

## PROPHETIC

***Your message burns in my heart and bones, and I cannot keep silent.***

(Jeremiah 20:9)

by – Stuart H. Pouliot

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### ***Sin & the Perfect Storm (Observation)***

To close out 2019 and the second decade of the third millennia, I offer a few observations along with a few words I believe the Lord gave me some years ago that play into where we are today. To some, what follows might seem too negative or dark, but hang in there, there is good news.

Light dawns in the darkness for the upright; he is gracious, merciful, and righteous. (Psalm 112:4  
ESV)

Have you noticed how there appears to be a rising tide of evil in the world, especially in America? Predictably, some will say that our era is no different from past eras when evil things happened. Some might even cite statistics as proof that our day is not much different from other days in world history. This is done quite often with natural phenomena. There is some truth to such arguments. However, as I have stated elsewhere, it is not really necessary to compare us to prior points in history. Today, *this day*, is our turn in the barrel, so to speak, to experience an outpouring of evil. What is needed is to recognize that things are changing rapidly and those with any sense of discernment not only can see it but feel it.

Amorality, unrighteousness, incivility, injustice, perversion of the natural sexes, evil being called good and good being called evil, depraved minds turned over to all sorts of grotesque thinking and acts, senseless killings, the rise of satanic cults, the bending over backwards not to offend certain religions and ethnic groups while ignoring the rampant persecution of Christians, a relentless attack on free speech all in the name of *cultural diversity* and *inclusiveness* (that excludes those who disagree with them), an obsession over material goods (holiday shopping hit an all-time, one day historical record of sales on 12.22.19), and an obsession with self (selfies, likes/dislikes, hearts etc.) are a small fraction of what is occurring in our land today. We hardly need to add to this the partisan coup that is in play in an attempt to overthrow the rightfully-elected President of the United States. God is pounding America's political fortress that no longer stands for *we the people*.

Of course, all of this and much more is played up in the countless number of news sources and opinion sites found on the internet, along with the social media that has become the psyche of humanity. The dark side of humanity sells, so we get a near constant bombardment of bad news. This is exacerbated by an entertainment industry that rampantly portrays killings (along with sex) in its movies, anesthetizing people with an unreality that is counter to the humanity that God created. Also, let us not overlook the social agenda being pushed in their movies and sitcoms, which are not shy to joke about or mock God and Jesus.

How we have fallen to such lows! I suggest that all of the above and much more have anesthetized people to the reality of sin and evil. O, with evil running wild in some cities, manifesting in mass shootings, drive-by shootings, road rage, and other senseless killings, people cry out for change as mothers and grandmothers mourn over the loss of loved ones. They march for change; they light candles for change; they hold vigils for change; they build monuments honoring the dead; they demand that politicians do something to change the situation (e.g., control guns, ban guns, more law enforcement, etc.). All the while

the police forces around the country respond by building up their arsenal of weapons, making them look more like a military force. And, throughout all this, no single, united voice has arisen that offers the only true answer to humanity's heart condition. The answer is the one who is truth. His name is Jesus!

### ***Prosperity & Technology***

The police military force reminds me of the recent announcement that the US is developing a fifth branch of the military called the *Space Force*. Really? For what purpose? What are they not telling us? Only God knows what sort of evil could be unleashed by this action. Most importantly, where are the true peacemakers in our government? One report I listened to about this new branch posited that this could unleash amazing technology that has been developed and is waiting to be revealed. Others say this branch is being tested in the air over our nation which explains why so many today are witnessing strange objects flying or hovering in the sky in ways that defy our traditional flight technology. Have you noticed how silent our government has been in trying to explain or refute such phenomena? Is something big coming?

This leads to something that I believe the Lord spoke to me on January 8, 2017, right before Donald Trump's inauguration, that was reinforced in 2018. Here is a summary or paraphrase of what I heard.

