

THE VOICE FROM HEAVEN

"Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."--[Revelation 18:4](#).

THE context of the above Scripture shows that our text refers to Babylon--not the literal city of Babylon, but to the symbolic city, described in the Book of Revelation. The term Babylon seems to signify a concentration of the various errors in apostate church systems, personified in Revelation as mother and daughters. "Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots," is the name given by the Lord to the original System, thus intimating that the whole brood is illegitimate in every sense of the word. She neglected the Heavenly Bridegroom, and mingled in her "cup" a stupefying potion that has intoxicated the world; even the Lord's saints were bewildered.--[Revelation 17:1-6](#).

After the Apostles "fell asleep," the people of God gradually drifted into error of doctrine and practise, which culminated in the Dark Ages. A great System developed, and led into confusion and darkness. We need not suppose that in all these centuries every one connected with this System was hypocritical. As the people of Natural Israel were led captive into literal Babylon, so the people of Spiritual Israel, among whom were some of the Lord's true saints, were led captive into Mystic Babylon. Some of these would have liked to get free, yet did not know what to do.

When we come down to the Reformation, we see that instead of getting entirely free from Babylon and her errors, the various systems then formed partook to a considerable extent of the spirit of the Mother System from which they had separated. The same spirit of persecution that was manifested in the "Mother" has also been manifested more or less in the "daughters." The enslaving power extended from medieval times to the Reformation; so that, looking out upon the so-called Christian world today, we see that there could not be a better word used to picture existing conditions than the word *confusion*.

Yet there are true people of God still in this Babylonian System. But the time of separation is here: those yet remaining in Babylon must hasten! The fact that some of God's children have been in Babylon all through the Age shows us why God has had any respect at all for Babylon; His saints have been more or less enslaved there for centuries. This is the reason why God has dealt with Babylon in any sense or degree.

BABYLON CAST INTO THE SEA

Our text with its context is a prophecy that in the end of the present Age a time would come when God would wholly reject Babylon. In the picture given us in Revelation of this time, the Lord's rejection of the apostate systems is declared in the words, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen!" She has been spewed out of His mouth, and the Almighty now calls upon His true people to "come out of her." The faithful ones are delivering themselves out of Babylon during this Harvest time; the separating work is almost completed. Soon, as pictured in Scripture, the "sea" of anarchy will swallow up the false systems. Babylon is to be "cast as a great millstone into the sea." ([Psalm 46:2](#); [Jeremiah 51:62-64](#); [Revelation 18:21](#).) We believe these prophecies are to be fulfilled in the very near future.

The nominal Church no longer stands in a peculiar position--above the world. Some of her ministers declare that they do not believe in Jesus as the Savior of the world--man is his own savior, they say. They believe in the social uplift of humanity, which, according to their view, is to come by putting the right men into the right places, by giving woman the franchise, and by other methods of social reform. What a sorry hope!

Some may ask: How may we recognize God's Voice calling His people to come out of the churches now? In what manner shall we hear His Voice? We answer that God bids His people to separate themselves from all sin and sinful conditions. Our forefathers did not hear this Voice, did not see this condition of sin. The Voice had not then spoken. Even in the time of the Reformation these entanglements of error were not clearly discerned. But now, in this Harvest time, we can see very clearly that the teachings of the nominal churches have been grossly in error--have grossly misrepresented the Divine Purpose and the Divine Character. We now perceive that Babylon is full of error and corruption of doctrine, and filled with the spirit of the world.

KNOWLEDGE BRINGS RESPONSIBILITY

Furthermore, the times and seasons of God's Plan are now made plain. We are shown that we are now living in the time foretold, when these systems of error are to be rejected by the Lord. Should we not leave these systems when we see all this? This is God's Voice to "come out of her." We hear this Voice now speaking; we see that this prophecy of Revelation is now being fulfilled. If [R5478 : page 180] any remonstrate: But, Lord, we have many precious friends in Babylon, and we are loth to leave them. We have tried to show them what Babylon is, but they will not heed. It will be a great loss to us to leave them all and take a stand against them. Must we come out? Our friends will think us crazy! The Lord replies: "Come out of her," or "receive of her plagues."

You are not sharers of her sins until the time you see this. You were born in Babylon. The Lord is not holding you responsible for what you did not understand. But the better you understand, the more responsibility you have. If, when you see what the Truth is and what the untruth is, you still remain in Babylon and support her with your influence and dollars, you will be very culpable. If you fail to come out of her when you hear the Lord's Voice, it will imply that you are not thoroughly loyal to Him. You may be His children, but if you fail to obey the Lord through fear of earthly loss, it will prove that these things are more precious to you than His favor, and He will treat you as He treats the hypocrites: you will have a share in their experiences.

If you are approving of the sins of the spewed-out systems by upholding them and giving them your influence, you will surely be partakers of Babylon's plagues. This is a fair warning. We understand that it is the duty of every Christian to break every tender tie, if necessary, and to be loyal to God, to stand free from the error and sins of Babylon. The time of her judgment has come.

