



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Revelation 17:1-6; Genesis 10:8-10; Genesis 11:1-9

"Babylon and the Origin of Babylonianism:"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] We are at that part of the exposition of the Book of Revelation that chapter 17 and 18 are before us and as you know from reading your Bible, the great subject of these two chapters is Babylon. And so in order to prepare a bit for it, we are going to do what we have done in other instances, take a look back at what the Bible in the earlier chapters has to say about Babylon. Today we are going to look at specifically chapter 11 verse 1 through 9 of the Book of Genesis. But for our Scripture reading, we'll read Revelation chapter 17 verses 1 through verse 6 first. And the Apostle John writes,

"And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls, came and spoke with me, saying Come here; I will shew you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters:

With whom the kings of the earth committed acts of immorality, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality. And he carried me away in the spirit into a wilderness: and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality: And upon her forehead a name written, a MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER

OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered greatly."

Now if you'll take a look down at verse 18, at the conclusion of this chapter the apostle writes, "And the woman whom you saw is the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth."

Now we are going to turn back to the Book of Genesis and ask that you turn to Genesis chapter 10 and we'll read verse 8 through verse 10. And verse 8, the author of the Book of Genesis, Moses writes,

"Now Cush became the father of Nimrod: he became a mighty one on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord, therefore it is said, Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the Lord. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar."

You might notice that expression, "in the land of Shinar," because that is another name for the area about Babylon and will come up later on in one of the other messages. Now turn over to the next chapter, chapter 11 and we'll read verse 1 through verse 9.

"Now the whole earth was to use the language, and the same words. And it came about as they journeyed east that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and settled there. And they said one to another, Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly. And they used brick for stone, and they used tar for mortar. And they said, Come, let us build for ourselves a city and a tower, whose top will reach into heaven; and let us make for ourselves a name, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth. The Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the sons of men had built. And the Lord

said, Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language; and this is what they began to do: and now nothing which they purposed to do will be impossible for them or will be withheld from them. Come, let us go down, and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth: and they stopped building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel; because there the Lord confused the language of the whole earth: and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth."

It is very interesting that that word, Babel or Babylon, is a word that probably meant "the gate of God". But it is related to the Hebrew word which meant "to confuse." Tohuw meant to confuse. And so we have a kind of word play here. Babylon, the gate of God, but it's also the place where God confused the languages and thus the linking together of "gate of God" with confusion in what happened at Babylon. May the Lord bless this reading of His word, and let's bow together for a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Father we give Thee thanks for the Scriptures and for the light that they shed upon the way in which we should walk. For the light they shed on the ministry of our triune God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for the fullness and beauty of the light that they shed on the atoning work of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ through whom and through whose sacrifice we have life; spiritual life, eternal life.

And we are thankful Lord that today on this, the Lord's Day we give Thee thanks for the spiritual blessings that are ours through the Lord Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah of the Scriptures. We thank Thee for all that we possess in Him, who is the second person of the eternal Trinity; very God of very God; possessed of all of the attributes of deity, thus able to meet all of the needs that we, as His disciples and

followers have. We are grateful. We express our thanks to Thee. We worship the name of the Lord our God.

Father, we pray particularly for the whole church of Jesus Christ today and the difficult days that we find ourselves in. We sense, Lord, how important it is that we who have come to Christ as our Savior be able to think clearly in our society where so much confusion reigns. Give us, Lord, a love for our Lord and a love for the Scriptures, and a love for the truth of God that will enable us to be fruitful in the society in which we are apart.

We pray for Dallas, Texas and its needs, for the United States of America, and we ask, Lord, for our President and for those who have important offices of government in Washington, in Austin, and in Dallas, and in whom we live. And we pray, Lord, for the sick. Those who are unable to be with us, especially those who have requested our prayers, we ask, Lord, that Thou would meet their needs, minister to them, give them the comfort of the truths of the word of God and the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ through the Spirit. Encourage them, build them up, give healing as it should please Thee and aid those who minister to them. Give them the sense of Thy presence with them and that they are carrying out a most important of tasks. We pray for our elders, for our deacons, for the members of this assembly, and for the friends of the visitors of those who are here with us today. Lord, may our time together be fruitful for them and for us.

