

Messages from Revelation 10 of 16

God's Instruction

#0471

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—August 17, 1973

We have been studying this wonderful message which comes at the close of human history. It's the last message to the last generation. It is destined to prepare a people who will welcome the Savior at His appearing as Revelation 14 pictures. The people themselves are pictured in the 12th verse; they are the saints who patiently wait for the coming of Jesus, keeping His commandments and His faith.

We spent several evening on this first message:

“Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters”
Revelation 14:7.

Then we've been studying the second message:

“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.

We noted that the wine of Babylon represents her doctrines and all the agencies which she uses to intoxicate the nations physically, mentally, and spiritually. The influence of Babylon is to benumb the higher centers, to confuse the thinking, and lead men to do insane things. And every agency, whether it's chemical, physical, mental, sentimental, religious, every agency that confuses the thinking of people is part of the wine of Babylon. God's message deals with truth, with reality, and is entirely apart from all pretense, all make-believe, all fiction, and everything that is contrary to fact and to truth.

In our last study, we studied the gods of Babylon which are fallen with Babylon. Will you turn back to the 21st chapter of Isaiah, where we hear the cry that is re-echoed in the second angel's message. Here, 800 years before John wrote on Patmos, we hear the announcement of the fall of Babylon, and notice what Paul says here:

“And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods He hath broken unto the ground” Isaiah 21:9.

So with Babylon's fall comes the fall of all her gods, her idols. Babylon is an idolater. Ancient Babylon was a *city* of false gods. Modern Babylon is a *world* of false gods.

"For it is the land of graven images, and they are mad upon their idols" Jeremiah 50:38.

The idols of Babylon bring insanity to those who worship them. This is the influence of idolatry. Among all the gods of Babylon are the god of money, the god of appetite, and the god of lust. These are the three great gods in the worship of Babylon.

Tonight I would like to study with you, some of the agencies that God has given, some of the instruction that He has given, designed to keep us from this idolatry. These points that I would like to bring tonight are simplicity, generosity, labor, and moderation. I'd like to have you notice that by putting these into His message for today, God has built in protection against the appeal of the worship of the gods of Babylon.

When we think of Sodom, we usually think of licentiousness, and this is correct. We usually think of the most depraved impurity, the most awful perversions. All this is correct. But there are some things lying back of this, fundamental to it, that the prophet Ezekiel exposes:

"Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before Me: therefore I took them away as I saw good" Ezekiel 16:49-50.

You notice here, God deals not with the terrible excesses and perversions of Sodom in its licentiousness. He deals with the underlying problem—pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness. Yet this fullness of bread and abundance of idleness is exactly what characterizes America today. There was never a time when money flowed so freely, and the things that money could buy were sought after and found. Very few people in America today are hungry in the sense that they cannot get anything to eat. As a nation there is plenty to eat. We are repeating the history of Sodom. This abundance of food and abundance of leisure leads in America just what it did in Sodom. It leads to gluttony and perversions of all kinds. It leads to impurity, immorality, fornication, adultery, and other perversions. And if God is calling you and me from the worship of the gods of Babylon, and calling us to a pure life, He will call us to simplicity and economy and industry. He will call us to physical labor and physical exercise, to purity and simplicity, to hard work and plenty of it. This is a part of God's remedy and God's prevention for the things that were the downfall of Sodom.

I read an interesting counsel:

“It was God’s purpose to alleviate by toil the evil brought into the world by man’s disobedience. By toil the temptations of Satan might be made ineffectual, and the tide of evil stayed. And though attended with anxiety, weariness, and pain, labor is still a source of happiness and development, and a safeguard against temptation. Its discipline places a check on self-indulgence, and promotes industry, purity, and firmness. Thus it becomes a part of God’s great plan for our recovery from the fall” *Counsels to Teachers, Parents, and Students*, page 274.

What is toil? Toil is work. What kind of work? Hard work. A person out to spend at least 15 minutes a day on it, hadn’t he? That is why the sinner doesn’t want it. That is why he spends his time in inventive ways to avoid it. That is why he is more interested in playing the ponies or stock market than he is in getting out and working. “Labor places a check on self-indulgence, and promotes industry, purity, and firmness.”

There has never been a time since the days of Sodom when it was so hard to preach and practice what we’re studying about tonight. There never was a time when it was so easy to take life easy. People are in the rat race, but the rat race is not concerned with digging ditches. We have machinery to do that. The rat race is not concerned with anything much that involves physical toil. It is largely using the brain to try to outwit the other fellow, to scheme and get the better of him; to build up one’s self at the expense of others. This is much of the rat race. But to get out and actually produce by work, sweat, toil, and pain is unpopular. It is not even known by millions of people today.

