



Psalms 78:2-4

I will open my mouth in a parable, I will utter dark sayings of old... We will not conceal them.

Parables Bookshelf - Series 1.5.1

This issue of PARABLES BOOKSHELF introduces the book *The Road from Babylon to Zion*.

The book you will find in this issue was written in 2002. At that time I had been walking with the Father in very unusual ways for about two years. I say my walk was unusual in the sense that it was uncommon for this present hour. As one reads the New Testament, however, they will find that the manner in which I was living was very common among the early disciples of Christ.

In October of 1999, the Lord led me to leave my job as a computer

professional at a regional hospital and to trust Him for all the provision of my family. He instructed me to pursue a ministry of writing and Bible teaching full-time. This has resulted at the present time in 14 books, and hundreds of shorter teachings.

It is from this accumulation of teachings over the past eleven years that the pages of these newsletters are filled. This period of time in my life was very fruitful, though outwardly it was full of trials.

It is a blessing to be able to share with others from this wealth of

experience.

The experiences you are passing through at this time can also result in much good in your life, and in the life of others if you will seek the path of obedience to the Father.

It matters not where you are at, or how you arrived there. At any moment you can give your life fully to a pursuit of God. The moment you do your experiences will begin to result in spiritual fruit, first in your life, and then in the lives of others. As someone has said, "Bloom where you are planted."

Food for Thought

"God takes away the world, that the heart may cleave more to Him in sincerity."

Thomas Watson

"Not to be afflicted is a sign of weakness; for, therefore God imposeth no more on me, because he sees I can bear no more."

Joseph Hall

Scripture Memory

Proverbs 8:17

I love those who love me; And those who diligently seek me will find me.

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The Road from Babylon to Zion

Introduction

Babylon and Zion - These names represent two groups of people that the scriptures have much to speak about. One group of people has the appearance of being very impressive. Their industriousness is legend. Their constant and unceasing labor seeks to plan and to build and to enlarge themselves until their works reach the very habitation of Yahweh God. Yet with this Babylonian people, God is not pleased. He has rejected their righteousness as filthy rags. He has rejected their labor as being works of lawlessness. He has despised the offerings they have brought before Him.

This people is impressive and glorious in the eyes of man in the same way that the massive buildings of Herod's temple awed the disciples of Yahshua the Messiah. Yahshua tried to temper

For a time it has been the will of God that the people of Zion dwell in Babylon.

per His disciples' misplaced enthusiasm by telling them that not one stone would remain upon another of all that appeared so magnificent to their

eyes. Even so, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots, who has glorified herself and exalted herself in the eyes of all men, will be suddenly destroyed, and that with great finality.

There is another people whose outward appearance is not impressive. They are a people that follow the pattern of the One who was despised and rejected of men. They have no comely appearance that men should desire them, nor stately form that the flesh of man should be attracted to them. These people are not known for their industry, rather they are marked by their oddness. They do not fit into the systems of the world. They are outcasts and misfits and they dwell in wilderness places.

Consequently many consider them to have been smitten and stricken by God, yet these Overcomers are the apple of Yahweh's eye.

These people are not renowned for their building in wood and stone. Instead, they stand out because they have undergone a spiritual transformation. The things of the world have lost their luster in their sight. They do not work and plan and strive to accumulate the goods of a passing age. They walk as aliens and strangers in the land, seeking a city whose builder is God. A world that judges by external appearance sees nothing of value, nothing that impresses, nothing that demands a second look, in this people. Yet Yahweh God, who judges the heart, is captivated by these Overcomers, these citizens of Zion, for in them He sees the image of His only begotten Son taking shape.

For a time it has been the will of God that the people of Zion dwell in Babylon. In this land of captivity He commanded Zion to be faithful and to seek righteousness. As Zion dwelt in Babylon Yahweh tested Zion's heart. Would Zion be tempted by Babylon's delicate meats and awed by Babylon's external majesty? Would Zion become entangled by the affairs of this life, striving for that which perishes, or would she remain faithful to the One who chose her? Would Zion walk in the midst of a wicked and unbelieving people and remain true to her God?

The citizens of Babylon have hardly suspected that there was another people dwelling in their midst. Babylon has been focused on her own pursuits and endeavors and she has considered herself to be the chosen one of God. Babylon has continued to build and to enlarge her borders. She has continued to strive to attain to greater heights, and she has considered herself to be successful.

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On occasion Babylon would note some member of Zion that was not involved in the same pursuits and she would think it odd. At times she might even get annoyed that there were some who did not share the same values and goals as she. At times her annoyance would turn to rage when she came to understand that the citizens of Zion were not impressed by all that Babylon had built, but that they were rather appalled by it all.

At the end of this age, now six days since Adam (six thousand years), and two days (two thousand years) since Yahshua the Messiah was crucified and rose again, Yahweh is doing a work of separation. Even as Judah and Jerusalem were released from Babylon after seventy years of captivity and were invited to return to Zion, so the people of God, the Overcomers, are being called out of spiritual Babylon.

Revelation 18:4

I heard another voice from heaven, saying, "Come out of her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive of her plagues..."

