

# PLAIN TRUTH®

CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION®

*Come Out of Her  
and Come to Me!*

*By Greg Albrecht*

*Come out of her, my people...*  
(Revelation 18:4).

**T**he 18th chapter of Revelation is a funeral dirge for the systemic, institutionalized religion mankind has historically embraced. Revelation triumphantly foresees a Christ-centered victory over Christ-less religion that exalts itself and praises human effort and performance rather than worship of the Lamb of God.

Revelation 18:4 is not a literal call to God's people to remove themselves physically from a city or nation or culture, rather it is a call to accept deliverance from the seductive trappings of religion.

All world religions, including much of Christendom, explain and insist that one can only be a part of their religion if one is doing the

right things and avoiding the wrong things. The heart and core of Christ-less religion is human performance.

Jesus says, *Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest* (Matthew 11:28-30).

Following Jesus is not predicated on what one does and how one behaves—following Jesus is based on believing and trusting. Note the two imperatives: **1) Come out of her and 2) come to me!**

All world religions, including religion as it functions and exists within the broad Christian world, propose that religious practice, deeds, creeds, rituals, prayers and ceremonies is the way to please and appease God and the way to gain his favor and love.

Jesus says the opposite—his invitation is to **1) come out of her and 2) come to me!** Jesus

continually opposed religion as the answer— many times he said religion was the problem.

Jesus invites those who are weary and burdened to **come to him**.

- Matthew 11:28-30 doesn't record Jesus inviting us to frequent a church building or become a member of a denomination. Nor does any other passage in the Bible.

- The invitation of Jesus is not a summons or a divine call to memorize and believe a particular set of dogmas or creeds. Christ-centered doctrine has its place—an important

one no doubt, but the invitation of Jesus is come and embrace him—not a set of doctrinal teachings. The invitation is first and foremost a relational invitation, rather than a cognitive and cerebral one.

- Jesus does not write us a long to-do list that, once we follow it, turns us into a Christian. He does not prescribe rituals and ceremonies and confessions and prayers that, once followed, will make us a Christian. He says **come to me**.

- Jesus doesn't direct us to seek and find a pastor or priest and sit at their feet. He invites us to **come to him**, to believe and trust in him and to rest in him.

## The City of Babylon

Close your eyes and imagine a walled city back in the middle ages or long before that. Let's call this city Babylon. Babylon is the name

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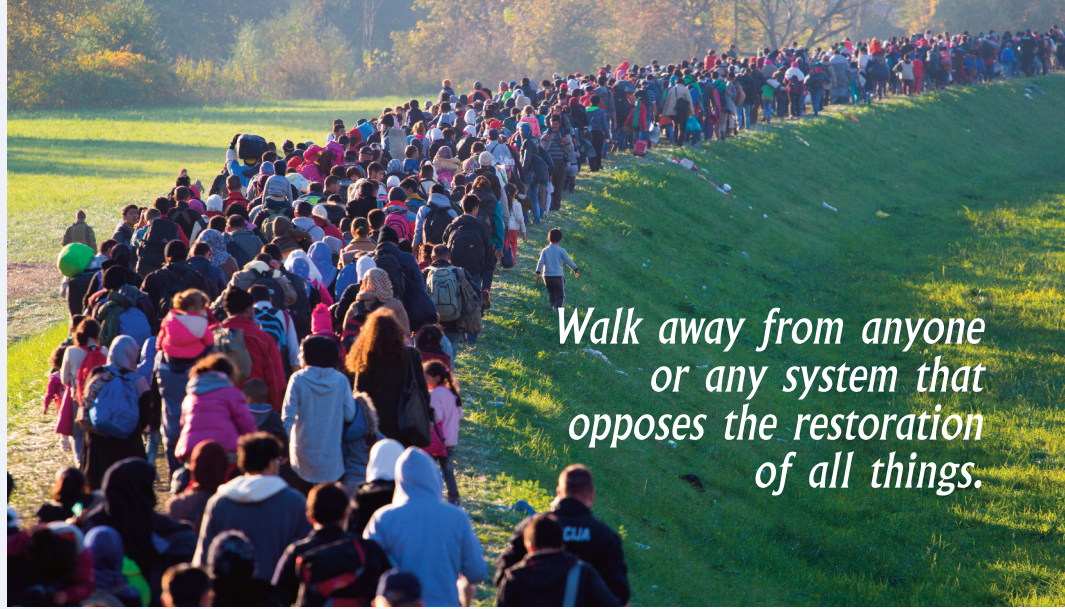
that the Bible gives all cities and all nations who live apart from God's grace.

The citizens in Babylon are under siege. They are weary and burdened. They are fighting enemies outside their walls and they are being insidiously used and abused by enemies within, notably their government and their religion.