Now we ask Thy blessing upon us as we sing and as we hear the word of God for Jesus sake. Amen.

[Message] We are going to spend our time this morning largely in Genesis chapter 11 verse 1 though verse 9 as a preparation for what we will be talking about when we come back to the 17th and 18th chapters of the Book of Revelation. John wrote in his first epistle, "We know we are of God and the whole world lies in the evil one." No where do we see that spirit more clearly than here in the building of the great tower of Babylon.

"Grandiose in its imagination, rebellious in its pretensions, yet reflective of a basic insecurity," someone has said. God said when He gave the original command to the early individuals upon the face of this earth, "Subdue the earth." So now evidently they have reached the conclusion that if God told us to subdue the earth, why not master it as well? And so like Lucifer, it is quite evident that they have for themselves the idea that they would like to be like God Himself. They want to build a tower whose top will reach into heaven, whose top is with heaven. They want to make themselves a name, but basically there is insecurity in what they are saying because they say in the last clause of verse 4, "lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth." They are confident in themselves and their words, but deep down within, they reflect that there is a possibility that their great aims for themselves may not be realized.

When one reads something like this and then reads the newspapers today, you cannot help but to see parallels in the way in which we, as men, glory in our great accomplishments of the 20th Century. We, in the United States of America, and in recent years particularly, have gloried in our space projects. And our televisions screens, our newspapers, are filled with the great things that we are doing. They are great things. And they are most interesting things and perhaps very, very significant for the time to come. But we need to be able to distinguish between the things that we are doing and the things that God is permitting to be done, or the things that are being done for us by the Lord God. And to do things in the name of the Lord and for the glory of God is the way in which our great accomplishments are to be done and by which they will ultimately be measured.

What Babylon turns out to be is the great organized institutional embodiment of the society of Satan. It's not surprising that we should read in Revelations chapter 17 and the 5th verse, "That the woman had upon her forehead a name written, Mystery, a Secret, Babylon the Great, Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth." On the other hand, with reference to this chapter, no where do we see the sovereignty of God more clearly.

In the chapter in which the accomplishments of men are glorified by men, we see the sovereignty of God very plainly. When man attempts to take over God's position and place, when we demands God's sword as if he has overcome God, then he receives the sword but its through his own heart. And we learn also that unity and peace on man's terms are not ultimate goods. Better division than collective apostasy which is what we see here.

Many years ago President Carnell of Fuller Theological Seminary, made a comment that has stuck in my mind. He said something like this, "Its better to be divided by truth then to be united in error. Better to be divided by truth, then to be united in error." I think that is true. In other words, we are interested in what is truth, fundamentally. We are not interested in unity, except in so far as it is unity in truth.

When our nation conducts its foreign policy and conducts it upon the terms of human autonomy, inevitable unity is what we are interested in, but not unity in truth. Let us as believing Christians realize that there is no unity that is worth while that is not unity in truth.

It is also interesting that nationalism comes to the fore here. It is almost as if one can see nationalism as God's fifth discipline for an evil race. We are plagued or we are troubled. You yourself determine the proper verbal statement by nationalism. The soul via government opposed to reality the problems of nationalism. It is almost as if that is His way of disciplining an evil race. Man's triumphalism has made it necessary for Him to make nationalism a problem.

Now with chapter 10 verse 1 of the Book of Genesis through chapter 11 verse 9, in one little section, the general history of mankind ends. Up to this point God has been dealing with men in general. And the stream of world history is a general stream of history from Adam down to this time. But after the Tower of Babylon and God's destruction of the tower and the confusion of tongues then the history in the word of God becomes a history of a little stream in the midst of the great stream. "A little rivulets,"

someone has said, in the midst of the great stream of human history because the Scriptures from this time on are interested in the line of Shem from which will come the Messianic King through Abraham the father. For example in the 10th verse when the 9th verse concludes and the place is called Babel because the Lord confused the language, Moses writes, "These are the records of the generation of Shem." Shem was one hundred years old and became the father of our pax-head two years after the flood and the story then becomes the story of Abraham and the promises that were given to him.

