

All throughout the first 49 chapters,
Jeremiah has been calling Jerusalem (and the nations) to submit to Babylon.

The careful listener, however,
would recognize that Jeremiah is not particularly "pro-Babylonian."

Submission to Babylon is only temporary.
Babylon herself is under God's judgment as well –
so the days are coming when Babylon herself will be overthrown.

God's people should "seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile" (29:7),
but they should never confuse Babylon with Jerusalem.

Jeremiah's counsel is precisely the stance that we see in the NT
in 2 Corinthians 6-7, Revelation 18-19, and elsewhere.

Christians should clearly distinguish between the earthly city (Babylon)
and the heavenly city (Jerusalem/Zion).

We can seek the peace of the city where God has placed us –
but never to the point where we identify ourselves with it.

Jeremiah can tell the exiles in Babylon to seek the welfare of Babylon –
but they must always be ready to “flee from the midst of Babylon...”

Do not become so attached to Babylon and its institutions –
or even *the institutions that you created in Babylon* (while you were seeking its welfare),
that you cannot walk away from them when the time comes!

In the early 19th century, Presbyterians built a network of schools and colleges.

Many of the early state and private universities had Presbyterian ministers at the helm
You may recognize some of them:

University of South Carolina, Princeton University, Miami University of Ohio,
University of North Carolina, University of Tennessee, University of Georgia

Likewise, in many communities
the Presbyterian church sponsored academies (we would call them “high schools”)
that prepared students for college.

As states developed “common schools” – what would become the public schools of today –
most Presbyterians argued that we should join with other Christians
in order to control and influence the public education of the state.

By the 1850s, they realized that a public education
could not include much religious content.

But they argued that having Christian teachers who set a Christian example
would help to improve the institutions of the state.

There were even “hymnals” developed for public schools!
But if you look at the content of those hymnals,
it was a “lowest common denominator” religion –
which meant that most of the hymns in the schools were Unitarian hymns!
(Do you want to know why most of the mainline denominations in the early 20th century
adopted Protestant Modernism?
In part, because they had grown up singing Unitarian hymns!)

Presbyterians had become too attached to their institutions –
the schools they had built – the massive neo-Gothic cathedrals
(largely built by the wealth and power they had amassed in industry and business).

They wanted to maintain institutional power and influence in Babylon.
Indeed, they seem to have largely forgotten that they lived in Babylon.
They thought that America was Zion –
that they were engaged in building the New Jerusalem on American soil.

Never forget that *this age* is Babylon.
And Babylon is under the same judgment as Sodom and Gomorrah!
Jesus is building the New Jerusalem.

The institutions that we build – the communities that we establish in this age –
are always temporary.
Yes, we seek the welfare of the city where God has called us –
but we never confuse Babylon with the heavenly Jerusalem!

I like the way Jake Meador put it last week:
“ Francis Schaeffer recognized long before the rest of evangelicalism
that the defining values of post-Christian America
would be thoroughly materialistic and center around personal peace and affluence.
His and Edith’s ministry at L’Abri recognized this splintering and refuted it,
not by explaining Christianity to a social order
that **can** be reconciled with the faith if we finesse it enough,
but by modeling a radically different way of life
to a society at odds with the faith on the most fundamental, basic levels.
The hospitality of L’Abri,
Francis’s way of talking about Christianity as comprehensive “True Truth,”
the hidden art embodied by Edith’s tireless work...
all these things contributed to making L’Abri a shelter of coherence
in a fractured and declining world...”

<https://mereorthodoxy.com/francis-schaeffer-and-christian-intellectualism/>

This is *really* what Jeremiah is talking about in his own day!
The fractured and declining world of the Jerusalem community –
a quarter of the population is in Egypt – another quarter is in Babylon –
another quarter is dead –

and the poorest quarter is living high off the land! (for now)

But everything that Jerusalem had stood for is gone!
The Davidic King – the Temple – the City – the People.
What is left?

What do you do when Babylon has destroyed or undermined all your institutions?
Well, remember that all of this is part of God's plan.
Babylon was God's agent – Nebuchadnezzar was God's servant in bringing judgment.
But Babylon's day is near!

These two chapters – Jeremiah 50-51 – provide the not-so-surprising conclusion:
Babylon will fall!

