

Pride Before Destruction

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[Proverbs 16:18-19] Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. 19 Better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly than to divide the spoil with the proud.

God hates the proud, haughty spirit in people. This world promotes pride; pride in appearance, pride in riches, pride in education, pride in positions, pride in achievements, but more than these, pride in themselves. The apostle John warned the Christians about the three things the world promotes.

[1 John 2:16] For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.

As we live in this world, our human nature leans toward these three things – lusting to satisfy sexual cravings, even against God’s moral standards; lusting to see things that are new, exciting, violent, sensual, and feeding the uncontrolled inner hidden desires of the mind; and lastly, the pride of life that wants to put oneself before and above others, and to put one’s importance even above God. The Scripture records these two kinds of pride and their consequences. The lesson is clear; pride brings about destruction in persons, in the nation, and the world, particularly when most people become proud and haughty against God.

One of such cases of proud people who met God’s wrath was the people of Ephraim in the region of Samaria, which was the southern part of Israel. Their land was verdant valleys that were highly productive, thus yielding rich agricultural production, which in turn brought wealth and pride in their achievements as if the wealth and sufficiency they were enjoying came from their wisdom and strength, forgetting they were blessings from God.

[Isaiah 28:1-3] Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower which is at the head of the verdant valleys, to those who are overcome with wine! 2 Behold, the Lord has a mighty and strong one, like a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, like a flood of mighty waters overflowing, who will bring them down to the earth with His hand. 3 The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, will be trampled underfoot.

They were overcome with wine in body and soul so that they embraced the foreign gods and became hypocritical people, loyal to both Jehovah God and Baal and Ashtoreth. We can read in Isaiah 9 how God felt toward Israel’s pride and what He planned as punishments. God caused the Assyrians to conquer Israel and took away all precious things and able men from Israel. Then they transplanted their men into Samaria and had them take wives of Israelites, thus a mixed generation was born and became Samaritans.

In summary, the Samaritans lost their identity and belonging as God’s people. They lost God’s blessing and favor. And they were rejected by the rest of Israel. However, they later repented and sought to be a part of Israel. In Jesus’ day, as we see in the case of the Samaritan woman who met Lord Jesus at the well, their humility after centuries of rejection by God finally brought the gospel and God’s solution to their spiritual confusion to their communities. We see in the Acts that Phillip, one of the early missionary pioneers of the church, had a successful mission in Samaria. Lord Jesus remembered their repentance. Thus, the Good Samaritan story expressed God’s recognition of their repentance and of the transformation of their hearts, which became a critical testament against the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees of Israel.

Moab is another example of a proud people who were against God. The people of Moab have disappeared from human history because of God’s anger against them. Today, in the land of Moab is the country of Jordan. But the people who can trace their ancestry to Moab no longer exist in Jordan or anywhere else.

[Isaiah 25:10-11] For on this mountain the hand of the Lord will rest, and Moab shall be trampled down under Him, as straw is trampled down for the refuse heap. 11 And He will spread out His hands in their midst as a swimmer reaches out to swim, and He will bring down their pride together with the trickery of their hands.

We see in advanced nations, such as America and South Korea, a similar trend of pride and haughty spirit that has permeated into the heart of people and the ruling classes. Their pride in their achievements, excess wealth, and modern advances such as in communication, transportation, technology, and agriculture, has made their life vastly different from the 20th century, so that the people's hearts have turned away from God, forgetting their affluence and plentifulness are blessings from God's generous hand and rejecting God's principles and commandments. Their hearts have come to not only distance their moral standards from God's but to hate God and everything that comes from Him. They disdain the Creation story in the Bible, teaching children that every living thing came from a single cell amoeba and that we humans are an evolved species of monkeys. They ignore the vivid evidence of the great flood, the global unfurling of God's wrath against the sinful, arrogant, rebellious generation of Noah's day because they do not wish to recognize another day of God's vengeance against their pride, arrogance, and rebellion.

God hates pride and arrogance in the hearts of people. And as shown in the case of Samaria and Moab. Today, God is angry toward the proud and arrogant nations of the world. Humility is the way to salvation and favor of God. We may see rapid economic degradation of western nations soon which will bring about the kind of downfall that occurred to Samaria and Moab. Many people will come to hate God for the misfortunes and calamities that add misery to their life. Yet, they forget that these consequences come because of their pride and arrogance over other people and against God.

God is calling for repentance and humility. God is calling the leaders of the western nations to humble themselves and seek God's counsel. They need to stop their plotting that brings harm to other people. They need to turn to God's principles and moral standards. God's mercy and blessings will be available only when people come to Him in humility and fear of God. Here's a mystery of God's wisdom; those who take pride in themselves will be debased and those who humble themselves before others and before God will be honored with God's blessings.

[Matt 23:12] And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

"Almighty God our Father! I was often proud and arrogant in myself, my achievements, and the fruits of my labor. I repent and humble myself before You. And I want to keep myself low before others. I pray for the proud nations and their leaders who turn away from Your truth and ways. I pray that they look back and consider how You have helped them rise from poverty and dejection, how You strengthened their hands against tyranny, ignorance, and destitute conditions, and how You brought fair winds, timely rains, and the heavenly wisdom and knowledge to bring about the advances they have made. We want to bring all honor to You only and worship You as our Creator and Almighty King! Hallelujah! Amen."

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