

Should [God] withdraw His eye or hand one moment from you, that moment would be your ruin. Ten thousand evils watch but for such an opportunity to rush in upon you and destroy you and all your comforts. You are too dear to Him to be trusted in any hand but His own. "...all his saints are in thy hand..." (Deut. 33:3). ~ John Flavel (1627-1691) in "The Mystery of Providence"

BENJAMIN KEACH'S CATECHISM

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

Q. 39. What is sanctification?

A. Sanctification is a work of God's free grace whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness. (2 Thess. 2:13; Eph. 4:23,24; Rom. 6:11)

Q. 40. What are the benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification?

A. The benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification, are, assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Spirit, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end. (Rom. 5:1-5; 14:17; Prov. 4:18; 1 Peter 1:5; 1 John 5:13)

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Sunday Morning Bible Study -- 10:00 AM

Sunday Morning Worship -- 11:00 AM

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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ENTERING THE KINGDOM

And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. Matthew 11:12

Both John the Baptist and Jesus had experienced popularity even though their message was one of repentance and faith. This statement was given in the context of the disciples of John being sent to the Lord to with the question, *...Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? Matthew 11:3*. The response to them was a description of what was occurring in His ministry. The response to the crowd was a commendation of John and his ministry along with the revelation that he was the answer to the prophecy of Malachi. Included in the Lord's report to the crowd was this observation in which he connected what had begun with John the Baptist with what was happening even at that time. The idea of violence with reference to the Kingdom has stirred the interest of many and much has been written. Some seem to think that the idea is that the Kingdom itself is pressing forward with violence. Others see it as pointing to those who would enter the Kingdom and become fully given to the Lord and partakers of the benefits of it. It is not within the ability of this writer to conclude about these things, but the things suggested about seeking entrance into the Kingdom and gaining full citizenship seem to be consistent with other parts of scripture.

The comment of Jesus here indicates a matter of desperation and zeal in those so coming. It is a characteristic of comers to Christ that they have despaired of all other hope and have been made to see the glories of the

Kingdom as accessible by the mercies of the Lord to whom they are being directed. In fact, it is His presence that makes the Kingdom desirable and so they become filled with urgency to submit themselves to Him in every way. On hearing of the only escape from sin and its consequences and the realization that their hope is in a person, it only follows that they would urgently pursue entrance into His presence.

It is true that many who were then following Him were expecting a political kingdom to be brought into existence. Because of this many would depart when they sensed that this was not the case. But, those whose faith was in Him would persist. Luke used the words a little differently: *The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. Luke 16:16*. Such will always be the true response to the Gospel and repentance and faith will be the order of the day. And, it will be realized that the Kingdom of God is first of all spiritual. None come but by the mercy and grace of God, but those coming are seekers unto God because of grace applied in regeneration and conversion. This text raises the question as to the manner in which they seek.

That the Kingdom is spiritual first seems to have been settled with the interview of Nicodemus. In response to his musings as to how Jesus could do the things He was doing, he was pointed to the existence of something he

could not see – the Kingdom that Christ was preaching. Had it been a material kingdom at that time, there would have been visible evidence. When Jesus declared the necessity of the New Birth to both see and enter the Kingdom, the matter was settled.

In another place Jesus had spoken of the approach to the Kingdom and the things pertaining to it: *Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. Luke 13:24.* This does no discredit to grace and to the operations of the Spirit in regeneration; rather it points to the designed involvement of the ones coming and the experience of necessity in coming. The suggestion here is of forceful pursuit and points to a deep personal involvement. Such is far removed from the concepts of easy believe-ism so often encountered today. The zeal of the true comer may be here characterized as “violence” and they as the violent who take the Kingdom by force.

We would be remiss if we did not point to the magnificent work of the puritan Thomas Watson, *Heaven Taken by Storm*. In his work he suggests that everything made to appear valuable by the grace of God is to be taken by “offering violence” or desperate need. He is exhaustive in applying this to every aspect of Kingdom life in this present world. He points to the opposition to such attainments by believers

and points us ever to the resource that is to be found by grace and which is the grace of God in Christ applied by none other than the Holy Spirit.

