PURITY IN CHURCH
Lessons from Israel

The divine proclamation that launched the church into being, requires that believers live their lives as a distinct and separate people, in accordance with GOD's Exacting law. That marvellous blue-print demands that Christians sustain a clear identity of consecration and separateness. It is this distinctiveness that was originally intended to mould the church into a people totally detached from the decay of this evil world, both in their belief and manifest lifestyle.

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, GOD's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light (1 Pet 2:9).

A lofty calling of this kind is what essentially defined the water-shed moment for the church, at her creation. It was upon this same platform of separation that JEHOVAH had hitherto proclaimed, not only the existence of the ancient nation of Israel, but also HIS everlasting covenant with them. The LORD ensured that such a covenant would encompass a spiritual austerity that would enforce a strict adherence to the separateness of Israel as a chosen people.

5 Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, 6 you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.” (Exodus 19:5-6).

Consequent to that holy treaty then, Israel was required to inexorably comply with a firm observance of a holy segregation unto the LORD. GOD's chosen people subscribing to such a Supreme Law with their own Creator, now demanded that they live their lives within the confines of that governing Law. The holy Law being discussed here is what brought with it the sacred instruments of restraint. A classical case in time is when the LORD restrained Israel as HIS covenant people, from intermingling with the defiled communities that defined their neighbourhood.

Obey what I command you today. I will drive out before you the Amorites, Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. Be careful not to make a treaty...
with those who live in the land where you are going, or they will be a snare among you. (Exodus 34:11-12)

On the matter of Israel's eternity, GOD ALMIGHTY did not leave anything to chance. He deliberately assigned such a gruelling regime of sanctions and restraints upon Israel, that she may walk exclusively along GOD'S predetermined path, and achieve her appointed destiny. Being very much aware of the cunning nature of the communities among whom Israel was intending to live, the LORD had to raise the above caution prohibiting Israel from excessively engaging with those defiled communities. Central among the most enticing affronts that such communities were likely to advance towards Israel were the social and inter-community agreements that often arise in the so-called observance of good neighbourliness. The LORD was very much aware that it is the short-term social gains entailed within these inter-community agreements, that would act as alluring baits to ensnare Israel to mixing with those defiled communities, and unnecessarily suffer the dangers of occult. The danger here arose from the fact that anytime a community engages in a bilateral treaty with another, it often involves a voluntary agreement, truce, accord, and settlement that normalize the said communities. The LORD knew it too well that it is this particular form of compromise that often goes a long way to erode the edge, uniqueness, distinctiveness and peculiarity of HIS people from the world. So was the case with Israel, when the LORD intended to tower them high above those subordinate communities. However, in all this, the LORD did not at any one stage envisage a scenario in which Israel would hold a truce or agreement of whatever kind with such evil and defiled heritages. As GOD's covenant people, Israel had already secured for herself a glamorous future that JEHOVAH HIMSELF had designed for them in HIS blueprint. And the truth of the matter is that such a flamboyant future indeed had nothing to do with the occultism that was being commissioned by the Amorites, Jebusites, Hivites, Hittites, that lived within her neighbourhood. The Jewish nation was essentially being preserved by the LORD, as a witness that Christ the Messiah would be born as a seed of Abraham. The LORD had initially planned to use purity in order to shield Israel, to the extent that unless Israel should consent to temptation, she could not be overcome by any schemes of the devil. And because Israel bore the image of GOD, every failure or defeat on their part would give occasion for the devil to reproach The LORD. The rigorous requirements that had to define the path of the Messiah, had now dawned on Israel as a chosen nation. It is this yardstick of purity that caused the LORD to further tighten the noose on these free-ranging former slaves, very much aware that they would easily have embezzled their newly earned freedom. An additional spiritual instrument had to be appointed into Israel's safety regime, in order that they may not be entrapped by the deception and seduction, of the otherwise proscribed marriages.

Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, for they will turn your children away from following me to serve other gods, and the LORD'S anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you (Deut 7:3-4).

They were from nations about which the LORD had told the Israelites, "You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods." (1 Kings 11:2).

It is for this very reason that the holy bible plainly instructs both Israel and the church; Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: ‘Be holy because I, the LORD your GOD, am holy. (Leviticus 19:2).

