

# Babylonian Captivity

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When one walks into a modern “church,” the evidences of Babylonian captivity are readily apparent if one knows what to look for. The obvious elements of the pulpit and pew speak the loudest of the ensnarement of this assembly if we could but hear what they say. The pulpit is the piece of furniture that not only most proclaims the superiority of the person standing behind it but it is that which is most used as a bottleneck by which the “pastor” (or whatever other title the CEO of that particular franchise uses to wield power and hold the preeminence – see 3 Jn. 9) controls who gets the privilege of speaking down to his captives and influencing, however minimally, their thinking. And indeed, the people are captive, even if voluntarily so. They are captivated by his eloquence, by his knowledge, by his aura of infallibility, by the demonic spirits that hold him captive and use him to ensnare the people, by his ability to scratch and soothe their ears “just right” (see 2 Tim. 4:3-4) or by whatever other secondary scheme of the devil and the demonic that works best in this particular assembly.

The pulpit is the most obvious element of the “church’s” Babylonian captivity because it is the centerpiece of modern churchianity. It cannot be found anywhere in the Old or New Testaments yet it stands as the virtual symbol and centerpiece of “Christianity.” That this piece of furniture is completely absent from the Bible should alone cause most people who follow the words of the Bible to hesitate and question their practice – but its true origins should make people want to tear it down and burn it. In the pagan Greek temples of the 2nd and 3rd centuries, it was called the *ambo* and it was imported directly from the pagan temples into the “Christian” temples such as were authorized and funded by Constantine, buildings patterned after Rome’s judgment halls (basilicas) which have no place whatsoever in the New Testament either. (see Acts 7:48) This fact alone should tell us much about why the sermons that come from the pulpit have only little life-changing power.

There is another built-in factor about the pulpit that should not be overlooked. It most often stands on a platform. This too comes from the pagan temples and the men who stood on such platforms were called “pontiffs” – and yes, the Catholic sect imported this title and position into its “Christian” religious practices from paganism too. It is only one of the abominations of which the Catholic “church” is the mother of. (see Rev. 17:5) The idea of a pontiff is that they are a bridge between the people and God (or whatever god or gods are being worshiped.) This position is already exclusively taken by Christ (1 Tim. 2:5) but men were long ago deceived into thinking they were supposed to stand in the place of Christ and God (see Ignatius of Antioch, died c. 110 A.D.) and this has now become a time-honored, cherished tradition of men that wars against the will of God. The platform places the speaker above the audience and keeps the audience seated at his or her feet. The subliminal message of this simple fact is more than capable of drowning out any deeper spiritual truths that might actually be communicated by the speaker.

Though the mere presence of the pulpit and pews should be enough to warn us, if one stays long enough, there will soon be teachings or “prophetic words” given about the need to be submissive to the “pastor”/CEO (which submission will almost always be a one-way street as no “pastor” or “spiritual father” should ever have to demean himself and submit to those so beneath him – see however Eph. 5:21, etc.) and to get behind his vision for this “church’s” particular “work of the Lord.” Doctrines of “pastoral oversight” and “spiritual fathering” are very popular nowadays among those who give great evidence that they are spiritually perishing. The idea that

God has delegated authority to certain men so that they now are the rightful lords over other believers is a lie of immense proportions. Jesus emphatically said, "It shall not be so among you!" (Mt. 20:26, etc.) and warned the ekklesias of Ephesus and Pergamos of the deeds and teachings of the Nicolaitans, those who "conquer over the people," a thing which He *hates!* (Rev. 2:6, 15) The "pastor" in the pulpit on a platform paradigm is the heart and soul of the deceptions that keep the "church" in its Babylonian captivity and it would not be possible without the idea of delegated authority over other believers.

The sad truth is that somewhere in many such congregations, there is a handful of true saints (using the term in the original New Testament sense of that word) who languish under all the paganistic influences and worldly activities and demonic oppressions that abound. They simply don't understand why the "church" doesn't bear better fruit, so they pray harder, work harder, participate more, attend more lectures ("sermons" and "teachings") and try more desperately to not let the frustration of being trapped in the religious squirrel cages and being enslaved on the endless spiritual hamster wheels get them down. "Judge not!" they are told – but the very depths of their soul cries out to be liberated from this spiritual nightmare of carnality and lawlessness (doing what is right in one's own eyes. – Jdgs. 21:25) That still, small voice deep inside that keeps whispering "Come out from among them" must be silenced and ignored and its effects pressed through because there is a Sunday school class to teach, a committee meeting to attend, a youth meeting to plan or any other of a host of usual "church" activities that really do much to tear down Christ's spiritual kingdom and do almost nothing to build it up.

