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A Troubled Country...



By Steven J. Hogan

~ A Saturday Morning Post #205 ~

This country is terribly troubled! It is sharply divided. It has major problems in its cities. It has big problems in its schools. It has huge problems in the government. It has problems economically. It has problems with crime, drugs, immigration, and human trafficking. There are problems with marriages, families, and even with churches. It is obvious that this country is going downhill, and sad to say, and sovereignly so, it will keep getting worse until Jesus Christ comes back and takes over, not just this country, but the entire world. Rev. 11:15

The real reason for this country's problems is her sin. The truth about sin and its consequences must be understood by Christians, or

else we will be looking for answers in the wrong places. Humanistic and worldly thinking never give us the answers about the spiritual need of the soul, our relationships, and how we can truly live – they only come from God, His word, and from Jesus Christ. John 8:32, 14:6

Sin is a major subject in the Bible. Sin is talked about from the beginning of the Bible to the end of it. One of the best lists of sins is in 2 Tim. 3:2-4: *"Men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God."* Another detailed list is found in Gal. 5:19-21: *"The deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealously, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these."* Jer. 2:13 sums up sin this way: *"My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, to hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water."* Indeed, the sin of rebelling against God and rejecting Him is the root of all kinds of other sins.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is the only solution to our sin problem. The wages of sin is death, both physical and spiritual death. *"The soul who sins will die"* (Ezek. 18:4). *"The wages of sin is death"* (Rom. 6:23). As people, we have sinned against God, and deserve to be punished, and eternally so. But thankfully, Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Son of man, became our substitute, and suffered and died on a cross to pay for our sins. *"God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"* (Rom. 5:8). *"Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God"* (1 Pet. 3:18). *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him, shall not perish, but have eternal life."* All those who repent of their sin and believe that Jesus Christ died for them, satisfying God's wrath, and then rose again

are born again, receive eternal life, are forgiven, and will go to heaven.

Many Bible stories illustrate our sin problem. There was Cain and his sin of murder, and he was judged (Gen. 4:9-14). There was the family of Achan greedy for gold and silver, and God had them stoned to death (Josh. 7:16-26). There were the proud, immoral, and gluttonous cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, and God righteously rained down fire and brimstone upon them (Gen. 19:23-29, Ezek. 16:49). In Noah's time, the people in the world were extremely wicked for *"every intent of the thoughts of his heart was evil continually."* God had no choice but to devastate the entire earth with a flood, and so everyone was punished, and perished, except for Noah and his family (Gen. 6-8). These examples, along with many more, are to wake us up to our serious and deadly sin problem. It is that which affects and afflicts every person, every family, every village, every city, every country, and the whole world.

A time when Israel was troubled by sin and found mercy – 2 Chron. 15:6 tells us, *"many disturbances afflicted all the inhabitants of the land. Nation was crushed by nation, and city by city, for God troubled them with every kind of distress."* It was God Himself who afflicted and troubled Israel because of her sin, because she rejected Him and worshiped false gods. And because of her *"abominable idols"* (vs. 8), *"Israel was without the true God"* (vs. 3). But King Asa was stirred by the words of the prophet Azariah who told him, *"As for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded"* (vs. 7). The king responded by removing the idols and calling on the people to repent and seek the Lord. And by God's amazing grace, the people *"entered into a covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers with all their heart and soul."* This led to a great revival for we see that God *"let them find Him*." The undeserved and unbelievable blessing was that "*the Lord gave them rest on every side,"* and there was peace, for there was *"no more war until the thirty-fifth year of Asa's reign."* 2 Chron. 15:15, 19

A major part of Israel's history is her sin against God. Time after time, the Bible graphically describes how God's privileged people sinned against Him, and therefore, He judged them. (Ps. 78, Ps. 106, Neh. 9, and the prophets). From around 1450 BC to 600 BC, God demonstrated great patience and love for His people (Ps. 136). There were short periods of time when the Israelites lived in a godly way, but most of the time they kept on sinning. Finally, and righteously, God had many killed and many others exiled from their land. After the Jewish people returned to their land and had been there for about 500 years, a most incredible thing happened – Jesus Christ, the son of God and Savior of sinners, actually came to Israel. Sadly, most of His people rejected Him, and again God exiled them, this around 70 AD, and this time to all parts of the earth (Luke 21:20-24). Since the 1880's, God has been mercifully, and according to His promise, bringing the Jews back to Israel, a number now totaling close to 6.6 million. That all these Jewish people returned and now reside in their God-given land is the #1 sign that we live in the end-times, and that Jesus Christ will soon return to rapture the church and begin reigning over this world. Dan. 12:1-4

The Old Testament prophets spoke extensively on the subject of sin. 1) The prophets talked very openly to the people about all the different sins they were committing. 2) They made it clear that what they were doing was wrong, and consequently, were guilty before God. 3) They strongly exhorted the people to repent of their sins and turn to God for mercy, for forgiveness. 4) They warned them that if they didn't repent that they would be judged for their sins. 5) They gave the Jewish people hope, for they spoke about the coming Messiah, One who would be both a Savior and a King. 6) The prophets told them about God's promises, that in the future He would save a remnant of Jews, give them an eternal King, and that they would inherit a large portion of land (Ezek. 37:21-28). The writings of the prophets occupy a sizeable portion of the Old Testament, and that's because God really wants us to learn about His holiness, the danger of sin, the consequences of sin, His great mercy, and the hope He has for Israel, which also relates to the hope He has for the church (Ps. 37:11 – Matt. 5:5). It's not just important, but imperative, that you read the sobering, instructive, and purifying

messages of the prophets, for it relates to you, and to the times we live in.

