

Jellyfish Christianity

“One plague of our age is the widespread dislike to what men are pleased to call dogmatic theology. In the place of it, the idol of the day is a kind of jellyfish Christianity – a Christianity without bone, or muscle, or sinew, – without any distinct teaching about the atonement or the work of the Spirit, or justification, or the way of peace with God – a vague, foggy, misty Christianity, of which the only watchwords seem to be, ‘You must be..liberal and kind. You must condemn no man’s doctrinal views. You must consider everybody is right and nobody is wrong’.”

~ J.C. Ryle

GADSBY’S CATECHISM

by William Gadsby (about 1800)

(Presented here as originally published – this does not constitute a full endorsement of the Riverside Baptist Church)

Question XXIV. Did God leave all mankind to perish in that estate of sin and misery?

Answer. No; God, having out of His own good pleasure from eternity elected some of them to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace to deliver them out of that estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into a state of salvation by a Redeemer.

Rom. 3.21-25 & 9.6-24; Eph. 1.4-7; 1 Thess. 5.9; 2 Thess. 2.13; 1 Pet. 1.2.

Question XXV. What is meant by a covenant of grace?

Answer. The covenant engagement entered into, in the counsels of eternity, by the Triune God in behalf of the elect; in which covenant the elect were given to the Person of the Son, and made His care and charge, and all spiritual blessings were treasured up and secured in Him, and so made sure to all the seed of promise.

2 Sam. 23.5; Psa. 89.27-37; Isa. 55.3; Hos. 2. 23; Jn. 17.2; Heb. 2.13 & 8.10.

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Sunday Morning 11:00 AM

Sunday Evening 6:00 PM

Prayer and Bible Study Wednesday Evening 6:30 PM

WCWV 92.9 FM – 8:00 AM Sunday Morning

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST REPORT

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Pillar and ground of the Truth” -- 1 Timothy 3:15

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YE HAVE WEARIED THE LORD

Ye have wearied the LORD with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment? Malachi 2:17

In an age of gross sin and the justification of it we find it difficult to imagine how it could be much worse. Perversions are beautified, murder is rationalized and while many find such things unthinkable they have no problem condoning and tolerating. Many such are quite vocal in defending the perpetrators in the name of human rights. Men blatantly call that which is evil good and openly condemn the declaration of the righteousness of God as it is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Yet, it may be that the ultimate sin is overlooked as we witness acceptance of popular atrocities in the name of justice and fair play. That is the tendency in men to blame God or to accuse Him of indifference. Multiple times in the book of Malachi the prophet charges them with questioning the observations of God concerning their behavior and thus impugning His claims.

The father of lies introduced the thought of questioning God from the beginning as he said to the woman, “Ye shall not surely die.” When confronted with their sin Adam and Eve revealed the reluctance of fallen men to own their guilt. J. M. Boice aptly observed that they in essence blamed God for what happened. When he was confronted Adam replied to the Lord God that it was the fault of “the woman whom Thou gavest me.” Eve passed the blame on to the serpent with the implication that the Lord had allowed the serpent into the Garden where he was able to beguile her. Moses would have passed the blame for his great sin of

disobedience at Meribah on to the people in that they provoked him. The Lord, however, would have none of it. So it has been and continues to be with men. There is no greater sin than that of questioning the integrity of God and the finality of His judgments. This is the essence of the charge Malachi brings to these people.

Thomas V. Moore (1818-1871) wrote “There is no greater attribute of God more wonderful than His longsuffering. It has borne with a sinful world for six thousand years with unwearied patience, and is even now waiting to be gracious. Hence when we read, as we do in this verse, that this attribute is exhausted, we infer that the wickedness which possessed such power must have been very flagrant.” Indeed, it is difficult for believers, who see and know their beloved God to be Omnipotent, Omniscient and Omnipresent and the possessor of boundless ability, to think of Him becoming weary. That we become weary and falter is easily understood. But, how can we understand the concept of weariness with the Lord? He is not capable of surprise in that He knows all and His purposes cannot be frustrated in the sovereign execution of divine providence. He does, however, interact with and respond to men in the sense of registering the reaction that is consistent with His disapproval and condemnation of their actions.

