

The Lure of Babylon: Warning! Come Out Of Her

Lesson #26 July 15, 2020

Babylon conveys the spirit of its founder, Nimrod [Genesis 10].

It is self-glory, a narcissistic elevation of one's own worth. Not content to be corrupt alone, this spirit seeks to entice and enslave others who willingly submit to its seduction.

A. The First Sin of Babylon -The first corporate sin that manifested itself after the Flood took place on the plains of Shinar, the sight of Babylon. Here a mighty ruler named Nimrod built a tower that reached to the heavens.

➤ 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

Genesis 11:4 Then 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."

They wanted a God whom they could control. The Spirit of Babylon says "let us reach heaven" and permeates Christians' activity with legalism or religious effort.

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.

The attitudes revealed in their actions indicate how they sought to accomplish this.

- Glory in Splendor a beautiful city
- Glory in Status the tower that reached to the heavens
- Glory in Success make a name for ourselves

Man wanted to make a name for himself through:

- ❖ the work of his hands
- ❖ recognition for what he could accomplish.

So man built a tower on the plains of Shinar, at Babylon, the very first place in the post-flood world where man exalted himself above God.

Genesis 11:8 And the Lord said, "Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. God had the last laugh: Gen. 11:7-9

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.

B. The First Sin of the Promised Land: Achan & The Babylonian Garment

Defeat In The Land Of Victory:

Deut. 11:11 Moses described the Promised Land [our spiritual inheritance; abundant life] as "a land of hills and valleys."

- Describes the geography of the life of faith - victories and defeats

Joshua had warned the people. Joshua 6:17-19, 24 And the city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein, to the LORD: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that 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." And they burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein: only the silver, and the gold, and the vessels of brass and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD.

- Joshua 6 describes the amazing victory over Jericho
- However, unknown to anyone, one man had secretly taken plunder and hidden it.

Joshua 7:1 BUT the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing for Achan, [trouble]... took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against the children of Israel.

- Indicates a change: Descend from the mountaintop victory to valley of defeat

Joshua 7:2- 19 Sends 2 spies to check out Ai - next enemy to capture

- Don't need the whole army to capture Ai. Only need 2,000-3,000 men
- Joshua heeded their advice - sent 2-3000 men to capture Ai
- But men of Ai chased the Israelites from the town gate, killing about 36 as they retreated in defeat
- The Israelites were overcome with fear at this turn of events, and their courage melted away. Their hearts melted and became as water.
- Joshua and the elders of Israel tore their clothing in dismay, threw dust on their heads, and bowed face down before the Ark of the Lord until evening.
- Then Joshua cried out, 'Oh, Sovereign Lord, why did you let the Amorites kill us? When the Canaanites and others hear about our defeat, they will surround us and destroy us forever. And then what will happen to the honor of your great name?'
- The Lord replied, 'Get up! Why are you lying on your face like this? Israel has sinned and stolen some of the things that I commanded must be set apart for me. They have not only stolen things and lied about it but hidden the plunder among their own belongings.
- You will never defeat your enemies until you remove these things from among you.'

Joshua 7:12-13 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."

The first recorded sin that spoiled the Promised Land for the Jews was the coveting and taking of a Babylonian Garment. [literally = a garment or mantle of Shinar; famed for their beauty] It stood for success and power.

➤ Achan was singled out. Joshua told him to tell the truth and confess what he had done. Joshua 7:21 When I saw among the spoils [not the spoils; they were part of the LORD'S treasure; wholly devoted to Him] a goodly Babylonish garment, [behg'-ed = treachery, deceit, splendor, magnificence, cloak made of fur or fine material] 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.

Consider: God had cared for Achan and his family in the wilderness. He had brought them safely across the Jordan River and given them a great victory at Jericho. God had accepted Achan as a son of the covenant at Gilgal.

- Instead of praising for the tremendous victory at Jericho, Achan was fixated on the Babylonian garment, gold and silver.
- "The imagination is the 'womb' in which desire is conceived and from which sin and death are eventually born."
- In spite of all this, Achan disobeyed CLEAR instructions to possess some wealth and status he couldn't even enjoy.
- If he had waited, he could have gathered all the spoils from the victory at Ai.

Do we struggle against the danger of stealing from God because we want a mantle of Shinar? Does it teach us to beware of grasping for affluence, for prestige, of trying to be a VIP?

