

**Outline of
the Messages for the Full-time Training
in the Fall Term of 2016**

**GENERAL SUBJECT:
THE FAILURES IN THE CHURCHES,
THE DEGRADATION OF THE CHURCH, THE OVERCOMERS IN THE CHURCH,
THE RECOVERY OF THE CHURCH, AND THE STAGES OF THE CHURCH**

Message One

**The Failures in the Churches—
the Principle of Babylon and the Way to Overcome It**

Scripture Reading: Rev. 17:1-6; 18:4, 7; Lev. 1:3-4, 9; 6:10-13

- I. The principle of Babylon (Heb. *Babel*) is man's endeavor to build up something from earth to heaven by human ability, by bricks—Gen. 11:1-9:**
- A. Stone is made by God, whereas bricks are made by man, being a human invention, a human product.
 - B. Those who live according to the principle of Babylon do not see that they are limited; rather, they attempt to do the Lord's work by their natural ability with their human effort—cf. 1 Cor. 15:10, 58.
 - C. The building of God is not built with man-made bricks by human labor; it is built with God-created and transformed stones and by the divine work—3:12.
- II. The principle of Babylon is hypocrisy—Rev. 17:4, 6; Matt. 23:25-32; Luke 12:1:**
- A. The significance of Achan's sin was his coveting a beautiful Babylonian garment in his seeking to improve himself, to make himself look better, for the sake of appearance—Josh. 7:21.
 - B. This was the sin of Ananias and Sapphira, who lied to the Holy Spirit—Acts 5:1-11:
 - 1. They did not love the Lord very much, but they wanted to be looked upon as those who greatly loved the Lord; they were just pretending.
 - 2. They were not willing to offer everything cheerfully to God, but before man they acted as if they had offered all.
 - C. Whenever we put on a garment that does not match our actual condition, we are in the principle of Babylon—Matt. 6:1-6; 15:7-8.
 - D. Everything done in falsehood to receive glory from man is done in the principle of the harlot, not in the principle of the bride—John 5:41, 44; 7:18; 12:42-43; 2 Cor. 4:5; 1 Thes. 2:4-6.
- III. The principle of Babylon is that of not considering herself a widow but of glorifying herself and living luxuriously—Rev. 18:7:**
- A. Only those believers who have fallen would consider themselves not to be a widow; in a sense, the believers in Christ are a widow in the present age because their Husband, Christ, is absent from them; because our Beloved is not here in the world, our heart is not here—Matt. 9:14-15; Luke 18:3.
 - B. Anything in our living that is in excess is luxury and is in the principle of Babylon—1 Tim. 6:6-10.
- IV. The principle of Babylon is the principle of a harlot—Rev. 17:1-6:**

- A. Babylon's purpose is for man to make a name for himself and deny God's name—Gen. 11:4:
 - 1. To denominate the church by taking any name other than our Lord's is spiritual fornication—cf. Rev. 3:8.
 - 2. The church, as the pure virgin espoused to Christ, should have no name other than her Husband's—2 Cor. 11:2; 1 Cor. 1:10.
- B. Babylon means confusion—Gen. 11:6-7:
 - 1. In the church we should not have different kinds of speaking; we should have only one mind and one mouth under one ministry with one unique teaching for the one Body—Rom. 15:5-6; 1 Cor. 1:10; Phil. 2:2; 1 Tim. 1:3-4.
 - 2. When we are in our mind, we are in the principle of Babylon; when we are in our spirit, we are in today's Jerusalem, in which there is the divine oneness—John 4:23-24; Eph. 4:3.
 - 3. We should not dare to have any division, because our Husband is one, and we His wife are also one—Matt. 19:3-9.
- C. With the rebellious people at Babel, there was a scattering—Gen. 11:8:
 - 1. In the ancient time all the Israelites came together three times a year at Jerusalem; this was versus the scattering at Babel—Deut. 12:5; 16:16:
 - a. It was by this unique place of worship to God, Jerusalem, that the oneness of His people was kept for generations—Psa. 133.
 - b. Jerusalem not only signifies our spirit but also signifies the genuine ground of oneness, the ground of locality—Acts 8:1; 13:1; Rev. 1:11.
 - c. In order to come out of Babylon, we must be “in spirit, on the ground.”
 - 2. The sin of Jeroboam, who set up another center of worship, is the sin of division caused by one's ambition to have a kingdom, an empire, to satisfy his selfish desire—1 Kings 12:26-33.
- D. Babylon is a mixture of the things of God with the things of the idols:
 - 1. King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon burned the house of God in Jerusalem, carried away all the vessels that were in God's house for God's worship, and put them in the temple of his idols in Babylon—2 Chron. 36:6-7; Ezra 1:11.
 - 2. In the New Testament this mixture is enlarged with the great Babylon—Rev. 17:3-5; cf. 21:18; 22:1.