So general history ends, the special history that ultimately will bring us to the Messiah through Abraham begins now. That's the primary attention of the word of God from this time on.

The Tower of Babel incident occurred about one hundred years after the flood. It's a reminder of the inclination of the fallen heart of arrogance. Languages are now the experience of men. Languages do not arise from our ingenuity. They arise, so Scripture says, from our sin. So, we should not praise the ways in which men speak as if they are the results of our original doings. They are the results of God's doing.

Well, now I think it would be wise for us to go back just a few pages to chapter 2 for a moment. Let me just read a few verses because the story of Babylon begins even before this. In chapter 2 in verse 8 through verse 14, we read these words, and I'll just make brief reference to them after reading Genesis 2:8 through 14,

"And the Lord God planted a garden toward the east in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground, the Lord God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight, and good for food; the Tree of Life also in the midst of the garden, and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Now a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it divided and became four rivers. The name of the first is Pison: it flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold;" (I sat down at the breakfast table today after the morning service and one of the people at the

table was very interested in that statement and wondered where that was. I think he wanted to go and dig for it. [Laughter] But I was unable to help him.) "And the gold of that land is good: bdellium and the onyx stone are there. And the name of the second river is Gihon: it flows around the whole land of Cush. And the name of the third river is Tigris: and it flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates."

And of course you remember that the Euphrates flowed right through the center of Babylon. So the story of Babylon really begins back with the story of the creation. The relationship of the Euphrates River to Eden is really unknown, but it's obviously there is some connection between them. And they are related to a particular part of the earth. Some have even suggested that where Babylon was historically, was also the place where Satan himself liked to cohort on the earth. In other words, whenever Satan wished to deal with men specifically, that would be the area in which it took place and perhaps that is the reason that the Fall is described as it is. At any rate, what we read in Genesis up to the present point is the fact that Adam fell, that Cain then murders his brother, and so the answer to diluvium apostasy began right near Babylon. So when we think about the Fall, we are thinking about a fall that took place at least in the vicinity of Babylon itself. The Fall itself being caused by unbelief.

Unbelief is the basic sin of men. And when Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden, the basic reason he sinned was his unbelief. It was not his pride. It was not his selfishness. It was not his rebellion. These have often been given as reasons of Adam's fall and also as a description of the nature of sin. But the nature of sin is fundamentally unbelief; the failure to believe the word of God. The reason Eve rebelled and the reason Adam rebelled, was not because they were wicked and rebellious and sinful in any other way than they did not believe the word of God. The reason Adam rebelled was unbelief. The reason Eve rebelled was unbelief.

So the story of sin, its nature and its effects, is first of all, unbelief, then rebellion, because of unbelief. And thirdly, the final step, which incidentally we so much in our society is the immortality that ultimately flows. It is not surprising when Adam and Eve disbelieved the promise that they reached out to take the fruit. Then it is not surprising that having done that, that Cain shortly should be murdering his brother. This is the way in which we are to think through our relationships between sin and its results.

Jesus said the same thing in John chapter 16 when He is talking about the coming of the Holy Spirit. You may remember the things that He said. Among them are these things, "That when the Holy Spirit has come He shall glorify Me for He shall take of Mine and shall disclose it to you." Just before that He had said that when He comes He shall convict the world concerning sin, righteousness and judgment. "Concerning sin because they believe not on Me."

So whatsoever is not of faith is sin. The fundamental sin is unbelief. Please, my Christian brother and sister remember that that is really our fundamental problem. The believing that God is truthful when He writes His word, and therefore, that our response to the word of God is to believe it. To accept it as word from God and seek with God's help to follow it.

