

The 5-Lane Highway Out of Babylon

Christopher J. Patton

I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.

As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified. "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. (John 17:14-21)

Then I heard another voice from heaven say: "Come out of her, my people, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues; for her sins are piled up to heaven, and God has remembered her crimes. (Revelation 18:4-5)

Jesus' last intercessory prayer for His disciples set out some vital principles to live by during the days of our biological lives in this world or cosmopolitan age. The servants of God are also directed by Scripture to "flee Babylon." A harmonization of these concepts can guide those seeking to serve God in these last days until He comes to rule the earth as promised. (See Matthew 24:46-47.)

Of course, the basic assumption of the materialist perspective is that God and the spiritual dimension are not real. Consequently, materialists seek the false financial power of prosperity and wealth referred to by Jesus as "mammon" instead of seeking to serve the living Creator God of Israel. They measure right and wrong by what they consider to be to their personal advantage.

Others may acknowledge the existence of spiritual power such as forces in nature and/or within the human soul, but not the necessity to submit to a holy Creator-Judge. God gave humanity a written Word that defines concepts like the sanctity of life and love. The Bible also includes commands on how to live by those concepts: one practices love by considering the welfare of his neighbor equal to his own, which includes the command, "love your enemy!"

Some reject God outright even though they may seek to control the universe's mysterious and rarely perceived spiritual forces to their advantage. Using favorable theological interpretations, others, who claim to be Christians, modify the God revealed in the Bible in order to accommodate their desired vision of reality and material considerations. In either case the adherents of these unbiblical life strategies become a law unto themselves. They define justice by their own standards and execute judgment according to their corrupted version of justice as they are able.

In the World, Not of It

The biblical perspective reflected in the opening verses present a different vision of ultimate reality or truth. Possessing God's Word, the disciples of Jesus are to be different: they are set apart from this world or externally apparent cosmopolitan age. As disciples of the Son, we are not to withdraw out of the world any more than Jesus did. The implication of these verses is that the servants of God are united in how they separate from this age and in fact are divided by their engaged participation in human organizations and the sins of the world's society or cultural system in which we live, which the Bible often poetically refers to as "Babylon."

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He also prayed for the protection of all those down through time who serve Him from the "evil one" who is Satan, the enemy of all humanity and the prince of this world. (John 12:31; 14:30 and 16:11) I believe that Jesus' consideration went beyond just the salvation of His followers to include their effectiveness in their service in proclaiming the gospel and disciplining those whom God calls.

We are called out of Babylon in order to decrease greatly our *de facto* participation in her sins and thus to escape the plagues of judgment prophesied to come in the near future. Fleeing the societal sins of Babylon is a process just as much as the overcoming of our natural, sin-susceptible nature. The power to accomplish progress in these areas comes only from God's presence within us through His Holy Spirit.

Repentance is the turning away from sin towards God. It is the decision that the Creator is the sole definer of love and justice without appeal to what a society or a person might prefer. Through faith in Messiah, the believer becomes empowered to transform his or her life from the inside out by God's gift of the Holy Spirit. This divine presence sanctifies the believer, but God is only manifested in the areas of a person's life that die to Christ. We are to consciously determine by the Word of God how to conform to the heavenly and depart from the worldly even as we must continue to live in biological bodies set in a world ruled by a rebellious archangel who is our enemy. The world is Satan's tool to neutralize and defeat God's servants.

The Coming End to Societal Sin

Participation in the sins of society will bring the natural consequences of those sins, as does any violation of God's law. This principle is the essence of God's warning to His people in Revelation 18:4-5. Societal sins are just as much spiritual chains as personal sins are.

Jesus is second coming again to eliminate the sociocultural excuses for sin. He will terminate injustice and put away the rebellious spirits responsible for most of the world's spiritual deception. The millennial age will not be perfect because it will be inhabited by fallible humans still subject to human nature. For example, people will still suffer the sin of lying pride, which is the root cause of rebellion against God.

Abraham's Example

Abraham is called the "Father of the Faithful" because he left the Babylon of his day, the society of idolatry. He did not just leave. He had a place to go to – a land unknown to his experience but promised by God. (Genesis 12:1-4)

By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going.

By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. . .

And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. (Hebrews 11:8-10, 15)

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Abraham looked for a city, which is to say a kingdom because all ancient Near Eastern cities were city-states headed by kings, whose "architect and builder is God." We should follow Abraham's example in order to exercise the faith required to become a spiritual block in God's glorious New Jerusalem.

The 5 Lanes of Escape

The last warning to the churches was to Laodicea, which was so blatantly compromised and corrupted by its wealth. As the Apostle John taught, one can not both love God and love this globalist cosmopolitan age built on the socio-cultural, economic, political and spiritual foundations of ancient Babylonian civilization. Jesus said that it was impossible to serve both God and Mammon, or materialism.

I have identified 5 dimensions of living in the material world of time and space as a human person. Thus, they are also 5 dimensions of how we can follow Messiah Jesus to be in the world but not of it.

1. **Spiritually** – through repentance and faith in Jesus receive the gift of the Holy Spirit; avoid the false spirit of material life force that provides the power for false religions of this world under the prince of the power of the air and god of this age, Satan.
2. **Financially** – get out of personal debt, do not be totally dependant on the world's economic and financial systems, become an un-consumer as much as possible
3. **Politically** – citizenship in heaven, submit to worldly governments, render unto Caesar what is Caesar's, exercise political rights wisely, graciously. Do not fight God. Israel's Promised Land.
4. **Socially** – Jesus taught the necessity to leave father and mother to serve Him, if necessary. Not even to bury his dead father.
 - **Entertainment** – the poison of mass media, movies, video games, books, parties and anything that diverts from our primary purpose of serving God.
 - **Education** – not after the pattern of this world in government run schools or schools accountable to the government for their curriculum.
 - **Social Relationships** – friends, family, organizations including churches.
5. **Psychosomatically** – general health, emotions, life skills, physical fitness, media time, good family relationships and psychological health.

The Urgent Necessity of God's Judgment

Behold the goodness and severity of God.

The millennium is a restoration and not a re-Creation: something must be left to work with – a remnant of the Creation not tampered with by human experimentation in genetic modification driven by greed.

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Tikkun Ha-Olam and the age of the Messiah also includes the restoration of Israel under God's rule and the practice of both today in faith of God's eternal and inevitable promised fulfillment.

Purpose of the First coming: the forgiveness of personal sin, internal transformation of human lives by being born again of Holy Spirit

Purpose of the Second Coming: the forgiveness of societal sins, the implementation of true justice, peace, love and economic blessing to all nations beginning at Jerusalem. God completes the fulfillment of all His promises to Abraham and the covenanted children of Israel.

Live in faith until He comes. Promote life, liberty and the pursuit of holiness.

Power of a person lies in his or her decision. Decide now to put God first and choose life in Messiah Yeshua.