

Sanctuary 1968, 8 of 8

Babylon and Laodicea

#0517

Study Given by W.D. Frazee—January 8, 1968

We have been told that there are many precious truths in the Word of God, but what the flock needs now is present truth. And I trust that God will give us some fruit in season from the tree of life this morning as we look into His word.

I want to study with you this morning a very practical problem, and if God can bless us with clearness of presentation and clearness of understanding, I believe that He will help us to leave this service with clearer convictions and new determinations that will bring joy to His heart and to us all.

The subject this morning is Babylon and Laodicea. As you at once recognize, these are two terms found in the book of Revelation. My question this morning is, what is the difference between Babylon and Laodicea? Does it make any difference what the difference is or whether there is any difference? Does it make any difference? Yes, friends, it makes a world of difference, as we shall see. Before I turn to the book of Revelation, I would like to note 1 Corinthians 14:8. Paul says:

“For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?” 1 Corinthians 14:8.

God wants His watchmen on the wall, whom our brother has just been singing about, to give the trumpet a certain sound.

You know, back in the days of Moses the Lord had him prepare two silver trumpets. Those were put in the hands of the priests, and they were given certain instructions regarding the blowing of those trumpets. Certain blasts meant certain instructions. They had a certain blast when they started, another when they stopped, and so forth. Naturally, the movement of the people depended upon understanding what the trumpets were calling.

So today, the business of God's watchmen is to give the trumpets a *certain* sound. On this matter of what is Babylon and what is Laodicea, we need to have a clear, certain sound given, my friends. The book of Revelation makes it very clear, what is what and which is which. And with the inspired comments that we have in the Spirit of Prophecy, we should be abundantly able to come to clear conclusions that will lift us above all confusion concerning Babylon and Laodicea.

In the fourteenth chapter of the book of Revelation and the eighth verse, we have in the heart of the threefold message an announcement concerning Babylon. I read:

“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.

Babylon is pictured here as a great city, a fallen city. And she's fallen because of what she has given to the nations, and that is the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

Now, you're acquainted with the fact that in scripture prophecy a woman is often used for the symbol of a church. In fact, the true church is pictured in the twelfth of Revelation as a woman clothed with the sun, a crown of 12 stars on her head. The entire twelfth chapter is taken up with the story of the conflicts between Christ and Satan in which this woman plays a prominent part, culminating in the last great struggle between the dragon on the one hand and the woman and the remnant of her seed on the other, the remnant keeping the commandments of God and having the testimony of Jesus. We are familiar with that.

Now, that true, pure woman is not Babylon. No. She is clothed with the sun. In the seventeenth chapter of Revelation and verses four and five, we are given a picture of Babylon and this woman is arrayed in purple and scarlet color. Like our first parents when they lost those beautiful robes of light and made for themselves aprons of fig leaves, so Babylon, naked as far as any glory of God is concerned, seeks to cover herself and adorn herself with the purple and scarlet color, and also with gold and precious stones and pearls.

This is the symbol of the fallen church. And of course, you say, “Which one?” Well, one thing about the Devil, he has this great advantage—an advantage over God, if you want to call it that—and that is he can have more than one way to offer people. That's why the way to death is so broad.

There's only one right answer to the question, “What is two and two?” You all know what it is. But suppose I should ask you how many wrong answers there are, then what? Just how many wrong answers are there to the question, “What is two and two?” Unlimited. That's right. A million wouldn't cover it at all. How could there be a million wrong answers to a question? Well, there can be more than that. There can be a million, million or a million, million, million. The number is limitless.

So when the Devil seeks to deceive men, to beguile men, to lead them astray, he doesn't keep just one organization or one system of error, one lie. He has *multitudes* of them, and has down through the ages.

Over in India how many gods is it they have, brother? A limitless number of gods over there. Yes. Well, that's just one country. If you go up to Japan you'd find some more and in various parts of the world, wouldn't you? Here in America we have hundreds of different churches. Some of them are combining from year to year, but new ones are starting. So we have dozens, scores, hundreds, thousands of variations, all included under this scripture symbol of Babylon.

The word for Babylon is interesting. If you go back to the early chapters of Genesis you get the story of how Babylon began. You remember that after the flood, God told the people to scatter abroad and fill the whole earth. There were some people that didn't like that idea. And so in the eleventh chapter of Genesis, we see them congregating on the plain of Shinar and building a great tower. It was called the tower of what? Babel. And do you know, that was originally called Bâbilu, meaning the gate of God, but God turned that around. He did something to their language there in order to put an end to their work. What was it that He did? Confused their language. And so the name of it is called Babel. It says:

“Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth”
Genesis 11:9.