*The world is going to change. **Some will say it is much better, conditions have improved, and many will be persuaded by it.** But the heart of it all is dark. It is deception. Many will be deceived in the days ahead, deceived into believing all is well when the heart is rotten. **Prosperity and technology rob the hearts of the people; these things become idols to worship.** Prosperity and technology will lead to idolatry on a level never seen in mankind before. Do not be deceived by the quest for wealth, especially when you begin to hear of a **golden new era or age.** When you hear this, know that **the darkest hour has come.***

Needless to say, this put me on notice to be on the lookout for signs of this word. It didn't take long. I was watching a news clip in the spring of 2018 from what could be called *alt-news*. I won't bother to name the source, for it isn't relevant to this discussion. Let us just say that it comes as a voice among a cacophony of voices filling the internet these days. A single voice may not be indicative of the whole but, then again, given the wide sweep of the internet, one voice can resonate to many. This particular voice said something along the line that **Trump has brought us into a new era, the Golden Age, where our thinking changes and things actually get better and it starts working as it should.** Obviously, this immediately drew my attention to the word that came to me in 2017.

Let me be clear that I am only in one camp, and that is the camp of King Jesus and His kingdom. I only inject Trump into the picture of our day because he is obviously front and center in the news in a way that is nothing less than **cultish**, regardless of which side in the kingdom of the world one resides—the blue side, the red side, the left side, the right side, the liberal side, the conservative side, or whatever manmade-labeled side with which one chooses to identify.

Given that the stock market is at an all-time high, gold is up quite a bit, and unemployment is at an all-time low, it is easy to see how some might claim that we are in a golden era, a prosperous era. Perhaps outwardly, this might be true, although some would disagree even with this assessment. However, the important question is: What is going on inwardly, in the heart of humanity? This is what matters most, and this goes to the very core of the warning about idolatry.

What about technology? Is technology bad? No; actually, some of it is quite good, and what is coming off the drawing boards might be dazingly amazing for humanity. But again, this is not the point. Will our technology become a form of idol worship, much like the cell phone and social media have become? Will technology replace God in our lives, even become the god of the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Apart from Christ, it will. As reported, thinking could easily change and things could actually get better and start working as they should, but by whose standards? What is the measure of "working better"? Who do we look to for the measure? Man, or the Creator God? The answer is obvious for those who are in Christ.

Now, let us go back to where this discussion started—the cry for change from those who have been deeply wounded by so many things. Where is the cry for a change of heart? Where is the cry that says the heart of mankind is sick and in need of change? Humanity needs a new heart and a new spirit, and this won't come through the politicians and man's laws. We know the answer. So, where is the church in all this? What message is the church delivering in the midst of all this? This leads to the concept of sin.

## **Sin**

Sin and its effects have become so common to most that it is an accepted and unchallenged way of life, leading to sin no longer being recognized for what it truly is. And, don't think for a moment that this only occurs among the worldly ones outside the public church. I knew someone who sat in a denominational church all their life, even sang in the choir, and never grasped the concept of sin. Some try to whitewash sin with "I'm a good person," so that only the flagrant violations of the ten commandments count as sin. What they fail to realize is that these "ten words" through Moses cover the entire gamut of sins from the little ones to the big ones. As a reminder, for those of us in Christ, God's laws are being written on our hearts and in our minds, making them the spiritual law of God that is holy, righteous, and good; and not the literal letter of the law. By the way, the overarching principle or essence of all the commandments is love.

Is it any wonder why sin is so accepted? The entertainment industry makes its profits off its portrayal of sin as if it is nothing; the politicians exemplify sin by making lying to the people an acceptable norm of politics; the financial industry (including corporatism) is driven by the love of money, the root of all sorts of evil; the news media makes its profits off news of all the sin and evil occurring in the world and in our cities while it attempts to steer thinking down a certain path or worldview that is contrary to God's view; the social media plays up the self as the center of life, the domain of sin (i.e., self-centeredness); and the religious world has either lost sight of sin or has played it up in such a way as to mischaracterize the very essence of God, which is love.