John wrote, "No lie is of the truth." (1 Jn. 2:21) This simple insight should open up to us much of what is routinely done in modern churchianity and much of what has occurred in church history. Wherever we find a lie (not just an imperfection but a systematically installed deception), we have found the work of the devil and the demonic. (Jn. 8:44) Most "church"-ites are not even able to fathom the idea that the devil has had any part in creating their "church," blindly assuming their "church" was made by God Himself. But the mere presence of a "pastor" who is in truth a CEO of a modern corporation who stands in a pulpit that has no place in the Bible, tells us that God is not the only architect involved. The fruit that comes from "churches" and "ministries" – 3 to 5% conversion rates, high dropout and turnover rates, low involvement in the various "ministries," inability to attract youth, etc. – also indicate that the "church" is systemically flawed. A perfect, all-wise, all-knowing, infallible God cannot create a system with flaws in its very structure. It would be against His nature.

All this leaves us with the pertinent question: If God is not the only architect of the "church," then who else is involved? We cannot blame men – they would not have the ability to intentionally incorporate things that outwardly seem so good and wise and beneficial yet simultaneously and so efficiently divert believers from the road that leads to life. Not even the best of human comen would have this ability. This is the work of a brilliant mind capable of spanning centuries and manipulating lives toward an unseen destruction that is simply beyond the scope of human ability to conceive. Sadly, though, this mastermind seems completely incapable of recognizing the utter futility of it all – he will lose and be destroyed in the end. Perhaps, the devil and the demonic simply are spiritually insane after all – but this only renders them all the more dangerous to us as they are far more committed to their cause than are we committed to the cause of serving and following Christ.

So why doesn't someone just walk into these "churches" and point out these deceptions? There are three main reasons.

- *God* is the one who has given the “church” over to deception. It is *God* who has allowed the “church” to go into its Babylonian captivity. *God* has allowed the tares, the sons of the devil, to remain in close proximity to His wheat, the sons of His kingdom. (Mt. 13:25, 38) *God* has placed all times and seasons under His own authority. (Acts 1:7) It is not any man’s place to forcibly expose to the public eye and start removing tares because of what they are – that will be an angel’s job. (Mt. 13:41) Though there will certainly and always be those who will speak the truth, as in this article, *God*, at the time this is written, has not yet, at least in the knowledge of this writer, declared today to be the end of the “church’s” Babylonian captivity. That day will come soon, but not yet.

- The “church” doesn’t want the truth. The “church” would resist having its best ear scratchers become unemployed. The “church’s” clergy is blind because both the leaders and the followers wish to be blind. Christ’s sheep hear His voice (Jn. 10:27) and the “church” long ago stopped listening to Him. The prostitute will never become the bride and reform is not even a thought in her mind.

- The “church” will persecute, oppress and perhaps even execute those who oppose their apostasy and deception. The Pharisees will again rise up in indignation if the truth were brought forth on any grand scale and they will seek to crucify anyone who dares to disturb their power and financial base. Anyone who speaks out against the “church” errors, deceptions and excesses should be prepared to pay a high price.

In spite of these three factors, *God* has been raising up around the world a small remnant who are independently being led to similar conclusions about the “church.” This growing number of “church” dissidents are sounding strikingly similar notes – too similar to be a coincidence. If these could ever learn to work together (and unlearn the disunity they were taught at “church”), these could be a significant voice in the world today. But because they are tainted with leftover vestiges of “church” and have not, in one way or another, fully submitted themselves to *God*’s method of maturing believers, disunity still prevails even among those who are being given revelation and insight about the “church” and its malpractices.

It is inevitable that the complete number of Christ’s redeemed people will stand with Him again in the true practice of *ekklesia* (the Greek word poorly rendered “church” – Rev. 14:1) just as it is inevitable that the end of the falling away from the faith, the apostasy, the “church,” will end about (probably exactly at!) the time that Christ returns. (2 Ths. 2:3) The call to purify ourselves of all filthiness of flesh and spirit and be a bride “glorious, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but rather holy and without blemish” (Eph. 5:27) is sounding louder than ever before. The time to reach out and share the love and grace of Christ with this dark and dying world is shorter than ever before.

Jesus warned, “And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved.” (Mt. 24:12-13) If we are to be saved, we must be among those who persevere in loving those around us. Paul wrote, “Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.

The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in licentiousness and lewdness, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.” (Rom. 13:10-14) This *is* the outworking of “the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” that we should press toward, the goal behind which stands the prize of eternal life with and in Christ Jesus. (Phlp. 3:14)

Anyone who hears the call of the Lord to “Come out and be separate” (2 Cor. 6:17-18, 1 Cor. 5:11, Rev. 18:4) can escape the Babylonian captivity of the “church” and proceed to “Mount Zion” to help build the true temple of Christ and God. All that is required is that we submit to the purifying work of the Spirit of holiness and truth and jettison all the deceptions we have learned at “church.” If we are not willing to embrace Christ’s way, truth and life, then we can only expect fiery judgment and strong delusion to be the outcome of our lives. (Heb. 10:26-27, 2 Ths. 2:11-12) Christ will not receive anyone into His kingdom who is of the prostitute, who is lawless or who is improperly attired for His wedding feast. (Mt. 22:11-12) He has paid the highest price to gain us as His possession and He will not be cheated by any mere man. Choose this day whom you will follow. Choose Him who is life.

Let he who has ears hear.

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