

WHAT IS WRONG WITH MODERN AMERICA? : PART 1

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Tragedies And Victims?, God's Omnipotence, Divine Will And Pre-Ordained Purposes, Hardness And Blindness Of Modern Men, God's Conditional Blessings To Ancient Israelites, Wisdom In Acknowledging God In Our Lives, New Testament Examples Of Humility And Bowing To God's Will, Jesus - Our Prime Example Murmuring And Contentment, Israel's Steep Fall Into Apostasy Jewish Child Sacrifices, God's Continual Presence And Mighty Works, Promised Land Defiled, Israel's Whoredom And Idolatry

Every now and then, one of my readers will write to me, and ask me if I have heard of a certain fatal plane crash which has claimed a number of lives, or of a powerful storm which has struck a certain area of the world and left a great deal of destruction in its path, or of some other event which has filled the world press. In such cases, these incidents are sometimes described by the writer as being tragedies, and those people who have without warning lost their lives, as poor souls or victims. From a worldly perspective, this is the normal, natural and acceptable attitude to adopt when we hear of such news; but is it really the correct one to take for one who claims to be a Christian? While this revelation may shock a few of my readers, I personally no longer view such events as tragedies, or those people involved in them as being victims or poor souls. Why is this?

Quite simply, as a long-time reader of God's Holy Word, I have come to recognize that all things, both good and evil, come from the Hand of God; and I realize that He is in total and absolute control of His creation and the affairs of men. In other words, I am fully convinced that nothing happens by so-called accident, but that all things occur only by God's Divine Will and Permission. As such, I can no longer view such incidents as tragedies, but rather as a necessary part of His Plan in some way, even if I do not understand them. I am reminded of the following verses which confirm these points, and which reveal the Omnipotence of El Shaddai; that is, God Almighty:

"See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand."
Deuteronomy 32:39, KJV

"Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:"
Isaiah 46:9-10, KJV

"I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things."
Isaiah 45:7, KJV

"The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."
Proverbs 15:3, KJV

"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

Revelation 4:11, KJV

Truly, our God is the all-powerful Lord of the Universe; and He will indeed do all His pleasure; that is, whatsoever He desires, regardless of what we mere humans may think, say or do. As both King David and King Solomon tell us, God has His appointed time for all of us; a time to be born, as well as a time to die. All of the Lord's Divine Purposes are already pre-established. They are all already written in His Books. In fact, He told the Prophet Jeremiah the very same thing. Consider the following sets of verses:

"For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them."

Psalms 139:13-16, KJV

"To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;"

Ecclesiastes 3:1-3, KJV

"Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations."

Jeremiah 1:5, KJV

Thus, in my mind, there are no victims, or poor souls, but only those people whose lives are cut short by the Lord, for whatever His pre-ordained reasons might be. It is not my place, or yours, to question the ways of the Lord, but only to accept them; for as the Prophet Isaiah, the Patriarch Job and the Apostle Paul were also inspired to write:

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

Isaiah 55:8-9, KJV

"Moreover the LORD answered Job, and said, Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it. Then Job answered the LORD, and said, Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further. Then answered the LORD unto Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Gird up thy loins now like a man: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?"

Job 40:1-8, KJV

"Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast

thou made me thus?"

Romans 9:20, KJV

It is only in this modern world of so-called civilized men, where people have become so spiritually blind, so callous of heart, and so alienated from God, that they not only do not recognize the Power, Will and Purpose of God working in each of their lives, but they are also so lacking in godly fear and reverence, that they foolishly and quite arrogantly try to challenge the Almighty, or deny His existence altogether. As if this weren't already bad enough, due to their state of rebellion and unbelief, they attempt to attribute the Lord's Hand of Judgment to other causes; such as to meteorological conditions which they have dubbed as El Nino and La Nina, or to naturally-occurring tectonic plate movement, in order to try to escape the conviction God is trying to place upon their wicked and rebellious hearts. Again I am reminded of the following verses of Scripture:

"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

1 Corinthians 2:14, KJV

"This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:"

Ephesians 4:17-18, KJV

"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

2 Corinthians 4:3-4, KJV

In stark contrast to this modern anti-god attitude, the Holy Scriptures reveal that the ancient Israelites were very much aware of the Lord working in their lives, down to the most personal level. Whether a woman became pregnant or not was viewed as being the Will of God. Whether or not the rains came and caused the crops to grow, was viewed as being the Will of God. Whether they were victorious or defeated in battle was likewise viewed as being the Will of God; and they knew beyond a shadow of a doubt, that when things went poorly for them, it was because they were displeasing the Lord in some way. Consider the following words of the Lord spoken through His Prophet, Moses:

"And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God. Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store. Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out. The LORD shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways. The LORD shall command the blessing upon thee in

thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. The LORD shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in his ways. And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the LORD; and they shall be afraid of thee. And the LORD shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the LORD swore unto thy fathers to give thee. The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow. And the LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them: And thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day, to the right hand, or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them. But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee:"

Deuteronomy 28:1-15, KJV

Thus we see that the Lord was very clear with the Israelites regarding what He expected of them, if they wanted to remain the object of His affection. To disobey Him in these matters would result in dire consequences, as Moses then proceeded to explain to them. It was because of their acknowledgment of God working in their lives in order to fulfill His Divine Purposes, that even hundreds of years later, after Joshua and Caleb had died, and after the times of the Judges had passed, and after King Saul had miserably failed the Lord, that God found pleasure in King David and his son, King Solomon, who both honored the Lord in their lives, and who were thus inspired to write such words of wisdom as the following:

"Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass."

Psalms 37:4-5, KJV

". . . no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."

Psalms 84:11b, KJV

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever."

Psalms 111:10, KJV

"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

Proverbs 3:5-6, KJV

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding."

Proverbs 9:10, KJV

We find this very same attitude of humbly acknowledging the Lord in one's life, being revealed in the pages of the New

Testament by the first Jewish Christians. For example, the writer James tells us that we must resist our pride, humble ourselves before the Lord, and draw close to Him. He then continues by adding that we should not be so haughty as to make any long-term plans, without first considering the Will of God in the matter. Like the Old Testament writers, James also informs us that our stay upon this Earth is brief, and is determined by the Lord Himself. Consider the following verses:

". . . Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up . . . Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil."

James 4:6b-10, 13-16, KJV

The Apostle Peter offers similar advice when he likewise tells us that there is simply no place for pride in the life of a true Christian. Not only must we yield ourselves to God's Will in our lives, by allowing Him to mold and fashion us as He sees fit; but we must also be willing to be humbled before others as well:

"Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:"

1 Peter 5:5-6, KJV

The Apostle Paul was likewise no stranger to the mighty Hand of God which humbles the proudest of men. In fact, beginning with his very own conversion on the road to Damascus in Acts chapter nine, the Lord had to rip out his heart of pride, and give him one of flesh. Whereas Paul had been fighting against the Will of God before his powerful conversion, once he was won over to the young Christian faith, not only did he submit himself to the Lord's Mighty Hand, but he also taught others how to do the same. Consider Paul's admonition to the Roman brethren:

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

Romans 12:1-2, KJV

In his first Epistle, while briefly discussing the topic of prayer, the Apostle John tells us that when we pray, we must make certain that our prayers are in accordance with the Will of God, in order to be answered:

"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."

