

“Come Out of Her, My People...”

Revelation 18:4

Light on the Rock

by Philip Shields November 2007

Abstract: Many will ignore God’s command to come out of Babylon – to their peril -- on the assumption they are not IN Babylon. But why would God command His people to come out of her, if they were not in Babylon? Listen carefully. This message could spare you from sharing in Babylon’s horrific plagues and curses from God. Learn who modern Babylon is, who “My people” are, and most importantly – ways you and I may be part of Babylon without realizing it.

Good day, Abba’s children. Greetings all of you called-out holy ones – saints of God -- in the Messiah, our Redeemer. I started this way to remind us we are of a different House, a different order, a different Kingdom when Abba - our heavenly Father – calls us out of the kingdom of Satan we *were* in, into Abba’s House. We’ve been called into Father’s way, His life and into His city. Not because of any goodness in us, but because He has called us into a wonderful life as His children, and *Bride* to King Jesus, the Righteous son of God.

We were once part of another city, one called spiritual Babylon. We once were part of a different woman -- *not* the bride of Christ, but a filthy, evil woman described in Revelation 17 and 18 in particular, as an end-time world order called “Babylon, Mystery Religion, Mother of all Harlots”. She’s a mother harlot riding a Beast system; a coming worldwide union of church and State – as well as a one-world military and economic union that is going to viciously attack God’s people and any who don’t go along with her evil ways.

My sermon today is based on Revelation 18:4 (please turn there), where the Eternal has a sharp warning for us who are His people. When you combine this warning, with the warnings to the church of Laodecia at the end time, we should really take note. ***Just as God says of the Laodecian types who “do not know you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked” (Rev. 3:17)***, I think those who are “IN Babylon” do not know or recognize they are in Babylon! Among those in Babylon are people the Almighty refers to as “My people”, people of God who are in Babylon. Some of those in Babylon may be the very same people who are also of the Laodecian attitude

Listen carefully: just as Lot’s wife was told not to look back or turn back, we are not to spiritually go back into this confusing Babylon we were called out of. Just as Israel was not to go back to Egypt—and those who tried were slaughtered – we are not to go back into this world’s system. Just as Jesus warned that if a man sets himself to plow a field, and looks back, he’s not fit for God’s kingdom – so we must NOT be lured back into Babylon (Luke 7:62).

I preach to myself too. This sermon started as a personal study to jar me awake as I was seeing myself, in various ways here and there, spiritually slipping back into Babylon. Then I thought maybe some of you may profit from it.

A great angel with great authority speaks in Rev.18 for God. In this prophecy we are very near the return of the King of Kings to establish God’s thousand-year reign on this earth. Notice how pervasive and how worldwide is the influence of this Babylon. It’s not confined to one area of the world – but in fact it says the whole earth is part of this system.

Revelation 18:1-5

“After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. 2 And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! 3 **For ALL the nations** have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, **the kings of the earth** have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury."

(NOW let's particularly note verse 4 – a command and a warning!)

4 And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, My people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. 5 For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.”

God is talking to His people, and about a sinful woman. He tells His people to come out of her. What do you think that means? I think actually – since the context in verse 3 is spiritual fornication – that God is indicating His very own people are also fornicating with Babylon. Too intimate. Too close. You'll see that clearly as we go along.

So that's the topic today: what are God's people doing in Babylon in the first place, and what does it mean to come out of Babylon. *God wouldn't command His people to come out of her, if they weren't in Babylon.*

But what does “come out” mean? Does it mean to distance ourselves from the people of this world? Does it mean we can't join a Chamber of Commerce and be active in civic affairs of our community? Does it mean we have to dress funny, and live in a commune, or as a hermit? Is it a physical coming out – or a spiritual coming out -- or both -- or neither?

I hope and pray you give this serious thought. I pray that each of us, in fact, will even now pray that God shows us where and how each of us has remained in Babylon, or ways we are slipping back into Babylon. That's one of the goals of this message: to get you, brother or sister in Messiah, to look for, discover and eradicate any way you and I have started heading back into Babylon.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ‘COME OUT of her, My People’?

If you're in a small house group meeting on the Sabbath, perhaps you'll want to pause the message here for 2-3 minutes and discuss what “come out of her, my people” would mean to you, then resume. I suspect some of you won't initially agree with my assessment of what “come out” means. What do *you* think it means to “come out of her, My people”?

Be turning with me please to Jeremiah 29, for a very intriguing passage. You'll remember that ancient Judah was taken captive by Babylon in 604-585 BC in a series of massive ethnic cleansing purges, a literal physical removal from the land of Judah, as slaves chained together. God had prophesied that after 70 years He would allow them to return to Judah.