Introduction: The Gods of Babylon Cannot Protect Her (v1-3)

50 The word that the LORD spoke concerning Babylon, concerning the land of the Chaldeans, by Jeremiah the prophet:

² *“Declare among the nations and proclaim,
set up a banner and proclaim,
conceal it not, and say:
'Babylon is taken,
Bel is put to shame,
Merodach is dismayed.
Her images are put to shame,
her idols are dismayed.'*

Throughout the oracles against the nations, there has been a regular theme
that the gods of the nations cannot protect them.

The Assyrians and the Babylonians had scoffed at Jerusalem –
saying that Yahweh could not protect them.
But Jeremiah says that there was a *reason* for Jerusalem's fall –
Jerusalem had rebelled against the LORD.
And so the LORD has judged Jerusalem.

And while the gods of the nations may laugh at Israel for a moment,
Yahweh will have the last laugh!
In the end, “Babylon is taken, Bel is put to shame, Merodach is dismayed.”

God forbids the worship of images.
There is but one image of God – and that is Man (both male and female).
The idols of the nations are vain and foolish.

But all that God spoke against Jerusalem in the early chapters of Jeremiah
is now spoken against Babylon!

³ *“For out of the north a nation has come up against her, which shall make her land a desolation, and none shall dwell in it; both man and beast shall flee away.*

Back at the beginning of Jeremiah’s prophecy, in chapters 1-6,
Jeremiah had used this sort of language about Jerusalem.

“I bring disaster from the north, and great destruction” (4:6)

This language from Jeremiah 1-6 bookends chapter 50 –
If you look at the end of chapter 50 (v41-43) it is taken almost verbatim from 6:22-24.

Look at chapter 50, verses 41-43, while I *read* chapter 6, verses 22-24.

“Behold a people is coming from the north country,
a great nation is stirring from the farthest parts of the earth.
They lay hold on bow and javelin;
they are cruel and have no mercy;
the sound of them is like the roaring sea;
they ride on horses, set in array as a man for battle against you,
O daughter of Zion!
We have heard the report of it; our hands fall helpless;
anguish has taken hold of us, pain as of a woman in labor.”

Pretty much the only difference is that where chapter 6 spoke of the daughter of Zion,
chapter 50 speaks of the daughter of Babylon,
and where chapter 6 says that “we” heard the report and were helpless –
chapter 50 says that the King of Babylon heard the report and was helpless.

In other words,
God will now do to Babylon what he has done to Jerusalem.

And in those days, he will restore Israel and Judah.

1. The Restoration of Israel and Judah (v4-20)

a. The Everlasting Covenant – The Return to Zion (v4-5)

⁴ *“In those days and in that time, declares the LORD, the people of Israel and the people of Judah shall come together, weeping as they come, and they shall seek the LORD their God. ⁵ They shall ask the way to Zion, with faces turned toward it, saying, ‘Come, let us join ourselves to the LORD in an everlasting covenant that will never be forgotten.’*

Verses 4-5 remind us of the promise of the new covenant in Jeremiah 31.

You might ask, what about the promise to the nations?
What about the promise that *all nations will be blessed?*

There are different ways that scripture speaks in different passages.

Sometimes God speaks of the salvation of the nations.
Other times there is the contrast between Jerusalem and Babylon.

This is an instance of the latter.

Jerusalem stands for the heavenly city – the eschatological church –
the New Jerusalem that John saw coming down from heaven.
Babylon stands for the earthly city – that which is opposed to God –
the harlot – “Babylon the Great” that will be destroyed.

So here we are not talking about “church” and “state.”

This is not the idea of “two kingdoms” –
because the point of the “two kingdoms” idea is that we live in both:
as citizens, we are part of the earthly kingdom,
as Christians, we are part of the heavenly kingdom.

But that is *not* Jeremiah’s point.

Jeremiah is saying that those who belong to God
cannot become identified with Babylon.

Verses 6-7 remind us of the problem:

b. The “Lost Sheep” (Israel) Were Led Astray and Devoured (v6-7)

⁶ *“My people have been lost sheep. Their shepherds have led them astray, turning them away on the mountains. From mountain to hill they have gone. They have forgotten their fold. ⁷ All who found them have devoured them, and their enemies have said, ‘We are not guilty, for they have sinned against the LORD, their habitation of righteousness, the LORD, the hope of their fathers.’*

David was the shepherd-king.