Though those who are heeding the call may be a mere remnant of all that dwell in Babylon, yet they are a considerable people. Many are coming out. But this separation is not devoid of difficulties. For many, Babylon has been the only home they have known. Certainly this was true of those freed from Babylon so many years ago. In seventy years a whole generation had died and another had been raised entirely in a land of captivity. Although Babylon was a land of great idolatry and spiritual harlotry, it was also a land of great material wealth and prosperity. Many who had been born in this land, even the majority, chose not to leave when they were free to return to Zion. Their hearts had

grown attached to the things of the world. To travel the road to Zion meant hardship, and physical difficulty, and many dangers along the way. It was much easier to remain in the artificial security of a prosperous land, sleeping in a soft bed inside a house of luxury.

Yet many struggled with leaving simply because Babylon was all they knew. Babylon had truly been a mother to them. They had been raised in her, and Yahweh had told them to not seek to leave until the appointed time, but rather to dwell and prosper in the land and seek the welfare of their captors. Transitions are always difficult. It is hard to hear the Spirit tell us to leave a familiar place where we have once seen Him work, and to go to another place of which we know little. In this hour it is also greatly difficult for many to leave the sheltering arms of Babylon when they have known nothing else. Many are torn about leaving, especially when they see so many of those they have known saying that things are still fine in Babylon and that they have no intention of packing up and heeding the call to come out.

Many struggled with leaving simply because Babylon was all they knew.

Yahweh has foreshadowed many things in the pages of scripture. Those who are being called out of Babylon now can learn much from those who made the journey many years ago. Once one heeds the call and determines to come out, the first perils and difficulties have been passed, but more remain. When Ezra the priest made the journey from Babylon to Zion with those who went with him, we are told that the journey took four months and many perils lay along the way.

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Ezra 8:21-23, 31

Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God to seek from Him a safe journey for us, our little ones, and all our possessions. For I was ashamed to request from the king troops and horsemen to protect us from the enemy on the way, because we had said to the king, "The hand of our God is favorably disposed to all those who seek Him, but His power and His anger are against all those who forsake Him." So we fasted and sought our God concerning this matter, and He listened to our entreaty... Then we journeyed from the river Ahava on the twelfth of the first month to go to Jerusalem; and the hand of our God was over us, and He delivered us from the hand of the enemy and the ambushes by the way.

In the time I have been on this journey from Babylon to Zion I have encountered many ambushes along the way. The enemy seeks to de-

There is much confusion over the identification of Babylon...

feat those who would set their face toward Zion. If he cannot frighten them from taking this road, he will seek to waylay them and in some

means keep them from their destination. He would also seek to get these pilgrims to become wearied of the way and confused about their actual destination, to blur their vision of where they are going, that he might turn them back to what is familiar.

This book is written to encourage those at all stages of the journey: those who are just now hearing the call to come out and who are unsure of what they are to come out of; those who are torn at leaving all that is familiar to them; those who have begun the journey and who have been met by the ambushes of the enemy;

and even those whose foreheads are set like flint toward their destination and who have not looked to the right or to the left, but have been pressing ever onward.

My hope is that you will be both encouraged and forewarned of some of the pitfalls and ambushes along the way. As the saying goes, "To be forewarned is to be forearmed." May those who journey to Zion arrive at their intended end. May the citizens of Zion all rejoice together having overcome all and having received the approval of the One who has called them forth.

Babylon - Chapter 1

It is necessary at the beginning of this book to identify what Babylon is and what she is not. There is much confusion over the identification of Babylon, yet her identification is a very important matter. If Yahweh God is calling His people out of Babylon in this hour, (and He is), then His people must understand what they are being called out from.

Some have supposed that Babylon represents a country or nation of the earth that fits some characteristic attributed to her in scripture. For example, Babylon is spoken of as a land of trade where "the merchants of the earth have become rich by the wealth of her sensuality" (Revelation 18:3). She is further described in this way:

Revelation 18:11-13

"And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, because no one buys their cargoes any more -- cargoes of gold and silver and precious stones and pearls and fine linen and purple and silk and scarlet, and every kind

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of citron wood and every article of ivory and every article made from very costly wood and bronze and iron and marble, and cinnamon and spice and incense and perfume and frankincense and wine and olive oil and fine flour and wheat and cattle and sheep, and cargoes of horses and chariots and slaves and human lives... saying, "Woe, woe, the great city, she who was clothed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls; for in one hour such great wealth has been laid waste!" And every shipmaster and every passenger and sailor, and as many as make their living by the sea, stood at a distance, and were crying out as they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, "What city is like the great city?"

Some have supposed that America must represent Babylon since it is the greatest consumer nation in the world. Yet others have argued that Babylon is New York City due to the scripture's repeated use of the word "city." If this were true, then coming out of Babylon would mean that the people of God who reside in either America or New York City must depart from these places. If Babylon were merely describing a physical location then simply changing one's place of residency would fulfill the command to "come out of her, My people" (Revelation 18:4).

It is true that there is much in America and New York City that are typical of Babylon, and undoubtedly there is a judgment and plagues reserved for all such places who have been given great light and have chosen instead to walk in darkness. But Babylon is not referring specifically to America, nor to her "queen city."

Some have supposed that Babylon refers to the actual Babylon of the Old Testament. The ancient city lies in the country of Iraq, and al-

though it has been an uninhabited ruin for centuries, some have advanced the notion that Saddam Hussein is having Babylon rebuilt and that it will be populated once again. The ancient city is the site of much excavation and archaeological work today. But it will not be inhabited, nor will it rise to a glorious position such as she once knew in the world. The climate has changed. Bodies of water have dried up. What was once a fertile region is now a barren wasteland due to the judgment of Yahweh. Furthermore, we have Yahweh's word that the ancient city of Babylon will never be inhabited again.

