

FROM WITHIN

“For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean'.” (Mark 7:21-23 NIV)

America remains on a high state of alert. We expect another terrorist attack, but we don't know where it is coming from. The freedoms we cherish make us vulnerable in thousands of places. We could be attacked from almost anywhere at any time.

Spiritually speaking, however, we know where the attack is coming from. It will come from within. There is no question about it! Understanding this foundational truth is important beyond my ability to describe. Adam tried to blame Eve, Eve tried to blame the serpent, but a man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lusts and enticed (Ja. 1:14). A man is not defiled by something from without, but by something from within.

Our basic nature is both sinful and selfish. It is not by accident that these two are so closely related. They are twin manifestations of the same thing. Our sin arises from our selfishness. I think Is. 14:13 - 14 refers to the original sin of Lucifer in heaven. Note carefully these words: **“You said in your heart, “I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.”** It seems that these words have more than one application. First, they refer to Lucifer (or the morning star) who was cast down to earth for rebelling against God. Secondly, they refer to the king of Babylon, who also rebelled against God. Finally, they describe you and me when we rebel against God. Every time we sin we are exalting ourselves above God.

David, as you know, committed adultery, and murder. Why did he do these things? The answer is obvious. He did not do these things to please God, but to please himself. While David was committing these sins he was usurped the authority of heaven and making himself more important than God.

Fulgencio Batista Zaldívar was the corrupt dictator of Cuba. He was replaced, as you know, by another corrupt dictator named Fidel Castro. These two dictators are different in a number of ways. Batista was a right wing dictator, Castro is a left wing dictator. Batista had the backing of rich and powerful men in the Mafia and Castro has the backing of rich and powerful Communists. In the final analysis, however, they are quite similar. They both worshiped themselves.

Castro has a good friend who is the President of Venezuela. His name is Hugo Chavez. He came to power in 1998 promising to root out corruption and help the poor. Does that sound familiar? The Spanish version of the Miami Herald wrote about him on July 19, 2004 that he instead of helping the poor he is helping himself. He loves the good life. His personal expenses went up 500 % from 54 million in 2,000 to 252 million in 2003. An editor of a Caracas newspaper described him as the most narcissistic president they have ever had.

Daniel Ortega was the communist dictator of Nicaragua, when he visited New York he spent \$3,000 on a pair of sun glasses. Mao Tse Tung was the communist dictator of China. While western music and dancing were forbidden to the common people he danced to the fox trot every night and slept with a different teen age virgin. Nicolae Ceausescu was the communist dictator of Romania. While the people were starving he and his wife, Elena, lived like royalty. Here is the menu from her birthday party: “Three kinds of caviar, pate de foie gras, filet mignon, roast beef, baby pork, pork chops and pork loin, venison, roast turkey, Cornish game hens, pheasant, lobster, frogs' legs, smoked, salmon, and three kinds of trout.”

Corruption is so common place in the communist hierarchy that a joke made the rounds during the heigh of Soviet power - “In a capitalistic country one man oppresses his fellow man, but in a communist country it is the other way around”.

Do not be deceived! Our problem with sin cannot be blamed on anyone else. The things that corrupt our lives come out of our own heart.