Kings were supposed to lead their people into green pastures!
But the shepherds of Israel have led the people astray.
And the result is that the nations have devoured them –
even claiming that they are not guilty because Israel had sinned!

But Israel’s sin does not justify the sin of their enemies!

Just because Israel had sinned – does not mean that Babylon was *just*.
Yes, God called Babylon to bring judgment on Jerusalem –
but in so doing, Babylon herself fell under God’s judgment.

Just because the United States was the agent of God’s judgment against Saddam Hussein
does not mean that the United States is free from guilt!

We will be judged according to the measure that we have judged others.

c. Flee from Babylon (v8)

⁸ *“Flee from the midst of Babylon, and go out of the land of the Chaldeans, and be as male goats before the flock.*

And so Jeremiah calls for the people of God to “flee from the midst of Babylon.”

This is the same point that Paul will make to the Corinthians in 2 Cor 6:16-18.
Paul has told the Corinthians not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers –
not to join in partnerships with lawlessness –
not to have fellowship with darkness.

“What agreement has the temple of God with idols?
For we are the temple of the living God; as God said,
‘I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them,
and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.
Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord,
and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you,
and I will be a father to you,
and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty.”

Paul quotes other passages there – but it’s the same basic point as Jeremiah.

As a Christian you *cannot* identify yourself with the earthly city where you live.
You cannot yoke yourself to the earthly city –
because God’s judgment is coming against her.

d. The Arrows of the LORD against Babylon (v9-10)

⁹ For behold, I am stirring up and bringing against Babylon a gathering of great nations, from the north country. And they shall array themselves against her. From there she shall be taken. Their arrows are like a skilled warrior who does not return empty-handed. ¹⁰ Chaldea shall be plundered; all who plunder her shall be sated, declares the LORD.

That’s the point of the “d” section – verses 9-10 –
God is stirring up a gathering of great nations against Babylon,
and Chaldea shall be plundered...

Which brings us to the heart of Jeremiah’s message – Babylon shall be an utter desolation.

e. The Desolation of Babylon (v11-13)

*¹¹ “Though you rejoice, though you exult,
O plunderers of my heritage,
though you frolic like a heifer in the pasture,
and neigh like stallions,
¹² your mother shall be utterly shamed,
and she who bore you shall be disgraced.*

Think about the language used here:
“your mother shall be utterly shamed” (v12).
From the ancient to the modern world,
there is no greater insult than an insult against your mother.

*Behold, she shall be the last of the nations,
a wilderness, a dry land, and a desert.*

¹³ *Because of the wrath of the LORD she shall not be inhabited
but shall be an utter desolation;
everyone who passes by Babylon shall be appalled,
and hiss because of all her wounds.*

“She shall be the last of the nations.”

This probably means last as in “lowest” of the nations.

But there is a way in which the book of Revelation takes up the image of “last”
to portray Babylon as the chronologically “last” of the nations.

Every city that participates in Babylon’s sins will also participate in Babylon’s judgment.
What are the sins of Babylon?

Jeremiah’s only comment here is “plunderers of my heritage” (v11),
or “do to her as she has done” (v15).

Babylon was the political, military, and economic superpower of the day.

For decades they had battled Assyria and Egypt –
until they stood alone as the dominant world-power.

But that only lasted for a few decades.

And then the Persians arose and over threw mighty Babylon!

Today, the United States is the only superpower.

And in recent decades we have seen the US throwing its weight around –
much like Babylon of old.

Many think that the downfall of the United States would be a great tragedy.

But while we “seek the welfare of the city” (29:7) during our sojourn here,
we do not find our identity as “Americans” – but as Christians.

Why would the decline of US power be a bad thing?

Britain was once the dominant world-power.

They are no longer – and I think that they are the better for it!

Certainly the church in the US *must flee* from her identification with American power.

Because there *is no nation* that can be compared to Zion.