Now in the 10th chapter and the 8th through the 10th verses, we note the connection between Babylon and Nimrod. It is an interesting little section in the midst of all these names which we so often forget or pass over with only a cursory glance, we read that the "sons of Ham were Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan", in verse 6, but then in verse 8, "Now Cush became the father of Nimrod. He became a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord. Therefore, it was said, Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the Lord. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar."

Cush's son, Nimrod, was the father of Babylonianism, the debauching system of idol worship and carnal self exaltation. All paganism, all false worship is simply a

modification of this primal Nimrodic plan to defeat the purposes of the God of Noah by unbelief and rebellion against him.

"Cush begat Nimrod," we read. Nimrod, the hero of the Hamitic civilization. Incidentally, the word Nimrod may be related to the Hebrew word, "to rebel". And so we are not surprised that the tar gum Jonathan, a paraphrase of the Old Testament, reads on verse 9 that "he was a mighty rebel before the Lord." His very name suggesting that he was an individual who was rebelling against the truth of God. And in fact, the name Nimrod, may be related even to the god Bacchus, which as you know from your mythology was the god that was connected with the same kind of thing; debauching systems of idol worship and carnal self exaltation. So that Nimrod may have been Bar Cus, the son of Cush. Whether that is true or not is speculation. But at any rate, Nimrod is a fellow who before Frank Sinatra knew his doctrine, "He did it his way."

Now we read that he was a mighty hunter before the Lord. This is an interesting statement because the first thought you have is that he was a person that got up on Saturday morning, took his guns and went out in order to shoot some deer or some doves or a deer or so, became a mighty hunter before the Lord. But others have asked the question, do you think that God was really interested in the exploits of men in the bagging of game? And so they have suggested that perhaps a mighty hunter before the Lord, meant a hunter in the sense of ensnaring men by inciting them to rebel. Well I tend to think it is still the other way, but at any rate he extended hunting prowess to affairs of state. And so the hunter became the monarch and in Babylon we found the beginning of imperialism usurping God's place in His own universe.

The fact that he is called a mighty rebel before the Lord at this point in time is evidence of the worship of the Lord. There were some who were worshipping the Lord. But the world admires personal prowess and political power and Nimrod was the man.

We see that so in our society today. Today is the day of some important football games. And we have a great number of people who will be around their television sets

this afternoon, and incidentally, I want you to know that I probably won't be there, but I am not taking any pride in it. Because as old as I am I have spent enough time around the tube looking at football games that I think I can afford not to look for a few of these times. But I must confess that I still keep up with what is going on and one of the things that people in football particularly like is the person who manifests personal prowess and power.

So we have Sam Wyche, of the Cincinnati Bengals, after they have beat the Houston Oilers, sixty-one to seven, saying that he doesn't like the Oilers. That he thinks Granville is a stupid coach, that the team is a stupid team, and Granville replies very calmly, "But he does not like Sam Wyche any less than he did when he first met him."
[Laughter]

So it is natural for men to admire such men and the things that men do. Nimrod was a mighty hunter before the Lord and he undoubtedly had lots of people that thought he was great.

Now turning to the 11th chapter, however, we'll see how great Nimrod really was. The primeval history now comes to a climax in the building of the Tower of Babylon. After the Flood, the tower became the great institutional embodiment of the society of Satan; a theoretical structure basic to modern political and religious faiths. You can see that the things that the Babylonians were interested in were unity. Their purpose was a common unity. And their program was self-effort, united effort to accomplish the goal of unity.

But the principle, and this is the important thing, the principle is not the glory of God. The principle is the glory of man. How important it is to see that. Some commentators suggested that probably outside of the Tower of Babylon there was a great sign that said, "This building is dedicated to the greater glory of God." But it was anything but that. It was as they thought the great accomplishment of themselves. The construction of it is described in verses 1 through 4, "The whole earth used the same

language, the same articulation and the same words." They had the same vocabulary. They all understood each other. But they had rejected a very important principle of the word of God. If you will turn back to chapter 9 and verse 1, it's reiterated there. "And God blessed Noah and his sons and He said to them, Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth." There was the original instruction that they were given in the Garden of Eden. "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth." And verse 7 repeated again, "And as for you, be fruitful and multiply, populate the earth abundantly and multiply in it."

