

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE SOMERVILLE SOWER
 Is published by the Somerville church of Christ to promote New Testament Christianity, and for the proclamation of the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ as a part of its work.

PRAYER NEEDS: **Health**, Revena, & David Lundy, Kenny & Linda Mitchell, Joann & John Johnson, Lisa Maxwell, Anna Maxwell, Alan Johnson, Dennis & Jean Rhodes. **Other:** We need to pray that God will raise up men to aspire to serve as deacons. We need to pray for the leaders of our country, and for those serving in the military. Pray for those saints who are weak and those going through difficult times.

GOSPEL MEETINGS: The Parkway church in East Lawrence will be holding a meeting February 21-24. The Old Moulton Road church in Decatur will be holding a meeting February 28-March 3. The Somerville church will be holding a meeting March 21-24.

SINGING EVENING: This song service will be on Sunday evening February 14, at 5:00 pm.

EVANGELISM: For those of the Somerville family who would like to participate in the Bible correspondence course work, we will meet on Sunday February 7 & 14 at 6:00 pm

Elders
 Jimmy Dobbs (256) 751 9534
 George Harris (256) 340 1972
 John Maxwell (256) 482 8122

Schedule of Services
Sunday
 Bible class 9:45 a.m.
 Morning worship 10:45 a.m.
 Evening worship 5:00 p.m.
Wednesday
 Bible class 7.00 p.m.

Evangelist & Editor
 George W Harris
 Tel: (256) 340 1972 (H)
 (256) 340 1972 (O)
 Mobile: (256) 345 1557 (M)
 E-mail address: georgewharris@msn.com

Somerville church of Christ
 7 Franklin Street
 P O Box 460
 SOMERVILLE AL 35670
 Phone: (256) 340 1972

If you would be interested in a **free** Bible correspondence course, or if you would like a **free** Bible study in your home, or if you have a request for Bible information, please write to the above address or phone one of the above numbers for prompt service.

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“The seed is the word of God.” (Luke 8:11)

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Modern Day Babylonian Captivity

George W Harris

In the days of Isaiah, the prophet of Jehovah, both Israel (the ten northern tribes) and Judah (the two southern tribes) were in jeopardy of losing their freedom. Part of the covenant terms that God had entered into with His people Israel, was that if they sank into moral degeneration and rebelled against the laws of God He would allow their enemies to take them into captivity and they would lose the freedom that God had given them. (Deut. 28:15-36)

There are parallels to be drawn between the Israelites of Isaiah’s time and our own time. Firstly, Israel had fallen into idolatry, breaking the first commandment. (Ex. 20:3-4) *“Their land was full of idols, they bow down to the work of their own hands.”* (Isa. 2:8) The people of today are no less idolatrous. We may not bow down to images graven by man’s hands, although some religions do, never-the-less, whatever takes up the time that we should be serving and worshiping God is idolatry. There are even men and women whom we idolize, worship and adore.

Secondly, there was a decline in morals. The Israelites were committing fornication, adultery, homosexuality and bestiality, all of which were expressly forbidden in the law. (Ex. 20:14; Isa. 23:17; Lev. 20:13; Lev. 20:15-16) The punishment for such crimes was death under the Mosaic law or covenant. When the founding fathers carried out their heroic work in separating from the British influence, and wrote the constitution of the United States, not only was homosexuality treated as a criminal offense in all of the original thirteen colonies, and eventually in every one of the fifty states, but several of the states actually had the death penalty for homosexuality. These included New York, Vermont, Connecticut, and South Carolina. In fact Thomas Jefferson, actually advocated emasculation as the penalty for homosexuality in his home state of Virginia and even authored a bill to that effect.

Those of us who are old enough to remember, are aware of the fact that in the 1950's and 1960's Christians argued against illicit divorce and remarriage by comparing it to the sin of homosexuality, making the point that to accept relaxed standards for divorce is logically equivalent to accepting same-sex marriage. We never really seriously entertained the thought that same-sex relations would become acceptable to our nation. But look what is happening to us. Laws that we don’t want are being foisted upon us.

If same-sex relations are to be accepted into our society as legally, morally, and socially appropriate, it follows that sex with animals ought to be legalized as well. Sweden decriminalized sex with animals in 1944 in connection with the decriminalization of homosexual sex. As nations commenced their downward spiral into the quagmire of moral and spiritual degradation, homosexuality and bestiality were among the final indicators of imminent collapse.