Jeremiah 29:4-14

4 Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all who were carried away captive, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon:

5 Build houses and dwell in them; plant gardens and eat their fruit. 6 Take wives and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, so that they may bear sons and daughters -- that you may be increased there, and not diminished. **7 And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the LORD for it; for in its peace you will have peace.** 8 For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are in your midst deceive you, nor listen to your dreams which you cause to be dreamed. 9 For they prophesy falsely to you in My name; I have not sent them, says the LORD.

10 For thus says the LORD: **After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place.** **11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.** 12 Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. 13 And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. 14 I will be found by you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive.

God sent them as captives back into Babylon! And IN that Babylon, God says, “don’t give up. Keep increasing and growing. While you’re in Babylon, pray for Babylon! Because in its peace, you will have peace.”

Doesn’t that blow you away!? As you’ll see from scriptures right from the mouth of the Son of God, the Eternal is saying:

“Be IN it, but not OF it. As you’re in Babylon, remember not to get involved in their gods. I AM your Eternal Living creator, and I alone am to be worshipped.”

We are to even *pray for the leaders of this world*. When was the last time you prayed *for* President Bush, or your prime minister, or your governor? Or previously- did you ever pray FOR Pres Clinton?

1 Timothy 2:1-5

“Therefore I exhort first of all that **supplications, PRAYERS, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made FOR ALL MEN (for everybody!), 2 for kings and all who are in authority**, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. **3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all men to be saved** and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

So living in Babylon, as we all are, does not mean we can’t pray for its peace or for its leaders. We have already seen that.

Like our King -- our kingdom is not of this world either, as Jesus told Pilate (**John 18:36**). He went on to say, “...My Kingdom is not from here”. He was referring to the fact that as he lived IN this world, this Babylon, He was very aware He was not OF it. We are not to be OF it.

I think this is the crux of this message. Those who feel they should become separatists, holier-than-thou and have nothing to do with people of the world, are forgetting some very important points.

Consider these points, if you think it means we are to be exclusivists, separatists, uninvolved with people around us, as some of you believe:

- God Himself sent His only begotten Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but to give Himself for it and save it, offering salvation to all who would be called and believe on Him. (John 3:16-17; 1 John 4:9). In the same way, Yeshua – Jesus the Messiah – said that He had chosen his followers out of the world, and they are not OF the world (John 15:19). He clearly says the “world would love its own”. They won’t, and don’t love us, because we are not of the world - - but we live and work and function IN it.
- We are to be LIGHTS in a darkened world (**Philippians 2:14-16**), and our obedience to God should be obvious as a way of life. If we restrict our activity only to others being called by God, we’re shining our lights only in an already bright room!
- We know Abraham and our spiritual forebears lived IN Canaan, and yet Hebrews 11 says they **lived as pilgrims**, looking for another city, another time, another kingdom (Heb 11:8-10, 13-16 – please read). That’s our model. We live in the kingdoms of this world, but we are not “of” the kingdoms of this world. Our kingdom is the Kingdom of God, where we are already registered as its citizens (Heb. 12:23; Eph 2:20) and members of the Household of God.

Jesus said to “rejoice that your names are written in heaven”; past tense – Luke 10:20. Hopefully we are already written in the Lamb’s Book of Life (Phil 4:3; Rev 13:8; 20:15). Just as Joseph and Mary had to register in the city of their birth – Bethlehem – we are registered in our city, Jerusalem above. Heavenly Jerusalem is our city, the city God has built for the bride, as her city.

Yes, I am a U.S. citizen by birth, just as Paul claimed Roman citizenship by birth (Acts 22:25-26). But we are also citizens of Heaven – and also by *birth*, in the spirit. Can you be a citizen of heaven, or any country, unless you are first of all, born? Can you have a mother, without being at least begotten, or born? Jerusalem above is our mother (Gal. 4:26). Scripture says “IS” our mother, not “will be” our mother. In this case, we are citizens of Heaven by birth in the spirit. See also Ps. 87:5-6! It’s pretty exciting. “Of Zion it shall be said...this one was born there”.

Our flesh is a citizen of the country of your birth, but our spirit is a citizen of heaven above.

That is why Paul could say we come to *heavenly* Mt Zion, where we are registered, and to the spirits of just men made perfect (Heb. 12:22-23). But too many of us are still completely immersed in this Babylon, in Satan’s kingdom, down here – rather than the kingdom of heaven!

Coming out of Babylon is to be much more aware that we are of the heavenly kingdom of God.

Our conduct, speech, actions, attitudes – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week – should ideally reflect where we are from. It should be more and more obvious to people that we are of God's kingdom – even as it is obvious by accent, race, and sometimes behavior and culture, what countries foreigners come from. It should be that obvious that we also are of a different kingdom than this world – but not so much because we’re weird, but because of the love of God, his patience, his joy, his peace in a crisis, and the order they see in our lives.