So, what is sin? As I see it, in a day in which the concept of sin has either become a *religious relic* to many or has been wiped clean with *relativist humanism* by the many, a less religious or theological definition is necessary, one that makes the point without getting bogged down with theological concepts. I realize to some fundamentalists, this is an untenable suggestion, but hear me out. Modernizing the definition in a world that is dramatically different from anything in the past might be what is needed, especially if it speaks to what people are experiencing, even feeling, and are at a loss to explain it.

Before offering such a definition, consider some standard theological definitions: ***Sin is transgressing God's holy, spiritual law; sin is active violation of God's laws and basic moral principles; sin is active rebellion against God.***

How do these theological definitions of sin reach the heart of ones brought up in an amoral world that says everything is relative to the person; there are no absolutes? In this context, what does active rebellion against God mean to such people?

Now, these definitions might reach the heart of ones who have some religious background, but how do they speak to the heart of ones who have little to no concept of a creator God who has absolute rights over His creation that He designed to function a certain way and with an intended purpose? It can't be stressed enough that God as creator is essential to understanding sin. Stated another way; sin can't be grasped in the absence of a creator of the universe, which includes earth and its occupants. There must be a source or standard beyond us for measuring our actions.

Think about it; if you want to know how something works (e.g., a machine), what makes it tick, as they say, who do you seek out for answers? You seek the inventor or designer, the one who wrote the **design specifications** that explain the why, the how, and the working parameters of the invention. The design specs are particularly important if one wants to manufacture the invention so that it works as the inventor intended it to work. Deviating from the specifications will fall short of the inventor's intent, and ultimately, the invention will fail to reach its full potential or, worse, fail altogether. As we will see, this concept goes to the core meaning of sin.

For more on God's rights as creator, check out the following link. *Kingdom of God—Creator's Rights* — <http://www.kingdomandglory.com/tuc/tuc692.pdf>

To be clear, none of what is being shared is intended to deny that the holy spirit can and does move on the most hardened of hearts. Only the spirit of the Lord saves. For our part, we are to be witnesses and testimonies of the truth, which is not some ethereal concept lacking substance but a person—the Lord Jesus who is the way, the truth, and the life!

In a day like the one we are in now, the proposal is that we need a definition or understanding of sin that addresses the masses based on what they observe happening all around them every day, and we need to use this as a springboard to introduce them to God's antidote for sin and His way to receive a new heart and spirit. So, how are we to understand sin in light of these few thoughts?

First, simply on a human level, even without injecting God into it, sin is **harmful behavior that not only affects us individually but potentially others around us that could extend to all humanity (e.g., world war initiated by a madman)**. Who can deny that there is a whole lot of harmful behavior occurring in our day? Everyone born of Adam's race knows that behavior makes a difference in our relations with one another and, more times than not, our behavior leads to hurt (emotionally and physically), anger, even violence. One cannot study the news each day without seeing sin in action throughout our communities and extending across the globe. This brings us back to the previous comment about mothers and grandmothers crying out that violence must stop. Whether they know God and His Son or not, they are living proof that sin is harmful behavior that hurts more than the one perpetrating the sin.

**Simply, sin affects!** The effect of sin is death in all its forms! And, when sin is carried to the extreme (i.e., mass shootings, torture, etc.), there is a sense in all of us that such actions are contrary to the very nature of humanity. These actions are inhuman! Clearly, in our modern era, we have seen evil manifested that is best described as *sub-human*. Programmed within all of us is a sense that these things are not right (even if deeply suppressed within some); we know they have no place in our communities. It is for this reason

that some today who do not seem to know Jesus, even to the point of rejecting Him as Lord, are crying out for all to love and be at peace with one another. They say: *We need to love one another!* True; even if their idea of love does not perfectly line up with *God is love*.