We recognize that in an article of this nature we will be accused of being politically incorrect, but that is alright for we are in good company, God is not politically correct, and if it is alright for God to be politically incorrect then it is alright for us to be politically incorrect. We would rather stand with God than fall with man.

Another heinous, detestable and barbaric practice, prevalent in our modern society is abortion. God's command to man has always been *"be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth."* (Gen. 1:28) Children are a heritage from God. (Psa. 127:3) But man thinks that he can help control the population with murdering children whether unborn or born and we think that we can get away with it. It is the Herod syndrome. Murder under the law of Moses was punishable by death. What mother carrying a baby in her right mind would want to kill it? The Bible calls it *"unnatural affection."* (2 Tim. 3:3 KJV) Abortion has become big business, not only is there money to be made from the murder itself but it has given rise to scientific research in the fields of medicine and cosmetics. It is obvious from scripture that Jesus had a great affection for children. (Matt. 18:3; 19:14) Great will be the punishment in the judgement, for those who abuse, exploit and murder children.

Another moral dilemma that we have is rebellious children. This also is nothing new, it was around in the times of Isaiah too. For us it began in the 1950's and 1960's when we were introduced to Rock 'n Roll, flower power and rebellion against authority, whether that authority was in the home, the government or the school. Our children have become more and more promiscuous and are having critical problems with alcohol and mind altering drugs, and it is affecting society in a big way. None of us are unaffected by it. The punishment for rebellious children under the Mosaic law was death. (Ex. 21:15,17) The scripture describes such rebellious times in these words: *"For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power."* (2 Tim. 3:2-5)

Thirdly, there was corruption and oppression. There was no justice only oppression, no righteousness only a crying out from the people. (Isa. 5:7) All that was good was called evil and all that was evil was called good, all that was light was called darkness and all that was darkness was called light, all that was sweet was called bitter and all that was bitter was called sweet. (Isa. 5:20) The widows, orphans, the poor and the stranger were being oppressed. (Isa. 10:2) Law was being perverted and ignored, and God warned that a fall was imminent. (Isa. 30:12-14) Justice gave way to lying, falsehood and transgressing law. (Isa. 59:13) It was leadership versus the people, and as goes the leadership, as goes the people.

(Isa. 24:2; Hos. 4:9) Of course the people were crying out because of the corruption and oppression and perverting of law, but the leadership were not listening to the people, they ploughed right on setting God, law and the people at naught, but it comes with a price. *"Woe to those who make unjust laws."* (Isa. 10:1) *"Woe to those who call evil good and good evil."* (Isa. 5:20) *"Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!"* (Isa. 5:21) The people cry out, *"I am ruined, ruined! Woe to me! The treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously, indeed, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously."* (Isa. 24:16)

Modern America is no different than the people of Israel in the long ago, some 2500 years back in history. There is no longer any statesmanship, honor, dignity or integrity, only politics as usual, and shameful behavior. The leaders are calling the shots, calling good evil and evil good, making unjust laws that the people do not want, promoting rebellion toward God and ignoring His laws, making laws that encourage moral decay and debauchery. They are corrupt and oppressive, they are wise in their own eyes, and they seek the praise of men rather than the praise of God. (John 12:43)

"Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." (Prov. 14:34) All great nations who turn their back on the Creator of the heavens, the earth, the seas and everything that moves in them, will fall. This was true of Assyria, Babylon, Medes and Persians, Greece and Rome. Israel, God's people were no different, just because they were God's people did not exempt them from doing what was right. God warned them over and over again, and we can be thankful for the longsuffering of God. But in the final analysis, Israel did not repent and as a result God allowed the Assyrians to take them into captivity and they lost their freedom and ceased to be a people of God. Their sister Judah did not learn from the lessons given by God, they watched Israel go into captivity, but they continued on the same path as Israel and finally about 135 years later Judah went into Babylonian Exile.

What made America great was its faith in God and His Son Jesus Christ. In the 233 years since the declaration of independence, America remained great for about 175 of those years but in the last 60 years she has slowly sunk to the same condition as Israel and Judah were in when they lost their freedom.

However, there is hope. If America repents and turns to the God who created them, if they abandon the current rampant immorality, and if corruption and oppression in high places cease, then we will be able to escape the loss of our freedom which seems so imminent. It will take the leadership as well as the people to do that.

Every Christian man and woman should be on their knees daily begging God to forgive our sinfulness and ask God to turn the minds of corrupt leaders to listen to Him and the people. The nation should be determined to do whatever is necessary to get back to what once made it great before it becomes too late. If it doesn't it will experience its own Modern Day Babylonian Captivity.