The hardest thing for us to do is to live in a way that shows a separation of the flesh and the spirit. But we must. We like to think of the church as our mother, but that is not what the Bible says. You and I *are* the church so how can the church be our mother? Our mother is – let’s read it in Gal. 4:26 – “**Jerusalem** above is free, which is the mother of us all”. For me to have a mother, means I have already been either begotten or born!

We who are begotten of God, are still fleshly – we have flesh and blood – but we are no longer regarded by God as “being in the flesh” but are now, already, “in the spirit”. We have to accept scripture on this. As you’ll see, this has everything to do with coming out of Babylon.

Romans 8:8-9 “So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 But you **are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you.** Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.”

So you’re “not in the flesh”, if you have God's spirit. **Rom. 8:9** says so. In our flesh, dwells no good thing (Rom. 7:18), and we still have a flesh and blood body. Though our flesh lives in this world, in a sense, in a sense – we are considered in our spirit to live with God in the heavenlies, registered in heaven, and we are already considered its citizens, already transferred and already glorified – IF – BIG IF – IF we remain faithful, if we endure to the end. I’ll give lots of verses to prove that last sentence in a few minutes. Lots and lots of verses which say all I’ve just said! God's spirit in us will lead us to obey and live a righteous life. (Heb. 12:23; Col. 1:12-13; Phil. 3:20; Rom. 8:28-30)

WHO ARE “MY PEOPLE”?

This verse we just read also identifies clearly who are the people God calls “MY People”.

Rom 8:14-16 says those led by the Spirit are His children. We are NOT HIS, if we don’t have his spirit (**Rom. 8:9b**). In the Old Covenant, the nation of Israel were God's people (**Lev 26:12**). But in the New Covenant, God speaks of “*the Israel of God*” (**Gal. 6:16**) – including Gentiles, Asians, blacks, Africans, Indians, Jews, Latinos, Americans, Brits – IF any of them are led by God's spirit! Paul spends a lot of time in Romans, Ephesians, Colossians, etc. proving the GENTILES are now also the people of God if they are led by God's spirit. And modern descendants of ancient Israel are no longer people God would call “My people” – except in a physical sense – if they don’t have God's spirit. A spiritual “Jew” is one now who is “circumcised in the heart”.

So “My People” refers to God's children, in whom flows God's spirit, whether Jew or Gentile.

Everything we do is either feeding the spirit – or feeding the flesh. The nature we feed is one which becomes strong in us. That is why God says, through Paul, to quit feeding the flesh. He puts it this way – “**Therefore put on Christ, and make no provision for the flesh**” (**Rom. 13:14**). Give your flesh no provisions! And you’ll see, as we go along, this has everything to do with coming out of Babylon!

So we are sent INTO the world, but not to be OF it. To be different, we start the day differently. FIRST thing everyday, we seek first the Kingdom of God and its righteousness (**Matthew 6:33**), we talk to God, we listen for instructions from God, by picking up his Word –the manna from heaven – first thing in the morning, before it gets hot. Remember, those were the instructions from God to Israel in the wilderness. Jesus later said throughout **John 6**, “Eat of ME. Drink of me. I AM

the bread from heaven. He who eats of me will never hunger. He who drinks of me will never thirst” (**John 6:35, 48-51**). Jesus is the written word and the actual Word of God.

We need to take in God's word first thing. David says, “You word I have hidden in my heart, THAT I may not sin against you ” – **Psalm 119:11**. But too many of us seek other things first: anything but God's word. We seek first perhaps ... more sleep, the cup of coffee, or the news on TV, or breakfast, or internet, or phone calls – anything but the manna from heaven! I preach to myself. I take correction from this also. Babylon is all about DISTRACTION from the important..

We can live in Babylon, in this world, but not be OF it. We can be lights in it – but not partakers of its ways. So we must stop feeding the flesh – inputting data, evil forms of entertainment, wicked web sites on the internet, or feeding our passions and lusts. We’ve probably all done it one way or another – and it has to stop, for those things will make the flesh strong. Those things make Babylon strong in us – rather than GOD strong with us.

We can live in Babylon – as we all are right now -- as long as God remains strong in us, and HE is our God, and HE is the one we seek and obey and we don’t do the things that identify us with Babylon and it’s world.

If you think we are not to live in this world, listen to Yeshua’s words. Here’s the CRUX of the matter:

John 17:15-16 “*I do NOT pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. 16 They are not OF the world, just as I am not of the world.*” *He continues in verse 18: “As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them INTO the world.”*

What I say next may freak some of you out. I hope not. Babylon is pictured as a whorish woman. I think when God uses the language “COME OUT of HER, My people” – he is identifying an extremely INTIMATE connection – actually WHOREDOM – with Babylon. “Come OUT”. He’s saying “quit committing adultery with her! You’re THAT intimate with this world, that you are not being faithful to ME, but being intimate with Babylon!”