We are living in a time when literally millions of people have grown up on welfare. We are repeating the days of ancient Rome. We are repeating the days of Sodom. We may thank God for the efforts of well-meaning people to help the blind, the crippled, and the hopeless who have no way to earn a living. But millions of people are burdening the welfare rolls of our country. The worse thing about it is not the waste of public funds. It is what happens to the recipients. But before we pat ourselves on the back, remember that no amount of labor of the mind can take the place of the use of muscles.

Have you gotten far enough away from Babylon and Sodom so that you really appreciate God’s plan of physical labor? Would you do it if you didn’t have to? In some parts of the world, unless men work, they don’t eat. But millions of people in America are engaged in trying to prove that isn’t necessary.

Which way does your mind work? If you should suddenly inherit a million dollars, would you keep on working and working hard, using your muscles?

Someone says, “What for?”

As a part of salvation, my friends. And the man who allows his muscles to atrophy through disuse is going in the direction that leads to the sins of Sodom. As Isaac Watts wrote many years ago:

“In works of labor and of skill,
I would be busy too;
For Satan finds some mischief still,
For idle hands to do.”

Whether your idleness comes from government welfare or some oil well that your grandfather owned, or some bank stock a rich uncle left you. Whatever the reason for your idleness or leisure, the Devil will take advantage of it and lead you in one or all three directions: to greed, to gluttony, lust—the three gods we studied about the other night. And the man who is obsessed with greed for gold, the man who is obsessed with finding new ways to tickle the stomach, the man who has time and leisure to meditate and think upon lust in all its various forms, that man is far from the kingdom of God. And to come out of Babylon is more than ceasing to give lip service to any or all of these gods.

Flee out of the midst of Babylon. The Loud Cry of Revelation 18 says:

“Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers
of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues”
Revelation 18:4.

We must come to the place where we *hate* greed, where we *hate* self-indulgence, where we *hate* the slavery to appetite and passion, and where we *love* simplicity, love labor, love purity, love modesty. This is an experience, friends; this is an education in which our past education of which the past education of many of us must be put in a garbage can where it came from and where it belongs. Babylon is fallen, and all her idols are fallen with her. Those who go with her will fall with her.

I challenge you to think through this matter of labor and your attitude toward it and your relationship to it. Now, turn to Colossians 3:5:

“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the
earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil
concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry”
Colossians 3:5.

What does mortify mean? Put to death. Take the sword and chop its head off. Take the spear and thrust through to the heart. Crucify. What is it that is to be killed? Yourself. The old man. These natural inclinations. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth—fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness which is idolatry. You mean covetousness is idolatry? That’s what the Word of God says, my friends.

Covetousness is idolatry. The golden calf is being worshiped by millions today. Covetousness is the love of money, it's the greed for money. You can love money whether you have any or not. So if you're poor, don't pat yourself on the back. There are poor people who are just as greedy, and some rich men who are very generous.

God's goal is not to get all His saints poor. His goal is to get all His saints free from covetousness. And what a pity if the only way God can cure us of the love of money is to see that we don't have *any*. The people who are best equipped and best prepared to handle money are those who have been delivered from the idolatry of covetousness. Do you know what God's remedy for covetousness is? Continual giving. Continual giving starves covetousness to death. You see, if when mammon bellows at me and says, "Don't give," I say, "Listen, I'm going to give and you're not going to stop me. Be still." And I go ahead and give anyway. And I keep that up, and I keep that up. Every opportunity I have I use that muscle of generosity.

What happens eventually to covetousness? Why, it's starved up. Do you see? This is why the calls are increasing. This is why the opportunities to give are multiplied. They're not going to stop, friend. You and I can dry up the springs of benevolence, but oh, what a pity. How much better it is to understand what this is all about! God is trying to deliver me from the idolatry of Babylon, and one of the gods of Babylon is mammon. I don't want to worship that golden calf, do you? Oh no, friends. Babylon is fallen, is fallen, and all her graven images are broken. I don't want to fall with that system. And friends, really, wouldn't you hate to get to the place where you loved greed? Where you just loved to gloat over money that you'd gathered and just with a miser's greed, just count it over and not have any interest in other people. Wouldn't you hate to be like that?

Now, there're some people, what they want money for is not to hoard; they spend it just as fast as they get it. Some of them faster than they get it. But they spend it on themselves. They look with contempt on the miser and they say, "I'd hate to be that stingy." They're generous all right—with their own money and with other people's that they borrow without permission. But they're spending it all the time, for food and drink, for clothes, for automobiles, fine cars, furniture, for houses, boats, you name it. They're spending, spending, spending, spending. They're not misers; they're extravagant, their selfish.