Some have supposed that America must represent Babylon ...

Jeremiah 51:36, 37, 41-43, 61-64

Therefore thus says Yahweh, "Behold, I am going to plead your case and exact full vengeance for you; And I will dry up her sea and make her fountain dry. Babylon will become a heap of ruins, a haunt of jackals, an object of horror and hissing, without inhabitants... How Sheshak has been captured, and the praise of the whole earth been seized! How Babylon has become an object of horror among the nations! The sea has come up over Babylon; She has been engulfed with its tumultuous waves. Her cities have become an object of horror, a parched land and a desert, a land in which no man lives and through which no son of man passes... Then Jeremiah said to Seraiah, "As soon as you come to Babylon, then see that you read all these words aloud, and say, "You, O Yahweh, have promised concerning this place to cut it off, so that there will be nothing dwelling in it, whether man or beast, but it will be a perpetual desolation.' And as soon as you finish reading this scroll, you will tie a stone to it and throw it into the middle of the Euphrates, and say, "Just so shall Babylon sink down and not rise again because of the calamity that I am

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going to bring upon her; and they will become exhausted." Thus far are the words of Jeremiah.

People imagine many vain things, but these scriptures should be sufficient to let all know that the ancient city of Babylon will not rise again as some mystical phoenix from the desert to once more ascend to glory. Yahweh's judgment on ancient Babylon is final. Her ruins stand now as a somber warning against spiritual Babylon and her impending judgments and plagues. She too will be broken beyond remedy, never to rise again. We must conclude that the Babylon of Revelation is not speaking of the ancient city being rebuilt.

Untold numbers of saints have been martyred at the hands of Rome and the Catholic Church.

Others have supposed that Babylon represents Rome and the Roman Catholic Church, and there is much to support this argument. The following scripture reveals more about the character of Mystery Babylon.

Revelation 17:5, 6, 9

And on her forehead a name was written, a mystery, "BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Yahshua. Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits..."

Untold numbers of saints have been martyred at the hands of Rome and the Catholic Church. Through Rome's influence many heresies and pagan practices have been mixed in with the

worship of God until Christendom has become a corrupt mixture. Rome also sits on seven hills.

Many books and a myriad of sermons have gone forth proclaiming the Roman Catholic Church to be Babylon. Without a doubt there is a connection between Babylon and Rome, yet the Babylon of Revelation is more than the Roman Catholic Church. It is noted in the preceding scripture that Babylon is "the mother of harlots." Babylon has many daughters, and each one of these daughters is also Babylon. Some have argued quite convincingly that these daughters are the various denominations that populate Christendom today. Even within the denominations that have protested against the Roman Catholic Church (the Protestants), there is much of Rome left in them.

Entire books have been written to expose the false pagan practices that have become part and parcel of Christian practice today, both inside and outside of Rome. It is not just the Catholics that celebrate the Christ Mass on the historic date of the pagan festivals of Sol Invictus and Saturnalia. It is not just the Catholics that have kept the name and the date of the Spring fertility festival held in honor of the goddess Ishtar (Eostre, Astarte, Ashtoreth) which we know as Easter. It is not just the Catholics that have brought such devastation to the body of Christ by instituting the false divisions of clergy and laity. All of these things, and many more, are as typical of the harlot's daughters as they are true of the Great Harlot.

If we try to identify Babylon by her false practices, however, we will fail. These things are merely symptoms, and the outward trappings of Babylon. We must discover the root and the heart of Babylon to know how to truly come out of her. The saint could identify every false

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practice and every pagan influence of Babylon, and separate themselves from all such things, and still not have come out of her.

We are getting much closer to the center of things in looking at Mystery Babylon's association to the Roman Catholic Church and Protestant denominationalism. If these entities represent Babylon, the Great Harlot, and her daughters, then the call to come out of Babylon is a call to flee from Catholicism and all denominationalism. Yet there are those who have come out of these and they are not yet free of Babylon, for Babylon at its heart represents a spiritual principle.

Let us examine one more example of that which people are identifying as Babylon in this day. This last example is also related to Rome and her heresies. Many are identifying Babylon today by outward measures, by forms of worship, forms of assembly, practices and traditions. Many are looking back to the manner and practice of the apostles and how things have deviated since those first meetings of the early saints. Certainly there is value in discerning these matters, but returning to a "New Testament form" does not insure one's departure from Babylon, nor does holding to what is considered a deviation from the original pattern mean that one is still in Babylon.

By way of illustrating what I am speaking about, some say that home churches are the model that was portrayed in the New Testament and that large gatherings and meetings in buildings dedicated to the gathering of the saints (church buildings) is a Babylonian device and it should be avoided. The truth, however, is that there are saints meeting in homes who are indistinguishable from those who meet in church buildings. The only difference is one of form. The true distinction between

Babylon and Zion is one of the heart, and it cannot be measured or quantified or described and set forth by examining traditions, practices, or forms.

