

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

“Woe to the Rebellious Children”

By Andy Sochor

“Woe to the rebellious children,’ declares the Lord, ‘Who execute a plan, but not Mine, and make an alliance, but not of My Spirit, in order to add sin to sin; who proceed down to Egypt without consulting Me, to take refuge in the safety of Pharaoh and to seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt! Therefore the safety of Pharaoh will be your shame and the shelter in the shadow of Egypt, your humiliation’” (Isa. 30:1-3).

In the passage above, the Lord condemned the people of Judah for making an alliance with Egypt. The Lord made four points to them:

1. Their plan was not God’s.
2. Their alliance was not of God’s spirit.
3. As a result, their sin would increase.
4. Their sin would eventually bring them shame.

Even though this was addressed to the people of Judah, the same basic points apply to us today.

1. We need to make sure our plans are according to God’s will – The wise man said, *“The plans of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the Lord. All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight, but the Lord weighs the motives. Commit your works to the Lord and your plans will be established”* (Prov. 16:1-3). In other words, though we have the freedom to choose how we will direct our lives, it will be far better for us in the end if we commit our works to the Lord to do His will. If we simply follow the way that *“seems right”* to us, it will lead to *“death”* (Prov. 16:25).

2. We need to make sure our alliances are spiritually acceptable – Among those who are faithful to the Lord and will encourage us to do what is right, we must be *“diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”* (Eph. 4:3). However, when it comes to those who refuse to submit to the Lord, we must not allow them to influence us to do evil. Paul warned, *“Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them”* (Eph. 5:11).

3. We must not continue in sin – The grace of God must never be seen as “a license for immorality” (Jude 4, NIV). Paul wrote about this to the saints in Rome: *“What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?”* (Rom. 6:1-2). Christians are not to live as the world lives. However, when we allow sin to increase in our lives, it will result in an increasingly hostile attitude toward what is good. Jesus warned about this when He spoke of the coming destruction of Jerusalem: *“Because lawlessness is increased, most people’s love will grow cold”* (Matt. 24:12). If we continue in sin, our condition will only *“proceed from bad to worse”* (2 Tim. 3:13).

4. If we continue in sin, it will bring us shame – Paul warned that continuing in sin will cause our “conscience” to be “seared” to the point that we no longer feel guilt for our sin (1 Timothy 4:2). However, even if we no longer feel guilty, at some point our sin will cause us to *“shrink away from Him in shame at His coming”* (1 Jn. 2:28). However, at that point it will be too late to change anything. Paul wrote, *“For the wages of sin is death”* (Rom. 6:23). If we follow after sin and refuse to obey the Lord, the only thing we will have to look forward to is *“the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord”* (2 Thess. 1:9).

What is the solution to the problem of rebelling against God? Rather than being like Judah who went *“down to Egypt without consulting [God]”* (Isa. 30:2), we need to seek His counsel. His word shows us what is right. Paul told Timothy, *“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for*

training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). If we want to follow the way of righteousness and be engaged in good works, we need to follow what God's word teaches.

Let us not be *"rebellious children"* (Isa. 30:1). Instead, we should strive to be "obedient children" who are *"holy"* as He is *"holy"* (1 Pet. 1:14-16). – *Plain Bible Teaching*, October 18, 2017. ■

Not What I Expected

By Keith Greer

On different occasions, I've invited folks who have never attended a Church-of-Christ service to attend the worship services. Some of them have made very interesting comments about their experience. Let me share some of those comments.

"Where is the choir? I've never seen everyone singing in our worship services." The reason is we are commanded to sing – not to have others sing to us. *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord"* (Col. 3:16). Singing in the Lord's church should be *acappella* (vocal), (1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19).

"Why didn't you pass the contribution plates more than once? Why didn't you solicit contributions from everyone?" The Lord's church asks for a free-will offering from its own members. God requires His children to give *"as they have prospered"* (1 Cor. 16:1, 2). Also read 2 Corinthians 9:6, 7. We have no chili suppers, no ice cream socials, no rummage sales, or any other means of adding money to the church treasury.

"Why do you take the Lord's Supper every week?" By approved example, we see that the disciples came together on the *"first day of the week to break bread"* (Acts 20:7). Every week has a *"first day."* This is just as it was when God instructed the Jews to *"remember the Sabbath and keep it holy"* (Ex. 20:8). The Jews observed *every* Sabbath, and we observe the Lord's Supper *every* Lord's Day.

"Why aren't there people who speak in tongues?" Tongues were a spiritual gift given to first-century Christians. Read 1 Corinthians 12-14. We see that these gifts were temporary until God's word was completely revealed. Biblical tongues were *"languages"* never studied or understood by those who heard them. Please see Acts 2 and Acts 11.

"Why did the preacher say believers must be baptized in order to be saved? I believe man is saved by faith only." Jesus said baptism is necessary for those who wish to be saved (Mk. 16:16). Peter said it was a figure of what saves us (1 Pet. 3:21). Paul told the Roman Christians that those who believe are *"buried into His death"* (Rom. 6:3, 4). Faith alone cannot save a man (Jas. 2:14-26). That is why the preacher includes baptism in the Lord's invitation.

"Why are your worship services so boring?" How can they be boring if we follow the New Testament pattern? God desires the things we do to worship Him *"in spirit and truth"* (Jn. 4:24). Paul told the Corinthian brethren to do all things *"decently and orderly"* (1 Cor. 14:40). The worship service pays tribute and respect to God – it is not for entertaining men.

"Why don't you have a creed book?" The Bible is our only guide and source of authority for how and what we do (2 Tim. 3:16,17; Col. 3:17). The Bible is the *"perfect law of liberty"* (Jas. 1:25). How could man improve on what is already perfect?

Yes, one who attends the services of the Lord's church will find things done very differently than in the churches of men. However, there is a reason for this – one is seeking to please God, and the other is seeking to please men (Gal. 1:10). Who are you seeking to please? – *Knollwood church of Christ Articles*, February 2005. ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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