

WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE #14

Surviving and Thriving in Babylon

Introduction

American Christians are now living in what amounts to a spiritual ‘Babylon’, a spiritual ‘jungle’. A ‘jungle’ is a dangerous and unfriendly political environment that will test our faith in ways we’ve never experienced before.

The Good News is that the Bible story of Daniel and his 3 friends gives us a prophetic picture of how we can survive, and even thrive, even though we find ourselves forced to live under a Babylonian system of government.

The first lesson we must learn is that we will be...

Tested At The Table

Daniel and his friends were trapped under a Babylonian, antichrist government. In Chapter One, they are offered the king’s meat and to eat and the king’s wine to drink. And they *refused!*

Daniel 1:8

But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king’s meat nor his wine.

Tonight, I want to unpack the prophetic meaning of how what Daniel did holds a message for all of us today:

Daniel was in Babylon. But he purposed in his heart that he would not let Babylon get into him!

Many of us have been moaning over the fact that America is now becoming a modern-day version of Babylon. But we need to know this!

Theme

God is not much concerned that His people are living in Babylon; He is very much concerned about how much of Babylon is living in His people.

The question for Christians in these perilous times quickly coming upon us will be a 'test at the table': "Will we partake of what the world is putting on our plate or will we take a stand for the Kingdom of God?"

Steve Gallagher

Intoxicated With Babylon: The Seduction of God's People in the Last Days

As we draw closer to the return of Christ, the battle between good and evil, light and darkness, will intensify. The temptation to feast at the devil's banquet table will increase, and many will succumb to spiritual sluggishness as they gorge on the Devil's delicacies.

Satan is serving up his meat and wine; he is inviting us to dine. But...

Steve Gallagher

Christians must learn now how to say 'NO' to this world's system if they intend to withstand the great shaking that is fast approaching. It is vital that we as believers acknowledge that our flesh is weak and that we, most likely, are not as prepared for the coming conflict as we might think. Unless we humble ourselves and agree with Jesus about the seriousness of our condition, we will never seek the help we need.

With that in mind let me offer a...

3 Part Message

- 1. We are in a spiritual battle with the spirit of Babylon**
- 2. Every Christian will be tested at the table on the matter of mixture**
- 3. God will preserve and promote those who refuse to compromise**

I. We Are in a Spiritual Battle With the Spirit of Babylon

A. What is 'Babylon'?

The Dictionary of Biblical Imagery

Babylon

The term appears over 250 times from Genesis to Revelation. The Bible calls Babylon a 'woman', a 'city', a 'land', and a 'kingdom'. Finally, in Revelation 17:5, the Bible refers to it as a 'mystery'.

Easton's Bible Dictionary

A 'mystery' is a truth that is undiscoverable except by revelation, a truth long hidden now made known.

1. God's word reveals that the Babylon of the Bible is not just a physical city; it is a spiritual principle.

Steve Harrison

“The Clash of Kingdoms: Rediscovering Our Role in Earth's Greatest Battle”

Babylon is a belief system based on the promise, ‘We do not need God’.

Babylon represents fallen humanity's desperate effort to establish its own universal value system. It is the kingdom of man independent from God. This kingdom seeks happiness and meaning without God's involvement.

a. Notice. Babylon seeks to ‘establish its own universal value system’; this is why traditional biblical values and institutions are under attack; especially the church and the family.

b. A sure sign of a Babylonian system is that the true God must be removed from the equation.

2. Why so? Because throughout history, the spirit of Babylon presents itself as a political power that will bring us salvation and security. Salvation comes from the government. God is not needed.

a. It is antichrist in the sense it offers itself ‘in place of Christ’.

Steve Harrison

The kingdom of Babylon seeks happiness and meaning *without God's involvement*. It is determined to reach its goals and develop its leadership *without His involvement*. Its citizens are not extreme atheists but common people whose lifestyles reflect an independence from the God of the Bible. Ironically, in a recent poll, 92% of all Americans believe in God, so belief is not the issue. The problem is that we live as though we don't need Him!