So instead of doing what God wanted them to do, with a systematic colonization of the earth that God had given to men, they wanted a strong central society. Of course it was anything but that if you will look at it carefully. It is a half-built city and even the materials they used were half-baked materials. And it is not going to be what they think it is, but that is what they want it to be. What they had is what might be called a huddle hunger. They wanted to get together and warm themselves instead of doing what God wanted them to do. They wanted to have a paradise upon earth, but God is left out. The center is not the Lord.

Now of course there had been worship of the Lord God and still was worshipped as far as we know on the earth. In chapter 4 in verse 26 says, "To Seth, to him also a son was born and he called his name Enoch. Then men began to call upon the name of the Lord." In chapter 8 in verse 20 after the flood we read, "Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and took every clean animal and of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar." But here it's just the opposite. It is us, it is we.

Did you notice those pronouns? We read in verse 3 of chapter 11, "They said to one another, Come let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly and they used brick for stone and tar for mortar and they said, Come let us build for ourselves a city and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth." The city is to be a city for pleasure. A

stepped pyramid that proclaimed the continuity of earth with heaven. The Hebrew says "whose top is with heaven".

These Ziggurats, as they were called, were gigantic towers many of them. And this was to be a gigantic one evidently. There usually was a large platform upon which the Ziggurats was built. The Ziggurats itself was kind of a stepped pyramid that went up to the sky and then when the top was reached a temple was built upon that and in the temple one of the false gods would be worshipped. They were quite common. Today archaeologists have found numerous remains of them and even some archaeologists believe they have found the remains of the original Tower of Babylon.

So a great stepped pyramid. In Proverbs chapter 18 and in verse 10 there is a text that bears on this. The writer of the Proverbs says, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runs into it and is safe." In chapter 20 verse 7 of the Book of Psalms we read, "Some boast in chariots, some in horses, but we will boast in the name of the Lord our God." Nimrod and his companions in Babylon would boast in themselves. "Building for themselves a name." Autonomous man. Homo sapiens, we say. Maybe we should just say Homo sap. [Laughter] Because that is really what they were.

A strong tower is the Lord. A few months back *The Wall Street Journal* in November, it really wasn't too many months back, had a full page ad by Lockheed. It was rather interesting. It had interesting pictures that they conceived of Babel. Now whether you can see it or not, but here is the picture they have drawn of Babylon. And it's very interesting the things that are said because there are some accurate biblical exposition in this which one would not necessarily expect from Lockheed. "The parable," it starts off with, "The parable, any employees of Lockheed?" You didn't say it, I said it. [Laughter] "The parable is older than the writing itself coming to us from the first murmurings of civilization. Yet its lesson seems to be aimed specifically at the late 20th Century.

In Genesis chapter 11, we read of an unnamed people building a great city on the plain of Shinar, Mesopotamia. To the narrator of this parable peering across time and desert from his own Nomadic traditions, these folk were awesomely clever. They all spoke one common language and because of this nothing was impossible to them. The plan of these ingenious people was to erect a huge temple tower, a Ziggurat, whose top would reach into heaven. It was to be an altar to their own intellect and would be called Babel, or gate of God. But God Himself came down and walked the streets in their city and saw their project under construction. The hubris of this arrogant race angered Him. He passed His hand over the city and cursed it. Now where there had been one language there are suddenly hundreds. Confusion reigned. Nothing was possible. The people abandoned their city and scattered across the land, taking with them their bewildering tongues and their thwarted temple that the Tower of Babel was left un-topped, carrying for the wind."