Remembering we’re told to come out of the whore, Babylon, let’s read 1 Cor. 6:15-16. I think GOD is saying that HE sees our identification with this system as being unfaithful to HIM and participating in spiritual HARLOTRY! How ELSE are we to understand these scriptures?

1 Corinthians 6:15-17

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not! 16 Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For "the two," He says, "shall become one flesh." 17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.

James 4:4-5

4 *Adulterers and adulteresses!* Do you not know that friendship with the world [the cosmos, the way of life] is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. 5 Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"?

So do you love this world's way of life? I know we are to love people, and even God so loved the world – the people – that He gave His only begotten Son for them. But this world's system is abhorrent to God.

1 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.”

Being among the group God calls “My People” means being on a 2 way street: First God has to be our God, exclusively, uniquely. No gods of Babylon. No distractions. Nothing that comes first in our lives ahead of God – or that becomes our god. Then, God gives us His spirit and we become His. And He becomes ours. **We refer to YHWH as “our God” and He refers to us as “My people”.** There is no other God we love, serve, give time to, obey, and listen to. Let's read it:

2 Cor 6:16-18

16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God, as God has said: *"I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people."*

17 Therefore "Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord.

Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you."

18 'I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters', says the LORD Almighty."

So not being “OF” Babylon, means that we must live our lives such a way that every single day – we start our day with our instructions from our Master. We proclaim the Son of God as our King and Master. We eat of Him by digesting His words to us in daily deep study of His scriptures, and then a daily meditative, contemplative prayer asking Him to guide and direct us. Then we can go to work, live and act as lights in a dark world.

We are sent INTO the world, into this Babylon, as lights – but we are not ever to be part OF it.

One of the most righteous men who ever lived – **Daniel** – was #3 man right there in Babylon. But here's the point: he was never “of” it. He was respected but he was never of that way of doing things. He would not quit praying to the one true God. He would not bow down to idols – no matter the consequences. Ditto his 3 friends – Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego. And all 4 of these men were given Babylonian pagan names, but they forgot who they were, or what kingdom they were of, because they continued worshiping the true God, on the true sabbath.

Esther, another example. She was Queen of Persia, lived at the palace in Iran/Persia, wife of Xerxes. Her name was Hadassa – Myrtle – in Hebrew. She was renamed about as bad a name as can be given to a young Jewish girl. Esther means “Star” – referring to the bright star Venus, another name for Ishtar, the pagan goddess of sex. But in all of this, she knew whom to pray to, whom to FAST to, whom to seek: YHWH, THE EVERLIVING GOD. She was IN Persia, but not OF it. In fact – get this: HAD she physically left where she was and gone back to Jerusalem, she never could have been the one used by God to save all Jews alive!

So coming out of Babylon must mean more than physically. It means SPIRITUALLY we are not a part of it and we don't identify with it – and this world knows we are not of it either.

Joseph was #2 man in Egypt, but never OF it. ELOHIM was his God, the God of Abraham. He chose imprisonment rather than sin against God and his master by having easy sex with his master's wife, who urged him day after day to enjoy the pleasures of sin (Gen. 39:6-15). As a young man with hormones kicking, the flesh must have cried out for satisfaction. But he resisted the pulls of the flesh and many years later, God rewarded him.

So I feel "Come OUT of her, My People" means some of God's people are starting to identify too closely to this world's way. It means we're claiming to be God's people, but allowing too many sins. We go to our God's Sabbath services, look like God's people, but in our own unique ways, we are too involved in the world's Babylon. Perhaps we're letting in various things we know are sins. Perhaps we're not keeping the Sabbath holy, or we're starting to use God's name in vain, or get involved in sexual sins directly or by chat rooms and internet.

Let's take another look at Babylon.

BABYLON OF OLD: QUICK BACKGROUND

Revelation 18 describes sudden and total destruction and punishment on the end-time Babylon once and for all. Babylon raises its head for the first time **in Genesis 11**, right after the Flood. It was smack dab in what we know today as Iraq. Babylon represented the supreme rebellion by Nimrod and Semiramis against the one true God. God CLEARLY wanted everyone to spread out and repopulate the whole earth, but instead a band of rebels led by Nimrod decided to build a ziggurat or other kind of waterproofed tower (with pitch/tar) right to the heavens in defiance (Genesis 11:1-4).

They basically dared God to send another Flood because they were basically with this tower saying they could ride out another flood. Nimrod brought the people together as the original one world order, one ruler, one religion, one economy – and at that time, one language. On the surface, it was one world united under one ruler. They **progressed so rapidly scientifically**, that God Himself says, "Now *nothing* they have proposed to do will be withheld from them" (Genesis 11:6). Do you grasp what GOD Himself is implying here with that statement? These were people with one language, healthy bodies that lived hundreds of years – nothing could limit them.