Who is it that comes to Christ in this way? In the trials of David when fleeing from Saul he was given both assurance and identity as to who he was and what was intended for him. We read, *And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men. 1 Samuel 22:2.* This points to the fact that we see the Kingdom in looking to Christ alone and in spite of present outward appearance the Kingdom exists as surely as does the King. David was just such a seeker himself: *My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me. Psalms 63:8.* The struggle has always existed but not without hope: *As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. Psalms 42:1.*

We find assuring words in the visions of Daniel concerning the Kingdom of God: *But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever. Daniel 7:18.* As God’s dear children, beloved of the Lord shall we not offer holy violence in pursuit of that which our Lord has assured us we shall have? *bhs*

He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Revelation 22:11, 12

It would seem to be the cherished delusion of many, that a kind of moral transformation transpires in death; that because death itself is a change of relation, around which gather new sensations, new feelings, new thoughts, new solemnities, new prospects, that therefore the soul passes through a kind of spiritual preparedness to meet its approaching destiny. But such is not the case. The character which time has for years been shaping, it yields to the demands of eternity in the precise mold in which

it was formed. Death hands over the soul to the scrutiny and the decisions of the judgment exactly as life relinquished it. The "king of terrors" has received no commission and possesses no power to effect a moral change in the transit of the spirit to the God who gave it. Its office is to unlock the cell, and conduct the prisoner into court. It can furnish no plea, it can suggest no argument, it can correct no error, it can whisper no hope, to the pale and trembling being on his way to the bar. The turnkey must present the criminal to the Judge, precisely as the officer delivered him to the turnkey-with all the marks and evidences of criminality and guilt clinging to him as at the moment of arrest. The supposition of the multitudes seems to be, just what we have stated, that when the strange and mysterious but unmistakable signs of death are stealing upon them-when the summons to appear before the Judge admits of not a doubt, allows of no delay, that then what has been held as truth, and now, in the mighty illumination of an unveiling eternity, is found to be error, may be with ease abandoned; and that however negligent they who have lived all their lifetime without God may have been of religion, while the last day appeared distant-and however careless they who had made a Christian profession may have been of the ground of their confidence, and the reason of their hope, under an indefinite expectation of appearing in the presence of God-yet now that the footfall of death is heart approaching, and the invisible world becomes visible through the opening chinks of the earthly house of their tabernacle, they will be enabled to summon all the remainder of strength, and with the utmost strenuousness turn their undivided attention to the business of saving the soul. But is it really so? Is not the whole course of experience against a supposition so false as this? Do not men die mostly as they have lived? The infidel dies in infidelity, the profligate dies in profligacy, and atheist dies in atheism, the careless die in indifference, and the formalist dies in formality. There are exceptions to this, undoubtedly, but the exceptions confirm rather than disprove the general fact, that men die as they lived. In view, then, of this solemn statement, deeply affecting it must be to the Christian professor-if it be thus that our death will derive much of its character and complexion from the present tenor of our life-that in proportion to the lack of spirituality and the undue influence which the world has had upon the mind-to the habitual distance of the walk with God, and the gradual separation from us of those holy, sanctifying influences which go to form the matured, influential, and useful Christian-will be the lack of that bright evidence, and full assured hope in death, which will give to the departing soul an "abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom,"-then, of what great moment is it that every individual professing godliness should know the exact state of his soul before God! --Octavius Winslow

Don't Fool Yourself; God's Gets Angry

We must never flatter ourselves that God cannot be angry. He is indeed a God of infinite grace and compassion. But it is also written, that He is "a consuming fire." (Heb. 12:29.) His spirit will not always strive with men. (Gen. 6:3.) There will be a day when His patience will come to an end, and when He will arise to dreadfully judge the earth. Happy will they be who are found hidden in the ark, in the day of the Lord's anger! Of all wrath, none can be conceived so dreadful as "the wrath of the Lamb." ~ J.C. Ryle