1 John 5:14-15, KJV

Of course, as I point out in the series "So You Really Think You Are So Humble?", we all know that the greatest example of humility and submission to God's Will, was that of Jesus Christ Himself. Consider the Lord's own words, and what Paul later said of Him as well:

". . . My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."

John 4:34b, KJV

"For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day."

John 6:38-40, KJV

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Philippians 2:5-11, KJV

From all of the previous Scriptural evidence, it becomes clear then, that unlike many people in our modern society, who deny God's existence, or who ignore His Will and Power working in their lives, both the ancient Israelites, as well as the New Testament Christians, fully acknowledged the Lord in every sphere of their existence. Whether their lives were blessed with abundance and protection due to their obedience in keeping His commandments, or cursed with drought, famine and invasion when they failed to do the same, they accepted it as coming directly from the Hand of God. They didn't try to attribute their abundance to their own hard work or human wisdom, or their suffering to natural causes such as quirks in the weather, or to a stronger enemy. They knew full well that all of these things were ordered by the Lord; at least at first.

Sadly, as I point out in the in-depth series "The Fruits Of Disobedience", even before King David sat upon the throne, the Israelites had already begun to fall away from the Lord during the period of the Judges. In fact, if one studies the Scriptures very closely, he will plainly see that from the moment that the Lord delivered the descendants of Jacob from harsh Egyptian bondage, they began to complain; and their murmuring became so severe, that the Lord finally grew weary of it, and caused them to wonder in the desert for forty years, until the older generation of rebellious, grumbling,

faithless souls had all died, save for Joshua and Caleb. In speaking of these events, the Apostle Paul was inspired to write:

"Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."
1 Corinthians 10:10-11, KJV

In other words, Paul is telling us that if we are wise, we will learn from their mistakes and not do the same thing. In his Epistle to the Church at Philippi, Paul offers us some additional words of wisdom when he writes:

"Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."
Philippians 4:11, KJV

Despite this forty-year purge by the Lord, as I mentioned a moment ago, the times of the Judges were a mixture of the Lord's blessings and curses, depending upon the Israelites' obedience to His Word. While King David made some serious mistakes during his reign, which resulted in his wonderful prayers of repentance, it was during the latter years of his son's reign, that Israel fell into a state of deep apostasy; beginning with King Solomon himself. This resulted in the Divided Kingdom, and the many internal wars, and external invasions, which occurred during the hundreds of years that followed. It was during this period of the Prophets, that the increasingly backslidden state of Israel was exposed by way of the writings of such Prophets as Isaiah, Jeremiah and Hosea. Consider these examples:

"Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment."
Isaiah 1:4-6, KJV

"Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men: Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid. Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the LORD, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us? Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?"
Isaiah 29:13-16, KJV

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"
Jeremiah 17:9, KJV

"The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?"

Jeremiah 5:31, KJV

"And now they sin more and more, and have made them molten images of their silver, and idols according to their own understanding, all of it the work of the craftsmen: they say of them, Let the men that sacrifice kiss the calves. Therefore they shall be as the morning cloud, and as the early dew that passeth away, as the chaff that is driven with the whirlwind out of the floor, and as the smoke out of the chimney. Yet I am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but me: for there is no saviour beside me."

Hosea 13:2-4, KJV

So as you can see, when the Israelite leadership and people backslid, whether it was Israel in the north, or else Judah in the south, they backslid all the way. They still offered God their vain lip service, they still pretended to worship the one true God, but their hearts had departed from Him. They withdrew themselves so far from the Lord, that the Prophet Isaiah tells us that they basically said "He doesn't see us; He doesn't know what we are doing; and we aren't even sure if He is the God who really made us". The Bible tells us that the people of Judah became so utterly devoted to their worship of the pagan gods, that contrary to the very specific warnings that they had received from Moses hundreds of years before, not only did they build altars to them, but they also sacrificed their very own children upon the same. Consider the following shocking verses which expose the degree of their apostasy, beginning with the warnings from Moses:

"And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the LORD."

Leviticus 18:21, KJV

"There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee."

Deuteronomy 18:10-12, KJV

In the following verses, we see how much the Lord's warnings meant to them hundreds of years later after they had already occupied the land of Canaan, and after they had had time to co-mingle with the idol-worshipping heathen for a while:

"And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger."

2 Kings 17:17, KJV

"And they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Molech; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin."

Jeremiah 32:35, KJV

What a truly sad, sad story of rebellion and disobedience. Here was a people who had been highly favored by the Lord. He had delivered them from harsh slavery in Egypt. Their ancestors had seen the mighty works which the Lord had done there in order to accomplish so great a deliverance. They had watched as the Egyptians were consumed by all of the plagues while they were left untouched. They had witnessed firsthand the dividing of the Red Sea and the destruction of Pharaoh's army. They had heard the Voice of God thunder from Mount Horeb like a mighty trumpet. They had seen Moses' face glow after his mountaintop encounters with the Lord. They had eaten quail and Manna in the desert during those forty years. They had witnessed the Lord descending upon the Tabernacle in a cloudy pillar in order to speak with Moses face to face. They had seen Moses draw water from the rock, and turn bitter waters sweet. They had followed the cloudy pillar and the pillar of fire on their way to Canaan. They had beheld the parting of the Jordan River by Joshua as they entered the Promised Land. They had all watched as the walls of Jericho fell before them, and as one enemy after another was crushed by their advancing army, led by such heroic figures as Gideon.

During those formative years of their development as a nation, God was with them, just as He had said He would be if they would only obey Him. They were ever-conscious of His presence through the Tabernacle and the Ark of the Covenant. More than any other people living upon the face of the Earth at that time, the Israelites had every reason to believe in the eternal invisible God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In describing God's wonderful blessing of entering the Promised Land, and how the Israelites then foolishly defiled it, the Prophet Jeremiah wrote:

"Thus saith the LORD, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain? Neither said they, Where is the LORD that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, that led us through the wilderness, through a land of deserts and of pits, through a land of drought, and of the shadow of death, through a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt? And I brought you into a plentiful country, to eat the fruit thereof and the goodness thereof; but when ye entered, ye defiled my land, and made mine heritage an abomination."