I have no doubt that the city had a mix of good and evil, beauty and ugliness, high ideals as well as ultimate decadence – just like the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But it was in rebellion. You know what God did: He confused them by giving the various groups different languages so they couldn't understand each other. This forced them to spread out and colonize the world as God had wanted. Babel means "confusion" in the Hebrew tongue.

In this one chapter we can begin to understand what "BABYLON" means. Babylon surfaces again many, many years later under Nebuchadnezzar and kings before him. It became the first truly world-ruling empire, at least the known world. It's culture, religion, power and ideology became the first new world order. But ancient Babylon borrowed from various lands as they conquered them, so there were more gods in Babylon than you could count. That also made it easier to rule those nations, if you accepted parts of their religion. You may be familiar with Daniel 2's statue

that represents 4 great consecutive world-ruling empires. Babylon was the head. The head controls the body and influences everything else.

Babylon therefore became symbolic of the whole world under its real ruler: Satan the Adversary. In Revelation, Babylon is pictured as a whore, a woman, riding a beast. Babylon is pictured as the religious system that will bring the whole world together, as it unites church and state.

Over the years, many have speculated it's the Catholic Church. I don't think so narrowly, myself. It could be. **But I think the RELIGION of the coming one world order will be a MIXTURE of many religions** – so people of all cultures, tribes, nations, and religions – can come together, because they'll see elements of all parts of the world coming together in one! It will be a compromise. It will mix, in my view at least, some Catholicism, some Anglicanism, some Eastern Orthodox, some Protestantism, some eastern religions like Buddhism, outright paganism, Shintoism, Hinduism, B'hai, perhaps even elements of liberal parts of Judaism you get the picture. They may even allow elements of ATHEISM in this world view. *Very "New AGE"*.

ONE NEW WORLD RELIGION that becomes the glue for bringing the nations of the world – categorized by 10 economic regions – together economically, religiously, and eventually militarily.

In my view, it is possible they won't refer to YHWH at all. For the ostensible reason of not isolating to one religion, I think it's very possible exact names of God like Yeshua, Jesus, the Eternal, YHWH, etc. will not be allowed. So we're likely to hear more and more, as the years roll by, terms we've already heard which seem to be more all-inclusive. Instead of "God", or "the Creator" or "The Eternal" or "YHWH" or "Jesus" – you'll hear instead: *"The Higher Power", "Universal Intelligence", "The Good Within", "Transcendent Intelligence", "universal love", even "Mother Nature" and "Mother Earth", "The Universe" – "Universal wisdom" and its variants*. This becomes a matter of worshiping the created, instead of the Creator.

BEWARE of those code words. This is Babylon to the core! Sounds OK, right? But God tells us there is no salvation in ANY other name (Acts 4:12). And that is why I feel the name of the Son of God will not be allowed in this end time Babylon. Why? It's too exclusive and polarizing. Maybe I'll be wrong. I hope I'm wrong! But just watch out for it! Did you know there is already a strong movement in the U.S. military to forbid chaplains from praying in Jesus' Name!

Babylon became synonymous with everything that is opposite God. It was a proud city. It was a city full of false gods, wickedness, and a lack of mercy for the poor or less fortunate in society.

WHAT BABYLON STOOD FOR

Many try to identify "Babylon" with one nation, one city, or one region. It may be headquartered in one city, but I believe Babylon stands for that way of life that is of Satan's world. I personally think in its broadest terms "Babylon" means "the world under Satan's sway". I reject that it is specifically New York City, or even just limited to Rome. The USA and Britain will be taken captive BY the union of the Beast Power and spiritual Babylon – so how can U.S. or New York be Babylon? Though it may be centered in Europe – and possibly Rome – it clearly has worldwide sway.

GOD RULES overall even in the kingdoms of men. That's what Nebuchadnezzar was told by GOD, in **Daniel 4:17,25** – and God sets the "lowest of men" over the world's kingdoms! No

authority exists except by GOD, and when we resist authority, we are resisting God – Paul tells us in Romans 13:1-2.

We also know this whole world has been allowed to be under Satan’s sway and rulership. That is why Satan could offer all the kingdoms of this world as a temptation to Jesus (Matthew 4). In Daniel 2, the image that was revealed to Nebuchadnezzar represented world ruling empires. All the empires of this world are under the sway of Satan (1 John 5:19; Rev. 12:9). God still has overall say and Satan can only do what God permits.

Even Jesus referred to Satan as “the ruler of this world” (John 12:31; 14:30) – and VERY critical to this message, Jesus adds: “and he has nothing in me” (John 14:30). Wow! Yeshua – Jesus – was IN this world, living IN Satan’s kingdom, but not of it and Satan had nothing in Jesus.

