

simply turning on the television to walking down any city street should be demonstration enough. TV shows that are *tremendous* hits today would have been classified as “pornography” only a few years ago — shows like *Jersey Shore* come immediately to mind. That series follows the lives of several “twenty-ish housemates” who spend their summer together in the same house. We probably don’t even need to mention here that *Jersey Shore* is of course not the *only* indicator that there is a complete collapse of morality going on today. Our guess is that *all* readers of this article are already aware of too many examples.

Idolatry —

Idolatry exists in *many* forms today — and will vary from individual to individual. It can be anything from movies, to television, to sports, to laziness, to money, to people, to Wall Street, to jobs, to property, to hobbies, to cars, to Mother Earth — or anything *else* that becomes of greater importance to an individual than God.

So when we take a really close look at Habakkuk and the sins in which Judah and the Chaldeans were engaged, we’re not all that different. And while we may sometimes feel — as Habakkuk felt — that God is just not listening to our prayers when we ask Him to do *something* about the evil and wickedness all around us, we can’t be completely *certain* that He *isn’t!* We can never fully understand God.

“Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? (Rom. 11:33-34 NASB)

We live in a time when Christians are routinely depicted as “radical” and perhaps even “dangerous.” Attacks on *anything* or *anyone* that mentions God or Christ have become rather commonplace. Crosses as well as plaques or monuments of the Ten Commandments are removed for being “offensive” to non-believers. And it’s not *just* in society at large — many who even profess a belief in Christ view hell as nothing more than a myth promoted to “scare” people into believing in Christ. Those same individuals often believe that *everyone* will go to heaven — just by a variety of *different* paths. God’s Word is no longer considered to be Absolute Truth. Dysfunctional families are becoming the norm and mistreatment of children is too common.

John Wenham in his book *The Goodness of God* stated — “Who is man to pretend to understand the infinite wisdom and complexity of the divine purposes?” Habakkuk surely didn’t. He just prepared to *accept* God’s wrath with unflinching faith. So even though we may feel that the wicked surround the righteous and justice comes out perverted (Hab. 1:4), we too must say, as Habakkuk said —

“Yet I will exult in the Lord, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength,” (Habakkuk 3:18-19 NASB)

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Dennis and Sherri Owens — Cincinnati, Ohio
diligence@gorfsystems.com — <http://diligence.gorfsystems.com/>*



DILIGENCE

“We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure.” — Hebrews 6:11

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More On Habakkuk

In the previous issue, we discussed the startling solution God explained to Habakkuk concerning all of the evil and wickedness Habakkuk was observing among God’s chosen people in Judah. If you recall, the solution to solving that problem was *not* at all what Habakkuk had in mind when he had called to God to ask Him to do *something* about it. God explained to Habakkuk that He *was* doing something about it — He was raising up an even *more* wicked people to overtake Judah. God did however, make it clear to Habakkuk that the wicked people whom He was raising up would *also* not go unpunished.

In Habakkuk 2:4-20 God gave Habakkuk a “list” of the sins those wicked Chaldeans (Babylonians) were practicing for which they would eventually be punished. That list included — pride, covetousness, violence, immorality and idolatry. How *wicked* those people were!! But wait a minute — it might be interesting to note that those are the very *same* sins in which *Judah* as well as Israel were involved. Let’s look at the verses that mention *Judah’s* involvement with those same sins.

Pride —

“Thus says the Lord, ‘Just so will I destroy the pride of Judah and the great pride of Jerusalem.’” (Jeremiah 13:9 NASB)

Covetousness —

“At that time,” declares the Lord, “they will bring out the bones of the kings of Judah and the bones of its princes, and the bones of the priests and the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem from their graves. ... ¹⁰Therefore I will give their wives to others, Their fields to new owners; Because from the least even to the greatest Everyone is greedy for gain; From the prophet even to the priest Everyone practices deceit.” (Jeremiah 8:1 and 10 NASB)

Violence —

“Yes, destruction and violence are before me; Strife exists and contention arises.” (Habakkuk 1:3 NASB)

Immorality —

“And I saw that for all the adulteries of faithless Israel, I had sent her away and given her a writ of divorce, yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear; but she went and was a harlot also.” (Jeremiah 3:8 NASB)

Idolatry —

“³He stretched out the form of a hand and caught me by a lock of my head; and the Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the entrance of the north gate of the inner court, where the seat of the idol of jealousy, which provokes to jealousy, was located.” ... “¹⁰So I entered and looked, and behold, every form of creeping things and beasts and detestable things, with all the idols of the house of Israel, were carved on the wall all around.”
(Ezekiel 8:3 and 10 NASB)

While it seems that *Habakkuk* realized that there was great evil present in Judah, it's *inhabitants* apparently weren't concerned about it. There was no sign of repentance on their part. Did they perhaps think that God would tolerate such evil for *ever* — without *any* consequences? How arrogant of them! Why had they refused to listen to the prophets telling them to repent and leave their wicked ways? Didn't they understand how serious their wickedness was?

