

# "HEAR YE HIM"

## A Devotional Series For Radio

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The Sermon: GO YE OUT FROM BABYLON

Scripture: Doctrine and Covenants 108: portions of Paragraphs 2 and 4.

Prepare ye, prepare ye, O my people; sanctify yourselves; gather ye together, O ye people of my church, upon the land of Zion, all you that have not been commanded to tarry. Go ye out from Babylon. Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord. .... Go ye out of Babylon; gather ye out from among the nations, from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other ... Go ye out from among the nations, even from Babylon, from the midst of wickedness, which is spiritual Babylon. But verily thus saith the Lord, Let not your flight be in haste, but let all things be prepared before you; and he that goeth, let him not look back, lest sudden destruction shall come upon him.

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I will not spare any that remaineth in Babylon.

One of the lessons of both sacred and secular history is that when a nation, a race, or any group or society continually and rebelliously and willfully violates the laws of God, that group sooner or later decays and falls --either of its own weight, or because of being conquered by a more virile group. The Old Testament depicts some of the glories of ancient Israel as a kingdom. While they served God and kept his covenant, they swept all opposition before them. Under David and Solomon the kingdom became strong, prosperous, and flourishing. When they turned to iniquity, they declined until they were conquered and carried into captivity by Babylon. Babylon, wicked as it was, was the instrument in God's hands which caused their destruction and captivity.

Because in the eyes of Israel Babylon stood for all that was cruel and wicked and idolatrous, the Bible -- in both old and new testaments -- frequently speaks of Babylon as a type or symbol or allegory of any nation which is temporarily powerful and rich and prosperous in its wickedness, in which the people seem to enjoy the prosperity of sin. For note carefully -- although Babylon overthrew Israel, Babylon was even more wicked than Israel, and not long after, Babylon itself fell. Because of her riches and power, and because she was the destroyer of Jerusalem and of the last vestiges of the nation of Israel during the time of the writing of the New Testament, Rome was regarded as the Babylon of those

times. Rome was the instrument of God's destruction and judgment upon Israel; yet not many years later, Rome, the destroyer, was herself destroyed.

On page 244 of Somervell's abridgement of Arnold Toynbee's "Study of History", it is said that we are able to enumerate twenty-six historically significant civilizations. Sixteen of these, says Toynbee, are now dead and buried. Of the ten remaining, two are now in their last agonies. Six out of the eight remaining bear marks of having already broken down, and a seventh -- namely, the Eskimo civilization -- was arrested in infancy and has never been historically important. This leaves only one -- our own Western civilization. Every other one of the twenty-six has broken down and is in process of disintegration, and Toynbee thinks that he sees some signs of eventual disintegration in our own.

Not once, but many times then in the history of the world, Babylon has fallen. Babylon will fall again, and again, and again. All that is unrighteous, unjust, unmerciful, ungodly, in every civilization will some day be brought to judgment and destroyed. Judgment is eternal. It has been going on for untold milleniums of time; it will continue forever. Causes always produce results. Acts always bring consequences to judge these acts. Sometimes the consequences seem to be delayed, but they are inevitable. The mills of the gods grind slowly, but they grind exceeding fine. God's laws which

brought about the downfall of Israel, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, and many other great and glorious nations of the past, are still in operation; and any nation which chooses to live by those laws today will also fall.

Individuals, too, as well as nations and civilizations, must bear the consequences of their acts. John, speaking of the downfall of Babylon the great in the latter days, gives this commandment of the Lord in Revelation 18:4: "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sin, that ye receive not of her plagues." People who choose to live in Babylon must bear some of the results or consequences that ensue when Babylon comes to judgment.

Are you living in Babylon? Babylon is depicted in Revelation 17:5 as a MYSTERY, a type, or symbol, or allegory. Babylon may be political, geographical, or spiritual; the rule of Babylon extends to many phases or aspects of human life. It is to be found in the field of religion. Anything which tends to or induces idolatry, superstition, priestcraft, or false or insincere worship is a mark of Babylon. It is found in the field of economics, wherever men earn their living by catering to the sins and lusts and depravities of other men, where men make (not earn) their living by sharp practices, cunning, deceit, hypocrisy, by exploiting the labor of other men, or by taking exorbitant profits for which they have performed no labor. Where do you earn your living, in the kingdom of God, or in Babylon? Where do you spend your money, with men of God or with men of Babylon? Where do you save or invest your money, in God's kingdom or in the kingdom of Babylon? Where do you find your security?

Babylon is found in government, wherever government oppresses, destroys freedom, limits the free expression of thought and the exchange of information, or extorts from the people through exorbitant taxes, graft, or wasteful spending. Does your vote perpetuate or encourage such a government, or does it encourage an honest, economical, clean, progressive government worthy to be called a part of the kingdom of God?

Where do you get your education, from Babylon, or from God's kingdom? Oftentimes the learning and culture of Babylon seems to be great and attractive and so-

phisticated and desirable, but the ends thereof are the ways of death. By all means seek learning and wisdom and knowledge and education, but have a care about the sources from which it comes. The Book of Mormon says "To be learned is good, if they hearken unto the counsels of God."

Where do you get your amusement, your recreation? Babylon has many inducements to offer in this field. So has God's kingdom. It is you who makes the choice as to which kingdom's laws you will obey -- in which kingdom you would rather live. You can live according to Babylon's moral code, according to her marriage laws, according to her concepts of honesty, industry, beauty, utility, and godliness, or you can live in the ways of the kingdom of God. It is even possible to choose your diet -- your eating and drinking -- according to the ways of Babylon or according to the ways of God's kingdom.

As we have said, Babylon may be geographical, political, or spiritual. The social pressures of Babylon are terrific, and many people are almost compelled to go along with the crowd. As lone individuals, it is not always possible for us to move out of geographical Babylon or to change political Babylon; but we can always resist the pressures and withdraw from spiritual Babylon. We must do it if we are to survive. "Go ye out from among the wicked; Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord," for "I will not spare any that remaineth in Babylon." It is often wise and expedient for the people who are trying to serve God to gather themselves together in one geographical location where they may strengthen each other in resisting Babylon's social pressures, and find greater unity. But whether this is possible for you or not, it is possible for any man to follow this injunction of modern revelation which says: "Go ye out from among the nations, even from Babylon, from the midst of wickedness, which is spiritual Babylon."

The tragedy and the condemnation of today's world is that "every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own god, whose image is the likeness of the world, and whose substance is like that of an idol which waxeth old, and shall perish in Babylon, even Babylon the great, which shall fall." "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, that ye receive not her plagues."