Satan, in turn, apparently assigns powerful evil spirit beings, fallen demons, to be over specific countries. You can read about this at your leisure in Daniel 10. Daniel had been praying and fasting and so God sends a good angel with a message to Daniel. But on the way from heaven to Daniel, a powerful evil spirit referred to as “the king of Persia” stops the good angel until Michael, one of the great and righteous super-angels comes to assist. As Paul says in **Ephesians 6:10-13**, our REAL BATTLE is not with men and women – but with powers, “against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”

Daniel 10:12-14

12 Then he said to me, "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. 13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia.

Daniel 10:20-21

Then he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? And now I must return to fight with the prince of Persia; and when I have gone forth, indeed the prince of Greece will come. 21 But I will tell you what is noted in the Scripture of Truth. (No one upholds me against these, except Michael your prince.

Satan hates it when God's people humble themselves, fall on their faces before the Eternal, and cry out for deliverance from a merciful and loving Abba, the Supreme Ruler of the universe. Before our Father, the demons tremble (James 2:19). There is power in prayer, that defeats anything Satan wants to do with you.

Satan’s princes want you back in their kingdom – not God's kingdom where you are already registered as a saint and citizen (see Col. 1:12-13). There’s a war going on – and it’s largely about you!

Remember how Jesus said the ruler of this world had nothing in Him, and how Satan had asked for Peter, but Jesus said “I’ve prayed for you”? (Luke 22:31-32). Jesus is praying and interceding not just for Peter – but for ME too. And for you. Ask that He intercedes to the Father for your wife, your husband, your son, your daughter too. And for all of us, for there’s a war going on!

There's a war going on to seize each of us – and your sons and daughters -- back into Satan's kingdom of Babylon – and out of the kingdom of God. Satan will use Babylon's lures of prestige, power, religion, pride, pleasures of its sins, its wealth – anything to get you to come back to Babylon. Apparently enough do, that God has to warn us to come out. We need to be praying for one another that each of us will see how we are in Babylon.

The coming NEW ONE WORLD ORDER

The books of Daniel and Revelation make it very plain that end-time Babylon will be dominated by one man – called “the Beast power” – who will be given his power by 10 kings dominating probably 10 economic regions of the world. Scripture is clear that the 10 kings represent the entire world giving their allegiance to this Beast system. They will impose an international trading system that – if you don't participate in it – you won't be allowed to buy or sell. It will be very hard to live, frankly, unless you get involved in this one-world system. But God warns His children not to get involved, or we will suffer God's wrath and we will have our names blotted out of the Book of Life. Apparently so many of God's children do get involved in the 666 Beast system that God has to warn them to get out.

I don't want this to turn into a prophecy sermon, so please read Revelation 13:1-8 on your own. There it clearly states that this coming beast power gets its power from Satan (Rev. 13:2). The whole WORLD marvels and follows this new one world order called “The Beast”, over which Babylon – the woman of Rev 18 – rides and has union with.

This coming world order will be powerful as a bear, fast as a leopard, and strong and fearsome as a lion (Rev. 13:2). It will fight against the saints and for a time, prevail against them – killing and martyring God's people by the thousands (Rev. 13:7). Hardly sounds like all of God's people will be raptured away, does it? Let's read Rev. 13:7-8.

7 It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. 8 ALL who dwell on the earth [not just those in Europe; not just Catholics; not just any one group or area – but the whole world!] will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Riding the Beast is a religious system called “a whore” in Revelation 17-18, depicted as a wicked woman who has inscribed on her forehead, “BABYLON, MYSTERY...” In Scripture, religions are often depicted as women. Rev. 13 continues to say a **great false prophet** with awesome miracle-working powers will give life to this military-economic world power. (Rev. 13:12-14). The miracles are SO powerful, that even the elect are almost drawn in (Matt. 24:24). They have the mark of the Beast and the number 666 – without which, it would be impossible to buy or sell.

We don't know exactly how that all will come down... but keep your eyes open. And whatever happens, we must never be a part of this world system, or we will incur God's wrath and have our names blotted from the Book of Life.

There's much more I wanted to say, but time doesn't permit.

WHAT BABYLON STANDS FOR – AND WHAT WE MUST COME OUT OF

“Babylon” to me is any of the world’s ways, gods, lifestyles or practices that take us away from having an intimate relationship with the one true God. Babylon is confusion. The original HEBREW name is BABEL, implying “to confound”. The Babylonian language for their city means “The Gate of God” – but NOT to the one true God!

What does Babylon stand for? What must we come out of?

