

Nation's Decline in Moral Conduct III

Within Psalm 15, after having asked the question, "Jehovah, who shall sojourn in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill," David addressed the answers: 1) Negatively, i.e., characteristics an individual should not have, and 2) Positively, i.e., characteristics an individual should have. In this article we will consider the first of David's negative answers.

David said, "He that slandereth not with his tongue." Slander is, "an accusation maliciously uttered with the purpose or effect of damaging the reputation of another" (ISBE). Solomon stated, "He that hideth hatred is of lying lips; And he that uttereth a slander is a fool" (Proverbs 10:18).

Many before us have suffered at the mouth of a slanderer: Jesus once said to the multitude, "But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the marketplaces, who call unto their fellows and say, We piped unto you, and ye did not dance; we wailed, and ye did not mourn. For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a demon. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold, a gluttonous man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!" (Matthew 11:18-19).

When the opponents of truth looked for a reason to refuse the message, they looked at the messenger: in the first case, John. John had a limited diet, i.e., locusts and wild honey. John shunned what might be considered a normal way of life, so his enemies "say he hath a demon." But the Lord's enemies used just the opposite, i.e., Jesus "came eating and drinking," and they accused him of being a gluttonous man and a winebibber. Jesus utilized the actions of children to reveal the true nature of his enemy's reproaches, i.e., "we piped" and you did not want to dance, "we wailed" and you did not want to play funeral.

No matter what a preacher may say or do, there are those who will not heed the message of truth but will launch "an accusation maliciously uttered with the purpose or effect of damaging the reputation of another," i.e., slander the messenger to hide their own iniquity. The enemies of the Lord even cast slanderous accusations against Him, after his death, saying, "we remember that that deceiver said while he was yet alive, After three days I rise again" (Matthew 27:63). So, as was with John and Jesus, so also was the case with the Apostle Paul, when he said, "But if the truth of God through my lie abounded unto his glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner? and why not (as we are slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say), Let us do evil, that good may come? whose condemnation is just." (Romans 3:8)

For centuries, man has attempted to sway a decision to his side by slander. Understand that if you seek to dwell in Jehovah's favor, you will recognize the power of the tongue, and heed the admonition of the Apostle Paul, who said, "speak evil of no man" (Titus 3:2).

Remember the words of the Apostle Paul, who said, "Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for edifying as the need may be, that it may give grace to them that hear" (Ephesians 4:29). ret