



THE LENEXA EDIFIER

John 8:32 And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

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“BEHOLD, THE LAMB OF GOD”

Jim Stauffer

Have you ever been held hostage? Have you ever been judged worthy of death and then placed in holding until the assigned date of your death? Suppose, just for the time being, that you are a prisoner sentenced to death. What a horrible feeling that must be. We have people on death row. Very few of them are executed but percentages do nothing to relieve the stress on the one who is scheduled to die today. You may have suffered many things in life, but few if any would compare to knowing your death sentence was scheduled for today.

Now suppose a healthy and vibrant person entered the prison and arranged to die in your place. He was willing to die for the crimes you had committed to save you from that fate.

This is a place we have all been and may still be. Paul tells us in **Rom. 3:23**, *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*. Then in **Rom. 6:23** he says, *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord*. We have all sinned and the penalty is death. Sin is a transgression of God's law (**1 John 3:4**) and separates us from God Who cannot fellowship sin (**Isa. 59:1,2; Eph. 2:1,2**).

Now comes Christ, the Son of God to be the One who dies in our place. He becomes our propitiation (atonement sacrifice), sent from God to die for every man to enable us to avoid the death penalty associated with our sin (**2 Cor. 5:14,15; Rom. 3:24-26**). To accomplish this end He had to overcome the one who had the power of death himself, the devil (**Heb. 2:14,15**).

Many do not nor have ever viewed their future as being determined by the sins they have committed. There is a casual consideration that eases any fears by convincing themselves that a life primarily consisting of good citizenship and neighborly conduct will more that offset the sins committed. Separation from God by my sin can only be solved by the reconciliation provided in Christ and His death on the cross (**2 Cor. 5:18,19**). The wages of sin will be paid with eternal death and damnation. To believe otherwise is to reject clear biblical teaching as is contained in this article and the one by

bro. Willis on page 2.

Many of these same people will devote themselves this season to glorifying the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. There is nothing inappropriate in recognizing the importance of the birth of the Son of God who will reign over His Kingdom forever (**Luke 1:32,33**). But it is totally incongruous for one to celebrate the birth of our Lord and ignore His purpose for being born. He did not authorize His church to have special memorials to His birth, but he did institute a supper intended to memorialize and proclaim HIS DEATH until He comes again.

You see the significance of Jesus of Nazareth is as the Savior of mankind (**Luke 2:11**). *He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.* (**Acts 5:31**) God is a patient God. He is, *patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance* (**2 Pet. 3:9**). His mission is to save us from our sins. **Titus 3:4** *But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, 5 He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.* But even His patience has its limits. **2 Pet. 3:10** *But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.* Can we then focus on the purpose of the Son of God coming to earth? John the baptizer said it best, **John 1:29** *The next day he *saw Jesus coming to him and *said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*

I do not know when Jesus was born. God has not revealed that to me. Therefore, I have no responsibility to observe His birth. But I have both direct command and approved example to observe His death.

Sin and Its Punishment

As a basis of this subject I cite your attention to **1 Jno. 3:4**, which reads, *"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth the law, for sin is the transgression of the law."* If there is a definition of sin in the Bible, we have it in the last clause of this verse: *"Sin is the transgression of the law."* Of course, it means the transgression of God's law. God's law may be transgressed by thought; by feeling, by words, or by actions, for as we learn from other portions of the Word of God, there are wicked thoughts, wicked feelings, wicked words, and wicked actions.

This definition is not exhaustive, but it is sufficient for our present purpose. While all of us sin, we obviously fail to recognize the enormity of sin. I believe I would esteem above every other gift that could be bestowed upon me as a preacher, the power adequately to conceive what sin is, and adequately to set it before the people. It is impossible for us to relate the enormity of sin for two reasons: First, a failure on our own part to realize the greatness of it and second, our inability to gather up such words and such figures of speech, as would with any sufficiency, set it forth to our hearers. The pleasures of sin have blinded our eyes to its enormity.