Here’s a short list – and a clue as to how much in, or like Babylon, we are, and we’ll come back to this in more detail later:

- **Babylon is about distraction and confusion**, instead of order. God is not of confusion (1 Cor. 14:33). Where confusion is, God is not. Coming out of Babylon includes bringing godly order into our lives. Are you feeling all confused? Don’t know what to do? Life is too hectic? Your health is suffering from stress? That probably means we need to take a deep breath and get out of Babylon! *In Hebrew, the name for Babylon – BABEL – means “CONFUSION.” Babylon will distract you by false priorities, entertainment, fears, etc. Television will play a big part in this distraction.* Use it cautiously and carefully.

God has a will for you. Perhaps we need a sermon on discovering God’s will for your life (Eph 5:17). In any case, a child of God says, “Not my will oh God, but thine be done”. And we beg God to show us His perfect will in our lives, knowing He wants the best for us and will do what in the end will be the perfect will for us (Romans 12:2). It’s a life marked with the peace of knowing God is in the midst of it, even if at times there’s a lot going on. A child of God who is not OF Babylon, is seeking a life that is acceptable to GOD, not man (Ephesians 5:10).

- **Babylon represents pride, through and through. Babylon is all about making a name for yourself, rather than lifting high the name of God.** We can do this by our work, by recognition from peers, from society or wherever. I have seen that awful pride in me, and there’s always more to discover as God peels off the layers of pride we each have. Have you asked God to mercifully show you your pride, for unless repented of, that will alienate you from God.

Genesis 11:4—“and they said, ‘Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make *a name for ourselves*, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth”.

God hates pride. The Laodecians in the end time are a people who are proud – partly because they have imbibed of the spirit of Babylon, a proud spirit. Babylon is all about image, self-image, lookin’ good, having all the right vibes.... But nothing about humility, nothing about dying to the self, nothing about abasing oneself and letting God increase in us while the “old self” in us decreases. In their pride, they sought their own image, rather than conforming to the image of the Son of God (Romans 8:29).

I think pride and Babylon go so hand-in-hand. God has never changed. Humble yourselves – and then He will raise you up, in His time, in His way. God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. God’s kingdom is not about pride, is not about proud people.

In fact, the quickest way back to God has never changed: humble yourself, be contrite and repent of your pride and sins.

2 Chronicles 7:14-15

“If *My people* [there’s that term again] who are called by My name will *humble themselves*, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

As children of God, does that describe us?

In Daniel 4:25-32 you can read how KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR typified the ATTITUDE I’m talking about. One day (v.29-32) “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?" 31 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."

- Babylon is a life of defiant rebellion against God, instead of obedience. Babylon is all about disobeying and disregarding God's commands, one way or another. PONDER that one! How are you finding yourself not submitting to God, His laws, His ways?
- Those in Babylon were all about seeking their own will, their own goals, their own agenda, and their own wealth – instead of the will of God and what God wants for each person.
- **Babylon is all about False gods, instead of the one true God. It was FULL of lifeless gods, idols, images, temples to false gods. FALSE RELIGION**, instead of the pure religion of the true Creator God. Anything we place ahead of God becomes our god. Coming out of Babylon includes smashing all the idols and false gods and interferences we have allowed into our lives. Remember Gideon? Before God could use him, God made Gideon smash his father’s idols! We are not many, but we must smash the things that we put ahead of the one Living God. God's people find no pleasure in the entertainments that magnify witchcraft, spirit powers and forces other than God's spirit!
- **Babylon is about focusing on money, wealth, status, impact and domination. Babylon is about you wanting to be in charge, being top dog**, it’s all about numero uno—and I mean the self, not God! See yourself yet? I could see myself in all of that for sure. Babylon: instead of service, kindness, gentleness and sharing, BABYLON had no regard for the poor and weak of society. They sacrificed infants. They enslaved those unable to resist. Consider the Masons and other fraternities whose leader is the “Grand Exalted ruler” or similar title. Can you see Christ in any of that? Yeshua is not into the Grand PooBah concept!

Coming out of Babylon means to humble yourself under God, showing kindness and gentleness to all people. It’s about living the fruit of the spirit. *People of the world should clearly sense something very different about you and me – you’re nice. You’re gentle. You’re sweet, gentle, loving and patient.* You’re different -- just like a child of God should be. I know, I fall so short of that, but if we repent and ask God to change us, we

CAN become a different person with God's spirit and mind in us (1 Sam 10:6). But the point is: we not like the people of this world's Babylon!

Even those who are ordained ministers: have you remembered that our Master orders us not to ever lord it over anyone, for we all have one Lord, one Master! Instead, ordained ministers are to be the greatest servants (**Matthew 20:25-28**). When a pastor or minister becomes a big mucky-muck, he's become a part of Babylon and is walking away from the kingdom of God! And yet minister after minister falls into this trap and forgets their name – "minister" – means servant. So I urge ministers to avoid titles. Avoid being called Director, Rabbi, or Apostle, or Exalted Ruler, or holy father, or reverend. Holy and reverend is HIS name (**Psalms 111:9**). Let alone Vicar of Christ, Most Holy Father, Monsignor ("My Lord"), and so on. Jesus says to avoid these titles (Matthew 23:6-12).