Now in case you would likely expect that Lockheed would tell us that we will not have unity again until the new Jerusalem is brought down from heaven which God will accomplish through the saving work of Christ, I hope you are not disappointed.

[Laughter] That's not their solution. Their solution is systems integration. [Laughter] And if we have systems integration we will return everything to the situation that existed in Babylon.

Well, let's see what God thinks about this. They want to build a name for themselves suggesting that everything is to be defined by them ultimately; "A name for themselves", not the name of the Lord. The only proper interpretation of anything in our society is ultimately God's interpretation. Please remember that. Please remember that. That He is ultimately Thee interpreter of everything in this creation of His; He alone knows perfectly the creation of and the interpretation of everything. These people want to share His glory, make a name for themselves. They want to take the position of the eternal God. "Don't call us, we'll call you," is what they want to be able to say. "Don't

fax us, we'll fax you," as our society says today. But really they lack trust in the Lord God. They are afraid they might be scattered. The ecclesiastics of our day shriek, "Unity, unity is good. Disunity is evil." Evil is not heresy. Evil is disunity. And remember Carnell's word, "It is better to be divided by truth, than to be united in error."

Truth is what we are most interested in.

Well, what do you think the Lord God will do in the light of this? Now don't think that the Bible doesn't have a lot of humor in it. God knows precisely what is happening down on the earth. But He directs Moses to write it as if He is so far up there that what He sees down there is just something going on that He doesn't fully understand, that He cannot really see it. And so they've said, "Come let's build for ourselves this great tower. Come, let's make bricks and burn them thoroughly." So God says, and the humor is really striking. God speaks the persons of the Trinity, "Come." He even used the language of the men. "Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language." While, look. He caught on men finally. Finally, He caught on to what they were doing. That dinky, little fellow down there on the face of His own creation. Man is so dinky, so dwarfish that a local inspection is needed by the Lord God of heaven.

So He comes down and the inspection takes place and the tower is so small evidently, that God kind of puts it in the language as if it were so small it is hard to find. They think of it as a great thing that they have constructed. He writes in language as if it is a small, little thing that He'll have to go down and take a good look before He is able to see it. Don't think the Bible does not contain a lot of humor in it. He sees the three-fold unity. They want to do something for the glory of man. That is their aim, unity. Self-effort, unified self-effort. Effort is their second unity. And finally for the glory of God, God sees it all. He is not threatened. He is not jealous. He does not call together the Trinity and say, "We better do something or they are going to take over Our job." One thing that He is really always jealous of is His own deity. And when His deity is threatened, then we discover that He is God; that we are not God.

So, He destroyed their united nations building and scattered them by confusion. Confusion of the divine order leads to confusion. You can imagine the workers. They arrive one morning, God has determined confusion. One of the men makes a statement in the morning and someone else says in response to it, *Wie bitte?* [German spoken] And the next fellow says to him, [French spoken]. And another fellow over here says, [German spoken] And they're all confused and upset and they lose their tempers and begin to separate. You cannot have fellowship with people you cannot talk to. These people had forgotten how to talk.

So, God fulfills Genesis chapter 9 verse 1 and verse 7. They refused to call on Us." His creation as He told them to, so He'll do it, except it won't be done nicely. It will be done nevertheless, because He is the sovereign God.

So they begin to spread out and colonize the creation. And the temple of Babylon is left there as a kind of folly; man's folly. In Scotland, over near Oberlin in the west side there is a building that has been started. It has been there for many years. It's still there. It has never been finished, so far as I know, called McKeg's Folly. There was a folly over in Hendersonville, North Carolina on top of one of the little mountains outside of this city of Hendersonville. There was a large building that was constructed and as a teenager, we use to drive all the way up the mountain and park there. And all that was left was the steel of the ten or twelve foot structure. That was another folly. I have forgotten the name of the McKeg who lived there, but we always called it somebody's folly. And down in the center of Dallas, ten or fifteen years ago, there was a building that someone started and then as a result of things that happened in Wall Street, they were unable to finish it and so for a year or two it was there unfinished and they called it that individual's folly.

