

FALL AND RISE OF SOCIETY

“What happened was this: People knew God perfectly well, but when they didn't treat him like God, refusing to worship him, they trivialized themselves into silliness and confusion so that there was neither sense nor direction left in their lives. They pretended to know it all, but were illiterate regarding life. They traded the glory of God who holds the whole world in his hands for cheap figurines you can buy at any roadside stand. So God said, in effect, "If that's what you want, that's what you get." It wasn't long before they were living in a pigpen, smeared with filth, filthy inside and out. And all this because they traded the true God for a fake god, and worshiped the god they made instead of the God who made them—the God we bless, the God who blesses us. Oh, yes!

Worse followed. Refusing to know God, they soon didn't know how to be human either—women didn't know how to be women, men didn't know how to be men. Sexually confused, they abused and defiled one another, women with women, men with men—all lust, no love. And then they paid for it, oh, how they paid for it—emptied of God and love, godless and loveless wretches. Since they didn't bother to acknowledge God, God quit bothering them and let them run loose. And then all hell broke loose: rampant evil, grabbing and grasping, vicious backstabbing. They made life hell on earth with their envy, wanton killing, bickering, and cheating. Look at them: mean-spirited, venomous, fork-tongued God-bashers. Bullies, swaggerers, insufferable windbags! They keep inventing new ways of wrecking lives. They ditch their parents when they get in the way. Stupid, slimy, cruel, cold-blooded. And it's not as if they don't know better. They know perfectly well they're spitting in God's face. And they don't care—worse, they hand out prizes to those who do the worst things best!”

This passage reads like an indictment against modern society, written by someone of a future generation. It is in fact the Message version of Romans 1:21-32. (The verse references removed for effect). Last time we looked at the Wisdom of God, and the role that Wisdom plays not only in receiving new revelations and inventions, but also in the paths that our lives and society will take. Romans 1:21-32 shows us in graphic detail what society becomes when God is removed, and we see these trends daily.

No government program can rectify it, no psychological evaluation or treatment can reverse it!

History has shown us that as empires or world-powers reached their peak, the tentacles of corruption described in Romans 1:21-32 set in, and the system collapsed or dissipated. Take for instance the Roman Empire – Some have even said that the advent of Christianity made the Empire last as long as it did amidst the issues that were dragging it headlong into oblivion. Some of these issues were:

A Decline in Morals and Values – There was an increase in crime and violence to the extent that the streets were no longer safe and at one point it is said that there were approximately 32,000 prostitutes in Rome – male and female. Homosexuality was at its height, condoned and practiced by the Emperor who held lavish parties and held gladiatorial contests until the grounds of the Coliseum were drenched over and over again with layers of blood mixed with sand. These were watched by bloodthirsty crowds cursing and swearing to a high level of vulgarity.

Health and environmental issues arose as people interacted during the massive gatherings at the Coliseum and diseases spread along with alcoholism. There were slums in Rome with people living on the streets in hovels, much like the homeless today.

There was political corruption and often the Emperor was removed and replaced not by free and fair election but by assassination or bribery through which offices were sold to the highest bidder. This process resulted in the weakening of the authority of the Emperor as well as placing people with low values and standards into political office.

Other social issues evolved such as the extinction of the small farmer by wealthy landowners who owned large estates and produced lower priced goods through the employment of slave labor. The small farmers were people of integrity who had passed on their values and way of farming for generations. Gradually, these farms disappeared and the families moved into the cities that already had problems of unemployment and other issues, and this gave rise to higher levels of crime and violence.

There were other issues also such as high military spending and decline in the living standards, but one that stands out is the absence of new inventions to keep the Empire ahead of the rest of the world in agriculture, engineering and medicine – why was this? Instead of embracing the God of Creation they persecuted the Christians through whom the Light of Wisdom and the ability to create flowed.

All of this is familiar to us today – and don't say that will never happen to us. What use is history if we never learn from it? What good does it serve to observe the errors of others and not learn from them?

There was a reason God establishes a couple – male and female then a family then a community then a nation. There is a reason God establishes His line of authority in the earth. He is a God of order – He is a God of Wisdom – He is omniscient. There is a reason why He gives us His Word and His Spirit to guide us into all truth.

Man however, has exalted the intellect and relied on knowledge gained by the five senses to live by when Wisdom says that “the just shall live by faith” (Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11). What does it mean to live by faith? It means to live in a realm beyond the five senses. It means to live in the realm of the Spirit of God where we know that what God says, He will do and what He does, He has already said. God says in Jeremiah 33:3 (The Message) *"This is God's Message, the God who made earth, made it livable and lasting, known everywhere as God: 'Call to me and I will answer you. I'll tell you marvelous and wondrous things that you could never figure out on your own.'"*

If we live by the knowledge of the senses, of the intellect, we are living according to the flesh and God says in Romans 12-14(AMP) *So then, brethren, we are debtors, but not to the flesh [we are not obligated to our carnal nature], to live [a life ruled by the standards set up by the dictates] of the flesh. 13For if you live according to [the dictates of] the flesh, you will surely die. But if through the power of the [Holy] Spirit you are [habitually] putting to death (making*

extinct, deadening) the [evil] deeds prompted by the body, you shall [really and genuinely] live forever. 14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

Are you a son of God? If so, why are you allowing the system of this world to have the rule over you? Why are you living according to the dictates and standards of the flesh? (I am not saying to break the laws of the land! The Word of God forbids that!) We are to live by a higher Authority an Authority that says we should live with integrity, to stand up for what is fair and just, to treat all men and women fairly and equally, to walk in love, to do all that we do with a standard of excellence. We live by an Authority that says we are more that conquerors, we have authority over every situation in our lives, we do not accept sickness, we do not accept lack or poverty, and we accept nothing that has a negative impact on our lives.

We live by the Word and the Spirit of God.

If we are to change society, we must first change the man and this change can only occur through the born-again experience whereby the Spirit of God can effect change.

Ephesians 4:17-32 (NKJV) The New Man

17 This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, 18 having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; 19 who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

20 But you have not so learned Christ, 21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: 22 that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, 23 and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

Do Not Grieve the Spirit

25 Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another. 26 "Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath, 27 nor give place to the devil. 28 Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. 29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. 32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.