

## BABYLON AND THE CHURCH

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And they said, Come, let us build us a city, and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven, and let us make us a name; lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. And Jehovah came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. Genesis 11:4,5

The Lord wants to reveal His glory to the world through His people and cannot anoint a mixture. As God sends us INTO the marketplace he is also calling us OUT OF Babylon. Here are some observations.

### **1. *The spirit of Babylon causes man to say "come let us build".***

Whenever Christians gather we are the church (Ecclesia). We know the church is not the building, the organization or corporation, yet we need to organize the things we do. As soon as we move from the church being believers "gathered" to creating an organization and corporation, we become vulnerable to the spirit of Babylon. We can subtly shift to a "come let us build" mentality and end up building and sustaining a "religious organization", rather than extending the Kingdom of God. Human methods then replace the power of the Holy Spirit and selfish ambitions come in along with "every kind of disorder."

If we take an honest look at the church today where do we see the problems? They are usually centred around the organization! Regarding church buildings and organizations John Wesley adopted the stance "it will all burn". We must not initiate, but always follow Jesus.

The story is told of Chinese Christian leaders visiting our churches. At the end of their trip they were asked what they thought. Conferring for a moment they replied, "We are amazed at how much you have accomplished without the Holy Spirit."

We need organization, but it must always reflect Jesus. We cannot build the church, Jesus said "I will build my church..." (Matt. 16:18). Today the Holy Spirit is saying "repent from dead works, enter into rest and follow Jesus as Lord of the church, in everything we do."

### **2. *The spirit of Babylon causes men to say "let us get a name for ourselves"***

This is the real motivation behind much ministry. We have adopted human values of size, fame, youth, wealth, power and recognition! We want the name of our church or ministry to be famous! We operate by control through titles and positions to "get a name for ourselves", rather having real spiritual authority. The 1995 "Gathering" at Whistler marked a beginning of God's dealings with personal agendas in ministry in Canada.

I had a dream about the Whistler gathering the year before. In this dream about 2000 people are together. The leader says "The Spirit of God is coming like the rain, but He will be coming like Niagara falls." Everyone jumps up and grabs their "boogie boards" from under their seats, getting ready to ride the wave of God. These boards represent God's call on each life, and they were beautifully painted with the names of churches and ministries, honourable titles, and positions. As the rain hits the boogie boards the paint started to run. This is what God has been doing for the last ten years. He's washing off everything man adds to His work. Those who won't co-operate will be set aside in the next move of God!

When I stepped out of pastoral ministry last spring the Holy Spirit said forcefully to me "no positions, no titles" The coming generation of believers will be free of selfish ambition and be noted for one thing - The Glory of the Lord. When the bible says "The Glory of the Lord shall cover the earth" it does not mean we will be incapacitated by His presence, rather we will reflect the glory of the Lord in every sphere, because our hearts are one with His. It will be His name alone that is noticed.

### **3. *The spirit of Babylon says "let us reach to heaven"***

The spirit of Babylon is the spirit of religion. It says "let us reach heaven", and permeates Christians activity with legalism or religious effort. For example, today there is much striving in Spirit filled, revival circles, to "open the windows of heaven". I know what that means, we all want God's atmosphere to permeate our cities, but lets look at our methods. We've been taught to tithe accurately, adopt new ways to pray, do spiritual mapping and warfare, identificational repentance, quote the right scriptures, continually deal with heart issues, etc.

The problem is, the focus is on what WE do, not on what HE HAS DONE. We are always reaching for one more activity that will break through. Where is the simple unity and oneness with Christ and following the Holy Spirit that opened Jerusalem in Acts? Then they said to Him, What shall we do that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said to them, This is the work of God, that you believe on Him whom He has sent. Joh 6:28

The facts are, Jesus already opened the windows of heaven, they are not closed to a Christian, ever. We need no religious activity whatsoever, only to believe and follow. He is our great high priest who went into the heavens, and we have unfettered access to him. (Heb 4). In fact we are seated with Christ above the windows of heaven, and in a position of rest. We join Him in pouring down his blessing onto the earth with the enemy under our (His) feet. Since I've grasped this and simply believed, healings, miracles and spiritual warfare have dramatically changed. It's so good to stop striving and enter his rest! Heb 4:10. For he that is entered into his rest hath himself also rested from his works, as God did from his.

### **4. *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) In many ways we are like the Israelite priests. (We are a Royal Priesthood) We can have idols in our hearts, an image or picture of something we covet and serve. (covetousness is idolatry Col.3:5) The spirit of Babylon is at work in idolatry.

In the early nineties the Lord convicted me heavily of idols in my hearts. I didn't understand this until He showed me the images or pictures in my heart that I served. One was a picture of what I wanted my ministry to be like. Whenever ministry went according to the image my flesh was pleased. Whenever it went contrary to the image my flesh was upset and depressed. I served this idol of ministry with my flesh.

Until the idols of the heart are cast down (we have to do it) we cannot fully follow the Holy Spirit, or experience His power.

## **Consequences of Idolatry**

### **1. *Spiritual attack***

When there is idolatry in ministry terrible spiritual attacks and oppression will happen, and spiritual warfare cannot stop it ! This is what drove me to seek God. Satan took advantage of my idolatry and assaulted me. I could not resist him successfully because I was not really submitted to God. This is why there is so much spiritual warfare and depression in the church today.

## **2. Character issues in ministry**

When a minister has an idol of ministry in his heart all kinds of character issues emerge. Some may be depressed and discouraged. Others become angry or control people. Still others may use spiritual manipulation.

## **3. Soulless prayers and witchcraft**

Prayers become very soulless when serving an idol. We ask God to fulfill the picture of ministry in the heart rather than following the leading of the Holy Spirit. When prayers focus making people do our will it becomes witchcraft.

## **4. Confusions and Division**

The spirit of Babylon is under a judgement that causes confusion and division.

Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they cannot understand one another's speech. So Jehovah scattered them abroad from that place upon the face of all the earth. And they quit building the city Gen 11:7,8

The Lord declared His judgement on the spirit of Babylon and it stills operates against those under its influence today: Confusion, division, and scattering will always happen where this spirit has influence. This is actually the Lord's mercy to restrain mankind and return him to God.

We've wondered why the organized church is so prone to division. The truth is that we are experiencing the Lord's judgement on the spirit of Babylon in what we are doing. Instead of simply praying for unity, (which Jesus even prayed for) we need to repent and remove every influence of this spirit in our midst.

## **CONCLUSION**

The spirit of Babylon remains largely un-noticed by the church today because we grew up immersed in its practices, and following its ways in our organizations.

Let those who have ears, hear what the Spirit says to the church. And I heard another voice from Heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that you may not be partakers of her sins, and that you may not receive of her plagues. Rev 18:4