

CAN WE BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SINS OF OTHERS – INCLUDING CHURCHES?, part 4 quotes

1) Corporate Responsibility...continued

"A nation's sin and a nation's ruin were due to the religious leaders." Christ's Object Lessons, p 305 (see also Desire of Ages, p 738).

2) Achan was not alone in being destroyed, but everything connected with him was destroyed — including his whole family! Even though his family did not participate in stealing the goods, yet they perished right along with him because they were of one flesh.

"And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had...and all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones." Joshua 7:24-25.

"He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but **a companion of fools [those who depart from God and His wisdom] shall be destroyed.**" Proverbs 13:20.

If we are found to be a companion of churches that have departed from God and His wisdom, then we will be destroyed right along with them.

3) "Therefore thus saith the Lord God; I will even rend it with a stormy wind in My fury; and there shall be an overflowing shower in Mine anger, and great hailstones in My fury to consume it. So will I break down the wall that ye have daubed with untempered mortar, and bring it down to the ground, so that the foundation thereof shall be discovered, **and it shall fall, and ye shall be consumed in the midst thereof:** and ye shall know that I am the Lord....To wit, the prophets [church leaders and ministers] of Israel which prophesy concerning Jerusalem [the church], and which see visions of peace for her, and there is no peace, saith the Lord God." Ezekiel 13:13-14 & 16.

It was not just the structure which fell and was destroyed by the wrath of God, but it was also all who remained within the structure.

4) Jerusalem became a harlot church!

"How is the faithful city [Jerusalem] become an harlot! It was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers." Isaiah 1:21.

"It was by departure from the Lord, and alliance with the heathen, that **the Jewish church became a harlot**; and Rome, corrupting herself in like manner by seeking the support of worldly powers, **receives a like condemnation.**" Great Controversy, p 382.

"After speaking of the end of the world, Jesus come back to Jerusalem, the city then sitting in pride and arrogance, and saying, '**I sit a queen, and shall see no sorrow**' (see **Rev. 18:7**)." Selected Messages, book 3, p 417.

Who does Jerusalem spiritually represent today? Any church that was once chosen by God, but who departs from Him, becomes an harlot, and this would also include the SDA church!

"Jerusalem is a representation of what the church will be if it refuses to walk in the light that God has given....This people is before us as a warning. By rejecting God's warnings in this our day, men are repeating the sin of Jerusalem." Testimonies, vol 8, p 67-68.

5) How do we save ourselves from being destroyed along with the wicked in the midst of the harlot church?

Anciently God's workers had to be purified before they could minister and work for God. But if they should come into connection with a dead body, they would become unclean by this touch and unfit to work for God. There was only one way chosen by God in which this worker could become cleansed and able to work for God once again.

"He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days. He shall purify himself...on the third day, and on the seventh day he shall be clean: but if he purify not himself the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean....But the man that shall be unclean, and shall not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from among the congregation, because he hath defiled the sanctuary of the LORD: the water of separation hath not been sprinkled upon him; he is unclean." Numbers 19:11-12, 20.

This cleansing process involved the unclean person going outside of the camp. Then pure running water was mixed with the ashes of a red heifer that had been sacrificed and burnt. Then a branch of hyssop was dipped into this mixture and sprinkled upon the unclean person on two different times. They were then clean and could work for God once again--being accepted of Him (see Numbers 19:2-19). But after becoming cleansed if the worker for God would again come into connection with the dead body, they again became unclean and would have to go through the cleansing process once again.

-- What would spiritually represent the sacrificed red heifer? Jesus.

-- What would represent the pure running water? The Holy Spirit.

-- What represents the workers for God? Christ's professed followers.

-- What represents the dead body? It would represent something that is spiritually dead (see Bible Commentary, vol 4, p 1176), or a spiritually dead church--dead in sin, wickedness, corruption, harlotry and apostasy.

-- What would represent touching this dead body or harlot church? This would represent anything that would connect Christ's professed followers with the apostate church--including membership! This means that our names registered upon the books of an unclean harlot church makes us corporately unclean and unfit to work for God.

"If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these [touch anything], shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean. Then said Haggai, and said, **So is this people, and so is this nation before Me, saith the Lord; and so is every work of their hands; and that which they offer there is unclean.**" Haggai 2:13-14.

Anyone connected with a harlot church--even by the slightest touch or union--would become unclean by this touch and could not be used by God in this unclean condition. These would-be workers for God would remain worthless to Him, no matter how much effort and time they spent in trying to serve Him, until they would follow the only pathway God set out for them to become cleansed.

This cleansing process would involve the same pathway God pointed out in Numbers 19. The unclean would-be worker for God of today must go outside the camp, separate completely from their unclean harlot church, breaking all connections--membership and all--with that dead body. Only after they separated completely from the camp could they become spiritually cleansed by ashes in pure running water on hyssop — or in other words they would be completely purged [hyssop] from all their personal (including social) and corporate sins [cleansed twice] by the cleansing action of the Holy Spirit [pure running water] and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ [ashes of the red heifer].

