

“Come out of Babylon!” Even before the people of Israel had been physically hauled off into exile in Babylon, they were already spiritually slaves in Babylon—slaves of Civilization. They were in **spiritual** exile. In their hearts and minds, they had already wandered away from the Good Shepherd and looked to the ways of Civilization to watch over them. Their own rulers and leaders had convinced them to play the political games of the nations. They were convinced that **military** strength would defend them, that **walls** would protect them, and that **wealth** would provide for them. They turned away from the Creator—they did not trust in the Creator to defend, to protect, and to provide. The people of Israel were lost sheep, roaming through the wild political landscape of their day, trying to find a home, trying to find rest. The Creator declared, **“My people are lost sheep. Their shepherds have led them astray and caused them to roam. They wandered away and forgot their resting place.”**

And the people found **no rest** apart from the Creator—their **politicians** brought them no rest, their **wars** brought them no rest, their **wealth** brought them no rest. Everytime they tried to find safety and security through wealth and weapons, it only left them **anxious, worried, and stressed**. Their wealth and weapons always backfired on them. Their wealth and weapons drove them **insane**. Possessed by fear, the people went mad, unable to find any rest or peace in their souls and lives. Their land was filled with the idols of wealth and weapons and these **“idols drove them insane, possessing them with fear.”**

And their greatest idol was human intelligence and wisdom. They trusted in their own wisdom and intelligence and in the wisdom and intelligence of the nations they were allies with. They always believed they were **smart enough** to figure things out for themselves. Civilization convinced them that they could do **anything** they put their minds to. But the Creator told them the truth, **“Every man is senseless and without knowledge.”** But they would refused to listen. They kept listening to Civilization who convinced them that they would find freedom and rest through the strength of armies and militaries. Yet all the while the Creator declared, **“All soldiers will be silenced.”** They were convinced that if they followed Civilization’s ways, then there would be no end to their growth, wealth, and economic prosperity. Yet again the Creator declared the truth and they refused to listen, **“You who are rich, your end has come, it is time for you to be cut off.”** Civilization believed that it was eternal and what it was building would last forever. Yet the Creator declared, **“The peoples exhaust themselves for nothing, the nations’ labor is only fuel for the flames!”** Everything that humans build is a waste of time and energy, everything humans build is just fuel for the fire that is coming upon Civilization. For the prophet has declared, **“the Lord’s purpose is to destroy Babylon”**—the Creator is going to destroy all human Civilization.

The Creator says, **“I am against you, you who destroy the whole earth!”** Civilization’s whole method of taking care of itself is to push others down so it can lift itself up. Through this, Civilization has been destroying the earth—land, plants, animals, and people—from its very beginning. Therefore, **“The Lord will repay Babylon what she deserves! She made the whole earth drunk. The nations drank her wine and now they have gone insane!”** All the nations of the earth have followed the path and Way of Civilization—all nations have gone insane, destroying the very earth that allows them to live. And so the earth has been crying out against Civilization to the Creator, saying, **“Repay Babylon for her deeds! Do to her as she has done to others! May the violence done to our flesh be done to Babylon!”** And the Creator has promised to answer this cry from the earth and save the earth from Civilization, saying, **“I set a trap for you, Babylon, because you opposed me.”** Civilization will fall into the very pit it has dug for others. Civilization’s own ways will come crashing back down upon it. The Creator has declared, **“The arrogant one will stumble and fall and no will will help her up. Babylon will sink to rise no more.”**

Therefore the Creator has called out to all the earth, saying, **“Come out of Babylon!”** The Creator wants to save all his creation and all his creatures from Civilization and the destruction that Civilization is bringing upon the earth. And even though his people have wandered from him and trusted in Civilization, the Creator wants to rescue them, saying, **“I will forgive the remnant I spare.”** The Creator has not abandoned his people, **“Israel has not been forsaken even though her land is full of guilt.”** The Creator has stayed with his people and has gone with them into exile, so that he might bring them out again. **“The Creator will defend the cause of his people and bring rest to their land and unrest to those who live in Babylon.”** So again, the Creator calls out to all the earth, **“Come out of Babylon! Run for your lives! Do not be destroyed because of her sins!”** The only path is to leave Civilization. Civilization cannot be saved, it cannot be healed, it has to be destroyed. **“We would have healed Babylon, but she cannot be healed. So let us leave her! Do not be afraid! Leave and do not linger!”**

“Come out of Babylon!” We too live in Babylon, we too live in Civilization, we too live in a society of lost sheep who have listened to and followed shepherds that have no idea what they are doing. We live in a culture that is not at rest. We are **agitated, anxious, and depressed**. We are **stressed and worried**. We have gone **insane** and mad in the grip of **fear**. We have drunk the wine of Civilization deeply and it has made us insane, we have **lost our minds**—we cannot see any other way of living and existing. Yet everything our world labors for just adds fuel for the coming fire. Babylon, Civilization will be destroyed. There is no avoiding it. Our country will be destroyed. Our nation will be destroyed. The United States of America will come to nothing but ashes. We think we can live within it and fix Civilization, fix our nation—we think we can work within her mechanisms and politics to make her more humane and kind. But the prophet Jeremiah is clear, **“Babylon cannot be healed. So let us leave her!”** There is no way to fix Civilization, there is no way to heal our nation—her fate is destruction and fire.

Therefore the Creator urges us, **“Come out of Babylon! Run for your lives!”** This is not a command to physically leave Civilization, as there is nowhere we can go to physically escape Civilization in our world. This is a command to leave Civilization **spiritually** behind. But this spiritual invitation is terrifying for us. We are so afraid to stop relying on Civilization because we don’t think anyone or anything else can provide for us, protect us, and make us safe and secure. We have been **blinded** by our arrogance. We have gone **insane**, thinking that defending ourselves with **violence** and killing our enemies is the only way to find peace. We have gone **insane**, thinking that building up **wealth** and taking everything we can is the only way to find security. We are slaves in our **fear**. But the Lord tells us, **“Do not be afraid! Leave and do not linger!”** We cannot afford to hesitate. If we wait, Civilization will destroy us and our souls. If we spiritually stay in Civilization, then we will be destroyed by her sins—her ways of **arrogance, fear, and violence** will pollute our hearts and minds and pull us from the Lord’s way of **faith, hope, and love**.

“Come out of Babylon!” Even though we are **guilty**, even though we have participated in the **idolatry** of Civilization, even though we ourselves have gone **insane**, letting arrogance, fear, and violence control us, the Creator has not given up on us. The Creator offers us **forgiveness** and a way to new life even though our land is full of guilt. The Creator has **not** abandoned us. The Creator is **here** among us, begging us to wake up and snap out of our insanity. The Creator is urging us this day and everyday to follow Jesus and **“come out of Babylon!” Amen.**