

# THE CHRISTIAN'S ROLE IN BABYLON

Don Atkin

[www.DonAtkin.com](http://www.DonAtkin.com)

The wasting of a lot of energy and resources can be avoided by grasping one simple truth followed by the continual discipline of discerning certain spirits.

- **Truth:** Mankind, in our fallen state, cannot please God by our own ingenuity and effort. Therefore,
- **Discernment:** I must ask, "Of what spirit is this? Do You want me involved? And, if so, how?" before giving myself to a certain task or beginning in a particular direction.

There is a Holy Spirit who is to guide us into all truth.<sup>1</sup> There is a babylonian spirit whose primary fruit is confusion. The truth sets us free; the babylonian spirit will bring us into unmerciful and exhaustive religious activity.

## BABYLON

We find references to Babel, Babylon, Babylonia and Babylonians throughout the Old Testament Scriptures. Most New Testament references are found in the book of Revelation. References found in Matthew 1 are parts of the genealogy. Jeremiah is being quoted in the Acts 7:43 passage, and 1 Peter 5:13 is a greeting to a sister who lived in Babylon.

Babylonia, and particularly its capital city Babylon, has long held a place in Abrahamic religions as a symbol of excess and dissolute power. Many references are made to Babylon in the Bible, both literally and allegorically. The mentions in the Tanakh tend to be historical or prophetic, while New Testament references are more likely figurative, or cryptic references possibly to pagan Rome, or some other archetype. The legendary Hanging Gardens of Babylon and the Tower of Babel are seen as symbols of luxurious and arrogant power respectively.<sup>2</sup>

There are clues regarding the babylonian spirit (or spirit of babel) found both in the historical references throughout the Old Testament and the allegorical references in Revelation. Chief among the Old Testament clues are:

*"Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower whose top is in the heavens."*

*"Let us make a name for ourselves."<sup>3</sup>*

The implications of these two statements should be revealing enough for me to end this article right here. But, there is more for us to consider. The full extent of the futility of following this spirit is picturesquely elaborated in the alegorical story of the great harlot. John testifies about one of the seven angels coming and talking to him:

*"Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication."<sup>4</sup>*

---

<sup>1</sup> John 16:13

<sup>2</sup> Wikipedia

<sup>3</sup> Genesis 11:4

<sup>4</sup> Revelation 17:1-2

Kings, presidents, prime ministers, rulers, leaders, directors, CEO's, business owners, ministry leaders—you name it—who operate in the world's systems, and all followers of the ways of the world, have given themselves to this spirit. Is that what this passage says? Yes!

*"The **woman** whom you saw **is** that great **city** which reigns over the kings of the earth."*<sup>5</sup>

That's right. The *great harlot* is that *great city*! That *great city* is the *great harlot*—two metaphors for *the spirit of the world*.<sup>6</sup>

- A **city**, the counterfeit of New Jerusalem (the Jerusalem which is above<sup>7</sup>)—and,
- A **woman**, the counterfeit of the bride of Christ.

One verse describes the authentic city and the authentic woman:

- *"Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,*
- *Prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."*<sup>8</sup>

Our issues are not with a real live woman or an actual city. Our issues are with a real live spirit, an actual spirit of the harlot city, the harlot woman—a babylonian spirit. Our warfare is not *against flesh and blood*.<sup>9</sup>

- *That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*<sup>10</sup>
- *Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.*<sup>11</sup>
- *Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*<sup>12</sup>

The good news is:

- *You are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you.*<sup>13</sup>

## **THE CITY OF GOD**

*Repentance from dead works (the works of the flesh)*<sup>14</sup> and *faith toward God* are among the initial elementary principles and foundations for growing up in Christ.<sup>15</sup>

Faithfully and obediently functioning wherever God places us within the world system is one thing. Getting caught up in it, and adopting its ways is another. To be sent and to function in apostolic/missional obedience to the Spirit of truth is a good thing. To fail to discern the spirit of such an environment can lead to confusion and frustration, to failure. That would be a bad thing.

---

<sup>5</sup> Revelation 17:18

<sup>6</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:12

<sup>7</sup> Galatians 4:26

<sup>8</sup> Revelation 21:2

<sup>9</sup> Ephesians 6:12

<sup>10</sup> John 3:6

<sup>11</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:50

<sup>12</sup> Romans 8:8

<sup>13</sup> Romans 8:9

<sup>14</sup> Galatians 5:19-21

<sup>15</sup> Hebrews 6:1-2

To try to redeem the system is naïve; attempting to restore the system could only result in Babylon at her best; and a desire to reform her is about as likely as making a man into a monkey (or a monkey into a man). At her absolute best, Babylon is a counterfeit of Abraham's migration objective.

*By faith Abraham . . . waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*<sup>16</sup>

I am continually amazed by the hypocrisy of those who oppose the harlot church but remain loyal to a harlot nation! Those who are still hoping to turn their nation around have a false hope, temporal at best.

