

Rom. 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.

THE LENEXA EDIFIER

John 8:32

“And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free”

May 8, 2022

A LOVING GOD PUNISHES SIN

Jim Stauffer

There is a clear contrast between the blessings and curses that come from the Lord. Our Lord is the same yesterday, today and forever (**Heb. 13:8**). When we read **Deuteronomy 27** and learn of the curses at Mount Ebal and **Deuteronomy 28** about the blessings at Mount Gerizim the picture is clearly portrayed that these are contingent upon man keeping his covenant with God.

When God promised Abram (Abraham) that in his seed all nations of the earth would be blessed (**Genesis 12:1-2; 22:18**), He referenced the sacrifice of His Son Jesus as the conveyor of those blessings. *“Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as referring to many, but rather to one, “And to your seed,” that is, Christ.”* (**Galatians 3:16**)

The Old Testament then gives evidence His promises were contingent upon compliance with the covenant, that is obedience to His commands. This is communicated throughout the history of Israel and Judah in the Scriptures. Israel was sent into Assyrian Captivity and Judah to Babylon as judgment or a curse against them because they forsook God to worship idols. Not only did they reject the original words of the covenant, but they refused to heed the warnings He sent to them from the prophets (**Lev. 26; Jeremiah 25:3-7**).

It is the same contrast between the actions of Jesus healing the sick (**Matthew 4:23**) and raising the dead (**Mark 5:35-43**) on the one hand, and berating the Pharisees (religious leaders) on the other (**Matt. 23**)

How are we then to understand our God? Is He a God of compassion? Is He a merciful God? If so, why would He punish His people so harshly?

First, we must come to understand such things as righteousness and truth. These are attributes of our God. He is innately righteous and cannot lie (**Daniel 9:7,14; Titus 1:2**). Righteousness and truth are not moveable targets. They are absolutes. They are attributes we must strive to attain and while remaining imperfect in our quest, can ever pursue with an honesty that is described as our *...walk in the light as He Himself is in the light...* We can maintain fellowship with the One Who is perfectly righteous and truthful by repenting and confessing our sins before Him (**1 John 1:5-9**).

We must, however, overcome the consensus of the world that God is this cuddly Grandfather image that could never punish those He loves. It is evident He loves us by His actions to redeem us. His love led Him to mercifully grant redemption through the blood of His Son on Calvary (**Ephesians 2:4,5; Romans 5:6-9**). That same Jesus was then elevated to the right hand of God where He is over all authority and therefore the administrator of God's covenant that He, Himself mediated and sealed with His own blood (**Acts 2:34-36; Ephesians 1:20-23**). In that capacity Jesus *.....became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation....*(**Hebrews 5:9**). And it is needful to know He will then be the One Who *will judge the world in righteousness...*(**Acts 17:31**).

Can we grasp the principle that teaches us the One Who is innately righteous has designed a plan that will bring righteousness to the unrighteous in order for them to be reconciled to Him and receive the eternal reward pledged to those who obey His commands (**2 Corinthians 5:17-19,21**).

God Has an Answer

The contrast between **Revelation 13** and **Revelation 14** is one of the most striking between any two chapters in the Bible. In **Revelation 13**, all the news is bad. Even though the dragon has been defeated in heaven, a new ally for him, the beast, emerges from the sea. Another evil creature, a beast who is a false prophet, comes up out of the earth.

Together, these beings do incredible harm. The dragon leads all the earth to worship him and the beast. The false prophet mimics the work of Christ, deceiving all the people of the world. Now, anyone who does not worship the beast will be killed, and anyone who does not receive the mark of the beast cannot buy or sell. In short, by the end of **Revelation 13**, it seems that the bad guys have already won!

Revelation 14 tells a different story. There, we learned that 144,000 have not followed the dragon or the beast. Instead, they have remained faithful to God. Also, God uses His angels to begin his plan to overthrow the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. Babylon, the city of the beast, will be destroyed. Furthermore, all who have worshipped the beast will be punished. The righteous will be rewarded, and in the end, it is the will of God, not the will of the dragon, that will triumph.

In addition to making for exciting reading, this two-chapter sequence reveals a fundamental truth about the cosmic struggle between good and evil. It always looks like evil is about to win. This has been true at many, many times throughout the history of God's people, and it is certain to continue to be true.

