

The Pastor's Pen

“O come, Thou Wisdom from on high, and order all things far and nigh. To us the path of knowledge show, and cause us in her ways to go. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!”

Any Christian who takes even a cursory glance at the world we live in can immediately see the absolutely destructive nature of fallen humanity. We who are adults all grew up – and somehow lived to tell about it. As we look around at the world that our children (or grandchildren) are growing up in, it is a far, far different world than *we* grew up in – and it's *not for the better*.

World leaders almost always promise change and a good life to the people they wish to lead. However, the root of the problem with this is that true *societal* change cannot happen unless the *nature* of those who *make up* society changes. Contrary to the pontifications of secular humanists, the heart of humanity is *not* good. The uncomfortable truth is that mankind is *universally wicked*. After the Flood, when God promised never to destroy mankind again by water (Genesis 8:21), He said, “*the inclination of man's heart is evil from his youth.*” So, while the Flood had *cleansed the planet*, it had not *cured the problem*.

Does this mean that the hearts of people are *more sinful* now than they used to be? No, people are *not* more sinful now than in bygone days. People were fallen in bygone days, and people are fallen still. That said, the conditions on planet earth are *definitely* worse than they were in earlier days, and there is definitely an apparent increase in wickedness.

This should not surprise us, in light of the fact that Jesus told us to *expect this* as the Day of His Return draws nearer (Matthew 24:12-14).

But, *why* do things seem to be getting worse as the ages roll forward? The answer to that question is that today there is far greater opportunity for people to *pursue* and to *exercise* wickedness than in the days of *Auld Lang Syne*. The wickedness of man's heart has neither increased nor decreased, but temptations to sin that once had to be sought, now seek.

So, in light of this combination of man's ever constant *wicked heart* and the ever increasing opportunities *to pursue wickedness itself*, what nation can ever hope to *truly* change the world? The answer is – *no nation* that is *composed of* fallen people, and that is *led by* fallen people. It is true that one nation may set another nation free from the bonds of despotism and give to its people a measure of political freedom. However, *no* nation can set *itself*, or *any other nation*, free from the cancer that infects the heart of every man, woman, boy, and girl that *makes up* that nation.

So then, who can set us free? Only the One of Whom the hymn writer speaks when he says, “*O come, Thou Wisdom from on high, and order all things far and nigh.*” As we enter this season of preparation for the birth of Jesus, we must each ask ourselves a question. Will we who are the Redeemed of the Lord once again cry out to Him and ask that He will, “*To us the path of knowledge show, and cause us in her ways to go*”?

If we *will*, then our hearts will *also* know the *refrain* of this song – “*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!*”

In this season of Advent, may your hearts overflow with the Laughter of the Redeemed.

Heath