Second, to the last point, mankind was created to image God and ***God's essence is love***; therefore, we were created to image the love of God and out from this love to produce all the ***fruits of righteousness*** (i.e., ***doing things the right way***). Given this, another way of defining sin is that we fall short of God's design for us, that is, fall short of His image, which at its core is love. Falling short is generally described as missing the mark, like an arrow aiming for the bull's eye but most often missing it. This is essential to understanding the nature of sin, regardless of one's religious explanation of the origin of sin. (Frankly, trying to explain sin's origin is a distraction in sharing the good news of Jesus.)

Now, some might say that falling short is comparable to rebellion against God (one of the theological definitions of sin). In my opinion, this is not the best way to reach people, especially ones who have little to no history with anything related to God. It seems to me that rebellion against God is more appropriate for those who have a history with God. Case in point—ancient Israel was called out to be a kingdom of priests but, ultimately, they failed to do so. To this, some would say that rebellion angers God.

Alternatively, I propose that sin is rebellion against the way God designed us to be—again, to be imaging His love. We are in rebellion against our very nature encoded in us by God. When we ask the Lord for forgiveness, we are acknowledging our rebellion against this nature. God is not harmed by sin or rebellion, we are, along with creation itself. Further, anger on God's part is not like anger humans display to one another. God's anger is His burning passionate love for His creation; His burning desire to see creation come into all that He intends it to be where He is all in all with all things new and in love. Another way to describe His passionate love is He is a consuming fire, one that burns up all that is not of His essence.

The good news is that His Son, our Lord Jesus, has begun to right the ship, so to speak, and He will not fail to right it completely so there is only a new creation filled with a new humanity that is the perfect image of God.

Tracing back to our discussion of a creator God; falling short or missing the mark means that we are impaired or, using mechanical terms, broken in some way that keeps us from reaching our design potential and, in a broader way, the corporate design potential of humanity. God designed His creation based on His criteria, and when creation deviates from His design specs, even in the smallest of ways, over time it begins to sputter until it no longer works as He intended it to. To repeat again, regarding humanity, we were created to operate in such a way that we image the very essence of our creator, which is love. ***God is love!*** And, out of this love comes everything necessary for humanity to live productively and happily—truth, peace, joy, righteousness, justice, etc.

So, let us be clear that any deviation from God's design for us is sin.

Look around you today; broken humanity abounds. Again, a cursory look at the news of our day makes the point that there is a brokenness in humanity. It's like having an eight-cylinder car that is only running on seven (or worse, only two) and, even if they cannot explain it, people know this is true. Thus, at its fundamental core, sin is simply not following God's specs for His creation, and this manifests as harmful behavior to the individual and to others. This is an obvious fact of life.

Having said all this, here is my thought: Perhaps there is a way to reach people today as sin has become more blatant and obvious, as if in your face. A day is coming (if not now) when people will be ripe to hear a definition of sin that explains what they see and experience. Obviously, the challenge is to make it personal to them and just not leave it with others. Using this as a springboard, we can then introduce God as the creator of all things who wrote the specifications for His creation. He is a loving Father who knows best, and we are to be imaging His love for one another and for His creation. And from here we can present God's remedy for our sin nature in the death and resurrection of Jesus. God's Son is the one who rights God's creation. I realize that this is a very simplistic way of presenting the good news and that it is by no means the only way. I am simply offering an alternative to the heaven or hell preaching that attempts to scare people out of hell into heaven, which, by the way, is not the gospel. Such preaching goes along with Jonathan Edwards' horrible sermon on *sinners in the hands of an angry God*. On the contrary, God is not angry and bent on sending people to a pagan hell. As Paul reminds us, He has reconciled Himself to the world, that is, made peace, and He is not counting their transgressions against them. Today, ***sinners are in the hands of a loving God*** who knows how to win the hearts of humanity, drawing all of us into His love, forming a new humanity patterned after the Son of His love. We need to be open to the spirit of the Lord to share along these lines with those who do not know Jesus and the good news He is to all.