And the margin on Babel says what? Confusion. That's what the word means—Babel.

If you go back to the tenth chapter of Genesis, you find who it was that was the moving spirit in all this:

“Cush begat Nimrod” Genesis 10:8.

Cush was a grandson of Noah. Nimrod, his son:

“Began to be a mighty one in the earth” Ibid.

As we would say, he started out to be somebody. Just like some men today are trying to be somebody. And they will end up just as Nimrod did, friends.

But the tenth verse says:

“The beginning of his kingdom was” Ibid., verse 10.

What?

“Babel” Ibid.

That's where he started. The margin gives us the word Babylon. So that's where Babylon started. And that is what Babylon means. It means Babel, and Babel means what? Confusion. So that's a good name for the Devil's empire, friends—confusion.

I've often thought what kinds of counsels he must preside over as all these different devils come together. You know, those minds are not infinite. While they are very wise and bright, and they've had a lot of experience, there's a limit to their capacity. Each devil can think of only just so much, and he can take in only so much, just as we are limited. So I am very sure, friends, that the Devil has various principalities in his great empire. The Bible speaks of the principalities and powers of darkness, and the rulers of spiritual wickedness in high places.

I am very sure that as those devils get together, each one thinks he has the answer of how to deceive the world. So there are doubtless Mohammed devils and Buddhist devils. There are devils that think that the best way to deceive the world is through Roman Catholicism. Others think, no, that isn't the way at all. And so we have the Jehovah's Witness and the Mormons, and the Christian Scientists and all these other "isms." We have the Theosophy of New Thought. We have *all sorts* of ideas around this world, each one the brainchild of some devil.

But when you get it all together, certainly it's a confusion, isn't it? That's just what it is. It's a confusion. That's the way religion in the world is today. It's in confusion because they have rejected the plain, straight message of God as given in the fourteenth chapter of Revelation. When individuals, churches, cities, nations, reject God, they fall; can't help it. That's what's happened to Babylon.

Now, in the eighteenth chapter of Revelation, we find this announcement of the second angel of Revelation 14 repeated, and with it, an earnest cry from heaven. And it's that cry I want you to notice:

"And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying,
Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become
the habitation of devils" Revelation 18:2.

What a picture, friends. The churches of the world filling up with devils. That's a picture of spiritualism that's on the march today. Now the fourth verse says:

"I heard another voice from heaven, saying"
Revelation 18:4,

What?

"Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers
of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues"

Ibid.

Does God have some people still in Babylon? Yes. Does God have some people in these heathen lands overseas? Does God have some people in the Roman Catholic church in America, and South America and Europe? Oh, yes. Thousands of them, dear, earnest, sincere people that are serving God the best they know. Does God have people scattered all through these fallen churches of every stripe and type? Does He? Yes, He does. Is He going to leave them there? No. He says what? "*Come out, come out.*"

I want you to have emphasized in your minds those two little words, "come out." We shall refer to them later at another point in our study. But notice that is what Jesus said, "Come out." That's the message God has for His people in Babylon. "Come out of her my people."

Now listen. If you were in Babylon and you were Jesus' child, and you heard that message and knew it was from Jesus, what would you do? You would come out, wouldn't you? That's right. May I ask a question? (It sounds almost foolish.) Would you need to know what Babylon is and where Babylon is in order to obey this? Why, certainly. Otherwise you might hear the message and you might say, "Well, I'm all right. I'll stay right where I am."

Like a little girl over in England that I heard about not long ago. Her parents lost her and they were hunting all over, everywhere for her, just hunting and hunting and hunting. And there was a big meeting in progress, and somebody announced there from the stand they were hunting for this little girl. I don't know what her name was. Mary Jones we'll call her. And at any rate, by and by, at the close of the meeting the parents finally found the little girl. And they ask her why in the world she didn't answer when they called that the parents were looking for Mary Jones. "Well, they said there was a little Mary Jones who was lost," and she says, "I wasn't lost. I knew right where I was all the time." So you see, she didn't make any move.

Unless people realize, dear friends, what Babylon is and where they are, and that they need to move, they can stay there all the time and still think that they're obeying Christ. Can't they? Yes.

Do you know what Babylon is? Now I want to ask you another question. If you really know what Babylon is, do you know what Babylon isn't? You *must*. If you don't know what Babylon isn't, you are not fully clear on what it is. Let's take the where. If you know *where* Babylon is, do you know where Babylon isn't? Well, unless you do, you don't know where the boundary is.

You know, back in Bible times there was a clear boundary that marked the coming over from the land of Mesopotamia, where Babylon was, over to the promised land. That was the great river Euphrates up there in its headwaters. And when they passed over that, then they were headed for the Promised Land.