V. The Lord's call in the book of Revelation is for His people to come out of Babylon so that they may return to the orthodoxy of the church—18:4-5:

- A. According to God's Word, His children cannot partake of anything that has the character of Babylon—2 Cor. 6:17-18.
- B. God hates the principle of Babylon more than anything else—Rev. 11:2, 18.
- C. Anything that is halfway and not absolute is called Babylon:
 - 1. We need God to enlighten us so that in His light we may judge everything in us that is not absolute toward Him—3:16-19.
 - 2. Only when we judge ourselves in this way can we confess that we too hate the principle of Babylon—cf. 2:6.
 - 3. By His grace, may the Lord not allow us to seek any glory and honor outside of Christ—John 7:18; 12:26; Phil. 1:19-21a; cf. Exo. 28:2.
 - 4. The Lord requires that we delight and seek to be one who is absolute, not one who is living in the principle of Babylon.

- D. When God judges the harlot and shatters all her work, and when He casts out all that she is and the principle she represents, voices from heaven will say, “Hallelujah!”—Rev. 19:1-4.

VI. 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—Lev. 1:3; 6:9; John 5:19, 30; 6:38; 7:18; 8:29; 14:24; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; Gal. 2:19-20; Phil. 1:19-21a:

- A. By laying our hands on Christ as our burnt offering, we are joined to Him, and He and we become one; in such a union all our weaknesses, defects, and faults are taken on by Him, and all His virtues become ours; this requires us to exercise our spirit through the proper prayer so that we may be one with Him in an experiential way—Lev. 1:4.
- B. When we lay our hands on Christ through prayer, the life-giving Spirit, who is the very Christ on whom we lay our hands (1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:6, 17; 4:5), will immediately move and work within us to live a life that is a repetition of the life that Christ lived on earth, the life of the burnt offering (cf. Exo. 38:1).
- C. The burnt offering being kept on the hearth of the altar until the morning signifies that a burnt offering should remain in the place of burning through the dark night of this age until the morning, until the Lord Jesus comes again—Lev. 6:9; 2 Pet. 1:19.
- D. The ashes, the result of the burnt offering, are a sign of God’s acceptance of the offering (Lev. 6:10); 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 (v. 11) signifies that the handling of the ashes of the burnt offering was done in a stately manner.
- E. Ashes indicate the result of Christ’s death, which brings us to an end, that is, to ashes (Gal. 2:20a); the putting of the ashes beside the altar toward the east (Lev. 1:16), the side of the sunrise, is an allusion to resurrection; in relation to the burnt offering, the ashes are not the end, for Christ’s death brings in resurrection (Rom. 6:3-5).
- F. God has a high regard for these ashes, for eventually the ashes will become the New Jerusalem; our being reduced to ashes brings us into the transformation of the Triune God (12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18); in resurrection we as ashes are transformed to become precious materials—gold, pearl, and precious stones—for the building of the New Jerusalem.
- G. “The fire on the altar shall be kept burning on it; it must not go out. And the priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and he shall lay the burnt offering in order upon it and shall burn the fat of the peace offerings on it. Fire shall be kept burning on the altar continually; it shall not go out”—Lev. 6:12-13:
1. The priest’s burning wood on the altar every morning signifies the need of the serving one’s cooperation with God’s desire by adding more fuel to the holy fire to strengthen the burning for the receiving of the burnt offering as God’s food; the morning signifies a new start for the burning—vv. 12-13; cf. Luke 12:49-50; Rom. 12:11; 2 Tim. 1:6-7.
 2. The burning of the burnt offering laid a foundation for the sweetness of the peace offering; this indicates that our offering ourselves to God as a continual burnt offering (cf. Rom. 12:1) should be laid as a foundation for our sweet fellowship with God, signified by the burning of the fat of the peace offering; the burning of both the burnt offering and the peace offering signifies that both our absoluteness for God and our enjoyment of the Triune God are a matter of burning—Lev. 6:12-13.