3. The political party currently in power removed the name of ‘God’ from the party platform a few years ago. In other words, they don't need God to run the country. That same spirit is knocking at every door.

Steve Harrison

We now live in a humanistic culture where the end of all things is the happiness of mankind. Our currency states, “In God we trust”, but nothing could be further from the truth. We have been taught to trust in ourselves more than God. Tragically, we live as if we no longer need Him. Our

abandonment of God and His influence has changed the very heart of our nation.

4. This is why we now find ourselves, like Daniel and friends, living in Babylon. The question will be if Babylon is living in us. Which brings me to my second point...

II. Every Christian Will Be Tested at the Table on the Matter of Mixture

A. Tested at the Table?

1. There is a consistent pattern in the Bible that shows us how human hearts are tested and revealed 'at the table'.

a. **Satan's 1st temptation to sin involved something to eat.** They were 'tested at the table', so to speak.

b. Thousands of years later, before Jesus launched out into His earthly ministry, He went into the wilderness to undergo 3 temptations from the Devil.

The first of Satan's 3 temptations of Christ was about something to eat!
(Matthew 4:4-5)

2. The 'first Adam' was 'tested at the table' and failed the test; the 'last Adam', Christ, was 'tested at the table' and passed the test.

3. In both cases, the test was not about physical food; it was where the heart was revealed to obey God or not.

Proverbs 23:1-3

When you sit down to eat with a ruler, consider carefully what is before you; And put a knife to your throat if you are a man given to appetite. Do not desire his delicacies, for they are deceptive food.

Albert Barnes

'Consider carefully what is before you' could also read, 'Consider carefully who is before you'; consider the character and temper of the ruler who invites you to eat.

4. Daniel and his friends were 'tested at the table'; it wasn't about physical food; it was a spiritual test of what they would feed on and who they would fellowship with.

The Dictionary of Biblical Imagery

Tables are central to everyday life in the Bible, serving domestic, ceremonial and business or commercial functions. The image of the table stands for fellowship with others or with God at meals and ceremonies around tables.

5. Daniel was not simply saying ‘no’ to a slice of bacon and a glass of bourbon; he was saying ‘no’ to a political power and a world system that did not honor God.

6. Daniel was in Babylon but he refused to let Babylon get into him; he resolved in his heart he would not be defiled by the world system around him.

Daniel was in Babylon; but he purposed in his heart he would not let Babylon get into him!

B. Our Test At The Table Will Be The Over the Matter of Mixture

1. 200 years ago, the great theologian Andrew Bonar lamented over the condition of the Christian church in Scotland.

Andrew Bonar

Scottish Minister (1810-1892)

I looked for the church and found it in the world. I looked for the world and found it in the church.

2. This has been a problem throughout church history; Jesus called us to be in the world not of the world.

Our problem today is that the world is so churchy, and the church is so worldly that it is difficult to discern the difference.

a. The world is ‘churchy’ means that politicians turn their positions into pulpits and are now preaching to the church what our values ought to be.

b. The church has become worldly; praise and worship services become entertainment; pulpits are now places where the goal is to make people feel good about themselves; few preach repentance anymore.

3. But God is using the Corona crisis to separate the wheat from the chaff; we are waking up to the reality that we are in a battle for our very souls.

Steve Harrison

We are in a war today. Unfortunately, we are focused in the wrong direction. While many are scrutinizing political and economic decisions, the devil, or our moral weaknesses, we have overlooked an extremely formidable foe. Our lack of perception has allowed the kingdom of Babylon to infiltrate the foundations of our Christian faith. In this critical time in earth's history, we must awaken to this challenging reality and to God's overcoming light and power.

4. Millions of professing Christians voted for the pro-abortion candidates; hundreds of so-called Christian churches have swallowed what the world is now feeding us.

Steve Harrison

One of the kingdom of Babylon's greatest strengths is its power of seduction. Seduction comes from the word 'seduce' which means to lead astray, as from duty, to corrupt or lead away from principles, faith or allegiance. The ambition of the kingdom of Babylon is to lead good people away from the Kingdom of God; to rob them of biblical values by enticing them to embrace an appealing, yet corrupted set of values.