The Church

This separation of Israel by JEHOVAH is what ought to have been a very important lesson that today's church could well have learnt from, for her own good. As was the case with Israel, so is the case with the present-day church of Christ, that her failure to pursue purity, has indeed become the occasion for the adversary to reproach Christ. Such significant injunction as GOD levied on Israel for purposes of protecting her purity, is what was also intended to sieve out all the sullying influences of this dark world, that we today see totally devastate the church. This is how the LORD meant it to be for the church of Christ, that she may realize her salvation as a people solely consecrated unto the LORD. GOD'S purity requirement upon humanity is not a thing that has just began today, but instead been a long running standard for man since creation. The landmark pronouncement that the LORD enacted upon Adam and Eve at creation, is what was primarily intended to define in place the need for GOD's people to procure unto themselves purity as an existential necessity. In this way, we vividly see that a life of solemn purity in the church, was never meant to be an optional lifestyle, but a matter of life and death for the believer! At creation, GOD
ALMIGHTY had promised Adam and Eve that for as long as they would observe the purity of righteousness, they would never live to see death. While this simple instruction may have come in the form of a cautionary measure deterring them from eating from a certain tree, it however beheld a very central key to the righteous purity of the LORD. That is the righteousness with which GOD intended to sustain purity in that early church. As time went by, we see that spiritual purity began to take on a more central role even in the redemption formula that the LORD employed to rescue mankind. That is why at the Calvary Cross, spiritual purity indeed became the bedrock of GOD’s salvation for humanity. Be it as it may, we see that for Israel, GOD did not fail to lay down several parameters of caution regarding spiritual impurity. So has HE laid down such a warning upon today’s church, on the dangers of spiritual impurity and apostasy. If there was any single factor that can be today attributed to the fall in the church, then it is the blatant flouting of the Law of purity among believers in today’s body of Christ. Spiritual purity can then be defined as a state of lack of impurity. But spiritual impurity on the other hand is denoted by the complete embodiment of the confederacy of all the evil forces of corruption and defilement that today run this dark world. In this case, the classical caution that brings to context this virtue of spiritual purity in today’s church, then becomes a very relevant discourse in the present-day body of Christ. Unfortunately, this is a conversation that has lacked to a greater extent and for a very long time, thereby sidelining GOD’s essentials on adherence to righteousness as the standard for christian living. No where is GOD’s desire for spiritual purity of righteousness in the church more expressed than in Romans 12:2. In that scripture, the LORD also presents novel biblical safeguards that go a long way in protecting the hard-won Calvary purity when He says:

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what GOD’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will (Romans 12:2).

And because righteousness lasts forever, while wickedness on the other hand, is perpetually under the constant betrayal of its mortal self, the two present very opposite and antagonistic poles. This is the distinction that the LORD had hoped that today’s church would grasp, in order to entrench her salvation into righteousness as a refuge from the assault of this dark world. However, going by the manner in which the present-day church of Christ conducts her life, one can only come to the distasteful conclusion that she after all may not have captured the eternal treasure of purity. Since the duo of righteousness and wickedness share absolutely nothing in common, one would not have expected that the church would have brought into mixing the two in her Christianity. This is principally why the LORD put in place deliberate effort to clearly distinguish the christian lifestyle from the spiralling defilement of the present day. While many may advance their own reasons for apostasy in their lives, the church however cannot because decay has not come to her in the dark of night! It has instead assaulted her in the open broad daylight! The reason I say so, is because it is indeed common knowledge that spiritual impurity presents in none other than the same old vices of immorality, deception, falsehood, false prophets, false apostles, witchcraft, pornography, homosexuality, the gospel of prosperity, shame and death. Like Israel in her most compromised state, today’s church is equally confronted with a cocktail of challenges that perpetually attempt to push her towards disinherit her distinct and holy stature. These defiling influences are responsible for annulling the edge that the pulpit in the church ought to have enjoyed against this dark world. That is why by adopting the practices of the wicked communities in her surrounding, Israel too not only lost her edge over them, but also fell way below the standards of those defiled settlements. It is no secret that the church has today found herself in this very place! Because of the eminent vulnerability to sin that the church often presents, the LORD in His infinite wisdom has always placed upon her, a restriction that prohibits excessive indulgence with this dark world. In her darkest hour, such restraint is what had literally barred Israel in her early days, from intermarriages and treaties of any kind with the defiled communities that defined her neighbourhood. It is hence unfortunate that in her later days, Israel went ahead and intermarried thereby violating all these sacred laws that JEHOVAH had put in place. The rare account of Lot’s life in Sodom, and Abraham’s alarming experience in Egypt, indeed applaud the unorthodox faithfulness with which they beheld onto spiritual purity, despite the harsh assault from a predacious evil surrounding. On the contrary, the melancholy that encompasses the narrative of Lot’s wife in Sodom, and the lustful king in Egypt, are just but a few most sordid lessons that sound a serious warning to the church on the dangers of succumbing to spiritual adulteration. When one observes the present-day Christians going to church immorally dressed and the pew being largely