The plagues coming upon Babylon are sore troubles, which will result in the complete overthrow of the present order of things--political, social, financial and religious. This order of things in its various phases, is one Cause, under different uniforms; these interests are all united in one great policy. The princes and kings of the earth and their supporters are Babylon's great army, and pitted against it is another vast army, composed of the masses of the people. The conflict between these two great armies will ere long precipitate the present order of things of the world into anarchy.

THE VOICE OF PRESENT TRUTH

It becomes an important question then: Have all God's people heard this Voice? We answer that we do not think all have yet heard; hence there must be some Christians still in Babylon, partakers of her sins, but confused because of ignorance, because of lack of knowledge. The question might be asked: Shall we go forth making this call a special message? We answer: This is not our thought. Our thought is that where this is made a special message the result is usually different from what is intended: it makes many angry. They say: By what authority do you call us Babylon, and by what authority do you tell us to "come out"?

Our thought is that it is the Lord who calls His people out of Babylon; the call is to be recognized especially as a *Voice from Heaven*. What is this Voice from Heaven? Apparently, the Voice is Present Truth--a presentation of the doctrines of the Scriptures, with their times and seasons--a showing that while there has been confusion and error all the way down through the Age, we are now in the Harvest time, when Truth is clearer than ever before. This Voice of Truth tells us whether or not we should support a system that is full of error, full of confusion.

In what way should we give God's Message to come out of Babylon? We should show them the Light, the Truth; we should place before them the opportunity for investigation, and encourage them to *prove these things for themselves*. As they come to see the Truth and the bondage in which they have been, they will be glad to stand free in Christ by breaking off these shackles. This will be the Voice, then, that will show all the Lord's people who are in the right attitude of heart that they should stand free, that they should come out of Sectarianism, that they should not misrepresent the Lord by claiming that they are of Babylon when they are not, but that they take their stand for God.

LOYALTY TO TRUTH THE TEST

This stand will mean the holding forth of the Divine Plan of the Ages, the Truth. If, after one has seen the real character of Babylon and has gotten his bearings in a general way, he then remains, it can be only by compromising the Truth. By being worldly wise he might remain and continue for a time to have popularity, to have honor of men. But if after seeing the Truth, after [R5479 : page 180] understanding the Truth, one were to continue in Babylon, he would of course be a greater sinner than one who had not been so enlightened.

It is not our thought that we should avoid doing our duty in the proclamation of the Truth, but that we should avoid arousing unnecessary antagonism; for people in error are in no condition to have the error lightly spoken of. They must be in the right condition before one can even whisper to them, "Come out of her." Even if they make inquiry of us, we should not speak too positively; but we should say: Now, my dear brother [or sister], if you have heard the Voice of God, if you realize that the various denominations are in error, then you will, apparently, see your duty. You once said you were of them; if now you see that you are *not* of them, you should tell them so. But *when* you shall see, and *when* you shall hear, is not for another to say. If, when you have heard and believe the Truth, you remain in Babylon, you will be a partaker of her sins, and more guilty than the average one among them. When you are able to hear this Voice yourself--this Voice which will show you the right and the wrong, the Truth and the error--no doubt you will have the fortitude to "come out."

BABYLON'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE TRUTH

But those who hear the Voice of Present Truth, and who obey the call to come out of Babylon, are usually subjected to persecution. In our Lord's day, when the believers were from among the Jews, some were put out of the synagogues. We remember a particular instance during our Lord's ministry. A man who was born blind was asked how he had his sight restored; and when he confessed Jesus, the rulers put him out of the synagogue. ([John 9:22, 34](#).) That same spirit, that same condition, seemed to follow with the Apostles.

All through the Dark Ages those who were faithful to the Light were kept out of the churches. The church creeds and practises were *conscience-barriers* to keep Light-bearers out; those faithful to the Truth were excommunicated or put to death as heretics. This condition continued to some extent even after the time of the Reformation. Servetus, a brother Christian, whose horrible death by burning at the stake was caused by Calvin, is a case in point. Jesus said, "They shall put you out of the synagogues; yea, the time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." The execution of Servetus was an instance of the literal fulfilment of our Lord's words.

Those who have ruled the synagogues have not always been bad people, but *mistaken* people. Thus it was with Saul of Tarsus, when he haled Christians to prison and [R5479 : page 181] approved the death of St. Stephen. And so with the churches of our day when any become enlightened and let their light shine. The same thing is true that has always been true; namely, "The darkness hateth the light." They say: If you stay with us you shall not present these matters. So those who are loyal to God are in this way forced out of the synagogues; indeed, the loyal ones are now *called* to "come out."

"YOUR BRETHREN THAT HATED YOU"

But our day has a peculiarity that other days have not had. The Divine Plan is now so beautiful that we can see that others are in darkness, and this impelling Voice of the Truth is the Voice of God, the Voice of conscience, the Voice of enlightenment, calling us out of Babylon, which is misrepresenting God, His character, His Plan and His Word. We do not know but that they may go to the extreme in our day--to kill socially, to kill ecclesiastically, perhaps to kill physically. Nearly all the persecutions that have come to God's people have come from professed Christians, fellow-believers. "Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for My Name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified; but He shall appear to your joy, and they shall be *ashamed*."--Isaiah 66:5.