Every other nation, with the exception of God's holy nation, is Babylon the great, and prophesied to fall.<sup>17</sup> The *holy nation* for whom there is promise is made up of those who are in Christ. We are the *holy city* and *bride, taken out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation.*<sup>18</sup>

### **OUR ROLE IN BABYLON**

Our role in the world is apostolic and missional. We are sent as ambassadors to demonstrate, then articulate, another nation—God's holy nation.<sup>19</sup> Our citizenship is in heaven. Salt is a preservative than makes people thirsty. Light displaces darkness so that people may see.<sup>20</sup>

No matter what our day job, profession or career, we are laborers in the kingdom's harvest field—no more, no less. We are witnesses of Jesus Christ by the power of His Spirit within us. We carry Jesus' presence into all the world, and are to be revealed as sons of God.

It is vital that we understand that we are not to embrace the ways of the world.<sup>21</sup> All of our actions are to manifest the love and character of God. Our language must not deny Him. May Christ be revealed and exalted in all we think, say and do!

I do not have one ounce of energy or one moment of time to waste on changing or preserving Babylon, no matter how comfortable and attractive her lifestyle. If I am in her midst and functioning, it is because God has placed me there for His purposes. Jesus said that the world would hate us, yet He prayed:

*"I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.*

*"As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth."*<sup>22</sup>

To live separated from the world is not the answer. To remain in the world, yet separated from the spirit of the world is the will of God for us.

Joseph achieved significant stature, a place of prominent service within the world system. Yet, he kept himself from *all that is in the world.*<sup>23</sup> Potifer's wife did everything she could to get Joseph into bed with her. She went after him and he fled for his life, to keep his purity and not sin against God.

---

<sup>16</sup> Hebrews 11:8-10

<sup>17</sup> Revelation 18

<sup>18</sup> Revelation 5:9

<sup>19</sup> 1 Peter 2:9-25

<sup>20</sup> Matthew 5:13-16

<sup>21</sup> 1 John 2:15-17

<sup>22</sup> John 17:15-19

<sup>23</sup> 1 John 2:16

David said, *"I am weak today, though anointed king."*<sup>24</sup> We can be appointed and anointed by God for significance in this life. Nevertheless, we are protected from the spirit of the world because we have proactive and aggressive faith that Father has answered Jesus' prayer. Jesus has prayed that we be *sanctified by the truth.*<sup>25</sup>

- **Truth:** *Mankind, in our fallen state, cannot please God by our own ingenuity and effort.*
- **Discernment:** I must ask, "Of what spirit is this? Do You want me involved? And, if so, how?" before giving myself to a certain task or beginning in a particular direction.

Knowing what we are walking into, and knowing that we have been sent, we can serve our fellowmen with great love and integrity. We can do so without bowing to idolatry in any form.

*Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego walked out of the fire.*

*All the important people, the government leaders and king's counselors, gathered around to examine them and discovered that the fire hadn't so much as touched the three men—not a hair singed, not a scorch mark on their clothes, not even the smell of fire on them!*

*Nebuchadnezzar said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego! He sent His angel and rescued His servants who trusted in Him! They ignored the king's orders and laid their bodies on the line rather than serve or worship any god but their own."*

*Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon.*<sup>26</sup>

Scripture is laden with examples of God's people being promoted within the ranks of Babylon without bowing to idols. Here in the Western world, our lifestyles and creature comforts have become idols to many who name the name of Jesus. These people do not even need to leave their home to commit fornication with the great harlot. Many have made themselves subject to Babylon.

We need to:

- Abide in the truth,
- Discern the spirits of this age,
- Serve in the love of God,
- Refuse to compromise,
- Maintain our faithfulness to Him, and
- Reveal our sonship to a waiting creation.

*What happens when we live God's way? He brings gifts into our lives, much the same way that fruit appears in an orchard—things like affection for others, exuberance about life, serenity. We develop a willingness to stick with things, a sense of compassion in the heart, and a conviction of basic holiness permeates things and people. We find ourselves involved in loyal commitments, not needing to force our way in life, able to marshal and direct our energies wisely.*<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> 2 Samuel 3:39

<sup>25</sup> John 17:17

<sup>26</sup> Daniel 3

<sup>27</sup> Galatians 5:22-23 TM

Why unnecessarily waste a lot of time and resources, when *truth* and *discernment* can keep you on God's pathway, walking in the steps that He has ordered for you?<sup>28</sup>

*Stay alert. This is hazardous work I'm assigning you. You're going to be like sheep running through a wolf pack, so don't call attention to yourselves.*

*Be as cunning as a snake, inoffensive as a dove.<sup>29</sup>*

---

<sup>28</sup> Psalm 37:23

<sup>29</sup> Matthew 10:16 TM