

Sermon #69 — *Isaiah Series*

Title: **THE CRIMES OF BABYLON**

Text: Isaiah 24:5

Subject: *God's Indictments Against Man's Religion*

Date: Sunday Evening — January 27, 2019

Readings: *Mark Medley and Dave Burge*
Revelation 17:1-18:5

Introduction:

TWO RELIGIONS — There are, in reality, only two systems of religion in the world: the religion of Christ and the religion of antichrist. There are only two systems of doctrine in this world: the doctrine of free grace and the doctrine of free will. There are only two opinions about salvation in the world: salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, and salvation by the will, works, and worth of man. Everybody fits into one of these two categories. Every church and religious organization in this town and in the world fits into one of these two categories. But no one fits into both.

TWO CHURCHES — In the Bible there are only two churches: the false and the true. The false church, the church of antichrist, is Babylon, the great whore. Babylon represents all free will, works religion of

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every name and nation: Islam Judaism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and pseudo-Christianity (Genesis 11:1-9). Babylon is the religion of works, the religion of man, the religion of confusion.

- If you believe in salvation by man's free will, your religion is the religion of Babylon.
- If you believe in salvation by man's works, your religion is the religion of Babylon.
- If you believe in salvation conditioned upon, or determined by man, in anyway, to any degree, your religion is the religion of Babylon.

The true church is the Church of God, the Bride of Christ, the Lamb's Wife, made up of men and women in every age who trust Christ alone for their eternal salvation.

In this world Babylon is always opposed to and at war with the Church of God, antichrist is always at war with Christ. And before time is finished, the free will, works religion of Babylon will so thoroughly engulf the world that no one will be able to buy and sell and carry on the normal affairs of life who has not received the mark of the beast, who stands in

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opposition to the religion of Babylon, religion accepted and approved of by the world.

- The world accepts and defends any religion that approves of and accepts it.
- The world denounces as radical, divisive, and bigoted the gospel of God's free, saving grace in Christ.

But, in the end God will destroy Babylon! Antichrist will be destroyed! Free willism will be annihilated! Works religion will be cast into hell, from which it sprang! **In our text Isaiah, the prophet of God, tells us why God will destroy Babylon.**

(Isaiah 24:5) “The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.”

This is the conclusion to Isaiah's sermon, “The Burden of Babylon,” which began in chapter 13. It is the same thing which John describes in Revelation 17 and 18.

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(Revelation 17:1-18:5) “And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: (2) With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. (3) So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. (4) And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: (5) And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. (6) And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. (7)

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And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. (8) The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and **they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world**, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. (9) And here *is* the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. (10) And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, *and* the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. (11) And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition. (12) And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. (13) **These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.** (14) **These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb**

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shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful. (15) And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. (16) And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. (17) For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. (18) And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth. —

— (18:1) And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. (2) And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. (3) For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of

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her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. (4) And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. (5) For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

Proposition: In our text (Isaiah 24:5) the prophet of God tells us precisely what the sins of the great whore, Babylon, are.

(Isaiah 24:5) “The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.”

The title of my message is **THE CRIMES OF BABYLON**. Isaiah tells us that “*the earth is defiled under the inhabitants thereof.*” Babylon, the harlot, the great whore, has caused the people of the earth to become drunk with the wine of her fornication. Here,

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the Lord God, speaking by his prophet Isaiah, brings three indictments against Babylon. These three crimes I lay at the door of every church, at the foot of every pulpit, and to the charge of every preacher of freewill/works religion.

LAWS TRANSGRESSED

1st — **They have “transgressed the laws” of God.** — Isaiah is not here addressing the transgressions of God's law by the profligate, immoral, and profane of the world. Drunkards, thieves, murderers, adulterers, and perverse wicked men are commonly and properly seen as transgressors of the law. But **here Isaiah is talking about the transgressions of the law by the creeds and practices of religion.** — Here are three ways the religion of the world, the freewill/works religion of Babylon transgress the laws of God.

1. **Some transgress God's laws by changing them to accommodate the opinions, desires, and customs of men** (Exodus 20:1-17).
 - They make only the open worship of idols to be idolatry (Exodus 20:3).

