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Purity in church

Lessons from Israel

The divine proclamation that founded the church into being, requires that believers live their lifestyle as a distinct and separate people, in accordance with GOD's exacting law. That marvellous blue-print demands that christians maintain a clear identity of consecration and separateness. It is this distinctiveness that was originally intended to mould the church as a people totally detached from the decay of this evil world, both in their belief and manifest lifestyle.

But you are a chosen people, a royal priest hood, a holy nation, GOD's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light (1 Peter 2:9).

A lofty calling of this calibre is what essentially defined the watershed moment for the church at her creation. It was upon this same platform that JEHOVAH had hitherto proclaimed, not only the existence of the ancient nation

of Israel, but also HIS everlasting covenant with them. The LORD ensured that such a covenant would encompass a spiritual austerity program that would enforce a strict adherence to the separateness of Israel as a chosen people. Consequent to that holy treaty then, Israel was required to automatically comply with a firm observance of a holy segregation unto the LORD. GOD's chosen people subscribing to such a supreme covenant with their own Creator, now demanded that they live their lives within the confines of that governing treaty. The holy treaty being discussed here is what brought with it the instruments of restraint. A classical case in time is when the LORD demanded of Israel as HIS covenant people, never to intermingle with the defiled communities that defined their neighbourhood.

Obey what I command you today. I will drive out before you the Amorites,

Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land where you are going, or they will be a snare among you. (Exodus 34:11-12)

On the matter of the eternity of Israel, GOD ALMIGHTY did not leave anything to chance. He deliberately assigned such a grueling regime of sanctions and restraints upon Israel, that she may be able to achieve her appointed destiny. Being very much aware of the cunning nature of the communities among whom Israel was aspiring to live, the LORD hence raised the above caution prohibiting Israel from prophylactically engaging with those communities. Central among the most enticing affronts that such communities were likely to present before Israel, were social contracts, namely bilateral treaties. The LORD was very much aware that it is the short-term social trappings entailed within these treaties, that would act as the alluring baits to ensnare Israel, and unnecessarily expose her to the dangers of occult. The danger here was that anytime a community engages in a bilateral treaty with another, it often involves a voluntary agreement, truce, an accord, and a settlement. It is this particular form of compromise that goes a long way in eroding the edge, uniqueness, and distinctiveness with which Israel was meant to tower high above those subordinate communities. The LORD did not at any stage envisage a scenario in which Israel would hold truce or

agreement of whatever kind with such evil and defiled heritages. Israel as GOD's covenant people already had in place a future that JEHOVAH HIMSELF had designed for them and for their own good. And the truth of the matter is that such a future had nothing to do with the occultism that was being practiced by the Amorites, Jebusites, Hivites, Hittites, etc., that lived within the circumference of Israel. The Jewish nation was being preserved as a witness that Christ would be born as a seed of Abraham. Rigorous requirements that had to define the path of the Messiah, had now dawned on Israel as a nation. It caused the LORD not to stop there! He further tightened the noose on these communities of free-ranging former slaves, very much aware that they would easily have embezzled their newly earned freedom. An additional must-need had to be appointed into Israel's safety regime, in order that they may not be entrapped by the deception of seduction, into what were otherwise proscribed marriages.

Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, for they will turn your children away from following me to serve other gods, and the LORD's anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you (Deut 7:3-4)

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turn your hearts after their GODs." (1 Kings 11:2)

It is for this very reason that the holy bible plainly instructs both Israel and the church;

Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: 'Be holy because I, the LORD your GOD, am holy. (Leviticus 19:2).

This became GOD's significant injunction that was meant to sieve out all the *contaminating* influences of this dark world upon the church, that she may realize her salvation as a people *consecrated* unto the LORD. That landmark pronouncement at creation quickly defined in place the need for GOD's people to procure for themselves *spiritual purity* as an existential necessity. *Spiritual purity* then indeed became the bedrock of GOD's salvation for mankind. Be it as it may, GOD also goes ahead to lay down several parameters of caution regarding spiritual impurity. *Spiritual purity* can then be defined as a state of lack of *impurity*. Spiritual impurity on the other hand, is denoted as the complete embodiment of an evil coalition of all forces of *corruption* and *defilement* that propel this dark world. In this case, the classical scripture that brings to context this virtue of *spiritual purity*, is Romans 12:2. In that scripture, the LORD adduces this novel biblical safe guards when HE says:-

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what GOD's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will (Romans 12:2).

And because *righteousness* lasts forever, while *wickedness* on the other hand, is perpetually under the betrayal of its mortal nature, the two present opposite poles. Since the duo of *righteousness* and *wickedness* share

absolutely nothing in common, the LORD then put in place a deliberate effort to distinguish the christian lifestyle from the spiralling *corruption* and *defilement* that presents in such vices as immorality, deception, shame and death. Like Israel in her most compromised state, today's church is equally confronted with a perpetual danger of *disinheriting* her *distinct* and *holy* identity by adopting the practices of the wicked communities in her surrounding. Because of the eminent vulnerability to sin, the LORD in His infinite *wisdom* has always placed upon the church, a restriction that prohibits excessive *indulgence* with the world. In her darkest hour, such restraint had literally barred Israel from *intermarriages* and *treaties* of any form, with the defiled communities that defined her neighbourhood. The rare account of Lot's life in Sodom, and Abraham's alarming experience in Egypt, indeed applaud the unorthodox faithfulness with which they beheld onto *spiritual purity*, despite the harsh assault from a *predaciously* evil surrounding. On the contrary, the *melancholy* that *encompasses* the narrative of Lot's wife in Sodom, and the lustful king in Egypt, are just but a few most *sordid* lessons that sound serious warning bells to the church on the dangers of succumbing to spiritual *adulteration*. Today's church must therefore deliberately set out on a crusade to safeguard herself from any form of *spiritual impurity*, as a matter of life and death. However, it is suffice to point out that *spiritual purity* can only be achieved and sustained in the church through the *onliest* act of full *obedience* and *alertness* to the WORD. This implies that the Holy Spirit continuously desires a church that strives to achieve a soul that is purged-off sin, and eternally anchored to perfect worship. In that way,