“The highway of the upright is to depart from evil; He who keeps his way preserves his soul. Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall. Better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, Than to divide the spoil with the proud. He who heeds the word wisely will find good, And whoever trusts in the Lord, happy is he. The wise in heart will be called prudent, And sweetness of the lips increases learning. Understanding is a wellspring of life to him who has it. But the correction of fools is folly.” (Proverbs 16:17-22 NKJV)

Let's look *again* at that “list” of those five sins of which both the Chaldeans and Judah were guilty. There was pride, covetousness, violence, immorality and idolatry. Do we see *any* of those *same* things present in our Nation today? How about *all* of them? Are we — as a Nation — or as Christians so arrogant that we think God will tolerate that kind of wickedness *forever*? Let's look at each of those sins in that list in relation to our own society today — starting with pride.

Pride —

There are *numerous* events around this country that *proudly* celebrate the open rejection of God's view concerning the male/female relationship. Just this past July 4th — right here in Cincinnati OH — the *Cincinnati Equinox Parade and Festival* was held. The media reported that —

“Thousands of people came downtown to check out the parade. Members of Parents, Family & Friends of Lesbians and Gays [PFLAG] were out in force to support the gay community. PFLAG member Lynne Lefebvre said, ‘ ... The opposite of the word pride is shame, and we are so far from that and we want everybody else to be so far from that,....’” (<http://www.wlwt.com/news/>)

If one types “2011 gay pride events” into the Yahoo search engine it produces 10,800,000 results. It's difficult to name *any* major city that doesn't have its own special event listed. The very *first* listing displayed on the Yahoo search stated —

“2011/2012 international gay pride and events calendar: Details and event dates of all major gay pride festivals around the world. From Madrid to Sao Paulo and from NYC to Amsterdam we have all gay events in 2011 We fear exactly what might have been displayed had we actually *clicked* on some of those recommended website.

Covetousness —

It's a bit difficult to separate greed from covetousness when one begins to look at the result of *either* of those sins. But a quick search on eBay revealed that two of Casey Anthony's former classmates were selling yearbooks that included Anthony's picture. One offered a set for \$450. Another person posted a courtroom trial pass for sale for \$155. Crime Victim Advocate Andy Kahan of Houston Texas stated, “Anything that can be associated with the trial can and will be sold. I can imagine there will be millions of dollars involved. Casey Anthony, like it or not, is free to sell her story.” The fascination with her trial made her quite a celebrity who now has the ability to *profit* from being accused of murdering her tiny daughter.

If Larry Flynt has his way, Casey Anthony might even reintroduce herself — nude — to America, on the pages of *Hustler* magazine, and make well over a half-million dollars in the process.

Public relations expert Davidson Goldin said on *Good Morning America* — “Between a combination of a book, maybe some sort of magazine articles, TV interviews and other ways of telling this monstrous story that she has, she'll probably be able to wrestle out of this about a million dollars.”

Violence —

Since these articles are usually written *at least* several weeks ahead of their mailing, the following story is “breaking news” at the time this article is being written — what an example of senseless violence!

“COPLEY, Ohio (AP) — Investigators combed through three homes and outside another in a quiet neighborhood of this small Ohio town Sunday, collecting evidence to reconstruct a shooting rampage that killed seven people and wounded another before the gunman died in a gunfight with police. ... Neighbors said the dead included an 11-year-old boy; ...” (<http://www.local12.com/>)

Another recent story concerning a different kind of violence that is *far too* common in today's society —

“PORTSMOUTH — [A] 19 year-old Portsmouth mother is now charged with felony child abuse and neglect, after a string of crimes in the Lincoln Park area led police to her apartment. ... “ (<http://www.wtkr.com/>)

Immorality —

It's probably not even necessary to list “items of proof” here in this article to demonstrate the existence of immorality in today's society. Everything from