They are ruled over by the Babylonian government and the oppressive Babylonian religion. The citizens of Babylon are told when they die in service to their country and their faith they die serving God.

The citizens of Babylon are forced to produce quotas of work to serve the city—all the while they are in fear of their lives, because of the enemies beyond their gates and those who lord it over them within the city gates.

The citizens of Babylon are captives. They have been deceived into believing that somehow, some way, if they just work hard enough, if they fight in the army valiantly



*Walk away from anyone or any system that opposes the restoration of all things.*

enough, if they allow the governmental and religious officials in Babylon to tell them what to do and when to do it—maybe, just maybe, their collective efforts will defeat the enemy and they will experience peace.

The citizens of Babylon are corrupted and enslaved by guilt and shame—they are spiritually blind. They believe in all kinds of superstitions which further serve to keep them in bondage.

Meanwhile, as they are toiling and fighting, as they are weary and

burdened, a Savior intervenes for them. The Savior meets the enemies within and without.

**The Savior defeats the enemies—single handedly.** The Savior has no army—he wins the battle apart from any contribution or assistance from the citizens in the city who fear for their lives.

*The Savior wins the battle in the most unconventional way—he willingly sacrifices his life on the battlefield, allowing the enemy to have its way with him. And while the enemy is pouring out all its hatred and violence on the Savior, the enemy thinks it is winning—because naturally, if you kill your opponent, you win, right?*

**Wrong! The Savior wins by appearing to lose.** After his victory, the Savior enlists representatives and messengers to go to Babylon and to all the Babylons of this world announcing that the war is over and victory has been won by the Captain of their salvation.

### **The Savior's Invitation**

*Come out of her and come to me!*

Give up your wearisome lives in whatever version of Babylon in which you are living, forever burdened by endless religious requirements to measure up.

Give up the false and spurious promise that deceives you into thinking that one day, if you work hard enough, you just might qualify to enter into a heaven-like state where you will rest.

*Walk out of the religious bondage...*



The announcement that Jesus makes in Matthew 11:28-30 is to follow him and therefore to rest in him. The announcement is that Jesus is our Savior and that he has won the battle—the victory has been won! It is finished. It's done.

In Revelation 18:4 a heavenly voice speaks to people enslaved in Babylon *"come out of her my people."*

Leave the oppression. Come out of the slavery and bondage of the walled city.

Walk out of the religious bondage—reject the attractive and seductive deception that you are in control of your destiny.

Walk away from anyone or any system that opposes the restoration of all things.

You can't do anything about your enemy—the only way you will ever experience peace and rest is to follow the Savior, who says, *"come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."*

The Savior invites us to come out of our slavery and bondage, to turn our backs on any and all systematic entities that encourage their followers/slaves to focus on themselves—to fixate and obsess on their performance, as if their performance will determine whether or not they ever experience rest and peace.

Babylon attempts to rule over us, abuse and oppress us by putting our progress in the spotlight. Christ-less religion of Babylon places a focus on what and how we are doing and less and less on Jesus, our Savior, and what he has done.

Babylon is a definitive explanation for so much of what passes for authentic Christianity today which is all about doing more and trying harder.

Babylon is a message of self-salvation. It's a message about finding your purpose in 40 days and having your best life now. It's incredibly seductive and alluring because we all want to think that we have what it takes to make God happy with us.

## **Yeah, But ... What About Doing Good Things?**

Does the gospel of Jesus Christ announce that those who follow Jesus shouldn't even try to do more and get better? No, it doesn't say that. Obviously, improved and better behavior is preferable.

But the gospel is not primarily about people getting better.

The gospel is about Jesus being better and imparting his way of life to those who follow him, relieving them of their guilt, anxiety, shame and religious slavery so they may truly trust in him, resting in him and enjoying his peace.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is that there is a better way to get better than obsessing and fixating on your need to get better.

When you follow Jesus you are forever relieved and saved from an obsession from getting better—that's what it means to be saved.

***You are saved, when you follow Jesus,*** from the endless programs and requirements of religion.

***You are saved, when you follow Jesus,*** from forever worrying about whether God is mad at you and whether you have done enough to please him.

***You are saved, when you follow Jesus,*** so that you don't have to worry about getting better—Jesus has taken care of you getting better.

We do not grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by behaving better, or working harder, or doing more—we grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by trusting and believing.

We ***1) come out of her and 2) come to him*** by trusting and believing in and on him—implicitly and without reservations.

We come out of her and come to him by accepting his invitation to leave our bondage, accept his freedom and embrace the grace of God. □

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## ***Reflections Along the Jesus Way with Greg Albrecht***

***Christianity Without the Religion—Quote for the Day***