All nations of the earth belong fundamentally to Babylon –
as the angel says to John in Revelation 17:18,

“the woman that you saw is the great city
that has dominion over the kings of the earth.”

d’. “Spare No Arrows” – God’s Vengeance against Babylon (v14-16a)

¹⁴ *Set yourselves in array against Babylon all around,
all you who bend the bow;
shoot at her, spare no arrows,
for she has sinned against the LORD.*

¹⁵ *Raise a shout against her all around;
she has surrendered;
her bulwarks have fallen;
her walls are thrown down.
For this is the vengeance of the LORD:
take vengeance on her;
do to her as she has done.*
¹⁶ *Cut off from Babylon the sower,
and the one who handles the sickle in time of harvest;*

And so God calls the archers of the world to “spare no arrows” against Babylon –
because she has sinned against the LORD.
God has said, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay.”
And indeed, “this is the vengeance of the LORD.”
Revenge is the proper word for this.
“Do to her as she has done.”

Remember what happened to Zedekiah, the last king of Judah?
In chapter 39, verse 6, we heard that Nebuchadnezzar
slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes –
and then put out his eyes.
So the last thing that Zedekiah ever saw was the death of his little boys.
Zedekiah was 32 years old at the time –
so his sons couldn’t be older than 10 or 12.

We sang earlier in Psalm 137,
“O daughter of Babylon, doomed to be destroyed,
blessed shall he be who repays you with what you have done to us!
Blessed shall he be who takes your little ones and dashes them against the rock.”

In one sense, the Psalmist – with Jeremiah –
is crying out for someone (the Persians, perhaps) –
to repay Babylon for their savage cruelty.
This is not calling for a strictly literal repeat performance of what they did to us.
(Just like the OT law, “an eye for an eye” did not mean
that you literally gouge out the eye of someone
who intentionally gouged out another man’s eye).

Rather this is a call for *final judgment* –
that God would finally make all things right –
as John describes Jesus in Revelation 19:15,
“From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations,
and he will rule them with a rod of iron.
He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.
On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.”

The description of God's judgment against Babylon in Jeremiah 50 is exactly what Psalm 137 is describing – with the result that (verse 16b):

c'. "Everyone Shall Flee to His Own Land" (v16b)
*because of the sword of the oppressor,
every one shall turn to his own people,
and every one shall flee to his own land.*

The theme of "fleeing" returns (from verse 8) – followed by the theme of the devoured sheep (verses 6-7), as we climb back out of our chiasm:

b'. The Hunted Sheep (Israel) Devoured by Assyria and Babylon (v17)
¹⁷ *"Israel is a hunted sheep driven away by lions. First the king of Assyria devoured him, and now at last Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has gnawed his bones.*

But in the same way that the "b" section at the beginning showed forth the problem, now we start to see the solution. Yes, Israel has been hunted and devoured – with Nebuchadnezzar *gnawing* at his bones...

e'. Who Now Will Be Judged (v18)
¹⁸ *Therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I am bringing punishment on the king of Babylon and his land, as I punished the king of Assyria.*

But verse 18 brings the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel back to the foreground:
Behold, I – look at me, God says! –
I am bringing punishment against Babylon as I punished Assyria –
with the result that the LORD will restore and forgive his people (v19-20).

a'. The Restoration and Forgiveness of Israel (v19-20)
¹⁹ *I will restore Israel to his pasture, and he shall feed on Carmel and in Bashan, and his desire shall be satisfied on the hills of Ephraim and in Gilead.* ²⁰ *In those days and in that time, declares the LORD, iniquity shall be sought in Israel, and there shall be none, and sin in Judah, and none shall be found, for I will pardon those whom I leave as a remnant.*

There will be a remnant who will be forgiven.
Notice that God does *not* say that Israel will be sinless!
The reason why iniquity shall not be found –
is because God will *pardon* the remnant!

The solution to Jerusalem's problem is *not* a political alliance with some powerful nation.
The solution to Jerusalem's problem is the forgiveness of sins.

It would be nice to stop there.

But Jeremiah doesn't.

Indeed, Jeremiah sees that the forgiveness of Israel *requires* another step.
If God is going to forgive his people,
then how can his forgiven people live?
After all, if *Babylon* is still oppressing them –
then the forgiveness of sins will not be complete.

If God says “your sins are forgiven – but sorry, you’re still slave to Babylon!”
that’s not very comforting!
That’s like saying, “your sins are forgiven, but you’ll have to spend eternity in hell.”
In order for the forgiveness of sins to have any effect – Babylon must fall.

And so in verses 21-32, God summons the nations to rise up against Babylon.