After considerable reflection on the matter, I am persuaded that the only accurate gauge which we have with which to measure the enormity and heinousness of sin, is the punishment that God has decreed against it. God is infinite, unlimited, in all His attributes; infinite in love, in mercy, in compassion, but when we find the terrible punishment which the likewise infinite justice of God necessitated that He metes out to man because of sin, then we can have some concept of God's reaction and feeling toward the greatness of sin. Paul said in a discussion of the Law of Moses, that the Law was given *"That through the commandment sin might become exceeding sinful" (Rom. 7:13).*

Many are the unpleasant things which befall man in this life which come as a consequence of man's sin and disrespect of God's law. From its earliest history, the world has been laden with a vast burden of woe and pain and death. The journey of human life is strewn with tears; the whole earth on which we live has become dotted with cemeteries. Death, preceded by incalculable pains of the body, the whole period of the life filled with interchanging smiles and tears, anguish of hearts relieved by times of joy and happiness, have been our history. *"Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin" (Rom. 5:12).* All of this pain and woe, Paul said is caused by sin. It is a punishment the infinite God laid upon man -- because of his sin. While we experience these discomfitures here because of sin, without the aid of revelation, the nature, extent, duration, and the severity

of any punishment that might be suffered hereafter would be the subject of simple conjecture. All the details would be left in the dark. We must depend upon revelation for the answer to our questions concerning the matter. To it then we turn, and the question set before us divides itself into some four points.

First, "Is there any punishment for the wicked after death?" Second, "Is there a future, final and universal judgment, such as we have heard of?" Third, "What is to follow in the way of punishment, if anything, after that universal judgment?" Fourth, "How long, if there is such punishment after the judgment day, will it continue?"

First, "Is there then any punishment after death?" Notice particularly **Luke 12:4**, where Jesus addressing his disciples, said, *"My friends, be not afraid of them who kill the body, but after that have nothing more they can do."* They can take your body and burn it and dismember it, but that does not hurt your soul. They have no more that they can do which inflicts any pain upon you. *"But,"* He continued, *"I will forewarn you whom to fear. Fear Him who after He hath killed, hath power to cast into hell."* Furthermore, in **Luke 16**, the rich man died (**verse 22**), and in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment in the flame, so there definitely is punishment after death for the alien, and unfaithful.

Secondly, "Is there, according to the Word of God, and beyond all uncertainties of interpretation, and all questions about the meaning of words, such a final judgment as we have been taught to believe?" The word "judgment" is used and applied many times to judgments that occur here on earth. Many imagine that this is the only use of the term. But the Apostle told us in **Heb. 9:27**, *"that it is appointed unto man once to die, and after that the judgment."* In addition then to all the judgments on earth, there is a final judgment that comes after death. This judgment will be universal in its nature. *"So then each one of us shall give account of himself unto God" (Rom. 14:12).* *"When the Son of Man shall come in His glory and all the holy angels with Him, then shall he sit upon the throne of His glory and all nations shall be gathered before him" (Matt. 25:31; Jno. 5:28,29).* *"And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne" (Rev. 20:12).* So the judgment following death will be final and universal in its nature.

Thirdly, What is to follow in the way of punishment, if anything? Rationally speaking, were there no punishment provided there would be no point in having a judgment. God's infinite justice necessitates punishment to those who have violated His infinite holiness by disobeying His righteous commands. Do you remember how this punishment is set forth in the Bible? *"Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41).* Everlasting Fire! A lake that burns with fire and brimstone. The most excruciating torture, I believe, that

human flesh can experience, is to be burned with fire, and that represents this suffering after the judgment. Furthermore he said, "*There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth*" (Matt. 25:30). Men gnash their teeth only, when they are enraged against themselves, when they are tormented with anguish and self-reproach. Such then, is the answer to our third question. "Will there be any punishment after the final judgment?"

