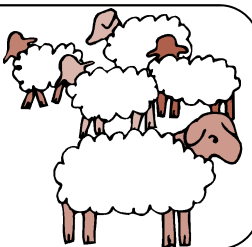


Just Like David!

Gabriel L. Mancino



of Joseph.” (6:3-6). Like Isaiah, Amos knew that these people were in big trouble...*first, with God*. Trouble coming from other sources is a result of the nation and its people turning from real love and obedience to God. Did you notice how lavish the people were living—“high on the hog,”—“top of the pops!” They even had musical instruments **like David!**

“**The herd instinct**” is an apparent part of our humanity. It is “the impulse or tendency toward clustering or acting in a group, especially the presumed instinct toward or need for gregariousness and conformity.” “Gregariousness” is “seeking and enjoying the company of others; sociable.” Another defines herd instinct as “a mentality characterized by a lack of individuality, causing people to think and act like the general population.”

People of all ages and background copy others, follow the trends and fashions, etc., though most deny it. Media has been greatly used to destroy individuality and the personal progress that is *truly* best for us. **So, what does this have to do with David?**

The front page article makes references to God’s words through Isaiah the prophet. In the same section of Isaiah, he says “*“WOE to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt!”* (29:1). Ariel, here, is another name for Jerusalem. People cherish their hometown heroes. The more noble the hero, the more worthy they are of esteem. Another Bible prophet named Amos somewhat follows Isaiah’s pattern, even starting with “WOE!” Amos says “*WOE to you who put far off the day of doom, who cause the seat of violence to come near; who lie on beds of ivory, stretch out on your couches, eat lambs from the flock and calves from the midst of the stall; who sing idly to the sound of stringed instruments, and invent for yourselves musical instruments like David; who drink wine from bowls, and anoint yourselves with the best ointments, but are not grieved for the affliction*

But they lacked awareness of man’s deepest agony. Many church folk, including evangelicals, are guilty here! We can talk of our spiritual heroes of the past and present, but what are we doing *PERSONALLY* for a world that is going to hell?

The Bible informs us that “the last days” will be “*perilous times*.” It lists many alarming characteristics of the people, but includes “*lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power*” (2 Tim. 3:1-5). Many people *claim* to believe in God, but will not allow God to have any *claim* on them! They will have the *form*, but *deny its power*. Other translations have “*live in defiance of its power*” or “*will not allow it to influence them*” or “*turning their backs on the power of it*.” But they imagine they are **just like David!**

John Wesley was one of Britain’s greatest men. He loved God supremely and his fellow-men immensely. God used Wesley and his helpers to save 18th century Britain from certain disaster. Motivated by “perfect love” of God, Wesley said “The world is my parish!” But it is no good praising Wesley, if I don’t follow his pattern. **Just Like David?**

Yet, “*a greater than Jonah and Solomon*,” (Matt. 12:41, 42), and yes, “*a greater than Wesley*” is the One we must be like. The blind men cried out for healing, saying, “*Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on us!*” (Matt. 20:29-34). This “*Son of David*” is “*greater than David!*” Peter says, “*HE is our Pattern, that we should follow in His steps; Who did no sin...!*” Let’s be **JUST LIKE JESUS!**

DANCE, PRAY, SING— JUST LIKE DAVID! A once-popular song in some churches said that this is what I will do “When the Spirit of the Lord is within my heart.” I would often wish they added a verse which says, “When the Spirit of the Lord is within my heart, I’ll REPENT as David did!” I thoroughly believe that genuine Davidic repentance is our great need today, and that only God’s Holy Spirit can bring it. Study his Psalm of repentance (Ps.51), then go and do likewise. Regret and repentance are not the same. See the difference in 2 Cor. 7:8-11, but study chapters 6 & 7 together.

