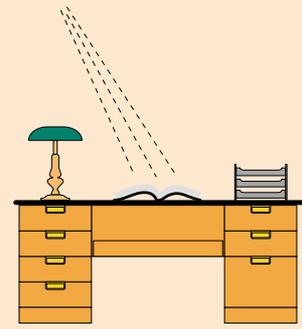


# A Derek Prince Teaching Letter

No. 1: Judgement Begins at God's House



Dear Friend

British Christians are confronted by a grim, undeniable fact: our nation has come under the judgement of God. For this there are many reasons, but they can be summed up in one simple statement: We have committed the sin for which Esau was rejected – we have despised our birthright (Heb. 12:15-17).

God judges us according to the measure of light we have received. Jesus told the Jews of His day that their judgement would be much more severe than that of Sodom and Gomorrah, because they had received a much greater revelation of truth. (Matt. 11:20-24).

The same applies to Great Britain over the last three centuries. Few other nations have had the same access to the Word of God that has been granted to the British people. Through culture and tradition, through churches and evangelists, and through the printed word, Britain has been blessed above all other nations with the knowledge of God's truth. Our judgement for rejecting it will be correspondingly severe.

Many Christians fail to realise that God's judgement does not begin with the people of the world, but with the people of God. Peter told the Christians of his day, "*For the time has come for judgement to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?*" (1 Peter 4:17). These words apply equally to the church in Britain today.

Of all the sins that could be charged against the contemporary church, it is sufficient to focus on two: **materialism** and **compromise**.

In Luke 17:26-30 Jesus predicted that the period before His return would be like the days of Noah and Lot. He mentioned specifically eight activities characteristic of those days: eating, drinking, marrying, giving in marriage, buying, selling, building, planting. Yet there is nothing specifically sinful in any of these activities. What, then, was the problem?

The problem was **materialism**. The people of those days had become so engrossed in these materialistic activities that they were unaware of the impending judgement of God on their carnal lifestyle. When judgement came, they were totally unprepared.

The same is true today of most professing Christians in Britain. If the final judgement of God should suddenly usher in the return of Christ, they would be totally unprepared. Like materialism, the sin of compromise often goes unrecognised. About two years ago,

while praying, I had a mental picture of the interior of a typical church building with rows of pews, a platform, a pulpit, a piano and so on. But the whole building was permeated with some kind of fog. The outlines of objects could be discerned, but nothing was sharply defined. While I was wondering what the fog represented, God gave me one clear word: **compromise**.

In the contemporary church, most of the main moral and doctrinal truths, so clearly enunciated in the New Testament, have become blurred and ineffective. In 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 Paul wrote: *“Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.”* Yet the church today is full of people who commit these sins, but remain totally unconcerned. In fact, they often boast of such sins.

A church member lay in hospital, dying of AIDS, which he had contracted through homosexuality. Then he received Christ and was given a New Testament. After reading some way in the New Testament, he sent an urgent message to the person who had led him to Christ: *“Come and pray for me. I need deliverance. I never knew there was anything wrong with my lifestyle.”*

Sadly, the chief responsibility for the erosion and rejection of many of the cornerstones of the Christian faith in this country lies not with the world but with the very leaders of the church itself. It has become a regular occurrence to hear of bishops denying the Virgin birth, ministers questioning the deity of Jesus and priests scorning the need for salvation.

Perhaps the most tragic outworking of this self-destructive process has been in the spate of “Inter-Faith” services held in Britain’s Cathedrals and Abbeys. Here we have seen an Archbishop of Canterbury participating in the worship of foreign gods alongside leaders of the Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim and Sikh faiths. Similar services have been attended on at least one occasion by the Queen, who committed herself by her coronation oath to the “Defence of the Faith”. God makes his feelings clear about such practices in Hosea 5:10 where he says: *“Judah’s leaders are like those who move boundary stones. I will pour out my wrath on them like a flood of water.”*

Yet within the church there is still a remnant of sincere, devoted followers of Jesus. If we are among that number, how does God require us to respond to the present crises?

One clear answer is given in 2 Chronicles 7:14: *“If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”* The phrase, *“My people who are called by My name,”* applies to all Christians who take the name of Christ upon themselves.

For at least 30 years I have been teaching on this Scripture, but recently I was confronted by a shocking realisation! God’s people in our day have never fulfilled the first condition. **We have never truly humbled ourselves.** Our pride – both religious and racial – remains as a barrier that holds back the answer to our prayers for ourselves and for our nation.

Through the severe dealings of God in my own life, I have learned the most effective way for us to humble ourselves. Very simply, **it is by confessing our sins**. If we regularly and specifically confess our personal sins to God, it is impossible to approach Him with an attitude of pride.

Furthermore, I have seen that God has only committed Himself to forgive us of the sins we confess. *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”* (1 John 1:9). **Unconfessed sins are unforgiven sins**. Thus the barrier of pride builds up a second barrier of unforgiven sin.

The Bible exhorts us to confess our sins not merely to God, but also to one another. *“Confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed”* (James 5:16). Confessing our sins to God deals with vertical pride; confessing to one another deals with horizontal pride. We can hardly maintain an attitude of pride towards someone to whom we have just confessed our personal sins.

This applies especially to the relationship between husbands and wives. Those who regularly confess their sins to one another are not kept apart by a barrier of pride. Furthermore, confession of sin is an essential prerequisite to effective intercession. Daniel was one of the most righteous characters in the Bible, but when he set out to intercede for his people Israel, he began by acknowledging his own share in their sin. (Dan. 9:3-13).

I believe that God is waiting for us as British Christians to humble ourselves before Him and one another by confessing our sins. Only after we have done that, can we move on to claim the healing of our land.

But I must add a word of warning. Do not begin to indulge in morbid introspection! The Holy Spirit is *“the finger of God”* (Matt. 12:28; Luke 11:20). Ask God to place His finger on the sins you need to confess. He will do it with unerring accuracy, probably bringing to light sins which you never recognised!

I have confined this analysis to the situation in Great Britain. Much of what I have said, however, applies to other nations who are heirs to the Judeo-Christian inheritance and to the church worldwide. May God help each of us to accept our personal responsibility!

Yours in the Master’s service



Derek Prince

You may reproduce this article on the following conditions:

- The article is not altered or edited in any way
- The article is credited to Derek Prince