Jeremiah 2:5-7, KJV

As the Prophet Ezekiel graphically informs us, the children of Israel had fallen from symbolically being the Lord's highly-favored spiritual bride, to becoming an unfaithful, adulterous woman, a whore, and a murderous mother of her own children, due to her voluntary defilement by the heathen in her midst, and the pagan gods which they served:

"But thou didst trust in thine own beauty, and playedst the harlot because of thy renown, and pouredst out thy fornications on every one that passed by; his it was. And of thy garments thou didst take, and deckedst thy high places with divers colours, and playedst the harlot thereupon: the like things shall not come, neither shall it be so. Thou hast also taken thy fair jewels of my gold and of my silver, which I had given thee, and madest to thyself images of men, and didst commit whoredom with them, And tookest thy brodered garments, and coveredst them: and thou hast set

mine oil and mine incense before them. My meat also which I gave thee, fine flour, and oil, and honey, wherewith I fed thee, thou hast even set it before them for a sweet savour: and thus it was, saith the Lord GOD. Moreover thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast borne unto me, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them to be devoured. Is this of thy whoredoms a small matter, That thou hast slain my children, and delivered them to cause them to pass through the fire for them? And in all thine abominations and thy whoredoms thou hast not remembered the days of thy youth, when thou wast naked and bare, and wast polluted in thy blood. And it came to pass after all thy wickedness, (woe, woe unto thee! saith the Lord GOD;) That thou hast also built unto thee an eminent place, and hast made thee an high place in every street. Thou hast built thy high place at every head of the way, and hast made thy beauty to be abhorred, and hast opened thy feet to every one that passed by, and multiplied thy whoredoms. Thou hast also committed fornication with the Egyptians thy neighbours, great of flesh; and hast increased thy whoredoms, to provoke me to anger. Behold, therefore I have stretched out my hand over thee, and have diminished thine ordinary food, and delivered thee unto the will of them that hate thee, the daughters of the Philistines, which are ashamed of thy lewd way. Thou hast played the whore also with the Assyrians, because thou wast unsatiable; yea, thou hast played the harlot with them, and yet couldest not be satisfied. Thou hast moreover multiplied thy fornication in the land of Canaan unto Chaldea; and yet thou wast not satisfied herewith. How weak is thine heart, saith the Lord GOD, seeing thou doest all these things, the work of an imperious whorish woman; In that thou buildest thine eminent place in the head of every way, and makest thine high place in every street; and hast not been as an harlot, in that thou scornest hire; But as a wife that committeth adultery, which taketh strangers instead of her husband!"

Ezekiel 16:15-32, KJV

As we continue this series in part two, we will further examine the waywardness of ancient Israel, and then bring to light some startling parallels to modern-day America. This will include a look at such topics as the guilt of the Jews, Hosea marries a whore, Israel's loss of her fear of the Lord, the sin of trusting in ourselves, the evil fruit of self-confidence, the Lord's warnings to the Israelites, the temptations of personal strength and goodness, King David's foolish census, Israel's fall into apostasy, self-imposed delusion and intentional deception, the Jews' upside-down distorted view, the blood of the Lord's Prophets, God sends delusion, Israel and Judah invaded, and King Hezekiah's call to repentance. I trust that you will join me.

Written by the WordWeaver

webmaster@endtimeprophecy.net
<http://www.endtimeprophecy.net>

WHAT IS WRONG WITH MODERN AMERICA? : PART 2

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Guilt Of The Jews, Hosea Married A Whore, Israel Lost Her Fear Of God, Sin Of Trusting In Ourselves, Self-Confidence Leads To Disobedience To God, God's Warnings To Israelites, Not Because Of Their Own Might Or Goodness, King David's Foolish Census, Israel's Fall Into Apostasy, Self-Imposed Delusion And Intentional Deception, Upside-Down Distorted View, Blood Of The Lord's Prophets, God Sends Delusion, Israel And Judah Invaded, Startling Parallels To Modern "Christian" America, King Hezekiah's Call To Repentance

As I concluded in part one, despite the many miracles in the land of Egypt and in the wilderness; in spite of the many victories in battle given to them by the Lord against their pagan enemies; and even though God saw fit to bestow upon them many physical blessings, the ancient Israelites went from being the most God-fearing people upon the face of the Earth, to being the most rebellious and anti-god nation the world has ever known; and in my opinion, they remain in that condition to this very day, perhaps only overshadowed by the United States of America. My reason for saying this, and it is indeed quite Scriptural, is very simple. Those people who know the truth, and who have consciously rejected it, are more guilty in God's sight, than those who have never heard it to begin with. As Jesus said of the unbelieving Jewish leadership of His day:

"If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin."
John 15:22, KJV

At this point, some of you might be wondering exactly how such a thing could possibly have happened. What caused a people who was at one time so highly favored by the Lord, to become viewed as a whore in His sight, as we saw earlier from the words of the Prophet Ezekiel? Before answering this question for you, it might interest you to know, that it was so important to the Lord to graphically illustrate His sore displeasure with the bad attitude and backslidden spiritual condition of the children of Israel, that He even told the Prophet Hosea to marry a harlot. Consider this verse:

"The beginning of the word of the LORD by Hosea. And the LORD said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the LORD."
Hosea 1:2, KJV

In His mercy, God was using every means at His disposal, in order to try to shock the wayward Israelites into realizing the gravity of their backslidden condition. So how did they arrive at such a condition? Well, believe it or not, the answer is very simple; and in fact, I have already given it to you. Allow me to remind you again of the wisdom of Kings David and Solomon:

"Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass."

Psalms 37:5, KJV

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever."

Psalms 111:10, KJV

"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

Proverbs 3:5-6, KJV

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding."

Proverbs 9:10, KJV

In short, the Israelites made two major mistakes. First; once they had grown into a large nation in the land of Egypt, and then became firmly established in the land of Canaan, successive generations began to lose their fear of the Lord. They hadn't personally seen the powerful miracles which had been done in Egypt, or the miracles which God had wrought in the wilderness. Neither had they experienced the decisive victories which had been won with the Lord's help during the conquest of Canaan. As I mentioned in part one, they had undoubtedly heard of the Lord's awesome might and delivering power through the stories which had been passed down to them, just as the entire pagan world of that region had heard, but it may be that their relationship with the Lord wasn't quite as personal as it had been with their forefathers. I would dare say that in the absence of such a multitude of miracles, it required more faith on their part to keep on believing in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

When any person, or any nation, begins to lose the fear of the Lord, two other things also begin to happen. The loss of Godly reverence is soon accompanied by the temptation to trust in ourselves and in our own wisdom and might, instead of in the Lord as we should. This temptation can ultimately result in disobeying the Lord's commandments; and as I have already mentioned, when the Israelites did it, they did it with full abandon. Let's take a look at some of the facts.