This is not to say that these things are unimportant, but leaving a fellowship of believers who meet in a church building to join others who meet in someone's home is not to be mistaken as journeying from Babylon to Zion. Neither is leaving a church that has pastors and deacons to go to a church that has a five-fold ministry of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. Nor is leaving a body that meets on Sunday to join a group that meets on the traditional Sabbath which began at sundown on Friday. Nor is leaving a group that uses the names and titles God, Lord and Jesus to join a group that uses the names and titles Elohim, Yahweh, and Yahshua.

Babylon at its heart represents a spiritual principle.

All of these matters should be examined, and we should ask the Father to grant us wisdom and understanding in them all, but these things do not mark the boundaries of Babylon and Zion. The Pharisees sought to conform to the letter of the Law and they had an appearance of righteousness, but Yahshua testified of them that inwardly they were full of dead men's bones. Even so, we can faithfully reproduce New Testament forms to the best of our understanding and still be considered citizens of Babylon. We should consider our Savior's words:

Matthew 7:21-23

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who

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does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to Me on that day, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?" And then I will declare to them, "I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS."

In this scripture we see a people who confess Yahshua as Lord and they are doing the very same activities that He did. Yahshua prophesied and so did they. Yahshua cast out demons and so did they. Yahshua performed miracles and so did they. Yet we have Yahshua's very pointed pronouncement, "Depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness."

It is not enough to conform to Christ in form, or even in action. We must have an internal

We see Babylon and Zion in the two brothers Cain and Abel.

conformity. Yahshua lived to do the will of the Father, and so must we. Yahshua never performed any of the activities mentioned of His own initiative.

He only did what the Father commanded Him to do. Yahshua never walked in lawlessness, He was every moment surrendered to the governmental will of His Father in heaven.

There are many home churches today that are doing much of their own initiative. There are many fellowships that eschew pagan practices and that name the name of Yahweh and Yahshua, yet they are full of their own plans and ambitions. There are many local bodies of believers that have five-fold ministers and who seek to pattern themselves after New Testament forms, but they are still living out of the soul of man and making decisions apart from

the Spirit of God.

Leaving Babylon requires much more than simply changing forms and practices that are outwardly observable. Undoubtedly, the people of Zion will stand out from the citizens of Babylon in numerous external ways, but the real difference is inward. To leave Babylon one must be circumcised in the heart. Babylon must be removed from one's desires and passions before one can journey out from Babylon.

Babylon and Zion have actually existed side by side throughout the entire history of the Scriptures. We see Babylon and Zion in the two brothers Cain and Abel. Both men brought an offering to Yahweh. Cain brought of the fruit of the earth, while Abel brought forth of the firstlings of his flock with their fat portions. We are told that God had regard for Abel's offering, but not for Cain's.

What was the difference between Cain's offering and Abel's that God would regard one and not the other? I have heard many vain things preached regarding this story, many saying that Cain did not bring the best of the fruit of the ground while Abel brought the best of the flock. But the scriptures do not say that Cain brought less than the best of what he had grown. I believe that he did indeed bring the very best of his produce from the ground. Why then did God despise Cain's offering?

The reason has to do with what the offerings represent. We can easily see that Abel's offering of the firstlings of his flock was in keeping with the offerings that Yahweh ordained should be brought before Him. The firstlings of the flock represent the Lamb who would be slain for the sins of the world, and we are told

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that “without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin” (Hebrews 9:22). Abel’s offering found acceptance with God because it looked forward in faith to that spotless Lamb that would one day cleanse the world from all guilt and condemnation. The scriptures reveal that it was because of this faith that Abel’s offering was acceptable in God’s sight.

Hebrews 11:4

By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous...

Cain, however, made an offering based upon his own works that did not look to the future atonement of Yahshua. After Adam sinned, the ground was cursed and produce came forth by the sweat of man’s brow. It was the fruit of his own sweat and labor that Cain presented to God as an offering and God was not impressed. Babylon always seeks to ascend to God through its own works and to thereby find acceptance and approval. Cain made an offering of the best that he had, and I am certain he was proud of the quality and quantity of the fruit. He thought, “Certainly God will have regard for my offering”, but God did not. By works of the flesh no man will be justified before God. Justification is only by faith in Yahshua and HIS FINISHED WORK.

This is actually the key distinction between Babylon and Zion. Babylon initiates great works and then asks God to bless them. Babylon has the appearance of great industriousness and her progress seems evident to all. But Babylon’s works are the works of man. Babylon may be doing the same kind of works that Yahshua performed, but she is doing them as she sees fit, not by command of God. Babylon is not Spirit directed, she is soul directed.

The soul of man devises many plans that seem noble and right and which find the approval of others. As we saw earlier, some of these activities include prophesying, casting out demons, and performing miracles. These activities also include feeding the hungry, proclaiming the gospel, building ministries with noble sounding purposes, and the list could go on and on.

*Babylon looks good
on the outside.*

The majority of the saints have been taught to judge things according to sight. If they observe a man casting out a demon they judge such a one to be righteous and holy and pleasing to God. If they see a person performing an authentic miracle they conclude that this person certainly bears the stamp of God’s approval. If they see a person operating a charity to care for the poor, they will also assume that it must certainly be of God. Yet Yahshua said that “many” would come to Him in the day of judgment and proclaim that they did such things in His name, but He will deny even knowing them.

