

BEWARE THE CURIOSITY OF THE KING OF BABYLON

The Internet and the Christian

Paul Thomas

2Kings 20:15 *And he said, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All the things that are in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them.*

The King of Babylon sent ambassadors to Jerusalem with the secret mission of assessing the strength and secrets of the Kingdom of Judah. We must understand the King of Babylon as a metaphor for a world in the service of Satan. It is significant that Babylon is prominent in the first and the last book of the Bible. The first time was when the children of Noah decided to congregate and build a tower that reached into heaven. God scattered them, confused the languages, and the place was called Babel, which means confusion.

Genesis 11:9 *Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.*

The next significant mention of Babylon is in the Book of Revelation. The Lord himself calls the system of the world, dominated by the antichrist, Babylon. “And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication” (Revelation 14:8). A careful reading of the Book of Revelation seems to indicate there is a connection between the modern internet and this insidious entity called Babylon. This is so because Revelation 18:10-13 registers diverse goods and products bought and sold in Babylon. Among them are the following:

Revelation 18:12 *The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,*

Revelation 18:13 *And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.*

It is our humble argument that the internet matches this amazing, all-encompassing business juggernaut called Babylon today. Where else can one purchase gold, silver, spices and souls of men (sex, pornography etc.)? No one can put a price on the internet; it is incalculable. Imagine what will happen when one day the Lord Jesus returns and “switches

off” the internet! The merchants of this earth will wail and mourn for such colossal riches. The above has been labored so we as Christians will approach the internet, and social media in particular, from within a biblical framework – God does not want his people to be part of a system of confusion. King Hezekiah was naïve to the intentions of the King of Babylon and gave his ambassadors a personal guided tour of the entire palace. Like King Hezekiah, Apostolics are carelessly revealing their secrets to the Babylon of this world. King Hezekiah forgot that Jerusalem and his palace belonged to God; Israel was the only country God reserved for himself of all the nations of the earth.

Deuteronomy 11:11 But the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven:

Deuteronomy 11:12 A land which the LORD thy God careth for: the eyes of the LORD thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.

King Hezekiah did not consult the Lord or the prophet Isaiah. I plead with our Apostolic youth in particular: please consult with your pastors and spiritual guides before you carelessly surf and interact on the internet! The King of Babylon is a metaphor for the godless world around us. Like the King of Babylon, the world may appear nice and harmless, but the aim is to make us at ease and collect as much data as possible. Today, we are the Temples of the living Christ; we must be more prudent and circumspect in what we click or upload on the internet.

1Corinthians 3:16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

1Corinthians 3:17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

In his book, *The Googlization of Everything* (2011), Siva Vaidhyanathan, Professor of Media Studies and Law at the University of Virginia, warns that modern liberal states, who profess freedom of choice and expression, invite us to relax, feel comfortable, and then go online and “be ourselves” – reveal all our secrets. He writes that they have learned from the mistakes of oppressive intelligence agencies such as the KGB of the former Soviet Union and the dreaded Stasi of East Germany. Even Erich Honecker, the Head of the Stasi during the pre-internet Cold War, wished there was a system where people **willingly** shared their addresses, pictures, hobbies, friends, movements and habits. His dream has been fulfilled today with the emergence of Google, Facebook, Instagram and other digital platforms. “We don’t know all the ways in which we are being watched or profiled – we simply know that we are. And we don’t regulate our behaviour under the gaze of surveillance: instead, we don’t

seem to care” (Vaidhyanathan, 2011, p. 112). There is no such thing as a free lunch, goes the saying! Why do you think many apps are free to download? The goal is to gather valuable information about us each time we make a call, text someone or upload a picture.

In the book, *The Snowden Files* (2013), the journalist Luke Harding interviewed the former intelligence officer, Edward Snowden:

What he had seen had “disturbed” him deeply. “Even if you’re not doing anything wrong you’re being watched and recorded,” he told *the Guardian*. “The storage capability of these systems increases every year consistently by orders of magnitude to where it’s getting to the point...you don’t have to have done anything wrong. You simply have to eventually fall under suspicion from somebody, even by a wrong call. And then they can use this system to go back in time and scrutinize every decision you’ve ever made, every friend you’ve ever discussed something with” (Harding, 2013, p.149).

So far, the focus has been on unnecessarily sharing personal information about ourselves generously on the internet because we are the holy possessions of the Lord Jesus Christ and the danger this information will be used against us. There is another good reason for Christians to revisit their use of the internet: it provides an ideal opportunity for the Devil to plant the seed of pride in our hearts.

Daniel 4:30 *The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? (Daniel 4:30).*

Note that the King of Babylon is once again involved! It is clear that even secular writers are becoming worried about the internet. A recent book, written by the journalist, Will Storr, has the title, *Selfie – How We Became So Self-Obsessed and What It’s Doing to Us* (2019). The writer investigates the origin of human individualism and narcissism (excessive self-love). It is clear that social media exploits the human desire for recognition and puts unbearable pressure on us to be “slim, rich, happy, extroverted, popular – flawless”. Put in a Christian perspective, all the Devil needs to do is encourage us to log onto social media. Once we engage with strangers, who, like all other human beings are sinful, we begin to slowly change and become like them. Before long, we will find ourselves sharing the same interests, fears and desires as these strangers who do not know the Lord Jesus Christ. Is this the will of the Lord? Certainly not!

2Corinthians 6:14 *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?*

Psychologists are concerned about what the internet and social media in particular is doing to our attention span. University Professors and lecturers have sounded the alarm about students' reduced concentration levels. We now have a generation of youth who spend most of their waking hours in the digital world. They text friends, purchase goods (even order food home), make doctor's appointments, comment/like stories and articles forwarded by friends, quickly read a few newspaper headlines (and perhaps a paragraph here and there) etc. In other words, they are constantly shifting attention from one subject to the other without the opportunity to deal in depth with any of the issues. In another recent book, *Anti-social Media: How Facebook Disconnects Us and Undermines Democracy* (2018), Professor Vaidhyanathan, writes the following:

Like casinos, slot machines, and potato chips, *Facebook* is designed to keep you immersed, to disorient you just enough so you lose track of the duration and depth of your immersion in the experience, and to reward you just enough that you often return, even when you have more edifying, rewarding or pleasurable options for your time and effort within your reach. This is not an accident.

What the above means is that the social media is deliberately addictive. It is designed to make us digital addicts. Martha was busy in the kitchen preparing food for the Lord, but the Lord gently corrected her. How much more will he reproach us if we are so busy texting, liking, subscribing etc. with no time for the Lord?

Luke 10:41 *And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:*

Luke 10:42 *But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.*

In summary, King Hezekiah naively granted the King of Babylon access to the treasures of the Lord. He brought a curse on his descendants. The Apostolic church must prayerfully guide the youth of today to beware the dangers of the internet. Of course, there are many benefits to the internet, but we need the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ to guide us away from the embedded landmines. The more young people learn to log off the internet, the less susceptible they will be to the pressures of the selfie and "I" generation (iphone, ipad etc.). Let us be curious about the Lord Jesus Christ and beware the curiosity of the King of Babylon! Amen!