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- They make the use of images acceptable (Exodus 20:4).
- They make only profane oaths by God's name to be the taking of God's name in vain (Exodus 20:7). — Jokes about God and the things of God are the taking of God's name in vain. — Minced oaths, using the name of God as a by-word, is taking God's name in vain (O my God — My Lord — Gosh — Lord — Jesus — Gees — God — My God).
- They make church attendance to be Sabbath keeping (Exodus 20:8).
- They make polite words and obligatory care to be the honoring of parents (Exodus 20:12).
- They make “*thou shalt not kill*” to mean only “thou shalt not commit physical murder” (Exodus 20:13).
- They make only “one-night stands” to be fornication and adultery (Exodus 20:14).
- They make only robbery to be stealing (Exodus 20:15).
- They make only open lies to be bearing false witness (Exodus 20:16).

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- They make only the passionate, envy of another's possessions covetousness (Exodus 20:17).

They transgress the law by limiting the law's claims to outward, letter obedience, and by altering the letter of the law to suit man's idea of righteousness. Whereas, the demands of God's law are infinite, spiritual and unbending. The ten laws of God, given in Exodus 20, require...

- The Recognition of God's Supremacy.
- The Spiritual Worship of God — No Idolatry.
- The Reverence of God's Name.
- Rest in God's Purpose of Grace in Redemption and Providence.
- Respect for God-ordained Authority.
- The Sanctity of Human Life — Seeking to Help the Lives of Men.
- The Sanctity of the Home — Marriage.
- The Sanctity of Private Property.
- Honesty, Integrity, and the Protection of Your Neighbor's Name and Reputation.
- Contentment with God's Provision.

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2. Some transgress God's laws by changing them to accommodate the opinions, desires, and customs of men. **Other's transgress the laws of God by altering the purpose and use of the law.**

Paul tells us plainly *that “the law is good, if a man use it lawfully”* (1 Timothy 1:8). If we use the law for the purposes for which God intended it, it is good. But if we seek to use it for other purposes, we transgress it and make the law a tool for evil.

In the Bible, we are told that the law of God was given for four purposes. These four things are the only lawful uses of the law.

1. To Identify and Expose Sin (Romans 7:9).
2. To Condemn Men for the Guilt of Sin (Romans 3:19).
3. To Restrain Wicked Men and Women from Acts of Sin (1 Timothy 1:9-10).
4. To Turn Sinners Away from Sinai to Calvary, Away from Moses to Christ (Galatians 3:24-25).

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(Galatians 3:24-25) “Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. (25) But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.”

When religious men and women use the law for any other purpose, they transgress the law and make it a tool of wickedness.

- To make the law a means of justification is to transgress the law (Romans 3:20).
- To make the law a rule of life for the believer is to transgress the law (1 Timothy 1:8-10; Colossians 2:16-17).
- To make obedience to the law a means of sanctification, a basis for assurance, or a test of spirituality is to transgress the law (Galatians 3:1-3).

(Galatians 3:1-3) “O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? (2) This only would I learn of you, Received ye the

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Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? (3) Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?"

- To make Sabbath keeping the observance of a day rather than the life of faith is to transgress the law (Colossians 2:16; Hebrews 4:9).
3. **The world of works religion transgresses the law of God by lowering its standard to accommodate sinful man.**
- All who teach salvation by the works of the law lower the standard of the law.
 - All who uphold the law as a rule of life for God's saints lower the law's standard.

The only person in the world who truly honors God's law is the sinner who looks to Christ alone as the fulfilment of the law (Romans 3:31; 8:1-4; Galatians 5:1-4).

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(Romans 3:31) “Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.”

(Romans 8:1-4) “*There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (2) For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. (3) For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: (4) That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

(Galatians 5:1-4) “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. (2) Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. (3) For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. (4) Christ is become of no effect unto you,

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whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.”

I lay this charge against every religious legalist, against every church and preacher who teaches either justification or sanctification by the works of the law — “They have transgressed the laws” of God!

CHANGED THE ORDINANCE

2nd — “*They have changed the ordinance.*” — The word translated “*ordinance*” means enactment, decree, law, or ordinance. In our text it refers to the Book of God, the Holy Scriptures. This Book is the Word — “*The Ordinance*” — of God. It is the authoritative decree of the Almighty.

This is the charge God lays against Babylon, the whole religious world. — **They have changed, altered, perverted the Word of God.** — And they have done so while pretending to honor and defend the Word (Jeremiah 23:21, 25-32, 36; Acts 13:8-11).