5. Basic biblical values are under attack not only from the world. Worldly values are seeping into the church.

Steve Harrison

There is a dangerous mixture occurring in our Church culture today. Under the banner of 'social relevance', we are accepting and esteeming the values of another kingdom that are opposed to God's ways. Much like Samson, we are losing our spiritual authority, power, and sight as a result of this contamination.

Example: Pastor Jim Conrad

The Southern Baptist Convention just disfellowshipped Towne View Baptist Church of Kennesaw, Georgia for affirming homosexuality and accepting homosexual and transgender members.

a. Pastor Jim Conrad did not argue.

Pastor Conrad doubled down on his position.

"We are guilty as charged. We decided that if the grace of God isn't for everybody then it's not for anybody."

b. Since when did anyone say there wasn't grace available for the homosexual? There is grace available for all sinners *on condition of repentance!*

c. But Pastor Conrad doubles down. He accuses those of us who preach God's word on the subject of gender as the cause of the high rate of suicide in the gay community.

Pastor Jim Conrad

Towne View Baptist Church, Kennesaw, Georgia

“Conservative theology on sexual orientation and gender is at least complicit in the alarmingly high rate of suicide among LGBTQ adolescents. Telling teens that the God who created them in His image hates them because they aren't straight or cisgender is a dangerous message.”

Cisgender

Denoting or relating to a person whose sense of personal identity and gender corresponds with their birth sex.

d. What kind of a Pastor would tell a teenager who's confused about their gender that God hates them? Why don't you just preach the Word?

Genesis 1:27

So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Mark 10:6

But from the beginning of the creation, God 'made them male and female'.

e. The world is bending over backwards to make sure no one is offended.

Hasbro Toy's Mr. Potato Head is now Gender Neutral

Hasbro will release a new Potato Head playset this fall that will let kids create their own type of families, including two moms or two dads.

f. Churches like Towne View Baptist are copying the world on the issue of gender.

6. Then there's the case of GracePointe Church here in middle Tennessee; several years ago the Pastor embraced gay marriage and having homosexuals on the church staff.

This week, the new Pastor of GracePointe announced on Facebook and YouTube that ‘the Bible is not the Word of God’-not inerrant-not infallible.

a. Pastor Scott is advocating something he calls ‘Progressive Christianity’.

Pastor Josh Scott

As Progressive Christians, we’re open to the tensions and inconsistencies in the Bible. We know that it can’t live up to impossible, modern standards. We strive to more clearly articulate what Scripture is and what it isn’t.

b. Somebody needs to tell this Pastor that this is not ‘Progressive Christianity’-this is ‘HERESY’!

Eerdman’s Dictionary of the Bible

Teaching that diverts believers from the true gospel toward doctrine that erodes the foundations of the faith, leads to ungodly living, and destroys unity in the Church.

c. Heretics like Pastor Josh Scott are what happens when the world gets into the Church.

C.J. Mahaney

Worldliness: Resisting the Seduction of a Fallen World

Worldliness is to gratify and exalt one’s self in exclusion of God. It rejects God’s rule and replaces it with our own, like creating our own Bibles. It exalts our opinions above God’s truth. It elevates our sinful desires for the things of this fallen world above God’s commands and promises.

7. It’s easy to spot how the world has gotten into churches like the ones we have mentioned; or point out pastors who have fallen into obvious heresy. But if we stop there we miss the point. The real question is how much of the world is in our church? How much of the world is in me?

8. Look at it another way; many of us have spent many months moaning about how the socialists have hijacked the government:

- We have gotten into debates over prophecies
- We have watched the world descend into chaos

9. But do we discern our greatest danger?

C.J. Mahaney

Today, the greatest challenge facing American evangelicals is not persecution from the world, but seduction by the world.

10. A personal note: Lately the Lord has been dealing with me to pay less attention about the church in the world and more attention to the world in the church-and how seductive it is.

