

Be alert—don't settle for Babylon when New Jerusalem is coming.

A major theme in **Revelation** is the contrast between **Babylon** (the corrupt world system) and the **New Jerusalem** (God's redeemed kingdom). Revelation challenges believers **not to put their hope in Babylon's temporary wealth and power, but to remain faithful to Jesus and long for the coming of God's true city.**

1. Babylon vs. New Jerusalem: Two Opposing Cities in Revelation

Throughout **Revelation 17-22**, **Babylon** and **New Jerusalem** are presented as **two contrasting cities, representing two different ways of life:**

- **Babylon** symbolizes **human pride, corruption, and idolatry**, built on power, luxury, and oppression.
- **New Jerusalem** represents **God's eternal kingdom**, where righteousness, justice, and worship flourish.

A. Babylon: The City of Seduction and Judgment (Revelation 17-18)

Babylon is depicted as a **prostitute** who seduces the world with **power, wealth, and false worship:**

"Come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who is seated on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality, and with the wine of whose sexual immorality the dwellers on earth have become drunk." (Revelation 17:1-2, ESV)

Babylon:

- **Deceives the nations** (Rev 17:2, 18:3).
- **Persecutes God's people** (Rev 17:6).
- **Glorifies itself, believing it will last forever** (Rev 18:7).
- **Is ultimately destroyed** (Rev 18:21).

Despite its **grandeur and appeal**, Babylon's fate is **destruction**, and Revelation warns believers **not to get comfortable in Babylon's false security.**

"Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues." (Revelation 18:4, ESV)

B. New Jerusalem: The Eternal City of God (Revelation 21-22)

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In contrast, **New Jerusalem** is God's **true city**, where **His presence dwells with His people**:

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away... And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." (Revelation 21:1-2, ESV)

New Jerusalem:

- **God dwells with His people** (Rev 21:3).
- **No more death, mourning, or pain** (Rev 21:4).
- **Filled with God's glory, replacing the need for a temple or sun** (Rev 21:22-23).
- **The nations are healed and walk in God's light** (Rev 22:1-2).

This is **our true home, our ultimate hope**—yet the temptation is to **settle for Babylon** instead of waiting for New Jerusalem.

2. The Warning: Don't Settle for Babylon

A. Babylon Is Attractive, But Temporary

Babylon **looks powerful, wealthy, and secure**, but it is **built on lies and destined for destruction**.

"For in a single hour all this wealth has been laid waste." (Revelation 18:17, ESV)

This means:

- **Babylon is not worth our ultimate trust.** Any security or status we gain from it **will crumble**.
- **Babylon thrives on compromise.** To succeed in its system, one must **bow to its idols**—power, wealth, pleasure, or fear.
- **Babylon demands loyalty, but it cannot save.** Revelation urges believers to **live as exiles, not citizens of Babylon**.

B. The Call to Be Alert and Faithful

Revelation **calls us to stay spiritually awake** and not be deceived by Babylon's temporary success.

"Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!" (Revelation 16:15, ESV)

Being **alert** means:

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- **Not putting our hope in earthly power or wealth.**
- **Refusing to compromise faithfulness for comfort.**
- **Living in anticipation of God's true kingdom.**

C. Jesus' Words: Seek the Kingdom, Not Babylon

Jesus gave similar warnings:

"For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?" (Mark 8:36, ESV)

"But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." (Matthew 6:33, ESV)

Revelation **reinforces this by urging believers to fix their eyes on New Jerusalem, not Babylon.**

3. Why This Matters for Us Today

A. We Live in Babylon, But We Belong to New Jerusalem

Like the early Christians, we live in a world that resembles **Babylon**—filled with **false promises, distractions, and temptations.**

- **The pressure to conform is real.** Culture demands our **loyalty, attention, and participation** in its values.
- **There is comfort in Babylon.** It offers **wealth, entertainment, and social acceptance**, making faithfulness harder.