Now finally, how long will that punishment which comes after the judgment, and which is described in these horrid terms, endure? How long shall the punishment last? Christ stamped the word "eternal" upon the duration of the sinner's punishment. "*And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life*" (Matt. 25:46). Eternal punishment for some and eternal reward for others. There are people who would tell you that the reward for the righteous will last forever, but the reward of the wicked will be completed at death. In other words, death is the final and complete punishment. Annihilation is the punishment for the sinner; but remember, the Lord said "*eternal punishment*" and "*eternal life*." If "eternal" life means forever, then "eternal" punishment means for the same duration. We know from their meanings that there is no end for either. We see then God's infinite hatred of sin by the fact that he is going to punish the sinner with everlasting punishment in the lake of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

How is it, then, that a man or woman, can consent to live in sin day by day and still realize the awful consequence of such a life? Knowing that they shall incur this awful penalty, that if they were to die today, this would be their unending fate, how can they fail to reproach themselves for being sinners, and to fly away from it to the only means of escape found in Christ Jesus our Lord? But thanks be to His blessed name; however, great the sins committed, however numerous they are, and however just the awful sentence that has been passed against us, there is a way of escape. This is had by obedience to the terms laid down in the gospel of Christ. "*Repent and be baptized, everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins*" (Acts 2:38). There is salvation through no other means, so we must be saved by obedience to the gospel.

By Cecil Willis -- Via Truth Magazine, XX:1, p. 3-4, January 1, 1976

YOU CALL ISLAM PEACEFUL?

An eight-month pregnant mother of a 20-month-old son was sentenced to death by hanging Thursday in Sudan, convicted of "apostasy" for converting from Islam to Orthodox Christianity. After three days the presiding religious cleric offered Meriam Yehya Ibrahim a chance to recant her faith, but she affirmed, "I am a Christian." She was also sentenced to 100 lashes for "adultery"

because she married a Christian man from South Sudan - an action forbidden under strict Islamic law and part of the Sudanese constitution. This is not the first such verdict in Sudan since 1991, but all the others have recanted and lived. As for this practice, "Ahmed Bilal Osman, Sudan's Information minister, told the AFP news agency before the verdict: 'It's not only Sudan. In Saudi Arabia, in all the Muslim countries, it is not allowed at all for a Muslim to change his religion.'" Her conviction is being appealed. ("Pregnant Christian Woman in Sudan Sentenced to Death for Apostasy", Alexander Smith, nbcnews.com)

The origin and spread of Islam was by the sword. Although "Islam" is from a root word meaning "peace" and hence, "submission to God", its history shows it spread by force and violence (those who did not submit received the sword!) Please note these are not Islamic extremists handing down this verdict of death; it is the judicial system of Sudan, a constituted Islamic state.

In striking contrast to Islam, Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, commanded that his gospel be spread through the world by preaching (Mark 16:15). The "*sword of the Spirit*" is the word of God, not the scimitar of the Ottoman Empire.

To Muslims, Jesus is a prophet, but not the Son of God. As unbelievers, they need salvation from their sins through the gospel of Jesus Christ (not the Qur'an of the prophet Mohammed, Acts 4:12; Romans 1:16).

We are impressed by this woman's conviction. If you were sentenced to death for your faith, would you die rather than deny Christ? It brings new meaning to confessing Christ, doesn't it (Matthew 10:32-33)?

--Joe R. Price— Taken from the Beesnest

Are There Good People In All Churches?

The statement that "there are good people in all churches" is usually made as a defense of the existence of the many different conflicting denominations. Certainly there are good people in all the churches. There are good people OUT of churches, too. There are good people who are infidels. But the question is not are they GOOD, but are they SAVED?

It is good to be good, but it is not good enough. One cannot save himself by just being good. He must obey the gospel of Christ (2 Thess. 1:7-9) to be saved. Cornelius was a good man but he was a lost man! (Acts 10:1-6; 11:14). The good people in human churches are lost people, not because they are not good moral people, but because they have not obeyed the gospel of God. This is why we appeal to good people to leave their human churches and obey the gospel. There is no other hope for these good folks. — **by Earl Fly, Taken from the Beacon Electronic Edition, Colleevue church of Christ**

Eph. 2:19 So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;

1Pet. 2:9 But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Psa. 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

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Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

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J.R. DANIEL PASSED AWAY EARLY FRIDAY MORNING. FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS TO BE ANNOUNCED.

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS: CHRISTIAN PARENTING - RON PECK

WEDNESDAY BIBLE CLASS: THE BOOK OF ROMANS - J STAUFFER

SUNDAY SERMON: TO BE PRESENTED BY JOE HURD



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10