

# *Houston, We Have A Problem!*

Larry DeLong

“Houston, we have a problem” is a phrase made famous by Hollywood in their action-packed films regarding space exploration. The quote “Houston, we have a problem” is a popular but slightly erroneous quotation from the radio communications between the Apollo 13 astronauts and the NASA Mission Control Center during the Apollo 13 spaceflight in 1970. The actual words spoken were “Okay, Houston, we’ve had a problem here” by Jack Swigert, and then repeated by Jim Lovell as “Uh, Houston, we’ve had a problem”. Houston, being the central command center, was radioed from outer space by the astronauts about some trouble they were experiencing and looking desperately for help with a solution. The actual problem was that Apollo 13 mission suffered an oxygen tank explosion in route to the moon. The explosion occurred on April 13, 1970, two days after the launch, and caused a loss of power, heat, and oxygen. The three astronauts on board, Jim Lovell, Fred Haise, and Jack Swigert, had to abort the lunar landing and use the lunar module as a lifeboat. With the help of ground controllers in Houston, they managed to return safely to Earth on April 17. This phrase has been made popular and is often used informally to account for the emergence of an unforeseen problem. It might be a simply fixed issue, or it could be a life-threatening situation. Regardless, it is nearly always something that needs attention.

I can almost hear God saying, as He looks down from Heaven upon His creation, “World, we have a problem!” The problem is huge, but it is also small. It is a world-wide epidemic, but it only consists of three letters; S – I – N. Sin is a word that means you are missing the mark for which you are striving. This word, “sin,” is loaded with moral and spiritual connotations. Men are simply not moving in the right direction morally or spiritually. This is not due to ignorance or some left-over beastly trait (an evolutionary excuse), because sin is a choice made by humans that are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27). It is a choice of impurity over purity, wrong over right, error over truth, hate over love, stupor over sobriety.

Until the choice of sin over righteousness changes, sin will continue to dominate the lives of those ensnared by it. Jesus knew of and declared the source of the problem – our hearts. He said in Matthew 15:19-20, “*For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man.*” Therefore, until the heart is changed, sin will continue its cruel dominance in our lives and in every aspect of the world we touch.

Changing our hearts is not an easy task, but it is a workable one. And, there is a simple solution. Jesus did more than just pinpoint the problem that plagues the world, He also provided the remedy, a solution, to the issue. He took the guilt of our sin upon Himself when He died on the cross at Calvary. All we have to do is follow our Lord in faithful Gospel obedience, and He will take “our burden all away.” That is such a small thing to ask to relieve the suffering that will be ours if we choose to continue down the wrong path. The question is: Are you prepared to listen to our command center in Heaven, rise above the immorality of this world, and fix the problem, or will you perish in your descent?