NAKURU REVIVAL 2013: This Cripple Got Up From The Wheelchair & Walked
And the unwavering obedience, right standing with GOD, wide world. Such virtues include soul of the believer into the whole known plethora of righteous virtues is what was initially meant to unleash a crusade to safeguard herself from any form of spiritual impurity, as a matter of life and death. However, it is suffice to point out that spiritual purity can only be achieved and sustained in the church through the onliest act of REPENTANCE. And the unwavering obedience unto the LORD becomes the cornerstone that preserves that spiritual purity. This implies that the Holy Spirit continuously desires a church that strives to achieve a soul that is purged-off sin, and eternally anchored to perfect worship. In that way, it goes without saying that the type of purity which JEHOVAH GOD seeks in the church, is indeed none other than that unadulterated divine purity of the soul. This acclaimed state of spiritual purity is the highest and most honoured order that the LORD ponders over when HE assesses the hearts of the believers in the church of Christ. The attainment of such a lofty order of purity in the church, is what was initially meant to unleash a plethora of righteous virtues from the soul of the believer into the whole known wide world. Such virtues include uprightness, right standing with GOD, holiness, humility, gentility, self-control, patience, and all the fruits of the Spirit that constitute the LIGHT OF CHRIST. If evangelism was meant to attain an ultimate achievement in the soul of mankind, then this was it. Nevertheless, such a highly exalted state of purity of the soul, can never be attained through half-baked therapies which simply seek out to massage on the surface of a fallen church, instead of getting to the core of the problem and squarely dealing with it. Today’s apostate church has perfected the art of fronting these temporary measures such as wellness conferences, prosperity gatherings, retreats, sowing of seeds, etc. This she has done in an attempt to develop a quick-fix solution to overcome the consequences of spiritual impurity. The modern-day Christian has committed this error of omission perfectly well as an attempt to navigate her salvation through this unforgivingly sinful world. If only she could know that the deep wounds of spiritual impurity can never be wished away, nor healed by such superficial solutions, but rather their healing is only achievable through the time-tested mechanism of GENUINE REPENTANCE. GOD preserves those who walk the path of purity but to depart from it is to venture into satan’s ground. And this detour is exactly what your present-day Christian has done. While it may be abundantly true that many a time a veil of evil hovers over the believer’s soul, it however is also true that a GENUINE REPENTANCE in the church can help lift such a beclouding mask, leading to the liberation of the soul into purity. It is a process that endeavours to anchor the soul to her heavenly CReATOR, while equally bolting her onto the heavenly worship of holiness. The enemy often lays claim on the believer’s soul through such veils as passion, immorality, anger, attachment, greed, ego, malice, deception, addiction, name it. It is such bundles of evil traits that have often weaved the souls of men, thereby entangling today’s body of believers with this cunning world. On the other hand, the LORD Jesus on the Cross indeed delivered the church by untangling such unwarranted claims and facilitating the recovery of the believer’s lost identity, back to a place of perfect purity. The Messiah literally lifted the veil off the eyes of the beclouded souls of man. However, presumption has today led the church to transgress this sacred law of purity by believing that Christ’s great love would save them from the consequences of sin, without REPENTANCE and striving for holiness. Christ Jesus Himself did not presume on GOD’s promises by going unbidden unto temptation, neither did HE give up to the despondency of this dark world! Having said that, the day the current church will finally assiduously adhere to the path of REPENTANCE and righteousness, she indeed will on that day overcome all the evil sways of the adversary, and commence a spiritual journey of purity. This is the much celebrated highway of holiness that leads towards the most glorious Kingdom of GOD (Isaiah 35:8-9). That will assuredly be the day when the unclean souls of today’s believers will progressively begin to sparkle their own light as a sign of their true form of bliss. This bliss of the soul marks the most exalted state in heaven. In GOD’s eyes therefore, spiritual purity constitutes the sanctification of the heart and the consecration of the believer’s inner soul. When the church is outrightly rejected by this dark world, and constantly continues to engage in the pursuit of a more perfect companionship with GOD, then she can be referred to as separated unto The LORD. This greatly underscores a most dignified and coveted order of purity within GOD’s hierarchy of preparedness for rapture. It is important to note that
on that day of reckoning, as the LORD appears in His magnificent glory at rapture, it will be absolutely mandatory for every believer to have attained a stature of spiritual purity of the soul. Without blemish, wrinkle, or spot, such a superb bride of Christ meets the heavenly requirement and accomplishes a perfect oneness with GOD ALMIGHTY. The lasting lesson arising from this, is that whenever Christians fail to obey GOD’s command, they inevitably descend into the pits of the abyss, unless speedily rescued by the power of repentance. Unfortunately, this chronic lack of awareness concerning purity, is what has today tragically swayed the church away from the righteousness of the LORD, and instead drawn her into the wicked enticements of this immoral world. And yet the LORD Jesus clearly taught us that we should never lose courage when assailed by the temptations of this world. How come then that today’s believer has not gathered enough courage to storm the tempter with his wicked temptation? Such a wafting away from the truth as being discussed here, is very deadly, and mirrors the sullying influence that the Canaanites employed to blemish the children of Israel. During the forty days and nights of His temptation in the wilderness, the LORD’S eyes were greeted with gloom and desolation that defined that loneliness, and then all of a sudden to be re-greeted by the loveliness and prosperity of this world! When confronted with this, the LORD Jesus outrightly rejected the devil’s presentations and offers in that wilderness encounter. The more the sunlight began to set on the cities that the enemy had paraded, the more the shadows of the clouds toned their beauties! Very much knowing the treasure HE beheld, the LORD Jesus without a doubt outrightly rejected satan’s schemes. The LORD Jesus must have wondered how come, by the one who had revolted from heaven, now the kingdoms of the earth were being offered to HIM? This was definitely a trick and the LORD Jesus could not have failed to see it. The enemy has continued to repeat this same trick unto the church, year after year, over and over again. The adversary appears to trick the church with the promise of the dominions of this world, while on the other hand he creeps in to take dominion over their souls. How come the church has failed to see this trick? Didn’t the LORD HIMSELF promise her that HE would take good care of her and provide all her needs outside satan’s realm? Where is her patience? How come she has not learnt from the radical pursuit that Jesus launched for singular focus unto GOD.

