

Series: Life in Babylon
Sermon: Babylon and the Empire
Core Group Discussion Guide
February 26, 2017

Message Overview:

Throughout the Bible, the city of Babylon is a metaphor for pride expressed through power and empire. And empires are always opposed to God because they compete with God for the ultimate allegiance of their people. Daniel and his friends were ripped out of their culture and taken to Babylon where they were forced to figure out how to be God's people in a culture and country that was not godly and even set up to oppose God. How did Daniel respond to this dilemma? What does his story teach us about living and contributing to the good of our neighbors and countrymen while maintaining an identity and calling very different from theirs? In this series we are examining the Old Testament book of Daniel to see what God might have to say to us as we navigate living in a culture opposed to the way of Jesus. The first message of this series seeks to understand how the Bible describes Babylon and its opposition to God. Babylon isn't just a city in the book of Daniel; throughout the entire Bible, Babylon is symbolic of anti-God and anti-Christ power. When we understand what Babylon stands for in scripture, we can better understand how to be Jesus' people in such a setting.

Text(s):

- Genesis 11:5-9 (Babel is the ancient city of Babylon)
- Genesis 12 (Abraham is called out of *Babylon*, which is Ur of the Chaldeans)
- Jeremiah 50, 51:7
- Revelation 14:6-10, 17, **18** (reading chapter 18 is very insightful. Key in on vs 4-5)

Questions for Discussion:

It seems to me that this would be a very good Sunday to break into small groups of 3-4 people at the beginning of Sunday School and have them write down **three observations and three questions** they had about the message today. (I have a strong hunch there will be plenty of both, but it will be helpful to draw out a variety of thoughts)

1. (Gather everyone together and begin with hearing the observations from each group. Follow that with a time of exploring the questions.)
2. Describe the various ways the Bible portrays Babylon.
3. In which ways does our culture sound like Babylon?
4. Have someone read Galatians 5:19-13. What are the fruits of life in God's Kingdom?
5. Which fruit are we most tempted to see as unrealistic and possibly even detrimental to experiencing the good life here?
 - a. What desires cause us to believe this?
6. What are you hoping will be addressed through this study of the book of Daniel?
7. Is there anything you fear?