

SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 12



**himself being
the chief
corner stone ...**

Ephesians 2:20

A COUNTERFEIT OF THE SUPERNATURAL

Scripture Texts: Revelation 18:1-5; Galatians 1:8-12; Matthew 15:13

About seven hundred years before the time of this prophecy, the kingdom of Babylon conquered Judah and took the people into captivity for seventy years (**Jeremiah 52**). Because of this, Babylon came to mean captivity, forced servitude, foreign authority, and punishment for sin. At the same site many years before, the Tower of Babel had been built (**Genesis 11:1-9**). Here God had brought confusion of language which stopped the work and dispersed the workers. From this event, Babel came to stand for confusion, scattering, and failure because of pride, human plans, and independence of God. The significance of all of these is combined in the meaning of the word Babylon. It is a fitting description

for this religious evil. It is a counterfeit.

MEMORY VERSE: *But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.*

—*Matthew 15:13*

DAILY READINGS:

Mon.—**1 Kings 12:25-33; 1 Kings 13:1-10** Human worship punished.

Tue.—**Ephesians 1:1-10** Chosen in Christ.

Wed.—**Acts 19:11-20** False workers.

Thu.—**1 John 4:13-21** Dwelling in God.

Fri.—**2 Thessalonians 2:1-12** A falling away.

Devotional Reading: Matthew 15:1-14 Human religion wrong.

Babylon the Great

Revelation 18:1-3 **Babylon the great is fallen.** For something to fall, it had to be lifted to a higher plain before. This great organization **is fallen**, not will fall. What has it fallen from? From Truth, righteousness, and holiness. It is shown to be evil by the descriptive words—**devils . . . every foul spirit, unclean and hateful bird . . . fornication.** It is widespread in its influence—**all nations have drunk . . . kings . . . merchants of the earth.** It has controlled people, governments, and commerce, compelling to worship as it dictates. But now the angel announces its downfall. What is it? The system of Catholicism is characterized as part of **Babylon . . . that great city, the beast.** Catholicism, the beast, and Protestantism with all false religion is characterized as Babylon. Protestantism is characterized as the **image** of the beast and the **harlot** daughters of the woman. It includes all that partake of their nature—their spirit. The one principle running throughout all, and that which makes it evil, is human rule. In the Church of God, Christ is the Head. In earthly religious organizations, man assumes Christ's place of authority.

A Call to Separate

Revelation 18:4-5 **Another voice from heaven . . .** This was Christ Himself calling to the scattered members of His body. **Come out of her, my people . . .** This is Christ's message to all the saved from sin in our day. To remain in her (spiritual Babylon) gives support to her and approval to **her sins.** Remaining makes them liable to her punishments. Christ's call is only to HIS PEOPLE—those honest-hearted ones who are truly saved,

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even though entangled in the evil system through ignorance. It is wrong for men to attempt to build a church, to form a religious doctrine, or to rule the people of God. The chief wrong in these is substituting human rule for divine rule. All such is doomed to destruction. A list of the terrible penalties for Babylon is recorded in **verses 21-24** of this chapter. **Her sins have reached unto heaven.** There the record will be opened at the Judgment.

No Other Gospel

Galatians 1:8-12 There is no other gospel, no other true doctrine, than that which Paul preached, which is the Gospel found in the New Testament. Why is it the only one? Because it **is not after man**. It was not Paul who was persuading men, that is, not in his own ability or his authority. God was doing it through him. The Gospel Paul preached was not man-made. Paul was not told it by man or educated into it. It is **by the revelation of Jesus Christ**. Jesus revealed it to him. There is but one revealed and supernatural Gospel from God. This Gospel ONLY can be rightfully passed on—unchanged, with no additions or subtractions. This is so important that a curse is pronounced against any who teach or preach another (**Revelation 22:19**).

Strange Plants to Be Rooted Up

Matthew 15:13 Jesus was condemning the Pharisees' traditions and **commandments of men**. Then, **Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted**—every doctrine, rule, theory, creed, system, or organization not from God—**shall be rooted up**. What then will be the fate of those entangled in the humanly planted plants?

The difference is also in the authority behind the church. The Church of God has the authority of God. Human organizations depend upon the authority of men. The church takes the authority of God's Word, the Bible. Human organizations take that of their leaders, councils, conferences, creeds, disciplines, doctrines, traditions, etc. They may say, "Christ is our Head." Why, then, have a man as head? Anything with two heads is a freak, a monstrosity. What man has the right to take in or put out members, to write creeds, to negotiate doctrines, changes, and mergers?

Counterfeit

A counterfeit dollar bill may look real, but it was not made by the government. A counterfeit church is any not authorized by Christ and which places human authority where divine ought to be. Since one enters the Church of God by spiritual birth, any group one can enter by joining can only be a counterfeit.

One may say, "I know people who belong to a certain denomination who are just as godly and filled with the Spirit as anyone can be." Certainly. They look to God and His Word as their authority. They open their hearts to Him. They belong to Him. These are the ones to whom Christ calls, **Come out of her, my people**, and stand in Me alone. God desires His people to come out of her, and to stay out.

In these days, we are hearing much about an ecumenical movement which is attempting to build a one-world church by uniting all denominations regardless of their belief. It includes the Word keepers, and they are blind to the fact that Christ has already built a one-world church. It is the body of Christ. (Read **Colossians 1:18, 24**.) There will never be another. There will never be a need for one, for the Church of God will never be destroyed. (See **Matthew 16:18**.) Any other can be only a counterfeit. A humanly built church is a human church that is all. It is only a religious organization—natural, not supernatural. Such will have union but will lack unity. No mechanical union can produce spiritual unity. The difference is in the life which empowers the church. The Church of God is **the household of God**, and her members are **fellowcitizens** . . . God keeps her membership (**Ephesians 2:19-22; 2 Timothy 2:19**). They **depart from iniquity**—live holy.

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.

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