Well this was the folly of man. Man calls it the "gate of God". God calls it confusion. Any time that He is not supreme in our thinking and in our lives and in our activities, it's confusion. Babylon's importance then is seen in it's assemble of collective defiance. Not individual, like Adam, Eve, Cain, Abel, Nor. But here we have collective

defiance. Human autonomy. No wonder in the Book of Revelation in chapter 18, Babylon is called the "dwelling place of demons". This is the beginning of its history.

God's program is a program of unity too. And it leads ultimately to the heavenly Jerusalem, so we are told in the Book of Revelation, where there is unity but unity in Christ. What a difference; unity in Christ and unity in men. You remember the Lord Jesus said in His great high priestly prayer speaks about that unity in chapter 17 and verse 21 of the Gospel of John. We read in our Lord's Prayer, "That they may all be one even as Thou Father art in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us that the world may believe that Thou does send Me." This is the favorite text cited by individuals who believe in unity but not in truth. And Jesus goes on to say in the last two verses, "Oh, righteous Father, although the world has not yet known Thee, yet I have known Thee and these have known that Thou does sent Me. And I have made Thy name known to them and will make it known that the love wherewith though does love Me may be in them and I in them." That kind of unity is the unity that really counts and which God will ultimately bring to pass by the glory of His eternal power.

The mystery of godliness progresses along with the mystery of iniquity. And we surely have a great deal of iniquity progressing and progressing in our day. But the mystery of godliness makes its progress founded in the blood of Calvary, extended by the rushing mighty, wind of the Holy Spirit's uniting action on the Day of Pentecost when individuals who could not speak the same language, nevertheless, by that mighty power of God began to speak the same language. Incidentally, that was God's way of saying that the time was coming when Babylon will be reversed. God's society is being constructed, united in the passion of Calvary, possessed of the Holy Spirit, all one body, we move to the city of God, the great city Jerusalem.

I had a friend who is now with the Lord, who was a very fine New Testament scholar, Dr. Merrill Tenney, at Wheaton College. Dr. Tenney later on in his life made a trip to the East. He was in Hong Kong. They invited him to preach and so he preached

with an interpreter. There were lots of Chinese speaking people there who also understood English and then there were a number who were there that didn't understand English. Dr. Tenney said that when he finished his message, he went to the front of the church and as the people were filing out and saying things to him, one man came and stood before him and looked at him and Tenney looked at him. It was obvious the man couldn't say anything in English. The only thing he could say was, "Hallelujah". And Tenney couldn't say anything to him in Chinese, so he said, "Amen". And they both smiled. They communicated. They communicated over their common relationship to Jesus Christ. Ultimately God is going to make it possible for us all to communicate in truth. Won't it be a wonderful day!

If you are here today and you never believed in our Lord Jesus Christ, we invite you to trust in Him. There is no other Savior. There is no other truth, than the truth for which He stands and which He has accomplished in His saving ministry. He has died for sinners. You are a sinner. We all fall into that category. Therefore, His sacrifice is for all. Come to Him. Believe in Him. The gate is open. The invitation is given to all. May God in His grace touch your heart. May you acknowledge your need. May you turn to Him and believe in Him. That decision is one made in your heart. And the term by which you come to Him is simply, trust. Trust in Him who died for sinners. May God in His grace so move you that you do that. Let's stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father, we ask that by Thy marvelous grace, Thy will deliver us from the Babylonianism that is still with us; the desire to extol in glory of man rather than in our great triune God. And oh, Father, if there is some in this audience who never turned to our Lord, may they by Thy grace sense their need, sense the provision that is made in our Lord Jesus Christ who died for sinners, and may they come to Him in response to His invitation, "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest."

“Babylon and the Origin of Babylonianism” by S. Lewis Johnson
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May oh God that be the response of faith on the part of any in this audience who do not yet have the assurance of the forgiveness of sins through Christ. For Jesus’ sake. Amen.