

Guidelines for the Exercise of the Lord's Day Prophesying
Message Three : The Degradation of the Church --
the Principle of Babylon and the Way to Overcome It

I. Overview :

The principle of Babylon is men's endeavor to do the Lord's work by their natural ability, is hypocrisy, is that of not considering herself a widow but of glorifying herself and living luxuriously, which includes denying God's name, confusion, with the rebellious scattering, a mixture of the idols. The Lord calls His people to come out of Babylon and return to the orthodoxy of the church. In order to overcome the principle of Babylon, we need to daily take Christ as our burnt offering; the priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and fire shall be kept burning on the altar continually, not let it go out. Our being reduced to ashes brings us into the transformation of the Triune God to become precious materials -- gold, pearl, and precious stones -- for the building of the New Jerusalem.

II. Truth and Enlightenment :

Day 1 --

A. In the building up, what is the difference between brick and stone?

Stone is made by God, and bricks are made by man. Bricks are a human invention, a human product. The meaning of Babylon relates to man's own efforts to build a tower to reach unto heaven. Babylon represents man's ability. Everything that consists of bricks baked by man depends on man's action. They think that man can do the Lord's work by their own natural ability.

B. Why is the principle of Babylon hypocrisy?

Hypocrisy has no reality, yet people act as if there is in order to obtain glory from man. Here is a real danger to God's children -- pretending to be spiritual. There's a great deal of spiritual behaviour which is acted out in falsehood. Many long prayers are counterfeit. Whenever we put on a garment which does not match our actual condition, we are in hypocrisy.

Day 2 --

A. Why do we have to maintain a widow's attitude toward the world?

Jesus said to the disciples of John, "The sons of the bridechamber cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them. But days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast". Oh, today He is no longer here. This is the time for us to fast. This earth is not our home; we have no happiness on this earth because He is not here.

B. How does she enjoy luxuriously with the principle of Babylon?

We are not saying that we should not use certain things at all, but we are saying that anything in excess is luxury. Regardless of whether it is clothing, food, or housing, if it is excessive or beyond our need, it's luxury and in the principle of Babylon. God allows all that we need, but He does not permit things which are beyond our necessity. We should order our living according to the principle of need; then God will bless us.

Day 3 --

A. Explain the confusion with Babylon in Genesis 11.

Babylon means confusion. God came in to confuse the people there, to confound them. This confounding from God was a punishment to man due to his trying to make a name for himself. He confounded them by causing them to have different languages. We all are different; those at Babel did not understand one another. This was done by God, who exercised His judgement upon the rebellious human race.

B. Expound how we see in the New Testament this mixture is enlarged.

In spirit John saw a vision of the great Babylon. The New Jerusalem is built with three precious materials: gold, precious stones, and pearls. The great Babylon is gilded with gold, precious stones, and pearls; she is only gilded with these treasures as ornaments for outward display. This is a deception intending to entice people. It is the harlot's false appearance.

Day 4 --

A. Why does the Lord charge His children to come out of Babylon?

According to God's Word, His children cannot be involved in any matter containing the character of Babylon. We have to come out of it. God's children must learn from the depths of their spirit to separate themselves from Babylon and to judge all her actions. If we do this, we will not be condemned together with Babylon.

B. Why do we say that the spiritual judgment must take place today?

Though the actual judgment is in the future, the spiritual judgment must take place today. We must note in His presence that anything which is halfway and not absolute is called Babylon. We need God to enlighten us so that in His light we may judge everything in us which is not absolute toward Him. The Lord requires that we delight and seek to be one who is absolute.

Day 5 --

A. How's the brunt offering signify Christ? What's its effect for God and man?

The brunt offering signifies Christ not mainly in His redeeming man from sin but in His living a life that is perfect and absolutely for God and for God's satisfaction and in His being the life that enables God's people have such a living. It is God's food that God may enjoy and be satisfied. This offering was to be offered daily, in the morning and in the evening.

B. How was in the Lord's life fully qualified to be the brunt offering?

In the life of the Lord Jesus there was no blemish, defect, or imperfection. He was perfect, and He lived a life which was perfect and absolutely for God. He was fully qualified to be the brunt offering. Having, through His incarnation, a body prepared for Him by God to be the real burnt offering, He did God's will and was obedient unto death. On the cross, He offered His body to God once for all.

Day 6 --

A. Expound that the ashes, the result of the brunt offering, are a sign of God's acceptance of the offering.

The priest's putting on linen garments signifies that fineness, purity, and cleanness are needed in handling the ashes. His putting on other garments to carry the ashes outside the camp signifies that the handling of the ashes of the brunt offering was done in a stately manner. Ashes indicate the result of Christ's death, which brings us to an end, that is, to ashes. The putting of the ashes beside the altar toward the east, the side of the sunrise, is an allusion to resurrection.

B. What the words are to be reminded to the young people?

I must tell you that hardships await you and that there is no future for you on earth. You will have nothing earthly on which to rely for your security and for your human living. You may feel that you will be very useful to God, but in the end you will be ashes. God has a high regard for these ashes, for eventually the ashes will become the New Jerusalem.

III. Conclusion :

Though Babylon is far away from the past, the principle of Babylon is still like a shadow followed us. Not only in the worldly things but also in the spiritual services are difficult to escape its power. The principle of Babylon is nature, hypocrisy, confusion, scattering, and a mixture. In order to overcome the principle of Babylon, we need to daily take Christ as our burnt offering, which typifies Christ in His living a life that is perfect and absolutely for God and for God's satisfaction and in His being the life that enables God's people to have such a living.