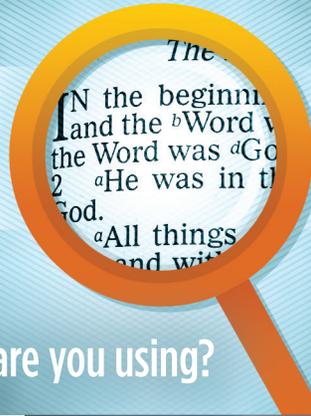


BIBLE OPTICS



What lens are you using?

The WORD or the world?

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From the Editor

We live in an extraordinary time. Information sizzles across the shiny glass we carry in our pockets faster than we have time to understand it. Never before has information—both true and false—been so readily available. Information overload can confuse even the most stalwart among us.

The Bible predicts such a time, when “knowledge will increase” (Daniel 12:4) and “lawlessness will abound” (Matthew 24:12). As a result, the “love of many will grow cold” (Matthew 24:12).

The Bible also tell us that in this time of abundance—of information and sin—God will issue an urgent warning to flee the religious structure and confused ideology that have perpetuated the confusion for centuries.

“Babylon is fallen, fallen... who made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication...” (Revelation 14:8).

Just what is God telling us? Come along as we unpack His loving warning in the Second Angel’s Message and discover its meaning for today. It is time to know the Truth!



Marshall McKenzie | Editor
Church Growth Director, KTYN Conference

A Loving Father Calls

Sometimes God’s love sounds a lot like discipline. In Revelation, God sends a message that might be interpreted as harsh, but it is actually a shout of love.

I was a stubborn kid. I was constantly distracted and sometimes didn’t listen. I liked to read, though, and I could tear through 600 pages in mere days by the time I was in middle school. On one particularly stubborn day, I took a book outside and found a comfy place on the sun-warmed driveway to read. I lay on the ground, turned my book up to the sky, and disregarded the darkening day; a storm was rolling in.

The Strike

My father began to call my sister and me to come inside. She quickly (and responsibly) left the pool and I (wisely) pulled my book closer to my face to block out the warnings. The storm swirled overhead and my father yelled louder, his concern for me growing. He said if I didn’t come inside, I’d be struck by lightning. I laughed it off, mad at him for ruining a perfectly fine read in the rain, and kept on ignoring his pleas and devouring the chapter. My dad grew angry, but he never came out to force me inside. He wanted me safe; I didn’t want to hear him.

AND THERE FOLLOWED ANOTHER ANGEL, SAYING, BABYLON IS FALLEN, IS FALLEN, THAT GREAT CITY, BECAUSE SHE MADE ALL NATIONS DRINK OF THE WINE OF THE WRATH OF HER FORNICATION.

REVELATION 14:8

Not five minutes later, the tallest tree in our yard exploded ten feet from where I lay. It had been struck by lightning! I shot up from the driveway, blinded by tree dust and debris. Stunned, deafened by the strike, smoke in my nose, and fear in my heart, I ran inside with my book and authority complex abandoned.

My dad was there to greet me at the door, both of us beyond startled. He checked me over, his frustration with me fading into relief. He was just glad I was okay. When we finally went to examine the tree after the last of the storm, we found a gaping burnt wound. That tree may have saved my life. Who knows? My dad and I unanimously decided we were glad it was the tree and not me, and that I should have chosen to hear my dad and come out of the storm.

The Voice of God or the Sound of Thunder?

There's a story I remember reading in John chapter 12 after our tree was struck in the storm. Jesus had been speaking to a crowd about the truest form of love this world has seen, his death and sacrifice, and how God would give us eternal life. In verse 28, God Himself speaks from heaven, but "the crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him". To half of the crowd, the actual voice of God sounded like noise, the meaning of the words lost on them, like my loving dad's warnings were lost on me.

A Warning of Love

God wants us safe just like my dad wanted me safe from the storm. He wants us with Him, now and in Heaven. While the entire Bible presents God as a loving parent calling His children to safety, in the Second Angel's message of Revelation 14:8 and 18:1-5, God calls His people out of the city of Babylon and its associations. In this issue, we will discuss what Babylon means to God in Revelation.

Babylon was a historical empire, but it has a prophetic meaning that materializes in the shape of a world-dominating and disinforming power. Prophetically, it is a fallen religious system whose ideology distorts the truth while presenting itself as the pride of the Earth. We'll look at that definition in "Babylon, Not so Great After All" (page 3).