Indeed, we ourselves may feel this way right now. It may be that as we consider the apparent moral decline of our country, the work of the devil is as apparent to us as it is in **Revelation 13**. The same may hold true in our personal lives as well. In my own life, developing a terminal illness does not look like a victory for God! However, we must hold the truth of **Revelation 14** firmly in mind. It was not obvious at the end of **Revelation 13**, and it may not be obvious in our lives now, but God is preparing an answer. If we see trouble looming on the horizon, how much more is He aware of it! He has had all the time in the world to address our situation. He knows what He is going to do, and His power is such that He will infallibly do it. Nobody reaches the end of Revelation and concludes that God has lost, and if we are faithful to Him, no one will think that He has lost the battle in our lives either.

This is not always easy to hear. We may well feel like God should have turned the chapter to **Revelation 14** a while ago! As always, though, God works on His

timetable, not ours. If we trust in Him, His triumph in our lives is as certain as His triumph in Revelation.

Matt Bassford

A Pioneer Preacher Proves A Point About Infant Baptism

Many stories are told about pioneer preacher "Raccoon" John Smith. He was a man of strong conviction and clever wit. One of the better known incidents in his preaching work is related in this excerpt from a biographical sketch . . .

Noticing, one day, that a young Methodist preacher had sprinkled a howling infant, he afterward seized him by the arm, in full view of the Methodist gathering that was meeting on the banks of Slate Creek, and powerfully pulled him toward the water. When the man questioned John of his intentions, Smith informed him that he was going to be baptized. The Methodist protested that he had no desire to be baptized. When the protest had been heard by the assembly, John stopped to make his point clear: why had the baby been "baptized" against his will and before belief? A few laughed in admiration of John's witticism, but most were gravely touched by the seriousness of his argument.

While this account may bring a chuckle, it also teaches a vital point. Infant baptism is an erroneous practice brought on by a false doctrine.

- Infants do not need baptism, for they are sinless (**Ezekiel 18:20; Matthew 18:3**).
- Additionally, any baptism entered into without prior faith (**Mark 16:16**), repentance (**Acts 2:38**), and confession (**Romans 10:10**) is of no effect to the saving of the soul anyway.

The example of devoted men like John Smith encourages us to be ready to use every opportunity to teach and defend God's truth.

by Greg Gwin

Is the New Testament Gospel settled and final?

The New Testament scriptures have been undermined and dismissed for a variety of reasons, none of which are legitimate in my opinion. One such claim is that more or different revelation is needed with the passing of time and changes in the world. That is not how the New

continued on page 3

Testament scriptures speak. Please notice the timeless finality of what is written in the following scriptures:

- **Jude 3** -- *Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.*
- **Galatians 1:6-9** -- *I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel — not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.*
- **John 12:48** -- *The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day.*
- **Hebrews 1:1** -- *Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son.*
- **1 Peter 1:23-25** -- *since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; for “All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever.” And this word is the good news that was preached to you.*

Don Bunting

Day by Day

“...He whose heart is kind beyond all measure, gives unto each day what He deems best.... One of the most well-known bible verses is **Jeremiah 29:11**, “*I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*” We don’t always know what God is doing in our lives—we just get one step at a time. It doesn’t always make sense in the present moment; and we become tempted to forsake His plan and follow after our

own reason, because it is tangible, and we can see in our minds how our own way could play out. **Proverbs 16:9** says, “*A man’s heart plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps,*” and **20:24** says, “*A man’s steps are of the LORD; how then can a man understand his own way?*” God is omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent. He knows what is in your future, and He knows exactly why He created you. He has the big picture of your life—but He wants you to trust Him. Let Him lead you day by day, giving you what He knows is best, and be amazed by an end result far better than anything you ever could have dreamed.

Caleb Anderson

We offer either in home studies in person or by way of Correspondence Courses.

Call me, Jim Stauffer at 913-620-0563, Evangelist at the Lenexa church of Christ.

We believe in worshiping and serving the Lord as He has instructed in His word.

Many teach in churches it doesn’t matter what you believe as long as you are sincere.

Did you know the Bible does not teach this concept but instead rejects it?

See Deuteronomy 4:2

Matthew 7:21-23

2 John 9-11

Revelation 22:18,19

“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

(2 Timothy 3:16–17)

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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MOTHERHOOD**



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