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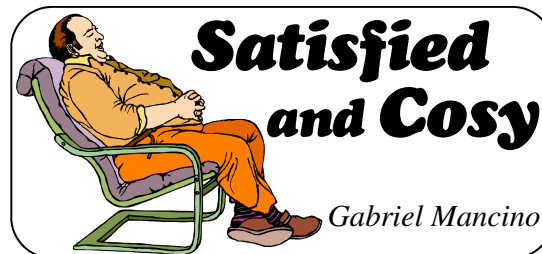
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“Lift up a standard for the people.” Isaiah 62:10

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I heard a man telling about a chap who had placed a roasting chicken in the oven, and sat in the comfortable living room chair to read the newspaper while his meal was cooking. For whatever reason, **the man fell asleep reading the paper.** The fragrance from the oven escaped through the open window, stopping a passer-by in his tracks. Seeing the man asleep, the outsider slipped in “just to investigate,” but ended up eating the entire chicken. In an attempt to cover his wrong, the stranger quietly took the plate of remaining scraps into where the homeowner was fast asleep, left the plate of bones nearby, gently smeared some of the chicken grease on the sleeper’s open hands and near his mouth, then quickly left the house. The man soon awoke stretching...and smelling...and tasting! He could see and feel the chicken grease on his fingers, and tasted it around his

mouth. Chicken bones and remnants lay on the nearby plate. The odd thing was that he still felt empty and hungry, despite the “evidence” that he had eaten.

This amusing story illustrates what God shared long ago through Isaiah the prophet: “*It shall even be as when a hungry man dreams, and look—he eats; but he awakes, and his soul is still empty; or as when a thirsty man dreams, and look—he drinks; but he awakes, and indeed he is faint, and his soul still craves*” (29:8). The man pictured in this verse awakes faint, weary and unsatisfied—still hungry...still thirsty—much like the man with the chicken, and so very much like the human race today.

The living room in our former home was small, so that the used “cottage suite” fit well. The sofa was a tiny two-seater with a wood brace between the cushions for extra support. That brace was hard on a person trying to sleep on the sofa, and its short length added to the discomfort by making it impossible to stretch out for sleep. Isaiah similarly records God’s insight on man’s condition: “*For the bed is too short to stretch out on, and the covering blanket so narrow that one cannot wrap*” (continued inside)

IS BRITAIN A HAUNTED HOUSE? Jesus’ told of “*a greater than Solomon & Jonah*” in Matt. 12 (see back page). He then told of spirits that leave a house, but even more spirits return because the house had not been kept in order (Matt. 12:43-45). The house was “empty,”—far worse than the sleeping man in the article above. Britain is sleeping, because its people are asleep. Sleeping people are easy targets for evil spirits & evil people. In the text inside (by the mother hen), Jesus tells how God abandoned *HIS* house. In time, it & the city, were destroyed. London, Britain & the whole world have hope, but **ONLY** if people will get **THOROUGHLY** right with God...& tell others!



SATISFIED AND COSY

(continued from front page)

himself in it" (28:20). A life of sin gives no real cover or comfort.

These "amusing" illustrations have painful and far broader application than just the hungry, homeless or hard-up. **Can anything be done about it?**

Among world efforts is one to erase POVERTY. Thanks goes to those who truly help others at home and abroad. From evidence I have seen, it appears that high-level greed has, for many generations, been wickedly *creating* the very poverty they wish us to eliminate today. The same is true for the ongoing created and sustained financial crisis. And God knows about this dodgy, so-called "swine flu!"

But let's get it on a personal level, since taking on the whole world may seem too intimidating. So, on a personal level I ask again, **Can anything be done about it?** God's words recorded in Isaiah show that the people had various ideas for dealing with their situation. Let's look.

First of all, don't expect drunkards to solve serious problems. I once "turned on" a young lad to LSD, and when he started to "freak out," I tried to get him to count coins for diversion to calm him down. He couldn't even count coins. But friends, God's faithful warnings through Isaiah to the many drunkards was not because they were all drunk on alcohol! Many people are intoxicated on themselves, or on a variety of other things—so much so that they lack common sense or the will to solve serious problems, even if the remedy for those problems is simple and within easy reach. The people in the book of Isaiah had various ways to solve the urgent matter. By the way, the "urgent matter" in the case of these people was that an invading army was about to strike! That is serious.

Look what they said: "We have made a covenant with death, and with hell (the underworld) we are in agreement. When the overflowing, overwhelming scourge passes through, it will not come to us, for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood we have hidden ourselves;

taking cover in what is untrue" (28:15). This is exactly where most are sheltering today, though the building material may vary from straw to steel and be painted with different colours. But God said He would "sweep away the shelter of lies" (v.17). Would any loving parent want their children attending a school where the entire electric wiring is old, bare and faulty, and the floor and ceiling wooden support is eaten with dry rot? Likewise God, our Father sees the danger of man's hiding places, though we are blind to it. He, therefore, sweeps away the false so that we may possibly see and run to the True Hiding Place in Himself.