You remember that when Abraham left this land of Shinar, left Ur of the Chaldees, he went out and stayed for awhile at Haran, but God didn't want him to stay there. He called him on down into Canaan and He promised to give him that whole land clear up to what river? The river Euphrates. Beyond that, that was for Babylon, and God didn't want His people ever to go down there. They finally had to go down there in captivity because they wouldn't learn their lesson to stay away from idolatry. But God's purpose was to bring them where? Back out of Babylon, as we were studying in our Sabbath School Lesson a few months ago.

All right friends, if you know where Babylon is today, the great fallen churches, all system of errors, then you should know where Babylon isn't. And if you know what Babylon is, you should know what Babylon isn't. God has a church in this world, and *that* church is not Babylon, it *was* not Babylon, it *is* not Babylon, it *will not* be Babylon.

Let's go over to the third chapter of Revelation and study about Laodicea a little. What is Laodicea, and *who* are the Laodiceans? Laodicea is mentioned in the last part of the third chapter of Revelation, beginning with the fourteenth verse. It's the seventh of seven messages addressed to the seven churches.

Now in the first chapter of Revelation we are first introduced to this picture. John, you remember, had been banished to the Isle of Patmos. And there one Sabbath day as John was having his worship with the Lord, banished there on that rocky isle, Jesus came and appeared to him. You can read that in the tenth verse. As he heard the voice of Jesus he turned, and the very first message of Jesus was:

"I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and,
What thou seest, write it in a book, and send it unto
the seven churches which are in Asia" Revelation
1:11.

Then He named them: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Tyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. All right. I want you to notice that Laodicea is one of what? The seven churches to whom Jesus did what? Sent a message.

"And I turned to see the voice that spake with me.
And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;
And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like
unto the Son of man" Revelation 1:12-13.

Now, what are these seven candlesticks that John saw Jesus walking in the midst of?

"The seven stars are the angels of the seven
churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou

sawest are the seven churches” Revelation 1:20.

The seven candlesticks are what? The seven churches. One of those is Ephesus. That’s the first. And what’s the last one? Laodicea. Is it really, friends? Do you believe that? Do you believe that Laodicea is one of the seven golden candlesticks? We sometimes hear people saying some pretty hard things about Laodicea. But Jesus loves Laodicea, friends, and right now it’s the object of His supreme regard. It’s the only church He has on earth.

Ephesus: that’s back there in the apostolic times. And Smyrna: that’s in the days of the persecutions after the first century. Pergamos: that’s during those days of apostasy when the papacy was rising and God’s true people had to hold fast to the faith. And Tyatira: that’s the dark ages when the Waldenses and the others held aloft the torch of truth through the dark night. And Sardis: that’s the reformation period and after. Then Philadelphia: the time of the great Advent awakening and the opening of the door in the most holy place. And now, Laodicea.

Yes, Jesus has a special interest in Laodicea, and He’s sent a message to it. It’s a letter. As the one object of supreme regard in this world, Jesus writes to Laodicea a message of love. It’s a love letter. Now, true, it isn’t filled with a lot of sentimental, gushing things that we sometimes think of associated with love letters. It’s too bad that that which is called love in this world has to be so soft and shallow at times that it becomes a very, very poor representation of divine love. God’s love for His church leads Him to be very frank and honest with it. Did I say it was a love letter? Yes, you’ll find that in the third chapter and the nineteenth verse:

“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten” Revelation 3:19.

And He’s rebuking Laodicea, and He’s telling Laodicea that, that’s proof that He what? That He loves her. It’s a love letter.

So in this last generation we find in the Laodicean message, God’s call of love to His people to turn from self-righteousness and accept His righteousness, to turn from dependence on human works and to accept the power of the indwelling Spirit, to turn away from worldliness and pride and with humility enter into the experience of fellowship with Christ. It’s all there in that Laodicean message.

Now my point is this, what I am studying this morning is: Babylon and Laodicea, is there a difference between them? Oh, yes, there is a difference. Babylon is outside of Laodicea, and Laodicea is outside of Babylon. There is no communion between them. There is no fellowship between them. And there need be no confusion over who they are or what they are or where they are.

Back in the 1890s, when Sister White was over in Australia, there was a man in this country that got a great burden to teach that *he* had been given a commission to give the loud cry, and that the loud cry was a message to come out of Babylon, and that that meant the Seventh-day Adventist church.

And in one short, decisive sentence we have this word from Ellen G. White, the Lord's messenger. You'll find it in this little book, *The Remnant Church*, page 47:

"My brother, if you are teaching that the Seventh-day Adventist church is Babylon, you are wrong"
Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, page 59.