A. Contentment is an attribute of God's children

Heb. 13:5 Let your conversation [behavior] be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

I Tim. 6:10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Phil. 4:11 for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

B. Covetousness Is Idolatry

Col. 3:5 Mortify [put to death] therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence [desires], and Covetousness, Which Is Idolatry:

Eph. 5:5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

C. Covetousness has its roots in selfishness

Luke 12:13-21 for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. [v. 15b]; So is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.

D. I TOOK - After the desire was created by LOOKING, it became his master.

James 1:14-15 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

¹⁵ Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

E. I HID - No pleasure in ill-gotten pleasure or spoils

Mark 4:22 For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was anything kept secret, but that it should come to light.

Heb. 4:13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

Rom. 2:16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

Jericho, an evil city, full of evil inhabitants, was dedicated to God for destruction. It was so evil that everyone in it was to be destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah. 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, God said that garment was fit for destruction. It represented man's pride in his accomplishments; accomplishments made apart from God!

Joshua 7:25-26 Joshua said, "Why have you troubled us? The LORD will trouble you this day." So all Israel stoned him with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones.²⁶ Then they raised over him a great heap of stones, still there to this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of His anger. Therefore the name of that place has been called the Valley of Achor to this day.

The Babylonian Garment Represents: 3 Things> A Danger To Our Love & Devotion to God
They are seemingly innocent things, things that we all need and appreciate and even desire. But the seduction of these three things will work their way into our lives until they minimize our need for God.

Splendor	Status	Success
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I. Splendor

We all appreciate beauty and are drawn to it. Whether it is a car, a woman, even a horse, we love beautiful things. Ads and TV shows shout this loud and clear. Women (and men) spend billions of dollars to make themselves beautiful. Architects design buildings, even stadiums, to display the splendor and beauty of their imagination.

King Ahasuerus, reigned from India to Ethiopia. In the third year of his reign, he gave a feast for all of his officials, servants, nobles and governors that lasted 180 days. All the days of the feast 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. America is a land of BLING! We even do it with piercings and tattoos!

We trick out our trucks, our cars, our motorcycles, and we wear our jewelry.

Even Satan was all about BLING!

According to Ezekiel 28:13, we learn that Lucifer is an amazing being to behold: 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".

a. 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, whose very wisdom he possessed.

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."

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. 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.

2. 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.

3. 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.

The Babylonian Garment Represents: Splendor Status Success

II. Status

Tradition says this robe was a priestly robe, used in worship to the Canaanite gods.

This robe not only was beautiful, it represented power, standing and status.

This robe granted its wearer access to the power people of Jericho and Canaan.

The wearer was somebody. Nobody messed with whoever wore this robe.

Status is very important in our world.

Satan began it all by saying "I will be as the most high". The status of God himself Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit because 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. But by the time of Christ, the High Priest had become a perverted, corrupt institution motivated by power and status.

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

Mark 9:35 "If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all."

III. 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.

Man's Success is Failure before God

Mark 8:34-36 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?

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.

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.

God's Warnings: The Voice of Separation [also Jer. 50:8; Jer. 51:6]

Jer. 51:45 My people, go ye out of the midst of her, and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the LORD.

Rev. 18:4-5 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

John offers 2 reasons for God's people to separate themselves from the diabolical system.

- They might avoid pollution, becoming "partakers of her sins." [Rev. 18:4]
 - I Tim. 5:22 Neither be partaker of other men's sins.
- God's people might be spared the terrible plagues He will send on Babylon.

Question: What specific sins would God judge?

- Babylon's evil influence on the world - seducing them with idolatry.
- God will judge the PRIDE of Babylon.

Rev. 18:7 She has glorified herself. She saw herself as a queen who could never be dethroned. God will judge Babylon's worship of pleasures and luxuries. [Rev. 18:7]

- To “live deliciously” is to live proudly in luxury while others go without.
- To make possessions and pleasures the most important things in life and ignore the needs of others.

In I John 2:16, John described this attitude as “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life.”

In all ages, God true people have been called to separate themselves from all that is worldly and anti-God.

- When God called Abraham, He ordered him to get out of his country. [Gen. 12:1]
- God separated the Jewish nation from Egypt and warned the Israelites not to go back.
- The church is commanded to separate itself from that which is ungodly. [Rom. 16:17-18]

Beware Of Friendship With The World. It can lead to:

(1) Being Spotted By The World

James 1:27 Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this:

to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to Keep Oneself Unspotted From The World.

(2) Loving The World

I John 2:15-17 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. ¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

(3) Results In Conforming To The World

Rom. 12:1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is your reasonable service.* ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

I Cor. 11:32 But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.