Another option these people considered was to go quickly on horseback to Egypt. They expected their old slave-master to protect them from the new threat. See how illogical sin is?! People will do just about anything rather than get thoroughly right with God. They will go from one brand of sin and emptiness to another. Then, as their various paths of escape are taken away, they turn to a path of excuses. God said it is like bringing a book to various people and ask them PLEASE to read it, but each of them makes different excuses. God gives that example to show His deep displeasure with people who, though they pretend to be "religious," yet are full of excuses for not really walking with God. Jesus gave similar examples (see Lk. 14:16-24 & Matt. 22:1-14). Oh, by the way, religious pretenders are not just found in "places of worship," though there are plenty there, too.

Jesus compared such excuse-makers to children playing in a marketplace. The kids were complaining to each other, saying "We made music for you and you did not take part in the dance; we gave cries of sorrow and you made no signs of grief" (Matt.11:17). No matter what they did to please them, some of the kids simply refused to join in. Jesus made it clear that He was referring to those people who refused to budge toward God. Regardless of how God reached out to them, "they would not come" (Matt. 22:3). The man

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could sleep in his short bed, the people could not hide in their shelter, the escapees were unable to escape. No rest, no refuge, no place to run. But all of these impossibilities were a result of the exercise of the human will...a conscious and repeated choice. This is why Jesus said, "But you are UNWILLING to come to Me that you may have life" (Jn. 5:40). The Good News is that this refusal does not have to continue!

After Jesus used this market-children illustration in speaking to His hearers, He then began to make these rejecters aware of the very serious, self-inflicted trouble they were in. This is exactly what Isaiah was doing. God is faithful to every generation. The main reason that a generation of people walk in darkness is not because God doesn't want them to have light, but because those who know the light of truth refuse to walk in that light. Those people therefore bring the curse of spiritual darkness on the whole generation, world-over! This is true with Home Missions and Foreign Missions. And those who are not "church-goers," yet know the truth cannot escape blame anymore than those people could succeed in escaping to Egypt! This is why I believe with all my heart that if London could have a genuine seeking and finding God and a complete abandoning of sin, the whole world could feel the effects of it. Java's volcano, Krakatoa, exploded in 1883, changing the level of the Thames! It's sound was heard

3,000 miles away. It's tsunami was 130 ft. compared to the 40 ft. tsunami on Boxing Day 2004. I'm talking about reversing the order and sending a heavenly tsunami around the globe...and I'm not joking.

We must not miss a perhaps shocking, but powerful and repeated feature in these Isaiah passages! Yes, God faithfully exposed the people's sins and their pitiful and futile attempts to hide, to rest and to escape. HOWEVER, time and time again amidst this faithful exposing of futility and sin, God inserts loving extensions of mercy. Read them for yourself! God says in effect: *This is what you really are, but I have a cure! This is where you are heading, but I have the best way for you! I have a resting place, a shelter; a place of comfort and satisfaction.* Remember, God's viewpoint far exceeds the assessing power of even the "above-average" man. God addresses the deepest needs of man for this life, and also has what is needed to prepare us for eternity... for ever and ever.

In the same chapter (Matt. 11) where Jesus speaks of the marketplace moaners and the rejecting recipients of merciful miracles, there seems to be an obvious hush...then Jesus invites all who are willing, saying "Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest...and you shall find rest unto your souls!" Unlike the poor, sleeping man at the beginning of this article, God wants us ALL to be fully satisfied...beginning on the inside!

We meet at Christ Church on the corner of Brent Street and Heriot Road in Hendon (NW4) at 5:45 pm Sundays. Nearest Tube: Hendon Central.

Weeping over the rejecting city, Jesus said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets, and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her young ones under her wings, but you were not willing. See, your house is left to you desolate" (Matt. 23:37, 38). Jews and Romans killed Jesus, and so did you and I. "Believing in Jesus" without loving and obeying Him is self-deception...just fooling yourself. Each of us are like Jerusalem, unless we thoroughly repent! Jesus said "YOUR house"—formerly the house of God—was empty, desolate, abandoned by God. What is the true condition of YOUR "house?" that is, your soul? The same sun that melts the snow, hardens the clay. Be saved today!