This leads to the...

### ***Perfect Storm***

Dear brethren, I propose that we have entered a perfect storm where many forces are converging all at once. The *perfect storm* is a term first coined in 1991 when a storm circling the Great Lakes (a cold front) and a nor'easter merged with Hurricane Grace as it came up the US east coast from Bermuda. On September 21, 1991, the Andrea Gail, a fishing vessel out of Gloucester, MA, set out to sea and was caught in the midst of this massive powerful storm with its mighty waves. No one knows exactly what led to their demise but the ship and its crew were lost to the storm. The perfect storm we face will do no less.

Today, we have the convergence of national (nationalism vs. globalism), political (power, influence, and control), financial (economic), social (cultural), and religious storms that only the Lord knows how they will play out. However, this has the potential of becoming a massive vortex of converging forces driven by the sin of man with these forces vying either against one another or in tandem with one another. Regardless, it could become a battle over who will rule, who will come out on top—whoever is the strongest will survive and rule over the rest. This is so even in the religious world where one group thinks it is superior to the rest and therefore all must bow the knee to their way of thinking. And, don't for a moment think the Christian realm is exempt from this, especially for those who are embroiled in the politics of our day or are convinced their doctrine is the absolute truth and not to be challenged.

Added to this storm is something that is occurring in the natural realm, as well, that could lead to storms in the physical realm. The sun goes through cycles in which its solar activity rises and falls—when it falls, it is called a ***solar minimum***. Some scientists are predicting that in 2020, the beginning of the sun's 24<sup>th</sup> cycle, it will move into a significant solar minimum that could further affect climate (cooling), movement of the earth's crust, volcanic activity, and movement of the magnetic poles.

Be assured that all of this and much more is upon us; it is only a question of how high the waves will rise, how strong and widespread the winds will be, and how much damage will result. Who will calm the waters? Who will calm the winds? You know the answer; but hold it for a moment.

## **Dark Hour**

A dark hour is upon us! However, it is not the end of the world or the end of history, as some proclaim. It is the end of an age and the open manifestation of the Age that commenced with the empty tomb and the resurrection of the Son of God, the ruler of the kings of the earth. Just as there was a convergence of ages from 33-70 AD that ended biblical Judaism along with its temple and animal sacrifices (i.e., age of Moses) and ushered in God's Age (i.e., of Christ) for those who inherit eonian life, ultimately leading to immortality, so is there a convergence in our day as the end of man's day (a long age since Adam) converges with God's Age. It is the perfect storm of the ages.

Metaphorically speaking, those of us who are in the Age now are in the eye of the perfect storm, the place where the wind and the sea are relatively calm and the sun is shining, in comparison to the fury of the storm in and beyond the eyewall. It doesn't mean we don't pass through the eyewall from time to time into a level of darkness, but regardless, we remain in the peace of God that surpasses all understanding. We are the light of the world, for we are in Christ who is the light, and His light shines in the darkness.

Given this, in the midst of the perfect storm, we must not lose sight of the eye of the storm. I can picture Jesus standing in the midst of the eye of the storm with everything whirling around Him while He remains perfectly calm and at peace. He is in the boat with us! We need to retain this picture in the days ahead.

We must keep in mind that all storms end; their day ends when all their fury has been exhausted and the sun begins to shine once again. How long will it last? Could be days, years, or another decade! We don't know. What kind of day will the world see when the perfect storm dissipates and is no longer? What is on the other side of this perfect storm? Is it simply one of many more to come, driven by cycles of time? Or, more importantly, is it the last of the storms right before the open manifestation of God's Age of peace and righteousness? For answers, we will have to wait and see, but I suspect we will have an answer sooner rather than later. Be assured; a new day will come when there will be no more storms.

