

## Causes And Solutions For Turbulent Times

It has been said if 2020 was a computer we should just reboot it and see what happens. This has been a year with all kinds of viruses and not all of them have been health related. We have seen social unrest rivalling that of the late 1960's and early 70's. Groups such as Antifa and Proud Boys with their messages of violence and hate has become "main stream." We might think such strife and division is unheard of in our world, however, knowing history and the Bible it is understood this is the norm for our world.

The book of Genesis speaks of murder (Cain killed Abel, chapter 4), (Lamech killed a man for wounding him, chapter 4.23) and of quarreling between the servants of Lot and Abram in Genesis 13. The question one must ask is why did these things happen? It was not due to race, or poverty but for other reasons. Why did Cain kill Abel? The best answer is given in **1 John 3:11- 12** **"For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous."** Lamech killed out of vengeance, and the servants of Lot and Abram quarreled due to prosperity.

Canaan was full of strife and division among its people because each city had its own king. Genesis 14 describes one of those "civil wars" as kings joined sides and fought. This resulted in Lot's captive, **"Then they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way. They also took Lot, Abram's brother's son who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed."** (Genesis 14:11-12). In the Book of Joshua, we read of the Gibeonites tricking Israel into an agreement which led to Gibeon's neighbors plan of attack. Why? Because they had made peace with Israel.

In the Book of Judges, there is murder, idolatry, homosexuality, prostitution, covenant breaking, undue violence among the Israelites. Abimelech killed seventy sons of Jerubbaal and then wiped out the city of Shechem going back on their promise to him, Judges 9. Jephthah vowed to sacrifice whatever came out of his house upon his return; it was his only daughter, Judges 11.

Samson, a judge, living with Delilah, a harlot, Judges 16. The tribe of Benjamin was almost destroyed by their brethren due to their homosexuality and violence. (Judges 19-20.)

During the time of the Kings the Northern ten Tribes were at war with Judah. Even Judah, the good tribe, was filled with violence and animosity before they were taken into captivity. **"Yet your eyes and your heart are for nothing but your covetousness, For shedding innocent blood, And practicing oppression and violence." (Jeremiah 22:17)**

During the time of Jesus, we read of the strife and division among the Jews. The Sadducees, Pharisees, and Zealots could not get along. The Pharisees saw the Sadducees as being too lax on the Law, the Sadducees thought the Pharisees were going by the wrong writings, and the Zealots thought everyone should be fighting the Romans.

Jews and Gentiles got along even less. Jews viewed the Gentiles as being worse than second class citizens and called them dogs. We see some of this in the conversion of Cornelius, a Gentile, as Peter is told in a vision to go to this man's house. **"24 And the following day they entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them, and had called together his relatives and close friends. 25 As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him. 26 But Peter lifted him up, saying, "Stand up; I myself am also a man." 27 And as he talked with him, he went in and found many who had come together. 28 Then he said to them, "You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean." (Acts 10).** Gentiles looked upon the Jews as being hypocrites, untrustworthy, and self-righteous. Not a good recipe for peace and harmony.

Let us not forget the factions, division, and strife among Christians. Corinth was divided, they were calling themselves after certain teachers, going to law with one another, and couldn't even observe the Lord's Supper without dividing into smaller groups.

Now to remind you part of this article is on solutions to these problems. They

are simple but demand we change our viewpoint. We must submit to God. **"5 Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"? 6 But He gives more grace. Therefore, He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." 7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you." (James 4)** Submission requires us to yield our will to His. One cannot serve God with a worldly attitude. This means we must love our neighbor, Matthew 5.43-49. If that person is truly my enemy, I must do good to them and not evil. I must listen to them and care about them.

As Christians we must submit to Christ. Sadly, division and strife occur among God's people. He prayed for unity, John 17.20-21. As congregations we can endeavor to have the unity of the Spirit. We can do so in our families also but this will require us to submit to our Lord and Master.

Many are talk about the problems in our world but the question for you and me is whether I am going to be part of the solution or problem. – Dennis Tucker