Babylon's meaning for our lives goes far beyond its history. Theologically, Babylon represents a people, a place, a world, and a life that isn't God's. It is a way of thinking that embodies a false sense of security just like the one I had while reading my book in a thunderstorm.

Symbolically, we all have many forms of "Babylon" in our lives that distract us from hearing God's voice, causing us to hear Him as thunder. Just like my dad calling me out of the storm, God lovingly warns us to flee the confusion and corruption of Babylon. If He didn't love us, He wouldn't call: "Come out of her my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues (Revelation 18:4)".

In all of its forms, "Babylon" creates such a barrier from safety--from eternal life--that God begs His people to separate ourselves from it before it's too late.

What is Our Recourse?

A life that does not listen to God and depart from the many forms of Babylon has the same power as the storm that could have taken my life. In the "storm" of 2021 and the years left on Earth's odometer, there are so many things in our world that sound more and more like thunder, and less and less like God. We have to ask ourselves: "What do I want to hear?" Thunder? Or the calls of our loving Father?

By Megan Ehrhardt



BABYLON, NOT SO GREAT AFTER ALL

Babylon. Both the Bible and secular history call it one of the greatest empires of all time. Yet the Bible also uses Babylon to represent something so wicked that God's followers must flee it at the end of time. What does Babylon represent and why does God issue such a stern warning against it? To find out we must journey back to ancient Babylon and its most famous ruler.

King Nebuchadnezzar ruled over a territory stretching from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean Sea. The capital city spanned some 200 square miles. Its buildings were lavishly decorated with gold and its thick walls impenetrable. The mighty Euphrates River flowed through its center providing an inexhaustible water supply. It was home to one of the Seven Wonders of the World—The Hanging Gardens of Babylon.

One day king Nebuchadnezzar proudly boasted, “Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?” (Daniel 4:30).

These words of the ancient king epitomize the selfish spirit of Babylon, a kingdom built for the glory and honor of man. Nebuchadnezzar even fancied himself a god and forced the inhabitants of Babylon to bow to a golden image representing him and his kingdom (Daniel 3).

These very same principles are seen in spiritual Babylon and we are warned against them by the second angel's message, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication” (Revelation 14:8).

This is a message of warning, given in love, by God.

It is worthy of a thorough investigation.

Identifying Babylon

We first encounter Babylon in the book of Genesis. Its inhabitants demonstrated the same proud spirit as Nebuchadnezzar did 1700 years later. The people went directly against God's command to fill the earth (Genesis 9:1) by congregating in one place to build “a tower whose top is in the heavens” so they could “make a name” for themselves (Genesis 11:4).

The principles on which physical and spiritual Babylon are founded are completely contrary to the principles of the kingdom of God. This is because the true king of Babylon is Satan (Isaiah 14:4, 12–14). His rejection of the law of God is what led to his fall from heaven and will bring about his ultimate destruction. It is the same with his kingdom of Babylon on earth.

The physical kingdom of Babylon no longer exists but its spiritual successor does. Babylonian religion and culture influenced both the Greeks and the Romans. The early Christians referred to the Roman empire as “Babylon.” We find evidence of this in the first epistle of Peter (1 Peter 5:13).

The early church developed a thirst for power and worldly approval. It began to seek power through the authority of the Roman government. In AD 538, Emperor Justinian gave the church of Rome the power and authority to enforce its religion upon the masses. This transfer of power began the 1260 years of papal supremacy foretold in Bible prophecy (Daniel 7:25; 12:7; Revelation 11:2, 3; 12:6, 14; 13:5).

History tells us that the church operated by the Babylonian principles of coercion and force. She “made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.” What we know as the Roman Catholic church is the spiritual descendant of Babylon and the Roman empire.

“THE LAST MESSAGE OF MERCY TO BE GIVEN TO THE WORLD IS A REVELATION OF HIS CHARACTER OF LOVE. THE CHILDREN OF GOD ARE TO MANIFEST HIS GLORY. IN THEIR OWN LIFE AND CHARACTER THEY ARE TO REVEAL WHAT THE GRACE OF GOD HAS DONE FOR THEM”

ELLEN G. WHITE, CHRIST'S OBJECT LESSONS, PP. 415, 416.

When Pope Pius VI was captured in 1798 the Catholic church lost its secular power and could no longer force its corrupt religion on others. This will soon change and the papacy will once again attempt to set up “the kingdom of God” on earth (We’ll look more closely at this when examining the third angel’s message next month).