***Who will calm the waters? Who will calm the winds? Who is on the other side of all the storms?*** There is only one answer: ***King Jesus!*** How will He do this? Will He do it all by Himself? He could, for He surely has all the power and authority to do so. After all, He has the power to subject all things to Himself. Consider these verses.

We, however, are free citizens of Heaven, and we are waiting with longing expectation for the coming from Heaven of a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, in the exercise of the power which He has even ***to subject all things to Himself***, will transform this body of our humiliation until it resembles His own glorious body. (Philippians 3:20-21 WNT [bold italic added])

For even as, in Adam, all are dying, thus also, in Christ, shall all be vivified." Yet each in his own class: the Firstfruit, Christ; thereupon ***those who are Christ's in His presence;***" ... For He must continue King until He shall have put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that is to be overthrown is Death; for ***He will have put all things in subjection under His feet***. And when He shall have declared that "All things are in subjection," it will be with the manifest exception of Him who has reduced them all to subjection to Him. But when the whole universe has been made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also become subject to Him who has made the universe subject to Him, in order that ***GOD may be all in all***. (1 Corinthians 15:22-23 CLV; 25-28 WNT [bold italic added])

Before King Jesus subjects all things unto Himself, He must bring His entire body into life; a body that Paul describes as His complement.

... and subjects all under His feet, and gives Him, as Head over all, to the ecclesia which is His body, ***the complement of the One completing the all in all.*** (Ephesians 1:22-23 CLV [bold italic added])

His body is His complement and, as such, is part of His completing the all in all, which is the ultimate purpose of God. In other words, His complement is intimately engaged in His completing the all in all. Or, as Paul tells us, they are engaged with Him in His summing up or gathering up or heading up all things in heaven and on earth (Ephesians 1:10). How do we know? Because we are seated with Him in the heavenlies! The order of subjecting all things unto Himself starts with His body and proceeds to all humanity and all creation.

It is an amazing truth that God is going to bring forth the new creation in His Son through a people, a first fruit of humanity—they themselves having been rescued by His redemptive process and made part of the new creation. This first fruit is only part of the process of God becoming all in all in His entire creation and beyond. In other words, the new creation is not about a select people; it is about all creation and all humanity. This should bring a deeply profound sense of humility to those of us who have been called and chosen (i.e., as new creations) as an integral part of His plan to achieve His ultimate purpose. We are rescued first in order for us to be part of the rescue mission of all creation and humanity led by God's Son.

Given this, Jesus will not fully subject all things unto Himself without His body. He must have a full and perfected complement in His image to do so. Good news: He will not fail to do so! And, today, He is perfecting His body that will rise up as the matured sons of God to rule and reign with Him in the oncoming ages. This corporate body will be His mirror image, having been made fully complete in Him—when this mortal is fully swallowed up in life, in immortality, and His body of sons shines forth in spirit-animated bodies with a physicality (not some ghostly figures) and a nature the world has never known, one that is perfected in love.

All of this speaks of the coming anointing and the presence I have written about elsewhere.

So, let us not fear the perfect storm(s); rather, let us rest in the eye of the storm. Jesus is our rest and He knows how to calm even the worst of storms. Let us look through the storms and see the joy set before us. When we do, we see only one person—**we see Jesus crowned with glory and honor as the King of All.** And, let us share His life with a world that is crying out for answers to the rampant sin (evil) it faces each day.

### ***Postscript***

First, I have purposely left out a discussion of the relationship of sin and evil. Like most subjects, this is explained in a variety of ways. To me, evil is sin personified in the extreme to the point of operating as a dark force in a realm contrary to the good of human nature. Beyond this, I leave it to the theologians.

Second, when it comes to the amazing advances of technology, just think how these might be used when they are let loose for the betterment of the world, without being driven by greed and the quest for power, control, and destruction of supposed enemies. When the new creation openly manifests, I suspect that these technological advances will be used for all humanity in the way God intends them to be used.