This is a large part of the trouble of coming out of Babylon: Babylon looks good on the outside. This is the same struggle that those who followed Messiah faced when He said, “Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the Scribes and the Pharisees, you can in no wise enter the Kingdom of Heaven.” The Pharisees looked good. They prayed. They fasted. They tithed of all their substance. They meticulously kept the Law... Yet, they were relying on their own works to gain approval before a holy God.

Yahshua told the story of the Pharisee who stood proudly in the Temple and looked with

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disdain at the tax collector who was on his face before God. The Pharisee pompously prayed, "I thank you God that I am not like this sinner." Yet Yahshua said the sinner went home JUSTIFIED while the Pharisee found no regard before God. The sinner threw himself on the mercy of God, offering no works, making no bargains, pledging no promises, trusting wholly to the character of God to deliver him. He simply asked for mercy and he believed God would be merciful.

The paradox today is that it is often the most righteous looking people who are the chief citizens of Babylon for they are working hard to find approval before God. They are striving laboriously to appear

It is often the most righteous looking people who are the chief citizens of Babylon...

righteous. Many a minister has spent his entire life working to find the approval of God and of men, and he has yoked the people who

follow him to the same burden of works. They may accomplish many remarkable things, but before God it is all striving and dead works for they are not born out of faith in the completed work of Christ. As the Galatians who began in faith and then tried to continue in works, such ones have become severed from Christ and He has become altogether worthless to them.

Looking at a church externally, how can you tell which ones are of Babylon and which are of Zion? They may both be performing the same activities, but one body is striving to be judged as righteous, while the other is resting in the knowledge that in Christ, Yahshua the Messiah, they are already righteous. One is seeking to overcome the flesh, the world and the Devil by imitating the works of Christ, the other realizes that Christ has already overcome all and they are in Christ and He is in them. One body is expending their very life to be approved be-

fore God, and the other proclaims that they have died and their life has been hidden with God in Christ Jesus, Yahshua the Messiah.

These are things that are not easily quantified and observable, but Babylon is living life from a point of striving to be approved before God and man while Zion is resting in the life of the Son. Zion is a people of faith.

Perhaps nowhere is this identity of Babylon seen more clearly than in the judgment that was brought upon Judah and Jerusalem when they were given over into the hands of ancient Babylon. The duration of Judah's and Jerusalem's captivity was prophesied to be seventy years. This time period was arrived at based on the number of years that they had failed to let the land know its sabbath rests.

Every seven years Israel was commanded to not till the land, nor plant, nor harvest. They were to let the land enjoy a sabbath, an annual rest. They should have taken a lesson from Cain. "Give it a rest Cain. God doesn't want your sweat and your labor. He wants your faith." Even so, the people of Israel were commanded to demonstrate the principle of rest and live by faith every seventh year. They were to trust God to provide everything they needed. But man has a problem with faith. Man wants to trust in his own works to carry him through.

Judah and Jerusalem had not given the land a rest in 490 years. This means the land had missed seventy of its sabbaths. As a judgment against their lack of faith Yahweh had the people carried away into captivity and for seventy years the land knew rest. For seventy years there was no one to till and to plant and to harvest.

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II Chronicles 36:20-21

Those who had escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon; and they were servants to him and to his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfill the word of Yahweh by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its sabbaths. All the days of its desolation it kept sabbath until seventy years were complete.

This is the difference between Babylon and Zion. Babylon is a land of works where man must accomplish every task and fulfill every mandate. Babylon knows nothing of rest and faith. Oh yes, Babylon speaks very much about faith, but it is a faith that is rooted in man's ability. Babylon's faith is founded upon man's ability to envision some end and to see it through. Babylon is built with blueprints, and planning sessions, and organization, and fund drives, and pep rallies, and the sweat of untold men and women. This is why when all is said and done and some project has come to completion, the people of Babylon feel justified to stand and proclaim:

Daniel 4:30

"Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built... by the might of my power...?"

Zion, however, is not seeking to build anything of her own will and initiative. Zion is a people of faith. Zion knows that salvation is of the Lord, as is sanctification, and as is glorification. Zion does not labor to build a city, for she seeks a city not built with hands whose builder and maker is not man, but God. Zion does not seek to work for the approval of Yahweh, she works because she is approved by Yahweh.

Zion is a city of rest. This does not mean that

those who are of Zion are doing nothing, it means that they are doing nothing of their own initiative. They are doing those works that God prepared beforehand for them. They are not dreaming up their own works, nor are they stretching out their hands to labor in fields to which they have not been sent. Austin Sparks made this very enlightening comment:

Thus it was that we were turned in that dark hour to Romans chapter six, and, almost as though He spoke in audible language, the Lord said: 'When I died, you died. When I went to the Cross I not only took your sins, but I took you. When I took you, I not only took you as the sinner that you might regard yourself to be, but I took you as being all that you are by nature; your good (?) as your bad; your abilities as well as your disabilities; yes, every resource of yours. I took you as a "worker," a "preacher," an "organizer!" My Cross means that not even for Me can you be or do anything out from yourself, but if there is to be anything at all it must be out from Me, and that means a life of absolute dependence and faith.'

Babylon is a land of works where man must accomplish every task and fulfill every mandate.

At this point, therefore, we awoke to the fundamental principle of our Lord's own life while here, and it became the law of everything for us from that time. That principle was: "nothing of (out from) Himself," but "all things of (out from) God."