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(Jeremiah 23:21-36) “I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. —

(25) I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed. (26) How long shall *this* be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? Yea, *they are* prophets of the deceit of their own heart; (27) Which think to cause my people to forget my name by their dreams which they tell every man to his neighbour, as their fathers have forgotten my name for Baal. (28) The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and **he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully.** What *is* the chaff to the wheat? saith the LORD. (29) *Is* not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer *that* breaketh the rock in pieces? (30) Therefore, behold, I *am* against the prophets, saith the LORD, that steal my words everyone from his neighbour. (31) Behold, I *am* against the prophets, saith the LORD, that use their tongues, and say, He saith. (32) Behold, I *am* against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and

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do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD. — (36) And the burden of the LORD shall ye mention no more: for every man's word shall be his burden; for ye have perverted the words of the living God, of the LORD of hosts our God.”

(Acts 13:8-11) “Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withheld them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. (9) Then Saul, (who also *is called* Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, (10) And said, **O full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?** (11) And now, behold, the hand of the Lord *is* upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.”

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Here are eight areas in which Babylon (Remember, Babylon represents all false religion, all free will, works religion) has perverted the Word of God. They have perverted what the Word of God says about...

1. **The character of God.** — Either God is sovereign, or he is not God! Either he is just, or he is unjust! Either he is righteous, or he is unrighteous! There is no in-between ground!
 - His Providence (Romans 11:36)
 - His Purpose of Grace (Romans 8:28-30)
 - His Justice and Truth (Romans 3:24-26)
2. **The Person and Work of Christ** (Hebrews 10:5-14). — He who is our God and Savior is “*a just God and a Savior*” (Isaiah 45:20-25). Either Christ redeemed his people, or he failed his work.
 - His Eternal Deity
 - His Complete Humanity
 - His Effectual Redemption — Substitution
 - His Triumphant Resurrection
 - His Heavenly Exaltation
 - His Sovereign Dominion

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3. The Office and Work of God the Holy Ghost (John 16:8-13).

- He convicts (convinces) chosen, redeemed sinners of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.
- He converts chosen, redeemed sinners by omnipotent mercy and irresistible grace. — Regeneration! — Effectual Calling!
- He comforts believing sinners with the pardon of sin by the revelation of Christ.

4. The Blessed Work of Salvation — “*Salvation is of the Lord!*”

- By Grace Alone
- Through Faith Alone
- In Christ Alone

5. The Ordinances of the Gospel

- Baptism, the Believer’s Confession of Christ
- The Lord’s Supper, the Blessed Remembrance of Christ

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6. **The Providential Rule of Christ** (John 17:2; Romans 8:28; Proverbs 12:21)

7. **The Life of Faith** — “*The just shall live by faith*” (Hebrews 10:38). The whole of the believer’s life is a life of faith.

- We begin in faith! — Salvation begins in a look.
- We walk in faith! — Salvation is maintained by a look.
- We die in faith! — Salvation ends with a look.

8. **Our Basis of Hope in the Day of Judgment** (2 Corinthians 5:10-11)

- There is a Day of Judgment which shall come.
- God will judge and reward all according to their works.

Our basis of hope in that great day is the substitutionary work of Christ. — My sin is gone. Christ put it away! — My righteousness in Christ is perfect! — My future is glorious!

Illustration: *Rowland Hill’s Dream*

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Babylon, the world of freewill/works religion transgresses the law of God and changes the ordinance of God. — And...

BROKEN THE COVENANT

3rd — “**They have broken the everlasting covenant.**”

— The everlasting covenant is a covenant of pure, free, unalterable grace made by the Triune Jehovah with Christ our Surety before the world began. Because it is not conditioned upon man’s obedience, it cannot be nullified or broken by man’s obedience.

This covenant was...

- Made in Eternity (Ephesians 1:3-6).
- Secured the Salvation of God’s Elect (Jeremiah 31:31-34; 32:38-40).
- Ratified by the Blood of Christ (Hebrews 9:12-26).
- Sealed to Every Believer by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13-14).

But the whole lost religious world despises covenant grace, casts it aside, and tramples it under the foot of their own free will and their own

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good works. In that sense, they have broken the covenant.

APPLICATION

(2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1) “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? (15) And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? (16) And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. (17) Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, (18) And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. — (7:1) Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse

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ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

(Revelation 18:4) “And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.”

Amen.