C. Demas the Deserter

1. Demas was one of the close companions of the Apostle Paul, one of the greatest men of God in the New Testament. On several occasions Paul honors Demas with kind words; but not at the end when Paul writes to Timothy...

2 Timothy 4:9-10

Be diligent to come to me quickly; For Demas has forsaken me, *having loved this present world*, and has departed for Thessalonica...

2. One of the old Puritan preachers comments...

The Biblical Illustrator

Ah! the case of Demas is full of melancholy warning. We do not find that he was scared by the perils which encompassed the profession of Christianity. It was love of the world which caused this promising disciple to make shipwreck of faith, and of a good conscience. He who could scorn danger or endure hardship could not withstand the allurements of the world, which tempted him with its pleasures.

3. Demas did fine while he was walking in the world; but he fell away when the world walked into him. He is a word of warning to all of us today-even though we've been faithful up to now.

The Biblical Illustrator

As you love your souls, beware of the world; it has slain its thousands and ten thousands. What ruined Lot's wife? -- the world. What ruined Achan? -- the world. What ruined Haman? -- the world. What ruined Judas? -- the world. What ruined Simon Magnus? -- the world. What ruined Demas? -- the world.

Jesus asked, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

May the lesson of Demas teach us to never underestimate the pull of this world.

Review

- 1. We are in a spiritual battle with the spirit of Babylon**
- 2. Every Christian will be tested at the table on the matter of mixture**
- 3. God will preserve and promote those who refuse to compromise**

III. God Will Preserve and Promote Those Who Refuse to Compromise

Steve Gallagher

Daniel was willing to do whatever he was told up to a point. But he refused to disobey God's commandments one iota for all the riches in Babylon. That conviction characterized his life in Babylon for the next 70 years.

A. Pass the Test at the Table Into Promotion

1. Daniel and his friends passed the test at the table; they were in Babylon but refused to let Babylon get into them.

2. When they were tested at the table they refused the king's meat and wine asking only for vegetables

Daniel 1:11-13

So Daniel said to the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, "Please test your servants for ten days, and let them give us vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then let our appearance be examined before you, and the appearance of the young men who eat the portion of the king's delicacies; and as you see fit, so deal with your servants."

Daniel 1:14-16

So he consented with them in this matter, and tested them ten days. And at the end of ten days their features appeared better and fatter in flesh than all the young men who ate the portion of the king's delicacies. Thus, the steward took away their portion of delicacies and the wine that they were to drink and gave them vegetables.

3. And now we come to the first of a series of promotions for Daniel and his friends...

Daniel 1:17

As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

4. Later at the fiery furnace and in the lion's den they will continue to refuse the world's ways and be promoted by God. This is our chance to follow their example.

5. This is where we are now...

Steve Harrison

True Christianity places people in strategic positions. True Christians will see things others do not. They will clearly mark their boundaries, lifestyle, and values. They will demonstrate a superior way of living through their words and deeds.

CLOSING PRAYER AND COMMUNION

Paul's Warnings About the Table

In 1 Corinthians 10:20, Paul warns that sacrifices to idols 'are offered to demons, not to God' and contrasts the good and holy use for the Lord's Supper of the 'Lord's table' with the 'table of demons', which is idol worship.

1 Corinthians 10:21 NIV

You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part both in the Table of the Lord and the table of demons.

Then, in 1 Corinthians 11, Paul speaks of the Table of the Lord

1 Corinthians 11:27-29

Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

1 Corinthians 11:31-32

For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.

As we partake of the Table, may we examine ourselves. May we be delivered from worry about being in the world; let us be more concerned with how much of the world is in us. There is an amazing promise to those who pass the test at the table.

Dictionary of Biblical Imagery

Jesus' promise of the eschatological kingdom centers on a table signifying ultimate blessing and belonging, but also final judgment for the unfaithful who refuse his invitation. He says to his disciples, "You are those who have stood by me in my trial; and I confer on you, just as my father has conferred on me, a kingdom, *so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel*" (Luke 22:28-30)