When Moses gave the people God's instructions regarding how they were to conquer the land of Canaan, he told them very specifically to utterly destroy and drive out the heathen nations living in Canaan, and to cast down their high places of pagan worship, and to destroy all of the idols of their false gods. This was for several reasons. First of all, as the following verses clearly reveal, according to the Laws given to Moses, anyone who worshipped a pagan god was worthy of death. Second; the Lord commanded the Israelites to do these things in order to protect them from falling into a spiritual and physical snare, and thus losing their spiritual and ethnic purity:

"He that sacrificeth unto any god, save unto the LORD only, he shall be utterly destroyed."

Exodus 22:20, KJV

"But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries. For mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and I will cut them off. Thou

shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works: but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images. And ye shall serve the LORD your God, and he shall bless thy bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee. There shall nothing cast their young, nor be barren, in thy land: the number of thy days I will fulfil. I will send my fear before thee, and will destroy all the people to whom thou shalt come, and I will make all thine enemies turn their backs unto thee. And I will send hornets before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, from before thee. I will not drive them out from before thee in one year; lest the land become desolate, and the beast of the field multiply against thee. By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land. And I will set thy bounds from the Red sea even unto the sea of the Philistines, and from the desert unto the river: for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand; and thou shalt drive them out before thee. Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me: for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee."

Exodus 23:22-33, KJV

"Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye are passed over Jordan into the land of Canaan; Then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places: And ye shall dispossess the inhabitants of the land, and dwell therein: for I have given you the land to possess it."

Numbers 33:51-53, KJV

"And thou shalt consume all the people which the LORD thy God shall deliver thee; thine eye shall have no pity upon them: neither shalt thou serve their gods; for that will be a snare unto thee . . . And the LORD thy God will put out those nations before thee by little and little: thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee. But the LORD thy God shall deliver them unto thee, and shall destroy them with a mighty destruction, until they be destroyed. And he shall deliver their kings into thine hand, and thou shalt destroy their name from under heaven: there shall no man be able to stand before thee, until thou have destroyed them. The graven images of their gods shall ye burn with fire: thou shalt not desire the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it unto thee, lest thou be snared therein: for it is an abomination to the LORD thy God. Neither shalt thou bring an abomination into thine house, lest thou be a cursed thing like it: but thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it; for it is a cursed thing."

Deuteronomy 7:16, 22-26, KJV

"When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee. Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God. For these nations,

which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the LORD thy God hath not suffered thee so to do."

Deuteronomy 18:9-14, KJV

It is also interesting to note that the Lord warned them to not think for a minute, that any of the victories which would be won, would be wrought by the power of their own hand, or even because of their own goodness. In fact, Moses very clearly told them that they were a stiff-necked and rebellious people, and that the reason for which the Lord was going to do these things for them, wasn't because of their own goodness, but rather because the heathen were so wicked. Consider these verses:

"Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day: Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; And when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint; Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end; And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day. And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish. As the nations which the LORD destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the LORD your God." Deuteronomy 8:11-20, KJV

"Understand therefore this day, that the LORD thy God is he which goeth over before thee; as a consuming fire he shall destroy them, and he shall bring them down before thy face: so shalt thou drive them out, and destroy them quickly, as the LORD hath said unto thee. Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the LORD thy God hath cast them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness the LORD hath brought me in to possess this land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD doth drive them out from before thee. Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Understand therefore, that the LORD thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiffnecked people." Deuteronomy 9:3-6, KJV

As I have already made clear, in spite of these many clear warnings from the Lord, those foolish Israelites turned around and slapped God in the face. They failed miserably at everything He had commanded them to do, or not to do. Only a few hundred years later, after the death of Joshua, and then

Caleb, and then during the times of the Judges, they began to marry those very same heathen whom they were supposed to drive out and destroy; and if that wasn't bad enough, they also began to adopt their false religions and their false gods as their own. As we saw in part one, it got so bad, that they were sacrificing their very own children to them.

David and Solomon both said to trust in the Lord, and in His wisdom, but the Israelites did the exact opposite. In fact, as I explain in other articles, in spite of the fact that King David was so loved of the Lord, he fell victim to these very same sins; and it is because of the lessons which he learned through his bitter experiences, that he was inspired to write some of the things which he did. Many of us are familiar with the story of David and Bathsheba, and how David leaned to his own understanding by both committing second-degree murder, and then adultery. This event in his life, and the repentance which followed, resulted in David writing Psalm Fifty-One, which has been a blessing, and a model prayer, used by many of us today.

Another incident which I mention in other articles concerns how in a moment of weakness, and human foolishness, David went against the wise counsel of his general, Joab, and took a nation-wide census of Israel. The reason why this act was such a sin before the Lord, is because David was supposed to be trusting in God for his military victories, and giving Him due credit for the same. Taking a census of Israel was a clear sign that David was beginning to trust in the arm of the flesh instead; that is, in the power of his fighting forces. Ironically, in the twentieth Psalm, David also wrote:

"Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God."
Psalms 20:7, KJV

As a result of this foolish disobedience, we are told in the twenty-first chapter of the first Book of Chronicles, that the Angel of the Lord smote seventy thousand fighting men throughout Israel. Following are some of the key verses from this interesting story:

"And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel. And David said to Joab and to the rulers of the people, Go, number Israel from Beersheba even to Dan; and bring the number of them to me, that I may know it. And Joab answered, The LORD make his people an hundred times so many more as they be: but, my lord the king, are they not all my lord's servants? why then doth my lord require this thing? why will he be a cause of trespass to Israel? Nevertheless the king's word prevailed against Joab. Wherefore Joab departed, and went throughout all Israel, and came to Jerusalem . . . And God was displeased with this thing; therefore he smote Israel. And David said unto God, I have sinned greatly, because I have done this thing: but now, I beseech thee, do away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly . . . So the LORD sent pestilence upon Israel: and there fell of Israel seventy thousand men. And God sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it: and as he was destroying, the LORD beheld, and he repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed, It is enough, stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD stood by the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite."

1 Chronicles 21:1-4, 7-8, 14-15, KJV

As I mentioned a moment ago, the loss of Godly fear is soon accompanied by the temptation to trust in ourselves, and in our own wisdom, instead of in the Lord; and this temptation ultimately results in disobeying the Lord in some way; which is exactly what David did. As I explain in other articles, such as in the aforementioned "The Fruits Of Disobedience", as well as in "The Children Of God And Politics", the very fact that the Israelites even had an Earthly king over them, was due to disobedience on their part, and their wayward desire to be just like the pagan nations which surrounded them. In other words, they weren't content with just having the Lord as their Eternal King in the Heavens; they wanted to blend in with their enemies and adopt their customs. So the spirit of pride and disobedience which first reared its ugly head shortly after the Israelites were liberated from Egypt, ultimately resulted in their downfall and destruction by their enemies. As King Solomon wrote:

"Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall."
Proverbs 16:18, KJV

From their on-again off-again obedience during the times of the Judges, to rebellious Saul's repeated disobedience and loss of the kingdom, to David's various sins of the flesh, to Solomon's steep fall into pagan idol worship in his old age, the situation just continued to deteriorate more and more as the years progressed. As we saw in part one, the Prophets Isaiah and Hosea wrote "ye will revolt more and more" and "And now they sin more and more". Again, what a sad story for a people who had been so close to the Lord.