it goes without saying that the type of purity which JEHOVAH GOD seeks in the church, is indeed none other than the uncontaminated divine *purity* of the soul. This *acclaimed* state of *spiritual purity* is the highest and most honoured order that the LORD ponders over when He assesses the hearts of the believers in the church. The attainment of this lofty order of purity in the church, is what was initially meant to unleash a *plethora* of righteous virtues from the soul of the believer into the whole known wide world. If evangelism was meant to attain an ultimate achievement in the soul of mankind, then this was it. Nevertheless, such a highly exalted state of *purity* of the soul, can never be achieved through half-baked therapies which simply seek out to *massage* on the surface of a fallen church, instead of getting to the core of the problem and squarely dealing with it. Today's apostate church has perfected the art of fronting these temporary measures such as wellness conferences, prosperity gatherings, retreats, sowing seeds, etc, as a means of overcoming her spiritual maladies. This, she has done perfectly well as she attempts to navigate her christian life through this unforgiving world. If only she could know that the deep wounds of spiritual impurity can never be wished away, nor healed by such superficial solutions, but rather their healing is only achievable through the time-tested mechanism of genuine REPENTANCE. While it may be abundantly true that many a time a veil of evil hovers over the believer's soul, it however is also true that a genuine REPENTANCE in the church can help lift such a beclouding mask, leading to the liberation of the soul. It is a process that endeavours to anchor the soul to her heavenly worship of *holiness*. The enemy often lays claim on

the believer's soul through such veils as *passion*, *immorality*, *anger*, *attachment*, *greed*, *ego*, *malice*, *deception*, *addiction*, name it. It is such bundles of evil traits that have often weaved the souls of men, thereby entangling today's body of believers with this cunning world. On the other hand, the LORD Jesus on the Cross indeed delivered the church by untangling such unwarranted claims and facilitating the recovery of the believer's lost identity, back to a place of perfect *purity*. The Messiah literally lifted the veil off the eyes of the beclouded souls of man. Having said that, the day the current church will finally *assiduously* adhere to the path of *Repentance* and *Righteousness*, she indeed will on that day overcome all the evil sways of the adversary, and commence a spiritual journey of *purity* towards the most glorious Kingdom of GOD. That will assuredly be the day when the unclean souls of today's believers will progressively begin to sparkle their own light as a sign of their true form of *bliss*, which is the most exalted state in heaven. In GOD's eyes therefore, *spiritual purity* constitutes the sanctification of the heart and the consecration of the believer's inner soul. When the church is rejected by this dark world, and constantly continues to engage in the pursuit of a more perfect *companionship* with GOD, in her thought and action, then she can be referred to as *separated* unto The LORD. This greatly underscores a most *dignified* and *coveted* order within the hierarchy of *preparedness* for *rapture*. On that *day of reckoning*, as the LORD appears in HIS *magnificent* glory at *rapture*, it will be absolutely *mandatory* for every believer to have attained a stature of spiritual *maturity*. Without blemish, wrinkle or spot, such a bride of Christ accomplishes a perfect *oneness*

with GOD ALMIGHTY. The lasting lesson arising from this, is that whenever christians fail to *obey* GOD's command, they inevitably descend into the pits of the *abyss*, unless speedily rescued by the power of REPENTANCE. This chronic lack of *awareness* concerning *purity*, has tragically swayed the present-day church towards the wicked enticements of this world. Such a wafting away from the truth is very deadly, and mirrors the *sully*ing influence that the Canaanites employed to *blemish* the children of Israel.

Purity & the Cross

The salvation that the LORD Jesus graciously unveiled on the cross was essentially meant to instil

upon the church a steadfastness to *obedience* and *alertness* in order to fulfil GOD's new law of that heavenly grace.

Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for GOD (2 Corinthians 7:1).

Spiritual purity is not only mentioned in every revered gospel of the Cross, but also declared in all scriptures of the Old Testament. All the Seers that were privileged to foresee the glorious coming of the Cross, have in their *pious* proclamation attached an immense worth on *purity* in the sacred mission of Christ the Messiah. In trying to

rank the increase in the glory of the Cross, these Prophets of old have earnestly submitted that, when that dispensation arrives, there would be an uncontested increase in the glory of the Christ at HIS coming. In their visions therefore, they have extensively testified about the increase of the Messiah's kingdom, and how it would translate into an increase in the *purity* of the church. In describing the vast dominion of that Kingdom's King, these Seers did not hesitate to stress that the Messiah's reign would fundamentally rest on the unshakable cornerstone of *spiritual purity*. In their observation then, the Prophet's of the bible submitted that

spiritual purity would be the one single factor governing spiritual growth in the hearts of the believers. In their watch, these holy Prophets deduced that movement up the heavenly order would be well-nigh impossible, if the people of that upcoming dispensation would in any way fail to embrace *spiritual purity*. This was because the Seers already saw that the upcoming dispensation would be a *spiritual* dispensation, and that the coming Kingdom of the Messiah would be founded on *justice* and *righteousness*.

To be continued...