Example: Gen. 13:10-12 And Lot lifted his eyes and SAW all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, like the Garden Of The LORD, Like The Land Of Egypt as you go toward Zoar. ¹¹ Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east...

1. Lot looked toward Sodom, pitched his tent toward Sodom and soon moved into Sodom.
2. Every time he moved, he pitched his tent closer to Sodom.

a. Lot was saved. II Peter 2:7-8 and delivered righteous Lot, *who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked...*

b. Lot lost ALL when the Lord destroyed the cities of the plain. [Gen. 18-19; I Cor. 3:11-23]

Consider: Abraham, the outsider, had a greater ministry to the world than did Lot, the friend of the world. [Friend > Loved > Conformed]

TRUTH: We move into sin and disobedience gradually.

Garments in the Bible often speak of works.

Fine linen speaks of righteous works. Linen absorbs sweat.

Wool, on the other, causes the body to sweat and therefore represents our own works.

The commandment in the Levitical Law not to mix linen and wool in a garment spiritually means, "don't mix works of the flesh with the righteous works of God."

The Babylonian garments speak of religious works; works done in the flesh in our own strength, which we think are pleasing to God when He actually considers them as "filthy rags."

Gal. 6:3 For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.

God's Command To Believers: The Garment of Humility

I Pet. 5:5c-6 Be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

Martin Luther: "God created the world out of nothing and as long as we are nothing, He can make something out of us."

Garment Tester

The truly Destitute [the poor in spirit, who come with nothing in their hand], can do nothing to get saved, can do nothing to stay saved. They can do nothing to "be like Jesus." They only yield to the workings of the Holy Spirit in their lives. They don't boast in what they've done for Christ that others haven't. They die to self and yield to the working of the Holy Spirit who produces through them "works prepared for them from the foundation of the world."

If we don't initiate those works, we shouldn't boast in them should we? Our boasting should be in the Lord and not in ourselves.

Whatever good may come from our ministry, we have no reason to boast because, humanly speaking, we are "weak," "foolish," "lowly," and "despised."

All the glory goes to God and God alone [Isaiah 42:8]

There are certain kinds of trees which never bear any fruit as long as their branches stay up straight, but if stones are hung on the branches to bend them down they begin to bear fruit. So it is with the soul. When it is humbled it begins to bear fruit, and the more fruit it bears the lowlier it becomes. So also the saints; the nearer they get to God, the more they see themselves as sinners.

The exceeding greatness of God's grace in Christ is understood in its fullness only against the black backdrop of my unworthiness.

- Gen. 18:27 Abraham understood that he was but "dust and ashes."
- Gen. 32:10 Jacob saw himself as "not worthy of the least of all the deeds of steadfast love and all the faithfulness" of God
- John 1:27 John the Baptist > "not worthy to untie" the strap of Christ's sandal
- Matt. 8:8 The centurion was not worthy to have Jesus under his roof.

This is the voice of the godly throughout the ages.

Paul's humility is most clearly seen in his own self-appraisal.

- 55 AD - I Cor. 15:9 "the least of the apostles unworthy to be called an apostle because [he] persecuted the church of God
- ~60 AD - Eph. 3:8 Paul refers to himself as the very least of all the saints.
- ~65-67 AD - I Tim. 1:15 - Paul considers himself the foremost of sinners.

What turned a once proud Pharisee into a humble apostle of Christ? It was Paul's understanding of the grace of God. He understood God's grace to be more than undeserved favor. He knew that in himself, apart from Christ, he fully deserved the wrath of God. Instead, he had been made a herald of the message he once tried to destroy. That is why he followed his assessment as the least of the apostles by the statement "but by the grace of God I am what I am" [I Cor. 15:10). He saw himself as a prime example of the grace of God, and his theology of grace produced his humility.

We will never know the true power of God until we recognize our weaknesses. If we are to bear fruit in this life we must don the garment of humility that weighs down the arms of self-sufficiency that so naturally dominate us. Such an action will bring humility to our souls and spiritual productivity to our lives.

John 3:30 He must increase; but I must decrease.

If we want the praises of God, we will have to give up our people-pleasing and self-pleasing ways. The question: Am I bearing fruit? Paul speaking to born again Christians in Galatia said to them, "My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you."

What? How can Paul say such a thing of born-again Christians?

There is a place of fullness of the Spirit which many of our modern doctrines have prevented us from receiving.

So then, what shall it be? Babylonian garments or the garments of humility?

Enter His rest and abundant life or striving in our flesh? Relationship or religion?