There is a call for us for the foreign mission field or the home mission field, or we see some poor person, or there's some opportunity to do good. But if we are within a mile of that god of mammon, he yells at us and says, "Don't do that. You need that money for yourself," don't respond. Or if you do it, you do it in a very meager way. That will make God sorry He ever asked you, for God loveth a cheerful giver.

"Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride,
fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her
and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand

of the poor and needy” Ezekiel 16:49.

You mean there were some poor people in Sodom? Sure. Did the rich people didn’t look after them? No. They spent their money on themselves.

I asked you a little while ago, if you’d work even if you didn’t have to? Now I want to ask you another question: Would you be economical even if you didn’t have to? Would you be careful with how you laid out money for food, for clothing, for automobiles, for furniture, for houses even if you didn’t have to because of poverty? That’s quite a test, isn’t it? That’s quite a test. God trains some of us in the school of poverty. It’s a wonderful school. But sometimes people who have been trained in the school of poverty, God lets them graduate into the school of prosperity so that they can find out whether they’ve really learned the lesson or not.

Let me illustrate what I mean. Here is a man who is making a living. He has to pinch the pennies and cut the corners. He has to be careful, but he’s making a living. He’s not in debt, he’s paying his bills, but just barely. He has to watch every point. He’s paying a faithful tithe and giving some offerings. Gradually his income is doubled. What should happen to his tithe? It should double. What should happen to his offerings? Just double? It is rare to find anyone whose income has doubled whose offerings have even doubled. Check up on yourself. That’s a rare thing. Do you think a person who has been living, we won’t say luxuriously, but decently at a certain income, if his income suddenly doubles, do you think he ought to spend twice as much for food as he did last year? Twice as much on an automobile? Twice as much for furniture or homes or boats? This that and the other? My friend, this is what is happening in America. Only in my picture, instead of being overdrawn, the picture itself is worse than that. Because most people in America are not only spending all they’re getting, they’re spending a little more. They’re going into debt. What for? For extravagance, my friends. And extravagance leads directly to the full worship of all these three gods—the god of gold, the god of appetite, and the god of passion. Remember it does, friends. That’s what extravagance leads to. It leads away from the cross, which would keep people from the worship of idols.

Jesus came down here to give us an example and show us how to live. He was an example in all these matters. He never worshiped the god of mammon. He always had His appetite and every passion under control. He met temptation with a firm resistance. He’s our example and our pattern. Let’s follow Him, what do you say?

But my lesson is on the point of appreciating the things that God has given us to keep us *from* this idolatry. He has given us a lesson of simplicity and economy instead of extravagance.

I wrote down a few questions that I want to ask you tonight. Is there something besides the empty purse that keeps you from spending? You go to town and along the way, the billboards beckon you. If you are so fortunate to have a TV or radio, it’s beckoning not only through the finger but through the ear. Come and

spend money. If you open your mail there is almost sure to be some invitation to spend money. What for? To be happy. To get something to fill your stomach, to make you more beautiful, to make you more attractive to someone, to satisfy and pamper some appetite or passion or lust.

When you go into town and the show windows are filled, you go in the store, and there are all sorts of displays, can you run that gauntlet and get the one object that you went to town to get that you really need? Can you run that gauntlet and come back with what you needed without some other things that you didn't really need? Can you? Well, you can if the only money you have in your purse is to buy the one object. But now my question is: Is the only thing that keeps you spending money selfishly on extravagance, on display, show off and put on, is the only thing that keeps you from that the state of your finances? Could God trust you with a million dollars, and you'd still stay simple, economical, careful in your management? Could God do that?

There are men and women and young people here tonight that God would like to trust with far more money. And if we'll be faithful with pennies, and not even waste one-tenth of a dime, God is going to give some of us the privilege, if we've been faithful over a few things, to be faithful over many things. But not for our own glorification. Not so we can ride in high-priced cars, and have the Babylonians come in like Hezekiah did and show them all the golden things in our homes, to make them greedy to come and take us captives so they can take our houses and furniture. No. Oh, that God may give us a view of Calvary that will spoil the pull of the gods of this world. Oh, that God may bless us with an appreciation of the sacrifice of Christ so that we love simplicity and hate extravagance.

Is there something besides not having a car that keeps you at home, or that makes you walk when you could ride? Is that a fair question? Usually, when we see someone out on the highway walking, we know it's because they're so poor that they can't afford to ride. And thankfully, it isn't so on this campus.