Come Out of Her My People

Over the centuries, the corrupt church chose to rely on the power of the secular government and not the Spirit of God. In pursuit of worldly honor and power, error was added to error and soon the pure apostolic church was hardly recognizable. She had become a “fallen” religious system.

The Bible calls the Roman Catholic church the “Mother of Harlots” (Revelation 17:5, 6) telling us that she will foster other churches like herself. The Protestant churches are her daughters who continue to cling to the errors of Rome. Let us remember that it is the Catholic church system that is Babylon, not the individuals in it. It is the Protestant church organizations and not the people in them that make up the daughters. God has true-hearted followers among these groups, hence the call to “come out of her my people” (Revelation 18:4).

From One Kingdom to Another

In response to Nebuchadnezzar’s boasting over his kingdom, God decreed “the kingdom has departed from you!” (Daniel 4:31). Physical Babylon crumbled long ago and the fate of spiritual Babylon and its ruler was sealed at the Cross. The corrupt religious systems of the world and Satan, their mastermind, will soon be destroyed (Ezekiel 28:18).

God is working through the Seventh-day Adventist church to restore the apostolic faith. The question we must ask ourselves is—Are we living it? No one is going to answer the call to come out of Babylon if they don’t see Jesus in us. We must present an attractive alternative to Babylon in a loving Christ-like manner. Souls will be won to God’s kingdom as we exemplify its principles in our lives. Which principles are you living in your life?

Principles of the Kingdom of Babylon:

Pride
Selfishness
Force
Lies

Principles of the Kingdom of Heaven:

Meekness
Love
Freedom
Truth

Consider these inspired words: “The last message of mercy to be given to the world is a revelation of His character of love. The children of God are to manifest His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them” (Ellen G. White, Christ’s Object Lessons, pp. 415, 416).

Jesus has called us “out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9), out of Babylon and into His eternal kingdom. Have you answered the call? Are you extending the invitation?

By: John Cloud

Dig Deeper: Revelation 17, 18

READY TO LEARN MORE? www.ThreeAngels.info

A brand new website from the General Conference with all the best materials available on the three angel’s messages. Videos, audios, articles and more!

Bible Q&A



What is the “wine of the wrath of her fornication” (Revelation 14:8)?

Over time the apostolic church formed illicit relationships with the world thus betraying her husband—Christ. She mixed pagan religious ideas with the pure tenets of the Christian faith and formed an unholy union of church and state. The people were told that the pope was their mediator and that they could atone for sin by their works. Pilgrimages, penance, and indulgences were said to appease the wrath of God and purchase His favor. Spiritualism was promoted by praying to the dead and the seventh-day Sabbath was obliterated. The doctrines of the church became a mass of confusion which still permeates the world today.

Jesus once referred to His pure teachings as “new wine” (Mark 2:22). By contrast, the wine of Babylon is its confused, distorted and impure teachings. It makes people “drunk” (Revelation 17:2). This is obviously a reference to the terrible effects of her corrupt teachings.

Although her doctrines were developed through “fornication” with the world, Babylon asserts they will bring peace and prosperity to men. Is this not what Satan has claimed from the beginning? The actual results are confusion, death, and the “wrath” of God.



Do you have questions about the three angels’ messages?

Send them to us at godled@kytn.org.



What Wine are You Drinking?

INFORMATION FATIGUE: “APATHY, INDIFFERENCE, OR MENTAL EXHAUSTION ARISING FROM EXPOSURE TO TOO MUCH INFORMATION”.

DOES THAT DESCRIBE HOW YOU FEEL THESE DAYS? I KNOW I’VE HAD INFORMATION FATIGUE. FINDING TRUTH HAS BECOME MORE DIFFICULT. IT’S LITERALLY EXHAUSTING EVEN FOR THE SEASONED CHRISTIAN.

This inability to pick out the truth among the mass of information available is not surprising if you understand prophecy. The second angel in Revelation 14 warns of Babylon’s fall and its inebriating wine. What is that wine? Today, it is not found in graven images of false gods or in the splendor of kings. The Babylonian ideology is found best in the confusion of our society, in false wisdom, and the wine of error. For she has “made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication” (Revelation 14:8).

Misinformation Vs. Disinformation

Misinformation is information that is false but not created to cause harm.

Disinformation is false information that is deliberately created to damage an

individual, a social group, organization, or country. It is a literal translation of the Russian word, *dezinformatsiya*, a term used by the KGB in the 1950s.

