

LET THE BIBLE SPEAK SERIES

HER SINS HAVE REACHED UNTO HEAVEN

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Rev. 18:1-5

1. Christians in Asia Minor, near the end of the first century, were undergoing severe persecution. Satan was behind it all, and found two allies to afflict the people of God.
2. They were symbolized in Rev. 13 as a beast rising out of the sea, exercising great political power, and a beast coming off the land, symbolizing false religion.
3. The two powers merged in emperor worship and used false wonders to deceive the people. The saints did not and could not receive the mark of the beast, but in their situation needed both hope and instruction.
4. As the visions unfold, John sees the ultimate fall of these two beasts. The persecuting power is symbolized as Babylon the great because that had been the great power which led God's people into captivity in Old Testament times. As God brought down that Babylon, so he would bring down this Babylon afflicting his New Covenant people.
5. Rev. 18 describes the fall of these evil powers and sounds a warning to the people of God of that day not to be caught up in the sins which characterized the citizens of Rome. "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye not be partakers of her sins, and that ye not receive her plagues" (18:4).
6. It is unfortunate, but true that the spirit of the world often infiltrates the lives of God's people.

Sin is made to look attractive.

It sparkles and sizzles.

It shimmers and shines.

It promises real living, but delivers death.

We are warned--1Jno. 2:15-17---2Cor. 6:17 "Come out from among them and be ye separate..."

1Pet. 2:11 "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul."

7. The reason God would judge the great harlot was that "her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities."
She had become arrogant and said, "I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow" (v.7). But God declared "she shall be utterly burned with fire; for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her" (v.8).

8. God judged ancient Tyre and brought it down. It was a center of commerce and of great immorality. Her sins reached to heaven and God said "enough".

God judged Nineveh and brought it down. Her sins reached unto heaven.

God judged ancient Babylon which thought it was invincible. It also said there is "none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow" only to be told by God that "they shall be as stubble (Isa. 47:7-15). Her sins reached to heaven. Through Daniel, Belshazzar was told "the most high God ruled in the kingdoms of men." Dan. 5:21

9. In the case of Rome, John saw in vision the kings of the earth, the merchants, the shipmen, all mourning the fall of this vast giant of power and evil. There was not the mourning of patriots. They saw the hope of their gain lost. Rev. 18 closes with the silence of the tomb, the bustle of commerce and life stilled forever.

I. The Sins of Pagan Nations

1. Romans 1:24-26---God gave them up, or literally "handed them over." He withdrew his restraining grace and let them have their own way--and then suffer the consequences of their own sins.

God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts unto uncleanness
He gave them up to vile affections

Here, Paul introduces us to the sleazy, slimy world of homosexuality, where men and women dishonor their bodies.

When a nation forsakes God for idols, there is not then so much as the conventions of society to hold them back.

Plunging deeper and deeper into sin Paul declared that they were:

filled with all unrighteousness--full of unrighteous, unjust deeds--dishonest, cheat etc.
wickedness-maliciousness-malignity---ill-will, the desire to injure--hurt or destroy
covetousness--a greedy desire for possessions
envy---discontent at another's excellence or good fortune
murder---little regard for human life
strife---wrangle, quarrel, fighting
deceit--- any snare, cunning contrivance of deceiving or catching, trickery etc.
whisperers---cowards who say damaging things about others behind their back
backbiters, slanderers, defamers---all who delight in destroying the good name of others
haters of God---those who defy God and his law soon come to hate him
insolent, haughty, contemptuous, brutal in behavior or language--disrespectful
boastful---an empty pretender
inventor of evil things---old forms of sin grow stale--new forms of sin are sought
disobedient to parents---not many things break down the morals of a country more quickly
and cause more lawlessness than disrespect for parents.
without understanding---people who won't understand
covenant breaker---one who will not stand to his agreement or word

without natural affection---no proper affection between parent and child
unmerciful---harsh and unfeeling

The sins of the pagans had come up before God. He gave them up and allowed them to continue in their sins until they were destroyed by their sins.

I. What About Our Sins, In America?

The downward plunge of our own nation is cause for deep concern for all who have learned from the word of God that God will not tolerate evil in a nation forever.

We once spoke of "trends" toward national decay. Today the evidence of such national rot are stamped across the stage of action as we watch with disbelief.

A. Disregard for God's Marriage Law, and Disintegration of the Home.

1. Disdain for God's marriage law.

Pearl Buck "No other people have changed as much as we Americans have changed since the end of the second World War, with the exception of Communist China...Nowhere is this change more apparent than in our new ethics of Sex." (Ladies Home Journal, Aug. '64)

As a result the foundations of the home are being eaten away.
Divorce is reaching epidemic proportions---for the most trivial of reasons
We read and hear of "communal marriages" and "homosexual families with children"
"office wives" and "suburban couple swap clubs" are freely promoted
"trial marriage" in the garb of "sexual freedom" is often fed to teenagers.
Some even declare that the home and marriage will soon be outdated.