The Son can do nothing of (out from) Himself, but what He seeth the Father doing: for what things soever He doeth, then the Son also doeth in like manner' (John 5:19).

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*"I can of Myself do nothing: as I hear I judge"
(John 5:30).*

"My teaching is not Mine, but His that sent Me" (John 7:16).

We saw that this explains so many strange and - naturally - perplexing things in His behavior: acting and refusing to act; going and refusing to go; speaking and refusing to

Babylon's works are birthed in the mind, will, and emotions of man.

Later, we came to see that this is the whole meaning of life in the Spirit, and that it is an altogether different life from the natural ways of men,

even of Christian men. At the time of this seeing, it was a matter of this law becoming basic, absolute, and ultimate, and it was something totally different from what had been in all our ideas and activities in Christian life and work.

[End Quote]

Yes, those who are of Zion are to be emptied of self, both that which they consider bad as well as that which they consider good. Zion is to live out the words of Paul:

Galatians 2:20

"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me."

Babylon seeks to perform godly works through human industry and effort. Babylon asks the question, "What Would Jesus Do?" and then it

tries to perform that action in the power of sinful flesh. Zion, however, sees self as crucified with Christ and Christ now living in and through them. As one brother has stated, Zion says, "Watch What Jesus Does!"

We have seen that Judah and Jerusalem were given over to Babylonian captivity until the land could receive its seventy sabbaths that it had been denied. The issue of rest is the most critical distinction between these two cities. By faith in the work of Messiah Zion enters into rest. Due to unbelief Babylon endures ceaseless striving and fails to enter into the sabbath rest of God. Babylon's works are birthed in the mind, will, and emotions of man. Many of these works appear noble and some are even supernatural in nature. But due to the corrupted source from which they arise all such works are rejected by God. Many of the works of Babylon are in direct opposition to Zion and her citizens.

Yahshua said the day would come when people would kill His disciples and think they were doing God a favor. Such is the end result of the polluted well that Babylon drinks from. In the name of God and His Christ millions of saints have been martyred in the past 2,000 years. This is the work of Babylon. What a shock is in store for these who will stand before Yahshua and say, "Did we not kill the infidels and heretics in Your name?" He will reply, "When you did it to the least of these My brethren, you did it unto Me."

Perhaps now you can see more clearly why Zion and Babylon cannot be identified merely by external measurements. Tares and wheat look much alike until they bear fruit. I know some would like to have a rule of thumb to be able to tell Babylon apart from Zion. Such rules are hard to come by, but one indicator I will

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give. Zion is a people of faith, while Babylon walks by sight and reason.

Example after example could be given of personal encounters I have experienced with ministers and churches who would not walk by faith. When the test comes then hearts are exposed.

Yahweh will press His people forward into realms of faith without exception. We are told that “without faith it is impossible to please God” (Hebrews 11:6). The people of Zion will go forward in faith “not loving their lives unto the death” while Babylon will shrink back.

Yes, there are many other things which characterize Babylon: her sensuality, her pride, her idolatry, her love of the world and the things in it; her persecution of the saints; her pagan practices; her heresies; her false forms and traditions, but all of these are the result of her lack of faith in Yahshua and her failure to enter into rest. This is the land that the people of God are being directed to come out from.

Babylon is many places. Babylon is America and New York City. Babylon is the Roman Catholic Church and her many denominational daughters. Babylon is all of these and more. The call to come out will impact each child of God in different ways, but the Spirit will lead all who have ears to hear.

Like Abraham who left Ur of the Chaldees to go to a land of promise he had never seen, so too are many today being called out in this hour. Abraham had to leave family and friends behind, and so too must many of those today. When Yahweh calls, we dare not disobey. We must gladly entrust ourselves into His care. It

is a good and a prosperous land set before us. Yahweh’s delight is in the people of Zion. As Moses said to the people of Israel when they left another land of captivity:

Deuteronomy 6:23

He brought us out from there in order to bring us in, to give us the land which He had sworn to our fathers.

The land before us is Yahweh Himself. He is our inheritance and our portion in the land. The heritage of Zion is beautiful and lovely beyond compare. May the way before you be made plain and may you know His presence as you journey along the way.

Coming Out - Chapter 2

There is no doubt that the majority of saints today began their Christian experience in Babylon. This does not imply that all these saints were Babylon, nor walking according to Babylonish principles, for Yahweh has always had a people of faith. But for a season it seemed good to Yahweh to allow His people to dwell in Babylon, and in this place they were to seek to prosper in spirit, soul, and body and to seek the welfare of those they dwelt among.

Zion is a people of faith...

Jeremiah 29:1, 4-7

Now these are the words of the letter which Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the rest of the elders of the exile, the priests, the prophets and all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusa-

The Road from Babylon to Zion

lem to Babylon... "Thus says Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon, Build houses and live in them; and plant gardens and eat their produce. Take wives and become the fathers of sons and daughters, and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; and multiply there and do not decrease. Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to Yahweh on its behalf; for in its welfare you will have welfare."

In the same way, many of the citizens of Zion today have been dwelling in Babylon, and the Spirit of God has led them to walk in integrity and faithfulness while there. They have been instructed to seek the welfare of the people they have dwelt among, and this they have done. In whatever task was assigned to them they have sought to perform their duty with great faithfulness that they might please the One who called them. During this time, Babylon has benefitted greatly from the presence of the Overcomers who dwelt in her midst.