What I find most alarming about this situation in ancient Israel, is that the Jewish leadership, as well as the common people, were living in denial of the truth. They knew that they were totally backslidden from the Lord; yet they continued to go through the motions of serving Him; so that on the surface, things appeared quite normal. The truth of the matter was entirely different, and God's true Prophets knew it, and even wrote about it. The Prophet Ezekiel, for one, clearly exposed what was going on behind closed doors. While the politically-correct, false prophets and priests were lying to the people, and telling them "Peace, peace; all is well", the true messengers of the Lord were warning them of imminent invasion and destruction by a very cruel and violent enemy, because of their sins against the Lord.

This delusion by the Jewish leadership was intentional; they were purposely trying to deceive the people into believing a lie; and yet, as I shared with you in part one, this is what the people wanted to hear. They didn't want to hear of their wayward condition. They didn't want to be told that God was soon going to judge them harshly through an invasion by a foreign power. They wanted to be overcome by a false spirit of complacency and lulled to sleep. As Jeremiah said:

"The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?"
Jeremiah 5:31, KJV

Imagine that! "My people love to have it so"! Those foolish people wanted to be blinded to the truth by their deceptive leaders! They wanted to see things in reverse! About one hundred and fifty years earlier, the Prophet Isaiah said of

them in the prophecy I shared with you earlier, "Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay". In other words, Isaiah was telling them that the Lord knew that they were purposely twisting the truth, and in fact turning the truth upside down and presenting a lie as the truth; and soon He would expose their wicked deception, and smash them in the fires of His hot judgments, like a marred potter's vessel which is utterly useless. In fact, twenty-four chapters earlier in this same book, Isaiah wrote of them:

"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!"
Isaiah 5:20, KJV

So you see, that is the spirit of strong delusion which existed in the land of Israel for literally hundreds of years; and as I explain in other articles, it existed right up until the time of Christ, and strongly manifested itself through the self-righteous Scribes and Pharisees, who were constantly attacking the Lord, just as their forefathers had persecuted and slain all of the Prophets of truth who had come before Him. It is for this very reason that Jesus said of His enemies:

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar."
Matthew 23:29-35, KJV

For more on this topic, please read such articles as "Revelation's Babylon The Great Whore". The point is, for literally hundreds of years, the rebellious Israelites had been living under a cloud of strong delusion, because once one rejects the truth, there is no room for anything but delusion and deception. As Isaiah also wrote in one of the final chapters of his book:

"I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not."
Isaiah 66:4, KJV

The Israelites feared foreign invasion more than anything else, and that is exactly what the Lord brought upon them. It wasn't long after Isaiah wrote the previous lines, that the Lord strongly chastised the northern kingdom of Israel through the Assyrian invasion. In like manner, it was also forty years after Jeremiah began to prophesy against the southern kingdom of Judah, that the Lord likewise punished them through the invasion by the forces of Babylonian King

Nebuchadnezzar, which left Solomon's Temple destroyed, and Jerusalem in ruins. It should also not surprise us then, that hundreds of years later, Jesus would quote from Isaiah's writings, in order to expose the same deceitful spirit which characterized the false Jewish religious establishment of the First Century:

"He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me."
Mark 7:6, KJV

So it is clear then, that the delusion in Israel was so strong, that the political and religious leadership, and the people, had a totally twisted, perverted view of the world, and of their relationship with God. They were so deceived, that they didn't even realize how far they had strayed from Him; and it all began when they lost their fear of the Lord, and became haughty, self-confident and started trusting in their own wisdom, strength and military might, which ultimately resulted in them compromising their faith with the pagan nations around them. As we saw in part one, the Prophet Ezekiel fully exposed the self-confidence of the ancient Israelites when he wrote in part:

"But thou didst trust in thine own beauty . . ."
Ezekiel 16:15a, KJV

By this time, some of you may be wondering what all of this talk about the sins of ancient Israel has to do with the title of this article. For those of you who are in tune to God's Spirit, I am sure that you already see the startling parallels to the Endtime, and particularly to the spiritual condition of modern-day America. In fact, if you happen to be a regular reader of my articles, then you may realize that I really haven't said anything new, but am merely reiterating certain points I have already made in other articles, some of which I have already mentioned.

For those of you who have not yet understood, just as the spirit of deceit and delusion existed in ancient Israel, and was promoted by the very leadership which claimed to worship the true God of Heaven, we have leaders in America today who make the very same boasts. They are false leaders, and false spiritual shepherds; and yet, sadly, just like the ancient Israelites, so-called Christian America loves to have it so; because unlike Moses of old who was willing to forsake the pleasures and sins of Egypt in order to serve the one true God, many Americans prefer to be fed the lie that they are blessed by God, and the greatest Christian nation upon the Earth, while at the same time, they kick Him out of public schools, out of government, and teach and practice many things which are totally contrary to His Word. Moreover, they continue to enjoy their over-indulgent, sinful, and materialistic lifestyle at the expense of the oppressed poor of the world who are forced to work in "sweat shops" for a meager wage, in order to earn their living. Consider the following verses:

"But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived."
2 Timothy 3:13, KJV

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;"

"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;"

Hebrews 11:24,25, KJV

Exactly how close are these parallels between the history and sins of ancient Israel and modern-day America? Consider the following shocking truths. According to American history books, the United States of America was founded upon the principle of the freedom of expression. This expression is particularly manifested through political ideology, as well as through the freedom of religious worship. While some of the forefathers arrived in America seeking for financial opportunity, others sought to escape from the religious persecution which was rampant in Europe at the time, due to such things as the Inquisition by the Roman Catholic Church.

Many of us have been taught that America was founded upon Christian principles, just as ancient Israel was founded upon belief in the one true God of Heaven. Just as it took only a few hundred years for Israel to forsake her God, can we honestly say that America has done any differently? The Israelites were specifically told to drive out and destroy their pagan enemies, which they not only failed to do, but ended up marrying them as well. Look at modern so-called Christian America. Has she done any different? By no means! Today, rather than keeping themselves pure from pagans and pagan belief systems, Americans are marrying Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, etc., and adopting their religions as their own, instead of holding to their Christian heritage. If American Christians truly consider themselves to be God's people, just as the Jews view themselves as the same, then why are they doing these things?

