

June 30, 2021

National Sins, Part I

As you read **Malachi 3:13-15**, notice again the Lord reminding Israel of their stout complaints against Him in verse 14. In verse 15 we return to the words of Malachi. The words “And now we” refer to Israel as a nation. Even though Malachi was a prophet of God, he had to include himself in the “we” of verse 15 when referring to the nation. As a man of God, he may not have been guilty of the specific sins that characterized the nation, but he acknowledged that as a people they were all responsible and therefore accountable. When God judges a nation, He does not separate the believers from the unbelievers. In the Old Testament, when God judged Israel, the prophets of God suffered right along with the people who were guilty of sin. Consider the prayer of Nehemiah in **Nehemiah 1:4-11**. Notice how Nehemiah includes himself and his father’s house when confessing the sins of the nation in verse 6. During the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem, Jeremiah suffered greatly. After the fall of the city, Nebuchadnezzar allowed Jeremiah to remain in Jerusalem, but Johanan rejected the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah and took the remnant of Judah, including Jeremiah, into Egypt, **Jeremiah 42-43**.

As children of God, we live in the midst of a rebellious people. Jesus said in His high priestly prayer of **John 17:14-16**, we are in the world, but not of the world. We are to live godly in an ungodly world that we might be a light in the darkness. Nevertheless, when God sends judicial judgment upon a nation, His children will suffer with the nation as a whole. In what ways must we as believers suffer in this present world? What godly judgments affect us all?

Malachi goes on to identify three specific national sins. First, they “call the proud happy.” In our current society, pride is associated with the national sin of Sodomy, so named because it was the dominant sin of the city of Sodom in **Genesis 19**. Sodomy refers to any intimate physical relationship involving a man with a man or a woman with a woman. Recently the sodomite community has come to refer to themselves as the LGBTQ community which stands for lesbian (two women), gay (two men), bisexual, transgender and queer, and includes or represents all forms of immorality. The word queer itself speaks of someone who is odd, weird, or outside what is considered normal behavior. The month of June is recognized as pride month and there are pride parades and marches in many cities and communities throughout our country. They even have their own flag, which unfortunately uses the colors of the rainbow, thus taking the symbol of God’s promise not to destroy the earth with a flood and using it to represent that which is an abomination to God.

A flag is an ensign or colors used to identify a group of people. It is a symbol. The word flag means to hang loose without stiffness, to droop. In the midst of pride month is a day that has been all but forgotten. June 14 is flag day, a day set aside or designated to honor the flag of the United States of America. A flag that represents our great nation. A flag that is to be honored and esteemed, not burned or trampled upon. Chapter 1 of Title 4 of the United States Code is the United States Flag Code which includes rules for care and display of the flag. Unfortunately, few people are familiar with the flag code resulting in a generation that often fails to display the proper respect due the flag.

Flags are important, especially in terms of what they represent. Those who fail to respect the flag are displaying contempt for those it represents. In essence, any American who disrespects the flag is also disrespecting the nation and the people of the nation of which they are a part. Just as Malachi included himself in the “we,” so too must every American. Every American should be taught to respect the flag and to stand with hand over heart while saying the pledge of allegiance or during the presentation of the national anthem. To fail in this regard is a shame and disgrace. Take a moment to reflect upon the pledge of allegiance to our nation’s flag. “I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.” What do these words mean to you?

There are three pledges we teach our children. The pledge to the American flag, the pledge to the Christian flag, and the pledge to the Bible. Have you made these pledges part of your life and can you say them from memory? If not, learn them today and meditate upon what they say and represent. “I pledge allegiance to the Christian flag, and to the Savior for whose kingdom it stands. One Savior, crucified, risen, and coming again with life and liberty to all who believe.” “I pledge allegiance to the Bible, God’s Holy Word. I will make it a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. I will hide its words in my heart, that I might not sin against God.

Coming back to our text, Malachi goes on to say that calling these individuals “happy” or “blessed” when in truth they are an abomination to God, is wicked. How does a nation or a people go from that which is normal to such perversion, wickedness and immorality? Read **Romans 1:18-32**.