

THE SINS OF JERUSALEM ARE THE SINS OF TODAY

The prophet Zephaniah listed four sins of Jerusalem. He said: "*She obeyed not the voice; she received not correction; she trusted not in the Lord; she drew not near to her God.*" Zephaniah 3: 2. These were the sins of God's people then, and they are also the sins of God's people today. Let us examine them more closely.

"SHE OBEYED NOT THE VOICE" OF GOD

They had heard God speak through His law and His prophets, but had taken no heed (Jer. 7: 23 - 26). They were rebellious toward God's law. Zephaniah said, "*Her prophets are light and treacherous persons:*" (Zeph. 3:4a). They were men who were empty, vainglorious boasters who taught their own false ways as though they were God's way! They deceived the people by their teaching. He said, "*Her priests have polluted the sanctuary, they have done violence to the law.*" (Zeph. 3: 4b). The worship in the temple had been profaned.

Just as God had spoken to His people in the Old Testament, He has spoken to us today by His Son (Heb. 1: 1 - 2; Matt. 17:5). His word is filled with solemn warnings about disobedience to His voice today (Heb. 10: 26 - 31; II Thess. 1: 6 - 10; Rom. 2: 8 - 9), but many members of the church (like Israel of old) hear Him speak, but obey not His voice!

God speaks on ATTENDANCE (Heb. 10:25), but people still forsake the assemblies! He speaks on GIVING (I Cor. 16: 1 - 2), and they treat Him as though He were a dog by giving Him the scraps and leftovers. He speaks on LIVING A PURE LIFE (Rom. 12:1- 2; Tit. 2: 11 -12; I Tim. 2: 9 -10), but they are not separated from the world in dress, language, the places they go, or in the things they do! He speaks on the LOVE OF BRETHREN (I John 4:20; John 13: 34 - 35), but they stir up hatred and strife! He speaks on ATTITUDES (Phil. 2:5), but sometimes theirs are the worst! He speaks on HOW CHILDREN OF GOD ARE TO OBTAIN FORGIVENESS OF THEIR SINS (Acts 8:22; I John 1: 7 - 2: 1 - 2), and some say you don't have to do that to be forgiven! He speaks on the ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH (Acts 14: 23), and they add other organizations! He speaks on the WORK OF THE CHURCH (preaching the gospel to the lost -- Mk. 16: 15 - 16; I Tim. 3:15; edifying the saved -- Matt. 28:20; Eph. 4: 11 -12; and helping the needy saints -- I Cor. 16: 1 - 2, and they add social activities and recreation!

Yes, there are many light, empty, vainglorious boasters preaching to day who teach their own false ways as though they were the ways of God! These men, by their "*good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple*" (Rom. 16:18), just like the false prophets of the Old Testament deceived the people!

"SHE RECEIVED NOT CORRECTION"

God sent correction through His law, by the prophets, and through chastening (Amos 4:6), but she did not receive it and would not return to God.

God sends His people correction today through His word (II Tim. 3:16; II Tim. 4:2) and by chastening (Heb. 12: 5 - 11; Rom. 5: 3 - 5), but many do not receive it! Many are rebellious at the correction of the Lord! Brother or sister, what is your attitude toward the correction you receive

from God's word? What is your attitude toward the preacher when he tries to correct your ways with the word of God? (II Tim. 4:2).

"SHE TRUSTED NOT IN THE LORD"

She had put her faith in man, in her military power, in false gods, and in alliances with foreign nations. She trusted in the "arm of flesh".

Many brethren today have put their trust in human wisdom, in money, in fine buildings, and in the innovations and organizations of men. The majority of these congregations are in a great apostasy, experiencing zero growth, and all the "arms of flesh" have failed! (Let us who have held to the pattern take warning !!!). God wants us to put our trust in Him and in His way that is revealed in His word (Heb. 11:6; Eph. 6:10).

"SHE DREW NOT NEAR TO HER GOD"

She did not draw near to God in faith and in supplications for Him to guide her in all her needs.

The trouble in the church today is that MANY HAVE NOT DRAWN NIGH TO GOD! James said, "*Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you*" (James 4:8). We are to draw nigh to God in faith (II Cor. 5: 7), in time of trouble (I Pet. 5:7), in worship (John 4: 23 - 24), and in prayer (Phil. 4: 5 - 7).

We develop a strong relationship with God by daily Bible study, by prayer and meditation, by teaching others, by trusting God to provide our daily needs, and by attending worship services regularly.

Friend, what is your relationship with God? Do you hear and obey His voice? Do you take the correction of His word? Do you trust Him for all your needs? Do you draw nigh to Him? The correcting of these four sins will solve the problems in churches of Christ today! Will we make the corrections???

-- Donald Townsley