Besides David and Solomon, one of the kings of Israel who was most pleasing to the Lord, was Hezekiah. Do you know why? As we are told in the Second Book of the Chronicles of the Kings, not only did he repair the Temple of the Lord and re-institute the priestly order and the daily sacrifices and offerings, but he also sent letters to the tribes throughout Israel and Judah, in which he strongly encouraged the people to return to the Lord. Furthermore, he advised them to tear down the altars and the false idols which had been built to honor the pagan gods of the heathen, as we see here:

"And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father had done. He in the first year of his reign, in the first month, opened the doors of the house of the LORD, and repaired them. And he brought in the priests and the Levites, and gathered them together into the east street, And said unto them, Hear me, ye Levites, sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the LORD God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place. For our fathers have trespassed, and done that which was evil in the eyes of the LORD our God, and have forsaken him, and have turned away their faces from the habitation of the LORD, and turned their backs. Also they have shut up the doors of the porch, and put out the lamps, and have not burned incense nor offered burnt offerings in the holy place unto the God of Israel. Wherefore the wrath of the LORD was upon Judah and Jerusalem, and he hath delivered them to trouble, to astonishment, and to hissing, as ye see with your eyes. For,

lo, our fathers have fallen by the sword, and our sons and our daughters and our wives are in captivity for this. Now it is in mine heart to make a covenant with the LORD God of Israel, that his fierce wrath may turn away from us. My sons, be not now negligent: for the LORD hath chosen you to stand before him, to serve him, and that ye should minister unto him, and burn incense."

2 Chronicles 29:2-11, KJV

As we conclude this series in part three, we will be making some final comparisons between ancient Israel and modern America, and then consider the possible outcomes of America's current state of apostasy. I trust that you will join me.

Written by the WordWeaver

webmaster@endtimeprophecy.net
<http://www.endtimeprophecy.net>

WHAT IS WRONG WITH MODERN AMERICA? : PART 3

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Obedient King Josiah, Israel's Pagan Temples, America's Many False Religions, Backslidden American Leadership, No God But One, Covenant Of Circumcision, Ruth The Moabitess And Esther Israelites Put Away Their Pagan Wives And Children, Abortion - Modern Child Sacrifices, Past Feeling, Spiritual Blindness False Complacency, Prostitution Of America, Raped By Lovers, Babylon The Great, Foolish American Legislation, Burned By Beast And The Ten Horns, America's Coming Judgment, Theories Concerning Coming Judgment, Chastisements - Tokens Of God's Love, Treatment Of God's Prophets, Delivering Our Souls, Warning To Offenders, God Vindicates His Prophets, Psalm 91

"And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, to keep the passover unto the LORD God of Israel. For the king had taken counsel, and his princes, and all the congregation in Jerusalem, to keep the passover in the second month. For they could not keep it at that time, because the priests had not sanctified themselves sufficiently, neither had the people gathered themselves together to Jerusalem. And the thing pleased the king and all the congregation. So they established a decree to make proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba even to Dan, that they should come to keep the passover unto the LORD God of Israel at Jerusalem: for they had not done it of a long time in such sort as it was written. So the posts went with the letters from the king and his princes throughout all Israel and Judah, and according to the commandment of the king, saying, Ye children of Israel, turn again unto the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, and he will return to the remnant of you, that are escaped out of the hand of the kings of Assyria. And be not ye like your fathers, and like your brethren, which trespassed against the LORD God of their fathers, who therefore gave them up to desolation, as ye see. Now be ye not stiffnecked, as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto the LORD, and enter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified for ever: and serve the LORD your God, that the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you. For if ye turn again unto the LORD, your brethren and your children shall find compassion before them that lead them captive, so that they shall come again into this land: for the LORD your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you, if ye return unto him."

2 Chronicles 30:1-9, KJV

"Now when all this was finished, all Israel that were present went out to the cities of Judah, and brake the images in pieces, and cut down the groves, and threw down the high places and the altars out of all Judah and Benjamin, in Ephraim also and Manasseh, until they had utterly destroyed them all. Then all the children of Israel returned, every man to his possession, into their own cities. And Hezekiah appointed the courses of the priests and the Levites after their courses, every man according to his service, the priests and Levites for burnt offerings and for peace offerings, to minister, and to give thanks, and to

praise in the gates of the tents of the LORD."

2 Chronicles 31:1-2, KJV

I pointed out earlier that ancient Israel's obedience to the Lord was extremely sporadic. As I mention in "The Fruits Of Disobedience", some of her kings were very obedient to the Lord, while others were not. It should not surprise us then that the good works begun by King Hezekiah did not endure. Thus, only a few generations later, we find a young and God-fearing King Josiah, at the age of sixteen, repeating the very same acts which had been done by other obedient kings who had preceded him to the throne:

"Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem one and thirty years. And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of David his father, and declined neither to the right hand, nor to the left. For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father: and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images. And they brake down the altars of Baalim in his presence; and the images, that were on high above them, he cut down; and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images, he brake in pieces, and made dust of them, and strowed it upon the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them. And he burnt the bones of the priests upon their altars, and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem. And so did he in the cities of Manasseh, and Ephraim, and Simeon, even unto Naphtali, with their mattocks round about. And when he had broken down the altars and the groves, and had beaten the graven images into powder, and cut down all the idols throughout all the land of Israel, he returned to Jerusalem."

2 Chronicles 34:1-7, KJV

While I can cite other examples of the scattered obedient kings of Israel, the point I wish to stress here, is that these men knew that if they truly wanted to please the Lord, they had to obey the commandments which had first been given to Moses, by stopping the sacrifices to the pagan gods, and by tearing down the many altars which had been built in the high places in order to worship these demons. In short, to really please the Lord, they had to rid Israel of all of the false religions and the temples associated with them. These false religions were so rampant in Israel, that the Prophets Jeremiah and Hosea were inspired to write:

"Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, are these."

Jeremiah 7:4, KJV

"For Israel hath forgotten his Maker, and buildeth temples; and Judah hath multiplied fenced cities: but I will send a fire upon his cities, and it shall devour the palaces thereof."

Hosea 8:14, KJV

Let us take another look now at modern America. Whereas the Lord told the ancient Israelites to not marry the heathen, and to not have anything to do with their false gods and their false religions, is this what the leadership of modern America has done? Quite to the contrary. When foreigners come to American soil seeking political asylum or financial opportunity, they are pleasantly surprised to discover that

they can also continue to worship the god, or gods of their choice. In fact, America is so, so friendly, that one can even be an antichrist atheist. It doesn't matter to Uncle Sam. All that matters to the American government, is that one will pledge his loyalty to America, that he will defend her if called to do so, and that he will contribute to America's wealth in some way. Anything else is considered a secondary issue, and this is wrong, wrong, wrong! It was her choice to follow the one true God which caused ancient Israel to prosper and receive the blessings of the Lord; and it was her choice to forsake Him and follow after other false gods and religions which brought down His wrath upon her time and time again!