Could you put it any clearer?

"My brother, if you are teaching that the Seventh-day Adventist church is Babylon, you are wrong. God has not given you any such message to bear" *Ibid*.

No. God's love letters are not sent to Babylon. She's a harlot, according to Revelation 17, and Jesus is not writing any love letters to the harlot. But He is writing messages of love and affection of the tenderest, sweetest love, to His dear church here in this world, and that's the Laodicean message.

"Ah, but," somebody says, "Doesn't it say that He's going to spew the Laodiceans out of His mouth?" Why, He's going to have to do that with some of them unless they do what? Unless they *repent*. But, ah, thank God, some of them are going to repent. They all can, and you and I can be among them. And what will happen then?

"To him that overcometh" Revelation 1:21.

And remember He's writing to Laodicea. He's not writing here to Pergamos or Philadelphia or Ephesus. He's writing to Laodicea:

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" Revelation 3:21.

Can you think of any greater, more wonderful promise than that, my friends? Ah, that's marvelous. Why, He's inviting you and me and Laodicea to overcome in His strength by accepting His counsel, and He said "If you will, I have a special place for you, right up in the very throne with Me."

This generation is called to the highest privilege of all the ages, my friends. The development of the 144,000, as pictured in Revelation 7 and

Revelation 14, is the work of this last generation:

“They ... follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth”
Revelation 14:4.

And if they follow the Lamb wherever He goes, they will be on the throne with Him, won't they? That's the promise to Laodicea.

Now, I come to a little expression tucked away in the heart of this Laodicean message that I would like to have you contemplate:

“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in” Revelation 3:19, 20.

Do you remember those two little words, I asked you a few moments ago to remember? What were those two words? “Come out.” Who said those two words? Jesus did. Who did He say them to? To His children where? In Babylon. But now as He comes to Laodicea, does He say come out? No, oh, no. Quite the opposite. He says, “I want to come in.” Is there any difference? Do you see it? That's the difference, friends, between Babylon and Laodicea. That's it, all in a nutshell.

The message God has for His children in Babylon is, “Come out.” God's message to His children in Laodicea is “I will come in.” So if we're in Babylon the thing to do is to come *out*. If we're in Laodicea, the thing to do is open the door and let Jesus come *in*. So we need to know *exactly* where we are, friends. And where we are makes all the difference in the world in what we ought to do.

Now in this book, *Selected Messages*, Book 2, pages 66 and 67, I read a divine comment:

“God is leading out a people. He has a chosen people, a church on the earth, whom He has made the depositaries of His law. He has committed to them sacred trust and eternal truth to be given to the world. He would reprove and correct them. The message to the Laodiceans is applicable to Seventh-day Adventists who have had great light and have not walked in the light. It is those who have made great profession, but have not kept in step with their Leader, that will be spewed out of His mouth unless they repent” *Selected Messages*, Book 2, page 66.

I see some people quote this, but they don't quote the next sentence. Listen to the next sentence:

“The message to pronounce the Seventh-day Adventist Church Babylon, and call the people of God out of her, does not come from any heavenly messenger, or any human agent inspired by the Spirit of God” *Ibid.*

And then she quotes a large part of the Laodicean message. Now notice:

“Jesus is coming in to give the individual members of the church the richest blessings, if they will open the door to Him. He does not once call them Babylon, nor ask them to come out. But He says, “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten’ (with messages of reproof and warning)... .

“I will say in the fear and love of God, I know the Lord has thoughts of love and mercy to restore and heal them of all their backslidings. He has a work for His church to do. They are not to be pronounced Babylon, but to be as the salt of the earth, the light of the world” *Ibid.*, page 67.

I like that, don’t you, friends? Well, I’m glad for these precious, precious messages from heaven.

In 1892, there was another man. He had a great burden along some of these lines. Sister White wrote him a letter from way over in Australia. You will find it in Book 1 of *Selected Messages*, page 179. Listen:

“You will take passages in the testimonies that speak of the close of probation, of the shaking among God’s people, and you will talk of a coming out from this people of a purer, holier people that will arise. Now all this pleases the enemy” *Selected Messages*, Book 1, page 179.

Do you see, friends? We can study the Bible in such a way as to please the Devil. We can study the *Testimonies* in such a way as to please the Devil. And when anyone takes the passages from the Bible and from the Spirit of Prophecy and puts them together in such a way as to give people the idea that this church is going to pieces, that this organization is going to all fall apart or go into apostasy, and that God is going to have to draw out His true people out of this into something else, all this (I am quoting), “all this pleases the enemy.”