- BABYLON was about MYSTERY, instead of clarity. Doublespeak. Cloaking sin with names that seemed holy to hide its practitioners from godly people.
- **Babylon was about Mindless PLEASURE, illicit sex, it was and is, SIN CITY** of its day. For example, look how Las Vegas REVELS in calling itself "Sin City". They MARKET the fact that there is SIN galore there, "but we won't tell". "What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas. You can come here and sin to your heart's content! We won't tell". If you see yourself SLIPPING BACK into SINS, we're back in Babylon! If you would ENJOY being in Las Vegas and doing all the shows and all that, you're in Babylon!

Videos, VCR's, internet, TV, Ipod and more have all made it ever easier to see and experience sex sin, violence, pride, sinning of all kinds. Surely God's children do not receive entertainment by watching sinners sin, and yet too many of us do. That's an area we're in Babylon.

- Worship of the Sun, moon and stars – instead of the Creator of all things. We even today have remnants of this in our very weekly calendar, with SUNDAY, MOONday, Thea's Day, WODEN'S Day, THOR's Day, Freia's Day, Saturn's Day and so on. We name the planets after pagan gods – Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, Pluto, all as a STENCH in God's nostrils. We've peppered our language with references to pagan mythological figures – echo, siren, nymphs, Futura – future – though God says not to worry about tomorrow but do good today with what God supplies us with.

When GOD sets up His kingdom on earth, there will be once again a PURE language, one language (Zephaniah 3:9).

Most of the religious holidays of the western world have come straight out of paganism – though we've "baptized them" with Christian labels. That doesn't cleanse them. It just makes all of this even more odious to God. I'm talking about Halloween, Easter, Christmas, Lent and others. Don't kid yourself. Hear my message about the true story of Jesus' birth, for example, and you'll be amazed at how the truth of scripture is different from what you may have always thought. Worshiping on the day of the sun – versus on the 7th day which God sanctified, that TOO is of Babylon!

God's PEOPLE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN CALLED OUT

I need to make something very clear before continuing with Babylon: **God's people have always been called out. The word for “assembly”– (usually translated “church”) in the Greek is Ekklesia, meaning “called OUT ones”. God's people are called to be holy, separate, APART FROM the ways of this world.** I preach to myself. I too have too often been a part of the sins of this world in my past, and I too have to ask King Jesus to save me from this trap of Babylon!

Many of us apparently start to come out – and then STOP part of the way out.

Examples:

- the Laodecians are not described as being in filthy garments, but being naked. They had taken off the filthy garments but have not finished the process of putting on, of being dressed in God's righteousness.
- Abram – and his father Terah, had apparently started out of Babylon to go to the Land of Canaan – but for whatever reasons, they stopped at Haran, some family members die there and Abram seems stuck there.

Genesis 11:31-32

And Terah took his son Abram and his grandson Lot, the son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, his son Abram's wife, and they went out with **them from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to the land of Canaan;** and [or “but”?] they came to Haran and dwelt there. [Hmmm. What happened?] 32 So the days of Terah were two hundred and five years, and Terah died in Haran.

Did you notice where they were coming from? Ur, of the Chaldeans! Not that far from the city of Babylon. If you keep reading into Gen. 12:1-2, God tells Abram to get out of your country, away from your family – and finish going to the land where I wanted you all to go! I think there may be something to this that we’ve missed before.

God has not changed. God still wants His children to come out of Babylon and come all the way out. Abram lived as in a foreign country, looking to the city of God (Heb.11:9-10).

PRAY FOR GOD TO SHOW YOU

I think each of us may be “of” Babylon in different ways from each other. There are some common areas, but where I’m “of” Babylon may be very different than your ways. So I think the next step is to humbly fall on your knees and ask God to mercifully show each of us where we need to see how we’re being of Babylon.

Be prepared to write a lot, because I think a lot of us are much further in and OF Babylon than we want to admit right now, or even understand right now. Including me. That’s why I have shared this message. It started as a warning to myself to come out of the ways I know I’m currently of this Babylon. If we don’t come out, we’re going to share in its plagues, and could lose our place in the book of Life.

Brethren, let me read again what the Voice from heaven has to say to God's PEOPLE:

Revelation 18:1-5

After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. 2 And he cried mightily with a loud voice,

saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! 3 For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury."

4 And I **heard another voice from heaven** saying, "*Come out of her, my people*, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues."

I hope we listen. I hope we come out, and come all the way out, and put a renewed effort into coming to truly know, and be IN, Jesus Christ and His father Abba, The Eternal in the Highest.

Until next time, this is your servant and brother Philip Shields.