Now let's be honest here. Can any of you really imagine any American president, signing into law a bill which will immediately outlaw all other religions and forms of worship which are contrary to our Christian faith? Can you imagine any American president signing any bill which will call for the complete destruction of all Jewish synagogues, Muslim mosques, Buddhist temples, etc., on American soil? Hardly; yet that is basically what King Hezekiah, King Josiah, and other good kings did in Israel. They did their best to purge the land of these false religions, because they feared the judgments of the Lord, more than they feared the opinions of the people who might oppose such an edict; and some people did oppose them, as we see in this verse concerning King Hezekiah's edict:

"So the posts passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh even unto Zebulun: but they laughed them to scorn, and mocked them."

2 Chronicles 30:10, KJV

Sadly, just like the majority of the leadership of ancient Israel, most of America's leadership is too backslidden in their faith to ever dare attempt such a thing. Most of them are more interested in being politically-correct, and in maintaining their public image, than in standing up for the truth of God's Word. Keeping their jobs, and their high salaries, takes precedence to obeying God's Commandments in His Holy Book. To be accused of religious intolerance, or of being a religious extremist, would absolutely ruin their careers, so they prefer to tow the line of ecumenism and say that all religions are good; and that in America, we must simply learn to get along with each other, regardless of our religious differences.

Because of this compromise, besides the Jews, Muslims and Buddhists, we have many other false religionists like the Wiccans, the Satanists, and various belief systems which have crept into the USA from Asia, Africa, Latin America, etc., besides those which were already being practiced by the Native Americans, such as Shamanism. Not only that, but some of these religions now have their days of worship included on the American calendar, and some of their customs are being taught in the American Public School System.

What utter nonsense and rebellion against the Lord's Word! Can you imagine if the Lord had told Moses to tell the children of Israel "Now, when you enter the land of Canaan, you are going to find a lot of heathen people who worship other gods besides Me. Now, you know that I am the only true God, but don't you worry about them, or do anything to harm them. Just learn to get along with them. Practice religious tolerance". Is that what the Lord told them? No! The Lord

said:

". . . I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;" Exodus 20:1b-5, KJV

As I have made clear, the Israelites were to have absolutely nothing to do with the heathen which inhabited the land of Canaan. They were suppose to destroy them and to drive them out! They were supposed to destroy their false temples and altars, and get rid of all of the idols of their false gods. They were not to marry the heathen, or to have any children by them. The Bible tells us that the only condition under which the ancient Israelites could intermingle with the heathen, was if the heathen were circumcised according to the covenant given to Abraham, and if they forsook their false gods, and adopted the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Consider these verses:

"And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant." Genesis 17:12-14, KJV

One Biblical account which is an excellent example of this, is the story of Ruth the Moabitess. Many of us are familiar with the fact, that after Naomi's husband and two sons died in the land of Moab, which is now a part of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Naomi entreated her two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth, to return to their families, and to their gods. While Orpah did as she was told, Ruth clave to her mother-in-law, Naomi, and said:

". . . Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God:" Ruth 1:16b, KJV

As we know, Ruth later remarried, and became the wife of an Israelite named Boaz, who was the great grandfather of King David, and thus an ancestor of Jesus Himself. Another clear example is that of the story of Esther, who likewise married the heathen king of Persia, and thus saved her people from certain destruction. Please realize though, that these are exceptions to the general rule. The norm was for Israelites not to marry the heathen. Sadly, as I stated in part two, in modern-day America, we see the exact opposite happening; and America has become the melting pot of the world, in both a religious, and in an ethnic sense. As I explain in other articles, in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, we see that the people of Judah repented of their evilness, and put away their pagan wives and the children whom they had begotten by

them, because their love for the Lord, and their desire to obey Him was much greater, as we see here:

"And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, answered and said unto Ezra, We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land: yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing. Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law. Arise; for this matter belongeth unto thee: we also will be with thee: be of good courage, and do it. Then arose Ezra, and made the chief priests, the Levites, and all Israel, to swear that they should do according to this word. And they sware . . . And Ezra the priest stood up, and said unto them, Ye have transgressed, and have taken strange wives, to increase the trespass of Israel. Now therefore make confession unto the LORD God of your fathers, and do his pleasure: and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives. Then all the congregation answered and said with a loud voice, As thou hast said, so must we do."

Ezra 10:2-5, 10-12, KJV

"In those days also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab: And their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people. And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves. Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin. Shall we then hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to transgress against our God in marrying strange wives?"

Nehemiah 13:23-27, KJV

If some strong Christian leader, or Prophet, were to come along today, and if he were to tell American Christians to forsake their unbelieving mates and families, how many of them would be willing to do it? I would dare say very few. Such a messenger would be viewed as an absolute fool, and his message mocked, just as we saw earlier in the case of King Hezekiah.

With all of these verses, I have now provided you with a very clear picture of what the Lord expected of the ancient Israelites. They were supposed to utterly purge the land of Canaan of the heathen. The only exception seems to be if the heathen were willing to forsake their pagan gods, and adopt the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as their own. In like manner, the Israelites were supposed to totally destroy all of the altars and temples dedicated to the false gods. The Lord required of them that they remain both ethnically and spiritually pure in His sight. In both regards, they failed on a grand scale, even participating in child sacrifices. As I explain in other articles, such as the eight-part series, "Abortion: Slaughter Of The Innocent", the child sacrifices continue in America today; albeit in a more subtle form.

Just the other day, I was totally shocked to discover a web

site where it is claimed that a certain ex-minister performs what is referred to as an abortion ceremony. During this ceremony, the woman holds up a silver bowl which contains the remnants of her aborted fetus, while the ex-minister pronounces certain words over it, in which he asks God to bless the woman and her family, for their willingness to make the courageous decision to abort the baby. If this is indeed true, surely it epitomizes the twisted, perverted way in which some American Christians now view things. That a minister would backslide so far from his Christian faith, and do such a thing, almost defies belief; but as we saw in part two, this is precisely what happened in ancient Israel as well. They backslid so far from the Lord, they were so spiritually blind, that the Prophet Isaiah told them that their entire perception was upside-down. It was distorted. It was reversed. They were living under extremely strong delusion. The spiritual and political leadership were both deceived, and they worked together to deceive the people as well. They cried "Peace, peace!" while the true Prophets said war and destruction was coming because of their sins.

