.

- He wanted the splendor that the money could buy him.
- He wanted the status of appearing to be such a giving saint.
- He wanted to appear successful in the eyes of the church and his friends.

Satan filled his heart with the spirit of Babylon.

Ananias tried to minimize God and exalt himself. God had the last say once again.

What is the Danger of Babylon?

Nimrod built one tall building. Achan took one fancy robe. Ananias told one little lie.

Yet their small act of sin represented a danger to what God wanted to accomplish.

Nimrod looked at the Tower of Babel reaching to the sky and said, wow, look what we did!

- God saw the Tower and changed the course of Mankind!

Achan looked at the shiny robe and said, Wow! I look like somebody in the Robe!

- God saw the robe hidden in his tent and changed the course of Achan's life!

Ananias told a partial truth but still gave the church a lot of money.

- God saw his heart and frightened the church.

Where does man get this desire to rob glory from God? SATAN

Isaiah 14:13-14 You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; Exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit on the mount of the congregation in the far reaches of the north;

I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'

Luke 10:18 And he said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven".

Psalms 2 also reveals this intrinsic attitude toward God in the heart of man:

Psalms 2:1-4 Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing?

² The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together,

Against the LORD and against His Anointed, *saying*, ³ "Let us break Their bonds in pieces and cast away Their cords from us." He who sits in the heavens shall laugh;

The Lord shall hold them in derision.

What we glory in reveals the god(s) of our lives.

Glory in Splendor

a beautiful city

Glory in Status

the tower that reached to the heavens

Glory in Success

make a name for ourselves

Consider: Am I displaying a minimal dependence on God in my home, work and/or life?

Jude 1:11 Woe to them! For they walked in the way of Cain and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error and perished in Korah's rebellion.

- Cain wanted to seek God in his own way. He thought his splendor was good enough.
- Balaam was divided between pleasing God and having the status of the King's Prophet. So he corrupted the message of God, and gained the status of the King, but lost his soul to the ways of Babylon.
- Korah wanted to make his own success, apart from Moses and God. He had enough of Moses, and told him, everyone is holy enough.

He is typical of false teachers; represents those who are arrogant, stiff-necked, and self-promoting. Korah was the guilty person accusing someone else (Moses) of his own misdeed. He led a revolt against God's leaders. God opened the earth and swallowed up the rebels, their families and possession. Fire came out from the LORD. 14,700 Israelites died that day.

The lure of Babylon has always been the love of Babylon, the world system, which has an amazing magnetic hold on Christians, as well as on the lost. We tend to try to compartmentalize our lives, giving some parts to God and giving other parts of our lives and our love to the Satan-controlled world system. God will not put up with two-timers.

I John 2:15-16 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

- These 3 things must DIE DAILY.

We are losing a generation of young people because we are wearing Babylonian Garments. The Millennial Generation or Generation Y consists of young adults born after 1980. The latest research from Barna indicates that this generation is growing up without a Biblical Foundation of Jesus Christ. Only 15% of Millennials profess faith in Jesus Christ. Yet their parents, the Baby Boomers, profess a 65% Christianity. What happened? The Garment of Babylon! We have put on our Sunday faces and clothes at Church, but throughout the week we wear our Babylonian Garment. We pursue our splendor, our status and our success. We embrace the spirit of Babylon in our homes and work. We display a MINIMAL DEPENDENCE upon God in our homes, our work and our lives. We have danced with Cain, partied with Balaam and colluded with Korah. Thus, Babylon has infected the hearts of our families and children.

The Solution for A Heart Infected with Babylon

Joshua 7:19 Then Joshua said to Achan, "My son, give glory to the Lord God of Israel and give praise to Him. And tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me."

God and Splendor - Jeremiah 9:23-24- God Wants to be Our Splendor

Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches; ²⁴ But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the LORD.

1. Inner beauty and splendor matters to God

I Pet. 3:1-5 Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful.

2. God Looks on the Heart

I Samuel 16:7 But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart."

3. God Must be our Splendor

Psalms 96:9 Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness; tremble before Him, all the earth!

Psalms 104:1 Bless the Lord, O my soul! O Lord my God, you are very great! You are clothed with splendor and majesty,

Psalms 111:3 Full of splendor and majesty is His work, and His righteousness endures forever.

4. We are to make known His Splendor to our children

Psalms 145:12 to make known to the children of man your mighty deeds, and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.

Matt. 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

- As I seek Him and behold His beauty and splendor, I find my status, my right standing of righteousness, in Him.
- I find my success, my spiritual maturity and being conformed to His image, in Him.

5. In the End Times, Men will seek to hide from the splendor of God!

Isaiah 2:19 And people shall enter the caves of the rocks and the holes of the ground, from before the terror of the Lord, and from the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to terrify the earth.

This desire to rob God of His glory is so entrenched in mankind that no matter what God does to mankind in the tribulation, mankind will curse God and refuse to repent and give Him glory!

Revelation 16:8-9 The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and it was allowed to scorch people with fire. They were scorched by the fierce heat, and they cursed the name of God who had power over these plagues. They did not repent and give Him glory.

6. The Splendor of Babylon will be no more.

Isaiah 13:19 And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the splendor and pomp of the Chaldeans, will be like Sodom and Gomorrah when God overthrew them.

Rev. 18:10 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.

Rev. 18:14 The fancy things you loved so much are gone," they cry.

"All your luxuries and splendor are gone forever, never to be yours again."

When Babylon falls, there will be the greatest Hallelujah ever!

Revelation 19:1-3 After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for his judgments are true and just; for He has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality, and has avenged on her the blood of His servants." Once more they cried out, "Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up forever and ever."

7. The Church will be presented to Christ in Splendor

Eph. 5:26-27 that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that He might present the church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

Man's Success is Failure before God

Mark 8:34-37 And calling the crowd to him with His disciples, He said to them, "If anyone would come after Me, let Him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.

For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

Revelation 3:17 For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.

Spurgeon: You say, "If I had a little more, I should be very satisfied." You make a mistake. If you are not content with what you have, you would not be satisfied if it were doubled.

Quit putting emphasis on the Babylonian Lifestyle of self-effort, status and success. When we seek satisfaction in the splendor, status and success of this world, we will end up miserable, dissatisfied, and maybe on medication for depression.

What does that Babylonian Garment offer me that could even compare?

- It is temporary; it is fading; it will be soon eaten or destroyed or lost!

Focus on the splendor, standing and success that come from putting on the Lord Jesus Christ. Rom. 13:14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

God created us to display His Glory! This world is to KNOW God's Glory by our lives!

Isaiah 43:7 Even every one that is called by My name: for I have created him for My glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.

Isaiah 42:8 I am the LORD: that is My name: and My glory will I not give to another, neither My praise to graven images.

God's Plan for Success:

Joshua 1:8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

The only One who can satisfy the human heart is the One who made it.

The world may try to satisfy that longing in your soul.
You may search the wide world over, but you'll be just as before.
You'll never find true satisfaction until you've found the Lord,
for only Jesus can satisfy your soul.
If you could have the fame and fortune,
all the wealth you could attain.
Yet, you have not Christ within, Your living here would be in vain.
There'll come a time when death will find you, Riches cannot help you then.
So, come to Jesus, only He can satisfy. Only Jesus can satisfy your soul:
Yes, only He can change your heart and make your whole.
He'll give you peace you never knew, sweet joy and love and Heaven, too.
Only Jesus can satisfy your soul. Yes, only Jesus can satisfy your soul.