Is there something besides a scanty meal that leads you to moderation instead of overeating? There are places in this world where everyone at every meal eats all that he can get. Some parts of the world people don't have enough to eat. Some parts of the world people go to bed every night hungry. Do you know very many people like that around here? I don't. It's a wonderful thing to be able to sit down at a good table furnished with plenty of good food and be able at the right time to say, "No, thank you, I've had enough." And mean it, and stick to it! Let your moderation be known unto all men.

Is temperance, moderation, self-restraint, your way of life? Are you temperate when you could be indulgent? Are you saving when you could be extravagant?

"In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But

(which becometh women professing godliness) with good works” 1 Timothy 2:9–10.

What is modest apparel? There are very few people here in this congregation tonight that even know what modest apparel is. But if you will begin wherever you are in your comprehension of the subject, and utterly refuse to wear anything that is immodest, and pray and study the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy, your vision of modesty will grow, and your clothes will grow to agree with your vision.

Do you know what modest apparel is? Modest apparel is that which covers the body so there is nothing conducive to awakening lust. Modest apparel is that which is so simple that it does not call attention to the one who wears it. This is why the Scripture says, “Not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array.” That scarlet harlot in Revelation 17 is decked with gold and precious stones and pearls. There are two things that characterize the dress of Babylon. One is exposure. The other is extravagant adornment. And Christian dress is the opposite in both points. Christian dress adequately covers. There is nothing in the material, or the way the clothes are made that suggests exposure of the body, in a way to awaken lust and passion. Nothing like that. There is nothing that dares. It is with shamefacedness and sobriety. And simplicity, I repeat, is the direct opposite of the extravagant adornment of Babylon.

“The love of dress endangers the morals and makes woman the opposite of the Christian lady characterized by modesty and sobriety. Showy, extravagant dress too often encourages lust in the heart of the wearer and awakens base passions in the heart of the beholder”
Testimonies for the Church, Volume 4, page 645.

When I think of all the time and money and effort that is being made to doll up these poor bodies, what a travesty. To take from and add to the natural beauty that God created, to twist and pervert and cripple beauty is not in Heaven’s sight. Beauty is God-created. We have a work to do as Adam did in Eden, to dress the garden and keep it. But to keep it is to *keep* it, to guard it and preserve it. Do you think that can be bought with money?

The remnant church in its final attack on the fortress of Babylon will be characterized by simplicity—simplicity in dress, simplicity in diet, simplicity in education, simplicity in worship, simplicity in every phase of life.

In the dream the Lord’s servant had 105 years ago this month in Battle Creek, she saw the people of God starting out traveling with loaded wagons. But as they advanced the path grew narrow, and they finally had to leave the wagons and go on horses. The path finally became so narrow that they had to leave the horses and proceed on foot. For then safety, they must remove their shoes and stockings and go on bare feet until finally, the path was stained with blood.

What does this mean? Study it there in *Volume 2*, the chapter “An Impressive Dream.” You will find that it points to economy and sacrifice rather than extravagance. You will find that it points to simplicity rather than the increase in facilities and ways of spending time and money. You will find that it calls for increased labor, more physical exertion on our part, and more dependence on God.

So as we study the second angel’s message, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen,” “Come out of her My people,” I am so thankful that God has given His people a positive message of reform in diet, reform in dress, reform in education, reform in every phase of life. What for? That we may be a simple people, a humble people, a modest people, a pure people. This is what Jesus died to purchase for Himself.

“Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” Titus 2:14.

So, as we think of these things tonight, let each heart examine itself. Let us not try to judge our fellowmen, friends. God has never made us judges. But deep within our hearts, let us say, “Dear Lord, am I worshiping the god’s of Babylon? Have I been taken in with this spirit of extravagance in this indulgent age? Are my wishes and longings, my effort, directed to filling my stomach, or satisfying some other physical desire? Have I become affected by the greed for gold; either to hoard or spend extravagantly? Or am I learning to walk with Jesus, the ever-narrowing path of self-denial, and rejoice in it because here I find fellowship with my Lord?

To enjoy, to save that we may give rather than if we may either hoard or spend extravagantly. This is joy. To enter into physical labor, not because we have to, but because we *choose* to, that we may have fellowship with Jesus and develop these physical bodies in harmony with His will, this is joy.

To choose the modest way, the simple way in worship, in dress, in education, in every phase of life, this is the happy way with Christ. It crucifies the natural disposition and develops those traits of character that will fit us for the society of saints and angels.

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