The KGB used disinformation for political gain. This has been an issue for a very long time. Lucifer began his campaign against God in heaven by spreading disinformation amongst the angels. He then continued his campaign on earth with the same tactics of falsehoods and lies. Jesus described him saying, “He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth because there is no truth in him. . .” (John 8:44). The father of lies is the originator of disinformation.

A City Made of Error

The Soviet Union commissioned the KGB to come up with campaigns of disinformation. Satan also employs an agency to do the same thing. The book of Revelation, which deals with eschatology (the science of the end), mentions Babylon repeatedly. Through interpretation and studying the Bible (See “Babylon, Not So Great After All”), we learn that Babylon symbolizes a religious power with political reach. There has been only one religious institution in history that has had massive political power, and that is the Church of Rome.

In the second angel’s message, we receive an important warning, “And another angel followed, saying, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication”. Babylon lives up to its original name, *babel*, which means confusion. Babylon is on an evangelistic mission to spread error and falsehood. She seeks to confuse and lead people astray. She is the agency of Satan, and she spreads his toxic lies.

The Third Angel’s Message is God’s final warning for earth. It is a message of dire importance—for how we respond to it will determine our eternal fate.

Join us next month as we study the Third Angel’s Message.

Wine of Error

“This wine of error is made up of false doctrines, such as the natural immortality of the soul, the eternal torment of the wicked, the denial of the pre-existence of Christ prior to His birth in Bethlehem, and advocating and exalting the first day of the week above God’s holy, sanctified day” (Ellen White, *Evangelism*, p. 365). Today, a vast majority of the Christian denominations worship on Sunday and believe that you go straight to heaven or hell when you die. When we look out the windows of our church, we see the world absolutely drunk from misinformation and error. Yet is it possible that this disinformation has crept into our hearts too?

Babylon is Lying to You Today

It’s easy for us to study prophecy and see Babylon as an institution thousands of miles away from us or an event far in the future. We don’t often think of how the spirit of Babylon exists in our lives today. Babylon is not just some sort of religious-political institution of the future or the past, but it is a permeating presence in society today. It is built on the wine of error, and its monarch is the king of lies. There are three doctrinal lies that seem to take especially strong hold in both the church and the world, both theologically and ideologically.

Lie number 1: Worship what you want, when you want, how you want

We are all carrying a mobile idol in our pockets. We can worship the screen when we want, where we want, and however we want. The device in our pockets is far more effective than any god made of stone. It opens a world of lies, lust, and addiction. Yet for many it is a cathedral of knowledge that will have you on your knees bowing to the wrong god for eternity. Babylon’s first goal is to defile worship, to cause you to bow down to the golden images it has erected, and to lead you away from true worship and communion with God.

Lie Number 2: God is Cruel

Defacing the image of God is the secondary agenda of the kingdom of Babylon. Satan has worked through scholars, skeptics, and evolutionists to foist the

depravity of men onto God. By placing doubt in the minds of men, the goodness of God is chipped away. Millions have become convinced that God—if He is real—must be a cruel maniac to allow so much suffering in our world.

Lie Number 3: We are all good

Another common lie that many of us believe is that we can be good people without Jesus. We all can say we are good because we fight for social justice or climate change, we are a feminist or a vegan. The Kingdom of Babylon has convinced us that we can be good all on our own terms.

How to Escape the Lies

The disciple Peter gives the most relevant advice on escaping the disinformation of Babylon. 1 Peter 5:8-11 says, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith. . .”. Interestingly, the lion is a symbol of Babylon, both in Scripture and in history.

Peter’s advice is simple: be sober. How are we to be sober when the wine of error has slipped into all the information we ingest? By being steadfast in the faith. We cannot defeat Babylon on our own, we can only do it through the faith of Jesus Christ. The way we defeat the lies is by believing the truth. The way we find the truth is through the Word. We must be vigilant in our search for truth within the context of the Bible. Instead of letting our favorite political commentator, our social media feed, or even our pastors be our source of truth, we must allow Jesus to be our one and only way to truth.

The religion of Babylon only succeeds when we allow its ideology to wash over us like an ocean, drowning us in its depths. If you find yourself flooded with the disinformation that Satan has perpetrated, reach your hand out of the murky waters and grab hold of Jesus. He’s waiting for you!

by: Elijah Ramjattan



Pastor Marshall McKenzie

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