The foundations of America tremble and shake as the home crumbles before the devil's freedom peddlers.

Marriage is still "honorable" in all according to Heb.13:4.

Marriage vows are still sacred---one man for one woman for life Mt.19:3-9

Not two men, not two women. God created them Male and Female.
There is a natural use and an unnatural use of the body. Romans 1:26 "for their women changed the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men..."

Paul needs to be heard in our world today. We have films, clubs, churches, and even preachers who would excuse, defend, justify and even glorify the very thing which Paul condemns.

Such is an abomination to God.

Newsweek Magazine recently had a cover with the picture of two women, it read "were having a baby". What a tragedy.

History records that homosexuality was rampant in ancient Rome. In fact, fourteen of the first fifteen emperors are reported to have been professed homosexuals. Hodge quotes one writer as confirming that in Rome homosexuality was so common and the countenance given to it so great that no one feared being detected in the act of practicing it. "Seneca says that in his time this sin was practiced openly in Rome, and without shame. He speaks of flocks and troops of boys trained up, distinguished by their colours and nations; and says that great care was taken to train them up for this detestable employment.

Their sin reached to heaven. So will ours.

II. Murder and Lack of Respect for Human Life

"Without natural affection..." Rom. 1:31 This refers to those who do not possess the love and attachment which nature teaches all mothers to have for their young.

In Union, S.C. "The mother who said a carjacker dumped her on a lonely road and drove off with her two little boys in the back seat confessed to killing the boys, her arrest warrant showed yesterday. (Susan Smith) Most of us feel outrage at such an event. Yet, it seems to happen all too frequently in our world today.

Albert Barnes, in his commentary, feels that Paul must have referenced the practice so common among heathens of exposing their children, or putting them to death. The canaanites "sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils and shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and daughters whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan." Psa.106:37-38

The practice of murdering small children was also common among the Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Chinese, and Hindus.

The Nazi Holocaust began with the elimination of almost 300,000 Aryan German citizens who were considered defective. Before Hitler finished his Nazi war machine had murdered six million Jews, plus another six million Gypsies, Poles and prisoners of war. Any woman who could destroy the child within her womb would have to be judged as one "without natural affection." During the decade of the Vietnam war there were 58,655 American war casualties. Our country now kills more unborn babies than that every fifteen days. During the six major wars fought by this country (Revolutionary, Civil, WWI, WWII, Korea, and Vietnam) we sustained 1,160,591 casualties. Since abortion was legalized in this country in 1973, over 28 million unborn babies have been murdered by their mothers.

The remains of these precious lives are destroyed in hospital incinerators or thrown into dumpsters behind the abortion mills. There is no national cemetery for the unborn, no flag draped coffins, no national day of remembrance. Today, in our society, human life is cheap. You can be killed for a dollar, candy bar, being in the wrong place at the wrong time, without provocation or cause. Some kill just to kill. Surely our sins have come up before God.

III. A Moral and Spiritual Sickness That Threatens Our Very Existence

1. In America today almost every subject has been subjected to a humanistic approach which desensitizes the rising generation to sin. Moral judgments are being neutralized. Every form of perversion has become "an alternate lifestyle". Murder, arson, rape, malfeasance of public officials, children passing through metal detectors at school to screen out knives and guns, these and more are the staples of daily news in the U.S.A. Raw language and explicit scenes are becoming commonplace on the evening news both locally and nationally. TV talk shows feature every form of aberrant behavior. Any moral objection or statement based on biblical principles is held up to ridicule. What passes for entertainment in prime time television is an exercise in moral debauchery. Have we forgotten that "The wicked shall be turned into hell, And all the nations that forget God. Psalms 9:17

2. How Long, Oh Lord?

The long suffering of God does not endure forever. He has judged Egypt, the Amorites, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Israel, Rome, and the empires of Napoleon and Hitler. He always allows space for repentance, but the time comes when God has seen enough and has had enough. He is still the ruler of the nations.

Arnold Toynbee (foremost historian of our generation) said "Of the twenty-two civilizations that have appeared in history, nineteen of them collapsed when they reached the moral state the United States is in now." It may be later than we think.

3. What shall we do:

A. America must return to the God of the Scriptures. No hope unless we do. Psalms 39:7 "And now Lord, what do I wait for, My hope is in you"

B. America must return to God's plan for the home, marriage, and sex. The happiness of man and the health of the nation are at the very heart of God's plan.

C. America must recognize the horror of sin and its consequences. We must accept God's definition of sin. i.e. a transgression of His law.

D. America must take up the essential ingredients of faithfulness to God. i.e. dogged determination to fight sin and unrighteousness. Self discipline, moral courage, and temperance will be needed. But the results will be rewarding.