Yet **Revelation reminds us:** Babylon **will not last**—New Jerusalem **is coming.**

B. Where Are We Placing Our Hope?

One of the core messages of Revelation is the call to examine **where we are investing our lives.** Babylon offers **temporary rewards**, but they come at the cost of **compromise and misplaced trust.**

We should ask ourselves:

- **Are we trusting Babylon's system for security?** Do we put more hope in financial success, political power, or cultural acceptance than in God's kingdom?
- **Are we prioritizing success, wealth, or approval over faithfulness?** Do we make small compromises to fit into the world's systems, even when they conflict with our faith?

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- **Are we longing for New Jerusalem, or have we grown comfortable in Babylon?** Do we live as people truly waiting for Christ's return, or do we act like this world is our final home?

Revelation 3:11 (ESV) – *"I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown."*

C. Living as Citizens of New Jerusalem Now

Even though **New Jerusalem has not fully arrived, we are called to live as its citizens today**. This means:

1. **Keeping our allegiance to Jesus above all else.**
 - Babylon demands worship and loyalty, but we worship **the Lamb alone** (Rev 5:12-13).
2. **Living with kingdom values in a Babylonian world.**
 - Where Babylon pursues greed, power, and self-glory, **New Jerusalem is marked by justice, love, and faithfulness** (Rev 21:3-4).
3. **Bearing faithful witness, even when it costs us.**
 - The saints in Revelation **"conquered by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony"** (Rev 12:11).
 - We **stand firm in our faith**, even when culture opposes us.

Philippians 3:20 (ESV) – *"But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ."*

4. Scholarly Insights on Babylon vs. New Jerusalem

A. Michael Gorman: Babylon as a False Kingdom

Michael Gorman, in *Reading Revelation Responsibly*, explains:

"Babylon represents **a seductive but ultimately doomed empire**, built on economic exploitation, violence, and idolatry. Revelation's message is clear: **Do not invest in Babylon, because it will fall. Invest in the kingdom of God, because it will last.**" (*Reading Revelation Responsibly*, p. 137)

This means **faithfulness to Christ is a long-term investment, while allegiance to Babylon is a short-term gamble that ends in destruction.**

B. David deSilva: Babylon's False Security

David deSilva, in *Discovering Revelation*, warns:

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"Babylon offers security and success, but its foundation is **spiritual compromise**. The warning of Revelation is not merely about future judgment but about the present reality: **Babylon is always falling, even when it looks strong**. The wise will align themselves with the city that will remain—the New Jerusalem."
(*Discovering Revelation*, p. 312)

C. N.T. Wright: The Temptation of Babylon

N.T. Wright, in *Revelation for Everyone*, describes Babylon's pull:

"The great danger for Christians is not outright rejection of God, but **gradual accommodation to Babylon's ways**—seeking power instead of love, wealth instead of generosity, influence instead of humility. Revelation reminds us that the city we are meant for is coming; we must live now as citizens of that kingdom, not this one." (*Revelation for Everyone*, p. 192)

5. Conclusion: Don't Settle for Babylon When New Jerusalem Is Coming

A. Babylon's Promises Are Empty

- Babylon **looks impressive but is already doomed to fall**.
- Its power is **based on corruption, greed, and violence**.
- Its rewards are **temporary and deceptive**.

B. New Jerusalem Is Worth Waiting For

- It is **built on God's righteousness, justice, and eternal glory**.
- It is **our true home, where we will dwell with God forever**.
- It is **already breaking into the present through the faithful witness of the Church**.

C. How Do We Live Alert and Faithful?

1. **Resist Babylon's seduction**. Don't be drawn into greed, power-seeking, or compromise.
2. **Live by the values of New Jerusalem now**. Choose love, justice, faithfulness, and worship over the world's ways.
3. **Fix your hope on what lasts**. Seek first the Kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33).

"The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come!' And let the one who hears say, 'Come!'"
(Revelation 22:17, ESV)

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Final Thought:

We don't **withdraw** from the world, but we **refuse to be shaped by Babylon's values**. Instead, we live as **citizens of the kingdom that is already breaking in and will one day fully come**.

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