We are assured from the Word of God that everything that offends God will ultimately be

forever put out of His sight there to reap the everlasting reward of all they have desired. In hell there will be no questioning of the holiness of God, of the rightness of His purpose, or the justice of His actions in executing judgment. We often stand amazed that He has not already moved with full justice and indignation on a wicked and perverse world. Yet, we understand that His longsuffering is not without purpose and will ultimately be to His eternal Glory. While we are able to count the longsuffering of God as salvation, to the unbelieving and disobedient it serves to intensify the punishment.

It is enough, as those addressed had done, to turn the things of God into human profit and self-satisfaction. But they, being confronted with unvarnished truth, reacted by essentially saying "what have I done that is so bad." Men have their focus on the appearance of prosperity promised by the world. Here they observed such in that nothing was happening to the perpetrators of evil and idolatry and assumed that the Lord was delighting in them. This will always be the result of the focus of a person or a nation when they look away from the Lord and doubt that He is making all things suit His purpose. The songwriter suggested the temptation is to think this way in observing: "While there are others living about us, Never

molested tho' in the wrong." We lament at seeing the evils that are way of life in our beloved nation. To conclude that the Lord is delighted in such behavior is sin at its worst. Which is worse, the evils or the idea that God approves them? Yet, this is the thought of many and the cry of the Lord's people is lacking either in fact or intensity.

Peter warned of the scoffers walking in their own lusts and questioning the promise of the coming of the Lord to judge. The question here in Malachi was "Where is the God of Judgment?" In other words if He is who He says He is why does He not act? The wise man wrote: *Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. Ecclesiastes 8:11.* Is this not the present course of our nation and the world?

Even Lot was "vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked. It must be so with those who know what our sin cost the Lord. But we must not sin in questioning the wisdom of God and His providence as we witness these things. We may surely be at peace in that it is He, *Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: Galatians 1:4.* bhs

The Freeness of Grace --John Piper

But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: Ephesians 2:4-6

The decisive act of God in conversion is that he "made us alive together with Christ" even when "we were dead in our trespasses." In other words, we were dead to God. We were unresponsive; we had no true spiritual interest; we had no taste for the beauties of Christ; we were simply dead to all that mattered.

Then God acted — unconditionally — before we could do anything to be fit vessels of grace. He made us alive. He sovereignly awakened us to see the glory of Christ (2 Corinthians 4:4). The spiritual senses that were dead miraculously came to life.

Verse 4 says that this was an act of “mercy.” That is, God saw us in our deadness and pitied us. God saw the terrible wages of sin leading to eternal death and misery. And the riches of his mercy overflowed to us in our need. But what is so remarkable about this text is that Paul breaks the flow of his own sentence in order to insert, “by grace you have been saved.” “God . . . made us alive together with Christ — by grace you have been saved — and raised us up with him.”

Paul is going to say this again in verse 8. So why does he break the flow in order to add it here? What’s more, the focus is on God’s mercy responding to our miserable plight of deadness; so why does Paul go out of his way to say that it is also by grace that we are saved?

I think the answer is that Paul recognizes here a perfect opportunity to emphasize the freeness of grace. As he describes our dead condition before conversion, he realizes that dead people can’t meet conditions. If they are to live, there must be a totally unconditional and utterly free act of God to save them. This freedom is the very heart of grace.

What act could be more one-sidedly free and non-negotiated than one person raising another from the dead! This is the meaning of grace.



A Better and an Enduring Substance by John D. Morris, Ph.D.

“For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.” (Hebrews 10:36)

Christians have certain heavenly possessions, and this knowledge helps put our earthly possessions and welfare in proper perspective. Evidently, some to whom this was written had been imprisoned, and others impoverished for their faith. “For ye . . . took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance” (v. 34). Peter called it “an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Peter 1:4).

These possessions are attainable; they are not in question; they are ours, given to us by the One whose name is “Truth” (John 14:6) and whose Word is trustworthy. We “know” (Hebrews 10:34) this beyond all doubt.

Furthermore, these possessions are valuable. We must “cast not away therefore [our] confidence, which hath great recompense of reward” (v. 35). With this assurance, we are able to bear up under any suffering or persecution that comes our way (see also Romans 8:18).

Knowledge of these possessions is prescriptive, for it helps us cope with longstanding troubles. In our text, we “have need of patience” to get through them and do “the will of God.” “Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh” (James 5:7-8).

Lastly, realization of these possessions is imminent. “For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry” (Hebrews 10:37). “He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (Revelation 22:20). JDM