In thinking of this man, I am also reminded of the words of the Apostle Paul, where he tells us that some people are so far from the Lord, and living under such strong delusion, that they are actually "past feeling". They are numb to the Voice of God which is trying to convict their evil hearts. Consider these shocking verses:

"This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness."
Ephesians 4:17-19, KJV

Sadly, it seems that with each passing year, America is also becoming more and more "past feeling". She is so drunk on her own pride and self-confidence, that she has become deaf to God's Voice crying out to her through His many scattered messengers. Not only that, but similar to ancient Israel, America has also prostituted herself with the pagan nations and peoples of the world; and they have raped her, in order that they might partake of her delicacies. Just like the mysterious Babylon the Great who is graphically described for us in the Book of Revelation, America has become a whore in God's sight, who boasts of her fornications with the merchants of the world. In her blindness, and her distorted way of viewing things, just like that haughty whore John describes for us, she says "I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow". Isn't this precisely what the false prophets were saying before Israel was invaded in the past? Consider John's description of Babylon the Great:

"How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow."
Revelation 18:7, KJV

Not only is America being raped from abroad, but she is being raped from within as well. She has opened wide her doors, and her lovers have come in by the millions. In fact, they are now so multitudinous, that they have begun to take over the country. The Jews have such an extremely powerful

lobby in Washington, D.C., that Israel has America wrapped around her finger. While the Muslims may not hold very much political power in America, nevertheless, Islam is still the fastest growing religion in America today, and Buddhism has also been embraced by many former Christians. To add to this scourge of spiritual diseases, the United States of America has foolishly passed certain laws which not only protect these religions, by making one guilty of a hate crime if he dares to say anything against them, but which also protect the rights of the gay and lesbian community as well.

As I explain in the four-part series "Homosexuality And Lesbianism: To The Point", as well as in the series "When Sin Is No Longer A Sin", these people have a very specific agenda which they have been aggressively pursuing for the past three decades. Today, to America's shame, we have gay and lesbian priests, priests who marry or bless gays and lesbians, so-called "civil unions" of homosexual couples in some states, and outright gay "marriages" in others, with all of New England scheduled to fall to their sinful agenda by 2012.

So you see, just like ancient Israel who was told to keep herself pure and undefiled, but who then turned around and disobeyed the Lord repeatedly, by committing spiritual whoredom with her enemies, current-day America has done the very same thing. She is literally sleeping with the enemy; not to mention men with men, and women with women. The question then, is how will it all end? If we follow the Biblical example, the answer can only be one. Each time Israel fell into apostasy, she was invaded by her foreign enemies as a chastisement from the Lord. In the case of the mysterious Babylon the Great, we are told that she will be utterly burned with fire by the Beast and the Ten Horns, or nations, who join with him, as we see here:

"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. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast...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."
Revelation 17:12-13, 16, KJV

Following these examples, unless there is truly a great repentance all across America, the only thing which can possibly await her is severe judgment and destruction from the Lord. It is not simply because I say so, but because this is what God's Word seems to indicate. For the Lord to not chastise America, would make Him seem unrighteous to anyone who is familiar with His dealings in the Bible. For Him to punish ancient Israel because of her apostasy, and then ignore the many sins of modern America, who also calls herself by His Name, would certainly seem like a clear case of hypocrisy; thus, being the righteous God that He is, it seems to me that judgment on America is imminent.

Exactly how soon, or to what degree, or in what form, this judgment will come, I honestly do not know. As we have seen, in the case of Israel, it was usually by foreign invasion; and quite often, the Prophets would prophesy for many years before the judgment would actually occur. While I do not like to resort to too much speculation, I can tell you that within some conspiracy circles, it is strongly believed that the invisible powers which are the motivating force behind

the New World Order, are planning to use the United Nations peacekeeping forces to invade America, as a result of some internal emergency. Is it possible that the current global financial crisis will continue to deteriorate to a point where chaos and anarchy will overcome America, as people become desperate for jobs, money, food, clothing, shelter and other daily necessities? Will such a social breakdown require the intervention of an outside force in order to restore the peace in America? I honestly do not know.

Another school of thought suggests that America is indeed Babylon the Great Whore mentioned in the Book of Revelation, and that some day in the future, the Beast and the Ten Horns will indeed rain nuclear fire down upon her. Even at this current time, the American Government and mass media have been very busy emphasizing the growing nuclear threat that is originating from such countries as North Korea, Iran, and other enemies of the United States. While in my view, the direct physical threat from such nations is currently very low, nevertheless, I am again reminded of the words of the Patriarch Job who said:

"For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me."
Job 3:25, KJV

Regardless of how soon, or in what form this chastisement manifests itself, if we again look to the examples found in the Bible, we must remember that no matter what the Lord does, and no matter how harsh His judgment may be, it is still a Divine Token of His Love; because as King Solomon and the Apostle Paul wrote:

"Open rebuke is better than secret love."
Proverbs 27:5, KJV

"For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."
Hebrews 12:6, KJV

What we can also learn from the Scriptures, is that in most cases, the majority of the people simply do not take heed to the warnings that are given by the Lord's messengers. As we saw earlier in this series, in the case of ancient Israel, rather than accept the Lord's many warnings, and repent of their sins, the political and religious leadership tried to stop the message from being delivered; or else they tried to neutralize the effect it had on the people by vilifying the true Prophets of the Lord, by calling them liars, deceivers, false prophets, and traitors to their own country. In some cases, they used their own false prophets to contradict the words of God's true Prophets. Such was the case with the Lord's Prophets Micaiah, Jeremiah and Elijah. Most of the Lord's Prophets were persecuted and slain. While the Prophet Jeremiah seems to have escaped death, he was vilified like the rest of his contemporaries, and cast into prison on a number of occasions, as I discuss in other articles.

That being the case, depending upon who reads this article, I suspect that, as on other occasions, I will at the very least receive a few pieces of hate mail, in which I will be accused of being insane, or anti-American, or full of hate, or religiously intolerant, among other things. However, such messages do not move me. I simply read them and then trash them. As with other articles I have written on this topic, I will at least have the satisfaction of knowing that I have

obeyed the Lord, and delivered my soul; for as the Lord told the Prophet Ezekiel:

"Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul."

Ezekiel 3:17-19, KJV

Regardless of how the messenger and his message are received by the people and their leaders, the Bible tells us that it is utter foolishness to seek to harm the Lord's messengers. Not only that, but we are told that God always vindicates His Prophets, and the messages which they bear, when they come to pass. Consider these verses:

"Saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm."

Psalms 105:15, KJV

"And when this cometh to pass, (lo, it will come,) then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them."

Ezekiel 33:33, KJV

Just as all of the prophecies of the past have come to pass, it is also a sure thing that those remaining will come to pass as well in God's perfect time; and this may very well include the judgment of America. It is my prayer that if your heart is not right with the Lord, that you will soon take the necessary steps in order to remedy the situation. God is indeed very merciful and extremely long-suffering. As Peter tells us, it is not His desire for any to perish, but there must come a time when His judgments begin to fall. Are you ready for them? I truly hope so. If not, please take care of it today; and that begins with accepting Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour, if you have not already done so. Once you have done that, please place your utmost trust in Him, and remember this:

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet. Because he hath set his love upon me,

therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high,
because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I
will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will
deliver him, and honour him. With long life will I satisfy
him, and shew him my salvation."

Psalms 91:1-16, KJV

With this wonderful Psalm of protection, I will conclude yet
another series. May the Lord bless and keep all of His
obedient children in the troublesome times which lie ahead.

Written by the WordWeaver

webmaster@endtimeprophecy.net
<http://www.endtimeprophecy.net>