2. The Summons: God’s Vengeance against Babylon (v21-32)

a. Go Up Against the Land of Double Rebellion...Because You Opposed the LORD

(v21-25)

²¹ “Go up against the land of Merathaim,^[a]
and against the inhabitants of Pekod.^[b]

Kill, and devote them to destruction,^[c]
declares the LORD,

and do all that I have commanded you.

²² The noise of battle is in the land,
and great destruction!

²³ How the hammer of the whole earth
is cut down and broken!

How Babylon has become
a horror among the nations!

²⁴ I set a snare for you and you were taken, O Babylon,
and you did not know it;
you were found and caught,
because you opposed the LORD.

²⁵ The LORD has opened his armory
and brought out the weapons of his wrath,
for the Lord GOD of hosts has a work to do
in the land of the Chaldeans.

In verse 21, God calls his unnamed army to go up against land of double rebellion (Merathaim)
and devote them to the destruction.

This is the language of holy war that God had used when calling Israel to destroy the Canaanites.
Now God says Babylon must fall.

The reason is very simple:

“because you opposed the LORD.”

b. Come Against Her...so That Israel Can Escape (v26-28)

²⁶ *Come against her from every quarter;
open her granaries;
pile her up like heaps of grain, and devote her to destruction;
let nothing be left of her.*
²⁷ *Kill all her bulls;
let them go down to the slaughter.
Woe to them, for their day has come,
the time of their punishment.*

Verse 26 uses the same language of “devote her to destruction” –
but now focusing on the granaries and the livestock –
proclaiming “their day has come, the time of their punishment.”

And the reason is found in verse 28:

²⁸ *“A voice! They flee and escape from the land of Babylon, to declare in Zion the vengeance of the LORD our God, vengeance for his temple.*

In other words, the curse of Psalm 137 has finally fallen on Babylon!

a’. Summon Archers...for She Has Proudly Defied the LORD (v29-32)

²⁹ *“Summon archers against Babylon, all those who bend the bow. Encamp around her; let no one escape. Repay her according to her deeds; do to her according to all that she has done. For she has proudly defied the LORD, the Holy One of Israel. ³⁰ Therefore her young men shall fall in her squares, and all her soldiers shall be destroyed on that day, declares the LORD.*

³¹ *“Behold, I am against you, O proud one,
declares the Lord GOD of hosts,
for your day has come,
the time when I will punish you.*

³² *The proud one shall stumble and fall,
with none to raise him up,
and I will kindle a fire in his cities,
and it will devour all that is around him.*

Verses 29-32 wrap up this part of the oracle by coming back to the theme of the archers,
and repaying her according to her deeds –

“for she has proudly defied the LORD, the Holy One of Israel.”

God has a day of vengeance against every city – every nation – that does evil.

If you act like Babylon, then you shall meet the fate of Babylon.

And:

3. So Long as Babylon Stands, the Nations Will Not Know Peace (v33-46)

Verses 33-46 begin to develop the theme of Babylon as world power

that will grow into the language of Revelation 18-19.

a. The Problem: Babylon Oppresses Israel – But God Will Give Rest (v33-34)

³³ *“Thus says the LORD of hosts: The people of Israel are oppressed, and the people of Judah with them. All who took them captive have held them fast; they refuse to let them go. ³⁴ Their Redeemer is strong; the LORD of hosts is his name. He will surely plead their cause, that he may give rest to the earth, but unrest to the inhabitants of Babylon.*

Again, the problem is stated in verse 33.

The people of Israel are oppressed...

All who took them captive have held them fast; they refuse to let them go

Verse 34 points to the solution – the LORD of hosts will plead their cause,
that he may give rest to the earth.

So long as Babylon is oppressing God’s people,
God cannot give rest to the earth.

God’s purpose is to bring salvation to the ends of the earth –
but so long as Babylon is interfering, God’s purposes are thwarted.

The kingdom of Satan must be defeated!

b. “A Sword” – the Agents of God’s Judgment (v35-38)

³⁵ *“A sword against the Chaldeans, declares the LORD,
and against the inhabitants of Babylon,
and against her officials and her wise men!*

³⁶ *A sword against the diviners,
that they may become fools!*

*A sword against her warriors,
that they may be destroyed!*

³⁷ *A sword against her horses and against her chariots,
and against all the foreign troops in her midst,
that they may become women!*

*A sword against all her treasures,
that they may be plundered!*

³⁸ *A drought against her waters,
that they may be dried up!*

*For it is a land of images,
and they are mad over idols.*

And so verses 35-38 declare that there is a sword against the inhabitants of Babylon –
Why?