I don’t want to please the Devil, do you? I want to please Jesus. And when we hear that knock at the door, friends, when we hear that gentle voice,

let's not get excited and misinterpret it. Let's not say, "Oh, God wants me to move out of where I am, He wants me to get out into something else, or get out away from all organizations." No. If we're in Laodicea, Jesus is not knocking and calling to us to move out at all. He'd just like to have us open the door and let Him in. What do you say, let's do it, shall we?

"He does not once call them Babylon, nor ask them to come out" *Ibid.*, page 67.

Who does He ask to come out? God's people where? In Babylon. There are thousands of them out in Babylon in these fallen churches. And our message to them should be, as we help them to see the binding claims of God's law, the truth that God has given us in the three-fold message, our message should re-echo the call of heaven, "Come out, come out, come out that ye be not partakers of her sins and that you receive not of her plagues." The message that the angels brought to Lot down in Sodom, "Come out, come out, come out."

But, oh, God's children in Laodicea, they may be weak and faulty, but the message of the Savior is not to come out. Oh, no. It isn't, my friends, moving to a new church that we need. It's opening our hearts to let the Savior in, in the church where His providence has called us, the church of the living God, the church of the firstborn which is written in heaven. God's true church, the Seventh-day Adventist church which starting out over a century ago, is soon to finish its work, and by the grace of God arrive at the promised land.

I like this wonderful statement:

"There is no need to doubt, to be fearful that the work will not succeed. God is at the head of the work, and He will set everything in order. If matters need adjusting at the head of the work, God will attend to that, and work to right every wrong. Let us have faith that God is going to carry the noble ship which bears the people of God safely into port" *Selected Messages*, Book 2, page 390.

I propose to stay on board by His grace, friends. And I propose to echo the loud cry to Babylon, bidding all the honest hearted, "Come out of these fallen churches into the fellowship of God's remnant church." And I propose to answer Jesus' call to my heart here in Laodicea—not by moving, friends. Oh, no. But by opening the door so that Jesus can come in with all His precious love and faith and eye salve and white raiment. How many would like to send that word to heaven this morning?

Now, I'm wondering if there aren't several that would like to give just in a sentence a piece of a clear, brief statement of your heart's response and conviction this morning, to the message that it's important to get out of Babylon

and be in God's true church. And I think we can all see also, that that isn't enough. It's important to be in the right church and stay there, but right there in that right church, we hear a knock at the door. Who is it? Jesus. That's right. It is a message to the Laodiceans, members of God's last true church. "I want to come in, I want to come."

And dear ones, I suppose it's true, that not a one of us this morning, no matter how much we've known of fellowship with our Lord, but what there are awaiting us, glorious experiences of closer fellowship, that will make all we've had in the past seem only the beginning. Don't you think so? Oh, let's open the door to the innermost apartment of our hearts this morning. That'll make Him happy.

Let's sing hymn 276.

You know dear friends, as we sing, there may be somebody here that wants to seek the Lord, that wants to get some special help, and if you do and you'd like to come up and kneel at God's altar, we'll pray here especially for you.

My Jesus I love Thee, I know Thou art mine;
For Thee all the follies of sin I resign;
My gracious Redeemer, my Savior art Thou;
If ever I love Thee, my Jesus 'tis now.

I love Thee because Thou hast first loved me,
And purchased my pardon on Calvary's tree;
I love Thee for wearing the thorns on Thy brow;
If ever I love Thee, my Jesus 'tis now.

In mansions of glory and endless delight
I'll ever adore Thee in heaven so bright
I'll sing with a glittering crown on my brow
If ever I love Thee, my Jesus 'tis now.

God is good, dear ones, wonderfully good. And we're going to have a little after-meeting with these folks. We want them to get all the help they've come for. I'm going to dismiss the meeting and Brother Boykin will greet you at the door. I'm going to stay here with these folks for the after-meeting. If there are any of you that would like to stay, you're just as welcome as can be. God has a blessing here for all that would like to share it. Shall we bow our heads and you, who are leaving, you can just remain kneeling there as long as you wish, while the people are passing out and then we will have our little after-meeting.

Dear Lord, dismiss this congregation with Thy blessing. If there are any that Thou art calling to stay at this after-meeting, help them to know it and to come. And bless everyone who has come to the altar. They want help, dear Lord. We know it's here for them. Help them to tarry here at Thy feet until they

know that God has heard them and given them the blessing they are seeking. And keep us all happy that Jesus has knocked at our door and that we have opened the door and that Jesus has come in and that He is going to stay with us to the end. We ask it in His dear name, Amen.

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