We are glad that these shall one day, not far off, we believe, see their mistake. Instead of feeling like bringing vengeance upon our enemies, we should feel quite a sympathy--not *with* them, but *forth* them. We should realize that it is with them very much as it was with the Jews in our Lord's day: those Jews and their rulers knew not what they did, or they would have been ashamed. And they *will* be ashamed when they come forth and realize what they did--just as Saul of Tarsus was ashamed when he realized what he had done. And so with these blinded ones of today: "Some shall come forth to shame and lasting contempt." This contempt will last until there has been a proper repentance for their share in the persecutions of the Lord and His faithful ones.

AMOUNT OF KNOWLEDGE NECESSARY

We surely appreciate very highly the value of knowledge, but we also remember the truthfulness of St. Paul's statement that "knowledge (alone) puffs up, but love builds up." Yet knowledge is necessary to growth in grace. Only as we perceive the beauty of the Divine character can we appreciate our God. Therefore, we rejoice that He is lifting the veil and revealing Himself more and more to our eyes of understanding.

We can see that mental capacity is not the same in all. Some can receive a large measure of the Truth, while others can assimilate only a little. No one needs more knowledge than he is capable of receiving. God is judging His people according to their character-likeness to His Son, our Lord, not according to what they *know*. While knowledge is very important, very necessary, still no one has a monopoly of understanding--no one has perfect knowledge in the present life; and if our eternal destiny depended upon knowledge, each of us would come short. Nevertheless, we believe that all who are the Lord's will be brought into touch with Present Truth, and will be judged by it. Those who obtain the knowledge and then show a disposition to shirk the responsibility connected with it or to deny the Truth or to live ungodly after seeing the Light, thus demonstrate their unworthiness.

The Apostle, speaking to the faithful ones in Christ, says, "Ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that Day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are children of the light." He seems to imply that the Lord's true people will come to a knowledge of the Truth. This does not necessarily mean *all* the Truth, but enough to sanctify. One with large intellectual power would require and could assimilate a large amount of knowledge; one with small mental capacity would need less.

There are certain basic principles that the Lord's people have at all times grasped; for instance, the fact that there is but one God. Even those who hold to the doctrine of the "Trinity" declare that there is one God. Thus they have a measure of the Truth, although they contradict themselves. It is the same in regard to the penalty for sin. Our forefathers desired to be right when they thought eternal torment the punishment for sin; and they called it a *just* penalty, in their endeavor to be right. But with these basic principles is mixed a large proportion of error. The whole world of mankind has been under delusions; and we who are now waking up are really surprised to see how little we actually knew-- how ignorant we were in regard to some of the precious messages which our God has given us.

"WEEPING AND GNASHING OF TEETH"

But as we were children of God before we received full knowledge, so we believe that it is possible for others to be children of God without having full knowledge. We are living in the Harvest of the Gospel Age, when God is causing the knowledge of the Truth to encircle the earth. At the same time the Adversary is doing all that he can to hinder people from studying the Divine Message-- raising a dust of calumny to blind the eyes of the unwary.

It is because we believe that there are children of God attempting to live on the husks and skimmed milk of human tradition--brethren in Christ starving for the pure food offered in the Word of God--that we are trying to reach and help them. Otherwise we would abandon all special efforts at propaganda; for we know that as soon as the Messianic Kingdom shall have been set up, conditions will be favorable to all to come to a knowledge of the Truth as it is contained in the Bible.

The days that are almost upon us will surely bring "weeping and gnashing of teeth" to many of the Lord's people; for whoever stands for error will be in opposition to God. They are about to go into a great Time of Trouble, and it will be their own fault. Some of us heard God's Voice early in the Harvest, and therefore we had the responsibility earlier; some heard later. Some are hearing now about the sins of Babylon--that these sins are about to be punished, and that they should come out and be on God's side, if they would have Divine favor. It is the desire to further sound out this present Message that has led us to the production of the PHOTO-DRAMA OF CREATION--that those who would not *read* might *see*. To whatever extent it helps each of God's children, still bound, to recognize his own responsibility, it represents the Voice of God, telling them their present duty as Christians.

"When ye hear I am come, then can ye arise,
The joy of your heart springing up in your eyes?
Can ye come out to meet Me, whate'er the cost be,
Though ye come on the waves of a storm-crested sea?
"When I call, can ye turn and in gladness 'come out'
From the home of your childhood, the friends of your heart?
With naught but My promise on which to rely,
Afar from their love--can ye lie down and die?"
"Yea, we'll take up the Cross and in faith follow Thee,
And bear Thy reproach, Thy disciples to be.
Blest Savior, for courage to Thee we will fly;
Of grace Thou hast promised abundant supply."