“For it is a land of images, and they are mad over idols.” (v38)

The idolatry of Babylon must be overthrown.

c. Babylon Will Become Like Sodom and Gomorrah (v39-40)

³⁹ “Therefore wild beasts shall dwell with hyenas in Babylon, and ostriches shall dwell in her. She shall never again have people, nor be inhabited for all generations. ⁴⁰ As when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighboring cities, declares the LORD, so no man shall dwell there, and no son of man shall sojourn in her.

And so Babylon will become like Sodom and Gomorrah.

Many have noted that the ancient city of Babylon gradually faded away.
It took a thousand years (there were even Christian bishops of Babylon!).
Much of the city is now under water.

God says that no man shall dwell there, and no son of man shall sojourn in her.

The U.S. army built a base on top of Babylon in 2003.
(Talk about a *really interesting* piece of irony!)

But the point is *not* that no one will ever sojourn in the exact location of Babylon.

The point is that *Babylon* will never again have people.

Babylon will become like Sodom and Gomorrah.

That did *not* happen when the Persians took over.

Babylon faded – but Babylon remained inhabited (at least somewhat).

The final fulfillment of this is described in Revelation 18-19,

when Babylon is finally overthrown.

John teaches us how to interpret Jeremiah 50.

Jeremiah is not talking about a particular location in modern Iraq.

Jeremiah is talking about *Babylon* in the same way that he talks about Jerusalem.

There is a heavenly Jerusalem – and a hellish Babylon!

And the two cities will remain opposed to each other throughout all of history –
until God does to Babylon what he did to Sodom and Gomorrah!

b’. “A People Comes from the North” – the Agents of God’s Judgment (v41-43)

⁴¹ “Behold, a people comes from the north;
a mighty nation and many kings
are stirring from the farthest parts of the earth.

⁴² They lay hold of bow and spear;
they are cruel and have no mercy.
The sound of them is like the roaring of the sea;
they ride on horses,
arrayed as a man for battle
against you, O daughter of Babylon!

⁴³ “The king of Babylon heard the report of them,
and his hands fell helpless;
anguish seized him,
pain as of a woman in labor.

The comparison of Jerusalem and Babylon is heightened in verses 41-43.

As we saw earlier,

 this is a quotation taken from chapter 6 –
 but in chapter 6 it applied to Jerusalem!
 Now it applies to Babylon!

And then in verses 44-46,

 God takes the language that he had used of Edom and applies it Babylon as well!

**a'. Babylon Is No More Powerful than Edom – the Earth Will Tremble before God
(v44-46)**

⁴⁴ “Behold, like a lion coming up from the thicket of the Jordan against a perennial pasture, I will suddenly make them run away from her, and I will appoint over her whomever I choose. For who is like me? Who will summon me? What shepherd can stand before me? ⁴⁵ Therefore hear the plan that the LORD has made against Babylon, and the purposes that he has formed against the land of the Chaldeans: Surely the little ones of their flock shall be dragged away; surely their fold shall be appalled at their fate. ⁴⁶ At the sound of the capture of Babylon the earth shall tremble, and her cry shall be heard among the nations.”

This is a direct quote of the oracle against Edom – now applied to Babylon.

In other words – when it comes to God’s purposes,

 the greatest nation on earth is no more powerful than the little dinky country

Babylon must fall – like Sodom and Gomorrah – so that God may give rest to the earth.

 The people of God may not yoke themselves to the political-economic power of the day.
 You can’t just “tweak” Babylon to make it “okay.”

As Jake Meador puts it:

 "We need to recognize that the modern western social project...
 is not something which can be reconciled with the faith
 by simply making some basic alterations to the machine.
 Market-backed, government-subsidized expressive individualism
 is the founding principle of today’s western world.
 And there can be no salvaging such a project...

 Our model, if Francis Schaeffer was right, ought to be Jeremiah, the weeping prophet
 who announced that there was death in the city."

<https://mereorthodoxy.com/francis-schaeffer-and-christian-intellectualism/>

Yes, we must build communities and institutions.

 But our citizenship is in heaven – and we await from there a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,
 who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body,
 by the power that enables him to subject all things to himself.” (Phil 3:20-21)