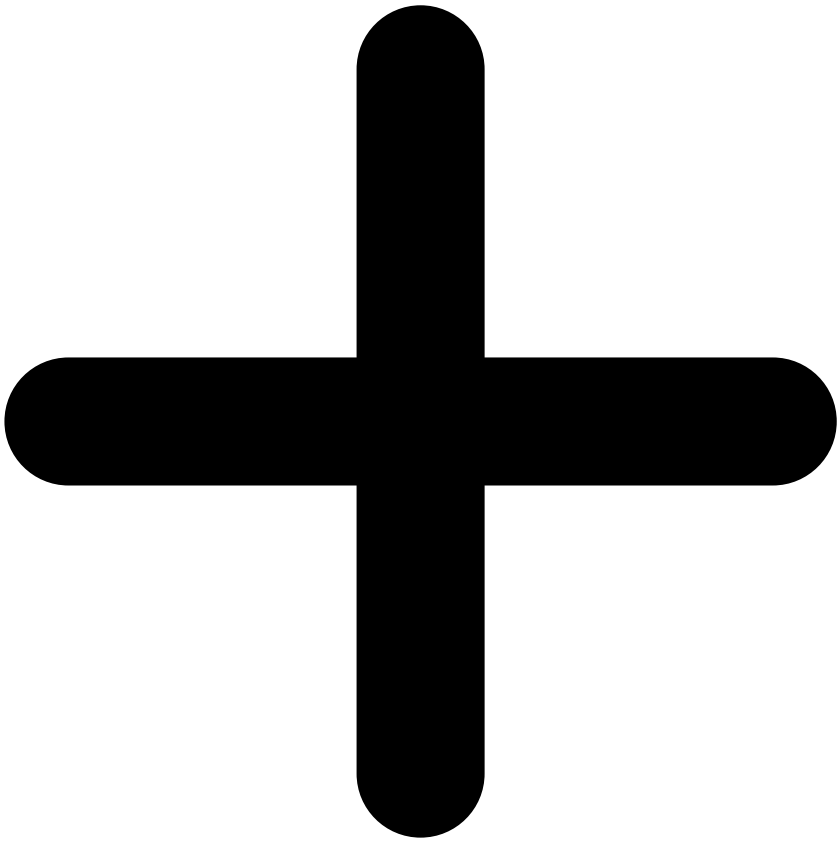
God has been judging the United States. We have been and will continue to be plagued by troubles, and it won't stop unless we, as a nation, repent of our sins and turn to the Lord. But I do not believe that will happen. Why? Because of the profound magnitude and seriousness of our sin, because of all the Old Testament examples of nations who greatly sinned and then were judged, and because we know that God, as a final and irreversible judgment, gives people over to their sin, especially to gross sexual sin (Lev. 18, Rom. 1:18-33). I don't believe there's any stopping our nation's downhill slide, which we have been witnessing since the 1960's. David Ettinger, in a recent issue of Zion's Hope, said, *"America is undergoing upheavals, and many of us are concerned. It is tough seeing the foundations upon which our nation was built under attack... If you believe godlessness and secularism in the United States have passed the point of no return – which I, and many evangelicals do believe – then it is highly likely 2020 may have been a spark that quickly becomes an inferno of cataclysmic events paving the way for the rise of the Antichrist and the return of the Lord Jesus. Don't count on 2021 – and 2022, 2023, 2024, etc. – to offer any respite from the downward spiral in which our nation is swirling."* (Zion's Hope Magazine – "A Perfect Right Now Passage" – Vol. 31, No. 5, p. 22)

Just because God is judging the United States does not mean He is not working, that people are not getting saved, and that the church is not growing. Jesus Christ is still building the church in this country and will continue to do so until He comes back at the end of this age and raptures the Christians who are still on earth. Until that time, you are to have faith, hope, and love, and be a holy, dedicated, and obedient Christian. Your job is to carry out the assignments God gives you, love all the believers, use your spiritual gift, and be united with the church in making disciples. And remember, seeking God's kingdom is your main priority (Matt. 6:33). It's not being consumed with the world,

politics, pleasures, sports, or fame. It's not making money. And it's not taking it easy (Luke 8:14, 12:13-21). Jesus plainly and lovingly tells us, *"If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me"* (Luke 9:23). What an opportunity and what a joy to work with God and fulfill His purposes at this time in history – and it results in Him receiving eternal glory, others being eternally blessed, and you receiving eternal rewards.

You may be saddened to think this country is in decline, but you must be thankful and happy in the Lord. *"The Lord reigns, let the earth rejoice"* (Ps. 97:1, 1 Thess. 5:16-18). You should know that what is now happening is by the sovereign hand of God, is part of His end-time plans, and must take place before the Antichrist comes to rule over this earth, and before Christ returns to rapture the church, defeat the Antichrist, judge the world, and reign over the world. I cannot stress enough the importance of seeing this big picture, of knowing where things are headed, and that God's eternal plans are unfolding day by day. It won't be long before Christ's coming, and then He will dramatically and wonderfully change everything, and all for the glory of God. *"He had made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father – to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him."* Rev. 1:6-7

P.S. This message about how our sin is in trouble because of our sin is extremely important to understand. I would also encourage you to read two other posts – *"The Downfall of the United States Before the Return of Christ"*, and *"In a Wicked World, You Have to Have Hope."*



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