Many of the citizens of Zion today have been dwelling in Babylon...

But the time has come when Yahweh has determined that His people should come out of Babylon that He might establish a pure and holy people, and that He might judge the sins of Babylon. For these two reasons His Spirit cries out:

Revelation 18:4-5

Come out of her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive of her plagues; for her sins have piled up as high as

heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.

When one hears the call to come out of Babylon, it would be a serious mistake to choose to delay or neglect the call. However, not all come out of Babylon at the same time. There were actually a number of pilgrimages from Babylon to Zion recorded in scripture. One such pilgrimage was attended by Nehemiah and Zerubbabel and the number who journeyed at this time was 42,360, along with 7,337 servants. When they arrived in Jerusalem they began to rebuild the temple and they made such progress as to get the foundation laid. However, due to the obstruction of the enemies of God, the people ceased building the temple and for fourteen years no work was done. After fourteen years Yahweh sent prophets to encourage the people to finish the building of the temple, and it was at that time completed.

After this, Ezra the priest made a pilgrimage to Zion and he took many people with him, and he brought the rest of the Temple furnishings that had been carried off into Babylon under King Nebuchadnezzar. Symbolically, the removal of all the Temple utensils and implements from Babylon represents the cessation of Yahweh's working among the people of Babylon. No longer would Yahweh bless Babylon because of Zion dwelling among her, for Zion was being removed and so were the blessings of God. Hereafter Babylon would know the plagues and judgments of God.

So it is with Mystery Babylon today. Zion is being called out of her midst, and as Zion leaves, so leave the blessings of God. Judgments are soon to come upon Babylon and it would be tragic to still be found in her midst. Yet, the door is still open for those who are desirous to

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leave Babylon, and Zion should not act with disdain toward those who will flee, even should they flee at the last moment as from a burning house.

Yahweh has many ways of getting Zion's attention and bringing her to this journey out of Babylon. Some are like Daniel who was reading in the scriptures when the Spirit opened his eyes to understand that the time had come for the captivity of Babylon to be ended. In this hour many are having their eyes opened and they are hearing the call to come out of Babylon, and they are responding in faith and obedience.

Others are like unto Lot whom the angels took by the hand and led out of Sodom along with his family. Some are being literally thrust out of Babylon by the mercy of Yahweh. Some have become so attached to this place of familiarity that they would not willingly leave. They are torn in their emotions; their understanding of what God is doing is still very cloudy, and their will is not strong enough to bring them to come out, so Yahweh is bringing them out under strong coercion. Indeed, the citizens of Babylon are the instrument of Yahweh in many such instances as they speak to the citizens of Zion and tell them that they are no longer welcome in their midst. Many are being thrust outside the camp of Babylon, and it is in this way that they begin their pilgrimage.

Whatever the means used, Yahweh is calling His people out. The parting can be most grievous as family and friends and all that is familiar is left behind. Ahead is much uncertainty and many trials and dangers, but Yahweh goes with Zion to bring her in to the place He has prepared for her.

I have corresponded with many of the saints of God and have learned that my own experience is not unusual. As a minister, the Father was directing me to urge those people I was among to walk in faith. Various trials and tests were sent by the hand of God, particularly in the areas of health and finances, in order to elicit from the people a response of faith. My own family knew great trials, and although it was with fear and trembling, we stood firm in faith and we saw the salvation of God. Yet the other ministers whom the Father had placed me among could only see the giants and the walled cities. They saw themselves as grasshoppers in comparison to the giants in the land and great fear gripped them.

Yahweh is calling His people out.

These ministers became angered that I was urging them to walk in faith and they began to rail against me. I was accused of being prideful and arrogant for thinking I had heard God speak when the rest of them denied that such a walk of faith was being demanded of them. But this is ever the response of those who have not the faith to face the giants before them. In a similar way David's elder brother Eliab accused him of mischief, pride and unfaithfulness because David was willing to face Goliath when all others were hiding behind rocks. In the same way the people of Israel picked up stones to hurl at Caleb and Joshua for urging them to trust Yahweh and go in and take possession of the good land before them.

Yahweh showed me that these ministers would eventually put me out of their midst. As I was embroiled in the midst of this controversy a book arrived that I had not even ordered, and it was from a friend. It was entitled "The Har-

The Road from Babylon to Zion

lot Church” and the subtitle said “Come out of her My people...” The Spirit spoke to me with great clarity and said that a separation was coming and that I would be put out of the church. He said I was not to resist this separation for it was of Him. It happened just as He said.

Many are the citizens of Zion who are finding themselves forced outside the camp of mainline Christianity in this hour. It is often

It is often with sorrow and great pain that the separation comes.

with sorrow and great pain that the separation comes. How painful it is to have brothers and sisters pick up rocks to stone us with. With sorrow we find

that those we once broke bread with no longer will make room for us at the table. But we have this promise:

Isaiah 35:10

And the ransomed of Yahweh will return and come with joyful shouting to Zion, with everlasting joy upon their heads. They will find gladness and joy,

And sorrow and sighing will flee away.

Even if Zion finds herself mistreated and rejected and persecuted by saints whose hearts are enslaved to Babylon, she is not to despise or become embittered toward them. Instead she is to have the heart of Yahshua who when being crucified said, “Father, forgive them. They know not what they do.”