Purity & the Cross

The salvation that our LORD Jesus generously unveiled on the cross was essentially meant to instil upon the church a steadfastness on purity and righteousness, in order that she may fulfil GOD’s new law of heavenly grace. Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for GOD (2 Corinthians 7:1).

Spiritual purity is not only mentioned in every revered gospel of the Cross, but also declared as supreme Law in all scriptures of the Old Testament. All the Seers of old who were privileged to foresee the glorious coming of the Cross, have in their pious proclamations attached an immense worth on purity in the sacred command in the mission of Christ the Messiah. In attempting to rank the increase in the glory of the Cross, these Prophets of old have earnestly submitted that, when that dispensation of the Christ arrives, there would be an uncontested increase in HIS glory at HIS coming. In their submissions therefore, these Prophets have extensively testified about the increase of the purity that the Messiah’s Kingdom would release. They however did not stop there, but went on to describe how that increase in the glory of the Messiah would translate into an increase of purity in the church. As they put pen to paper regarding the vast dominion of that Kingdom’s King, these Seers did not hesitate to underscore that the Messiah’s reign would fundamentally rest on the unshakable cornerstone of purity. In their observation then, the Prophets of the bible submitted that spiritual purity would be the one single factor governing spiritual growth in the hearts of the believers. Hence during their watch, these holy Prophets adduced that movement up the heavenly order would be well-nigh impossible, if the people of that upcoming dispensation would in any way fail to embrace this supreme law of purity. That was because the Seers already saw that the upcoming dispensation of the Messiah would be a spiritual dispensation, whose Kingdom would be founded on justice and the purity of righteousness.