After they became cleansed from corporate sin and responsibility, are they to go back and join the harlot church once again, or any other harlot group for that matter? No, not if they want to be be a worker for God and be accepted of Him.

6) Christ clearly reveals this vital truth to His people:

"And He cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto Him, and besought Him to touch him. And He took the blind man by the hand, **and led him out of the town;** and when He had spit on his eyes, and put His hands upon him, He asked him if he saw aught. And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking. After that He put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly. And He sent him away to his house, saying, **Neither go into the town...**" Mark 8:22-26.

This blind man was not healed within the town, but had to be separated from that corporate body before he could be cleansed of his blindness. He needed to be cleansed twice before he was completely cleansed! He had to look up with his eyes in order to be cleansed, and after he was completely cleansed, Christ commanded him not to go back in to the town which he was separated from. This is exactly the same pathway which God has chosen for His people to follow today in regards to union, membership, or association with a harlot church of Babylon!

7) This same truth can be seen in the experience of Abraham and Sarah.

Abraham and Sarah lived in Ur of the Chaldees, or Babylon, which was a corrupted, idolatrous, religious, established nation. And what did God command Abraham and Sarah to do?

"Now the Lord had said unto Abram, **Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house,** unto a land that I will show thee." Genesis 12:1.

God had commanded Abraham to physically separate himself from his established, corrupted, religious nation, and from all those who refused to give up their sins and leave their corrupted nation—even if these were his immediate family.

Did Abraham question God as to why he had to leave at that time? No. Did he follow his own fallible human reasoning and inclination to stay within that corrupted nation thinking that he could reform it by his righteous example and by reproofing the sins and abominations of his nation's members? No. Did he delay to obey, waiting for the apostate people and nation which he belonged, to tell him to leave, or to kick him out and thus he would be obeying God?

"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out...obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went." Hebrews 11:8.

"When God bade Abraham to leave his country and friends, he might have reasoned and questioned the purposes of God in this. But he showed that he had perfect confidence that God was leading him...He went at God's bidding. This is a lesson to everyone of us. When duty seems to lead us contrary to our inclinations, we are to have faith in God." Manuscript Releases, vol 10, p 118 (Manuscript #19, March 13, 1886).

Abraham did not receive the covenant blessing when he was a member of Ur of the Chaldees or Babylon until after he had obeyed Jesus' command to separate--breaking all connection with Babylon. All Abraham had was the promise of God's favor. But it was only upon condition of obedience that this promise was granted him.

"God selected Abraham as His messenger through whom to communicate light to the world. The word of God came to him, not with the presentation of flattering prospects in this life of large salary, of great appreciation and worldly honor. 'Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee,' was the divine message to Abraham. The patriarch obeyed, and 'went out, not knowing whither he went,' as God's light bearer, to keep His name alive in the earth. He forsook his country, his home, his relatives, and all pleasant associations connected with his early life, to become a pilgrim and a stranger....

"Before God can use him, Abraham must be separated from his former associations, that he may not be controlled by human influence or rely upon human aid. **Now that he has become connected with God,** this man must henceforth dwell among strangers. His character must be peculiar, differing from all the world. He could not even explain his course of action so as to be understood by his friends, for they were idolaters. Spiritual things must be spiritually discerned; therefore his motives and his actions were beyond the comprehension of his kindred and friends.

"Abraham's unquestioning obedience was one of the most striking instances of faith and reliance upon God to be found in the Sacred Record. With only the naked promise that his descendants should possess Canaan, without the least outward evidence, **he followed on where God should lead, fully and sincerely complying with the conditions on his part, and confident that the Lord would faithfully perform His word.** The patriarch went wherever God indicated his duty; he passed through wildernesses without terror; he went among idolatrous nations, with the one thought: 'God has spoken; I am obeying His voice; He will guide, He will protect me.'

"Just such faith and confidence as Abraham had the messengers of God need today. **But many whom the Lord could use will not move onward, hearing and obeying the one Voice above all others.** The connection with kindred and friends, the former habits and associations, too often have so great an influence upon God's servants that He can give them but little instruction, can communicate to them but little knowledge of His purposes; and often after a time **He sets them aside and calls others in their place**, whom he proves and tests in the same manner. The Lord would do much more for His servants if they were wholly consecrated to Him, esteeming His service above the ties of kindred and all others earthly associations." Testimonies, vol 4, p 523-524.

8) What about all the good and righteous people that are in the church? Surely God will not destroy the righteous just because their membership is found within a harlot church destined for destruction?

"Son of man, set thy face toward Jerusalem...and say to the land of Israel, Thus saith the Lord; Behold, I am against thee, and will draw forth My sword out of his sheath, **and will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked.**" Ezekiel 21:1-3.

All the good and righteous people that remain within the company of the wicked in the harlot church are are going to be cut off and destroyed right along with their wicked companions in the harlot church!