The Overcomers of Zion should realize that through their faithfulness and obedience Yahshua will bring deliverance and salvation to many who remain in captivity. Chip Brogden

gives us these insights:

In the Book of Revelation we find that the Lord is looking among the defeated Church for overcomers who will demonstrate the victory of Christ. Overcomers are not a super-spiritual elite class, they are simply those who rise up and fulfill God's original intent for the Church as a whole. They are the remnant which stand for God's Will and God's Kingdom on behalf of the entire Church. They are living the normal Christian life, whereas the others are living far below their potential. Everyone who is born of God overcomes the world: it is there for anyone, not for a select few. The reality, however, is only a few will actually count the cost, lay down their lives, and live as Overcomers.

[End Quote]

The obedience of the remnant will in the end result in blessing to the entire creation, including those in Babylon who have persecuted the Overcomers. We should not think this to be odd for this is the pattern of Christ.

Romans 5:8, 10

But God commends his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us... For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

Yahshua's death resulted in the blessing of those who were His enemies, even you and I. Should not the obedience of Zion also result in blessing to those who are her enemies? Those who are of Zion must keep in mind that theirs is not a ministry of condemnation, but of reconciliation. In coming out of Babylon, Zion's

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obedience will result in the reconciliation of many.

There is much in Babylon that is greatly displeasing to the Father, and much is being said and written about these things. This is natural and right for light exposes darkness. However, in exposing darkness our heart's intent should be to bring people to the light, not to condemn them in their darkness.

John 3:17

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

II Corinthians 5:18-20

Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

Zion must come out of Babylon. She does so to bring about the reconciliation of the entire creation. This is the glorious result of Zion's obedience.

*Zion must come out of
Babylon.*

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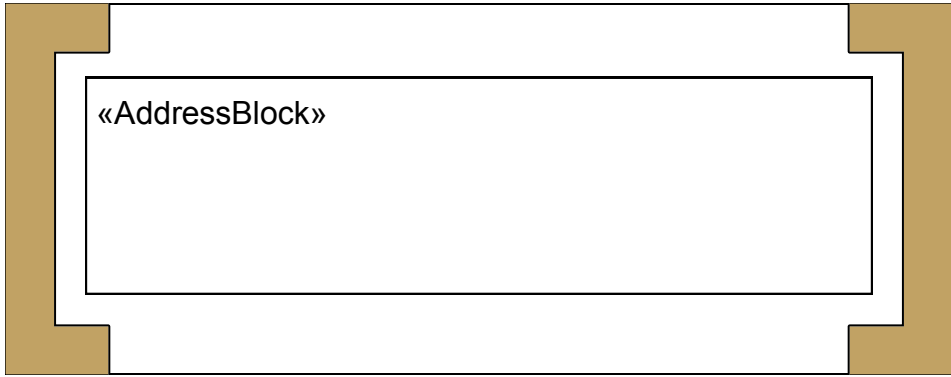
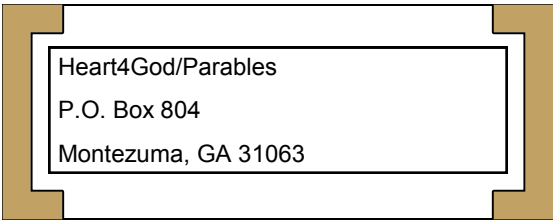
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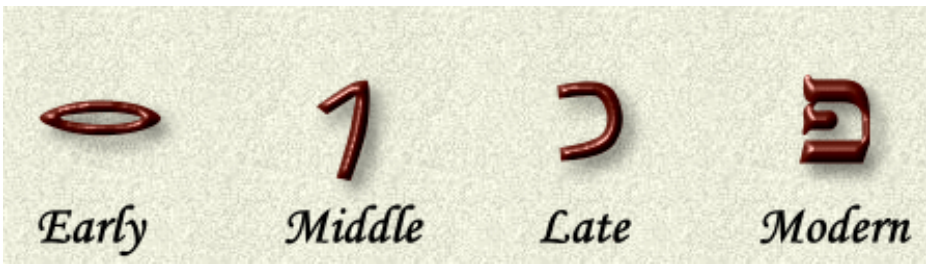
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PARABLES PRECEPT—The Hebrew Alphabet



(Image source: Ancient Hebrew Resource Center's Website)

Pictured above is the Hebrew letter Pey. The Semitic word *Pey* means “mouth.”


The early “Paleo-Hebrew” representation of the letter Pey, varied from one region to another. The image above, looking like an open mouth, is derived from a South Arabian depiction of the letter Pey. Jeff Benner in his book *The Ancient Hebrew Lexi-*

con of the Bible, chose this particular representation because it most closely resembles a mouth. Others have also chosen it as the correct pictograph due to its appearance as a mouth.

You can see that there is very little relationship between the Early depiction chosen and the Middle, Late and Modern depictions that were common for this letter.

As people have studied the an-

cient Hebrew aleph-bet, they have looked for various levels of meaning. Some have noted that this letter representing the mouth, follows the letter Ayin that represents the eye. They have suggested that this establishes the order of seeing, or understanding, before speaking.

Ayin, Pey - 

If we speak before we have understanding, our words are worthless. A man should labor to gain understanding and only then open his mouth to speak.

There are many such relationships that people have observed from the Hebrew aleph-bet, and they can make a very interesting study.