

[The] mention of God’s transcendence is a reminder that God is distinct from his creation. Even though we have a precious relationship with God made possible by the work of Christ, we should not therefore think that God is simply a grandfatherly figure in the sky or worse, “the man upstairs.” Jesus shows us that even as we can come to God as his children and approach a loving Father, we must not forget that the Father to whom we come is none other than the almighty God of the universe.

Al Mohler *The Prayer That Turns the World Upside Down*

BENJAMIN KEACH’S CATECHISM

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

Q. 45. What is the duty which God requires of man?

A. The duty which God requires of man, is obedience to His revealed will. (Micah 6:8; Eccles. 12:13; Ps. 119:4; Luke 10:26-28)

Q. 46. What did God at first reveal to man for the rule of his obedience?

A. The rule which God at first revealed to man for his obedience was the moral law. (Rom. 2:14,15; 5:13,14)

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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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THE BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE

Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Malachi 3:16-17

The Bible presents many contrasts in the declaration of the will and purpose of God. Often that contrast is witnessed in the reactions of the Lord's people. Such is the case here. The things observed of these people contrasts with the complaints of the prophet against the contempt for the things of God that was commonplace. This is the reason of the word “then” at the beginning of this precious passage. The actions of the many elicited a grace enabled reaction in the faithful. Albert Barnes aptly commented on this passage that “The proud-speaking of the ungodly called out the piety of the God-fearing.”

The tender regard of the Lord for those mentioned here has often been the occasion of a precious sensing of the love of God in this preacher, and in others who fear the Lord, I would assume. This would be true even if it were not in contrast to untoward attitudes and behaviors. We may read of the attributes of God and marvel and worship. We may believe the Word when it declares of Him, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” But, it is when we draw nigh to God and He draws nigh to us that we experience the reality of the love and care of our Lord for us. “Greater love hath no man...”

It is in considering the context of this statement that we are constrained to some self-examination. In consideration of the famine of the hearing of the Word of God that is

devastating our land, we ask, what effect does it excite in we who fear the Lord? In witnessing the assault that is being unashamedly carried on by the haters of God, how are we affected? I have listened to the observations and lamentations of many. We witness the efforts of others to legislate change for the better. But, we are reminded of the words of the prophet: *Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil. Jeremiah 13:23.* We would do well to consider the reaction of these Old Testament saints.

First, we would consider that of which they spoke. It is doubtful that they spoke of things of this present world. It would seem that the very things the prophet called out were included in their conversations. They would have realized the errors of their leaders and the fact that they had affected the lives of the many. They would talk of these things, not because of political expediency; rather it would be their sensitivity to the fact that their Lord was being dishonored.

This would lead them to thoughts of their own relationship with the Lord and the grace that brought them thereto. John Gill observed that they would have spoken of “the great and good things they were led into the knowledge of; the everlasting love of the Father in the choice of them, and covenant with them in Christ; of the redemption by the Son; the glories

of His person, and the fulness of His grace; of the work of the Spirit of God upon their souls; and the various truths of the everlasting Gospel; and of the gracious experiences they were indulged with; and all this they said for the glory of God's grace and for the comforting and strengthening, and edifying of each other's souls..."

Secondly, we would note the divine reaction to their words to each other. There is no doubt concerning the omniscience of God. *For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether. Psalms 139:4.* Here, however, the expression of divine interest is put in the manner of men and we rejoice that it is so. The picture is of the Lord inclining His ear with intense interest in what is being said. It is expressive of particular notice and divine approval. He listened, and He heard and acted accordingly.

Continuing with the thoughts that we might understand, it is added that "a book of remembrance was written before Him. It is a matter of record that books were often kept by men in high places. Such a book resulted in the deliverance of Mordecai. The pictures given us of things to come involve books being opened. We tend to think of these on a grand scale. Yet, here the things recorded are the words in which our Lord delights – the redeemed of the Lord

saying so and praising their redeemer God. God never forgets. But, we are here reminded of the designation of special attention to these things and it is especially "for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name."

Possessiveness is not always a desirable trait in men. With God, it is quite another matter. We delight that He refers to "My sheep" and we are reminded that we are not our own, we are bought with a price. We are the possession of our Lord as the gift of the Father to the Son. And then, we are told that He will specifically designate and manifest us as such -- His jewels without spot or blemish, dazzling with the righteousness of Christ, formed into the very image of His Son, the firstborn among many brethren.

This can only inspire wonder in the minds and hearts of we who know that there is nothing in us to recommend us to the favor of God. Yet, we are "spared" and brought forth through the redeeming blood of Christ to appear with Him in glory and to be designated as His jewels. Amazing Grace, indeed. Of what then shall we speak to each other? Of whom shall we speak? *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. Acts 4:12.* bhs

Let us humbly admit that America's lost Christian heritage cannot be reclaimed through government. If there is any truly good news in America, it will not be announced in Washington but will be heard through the lips and lives of believers who share the good news of the Gospel wherever God has planted them. Our task, quite simply, is to witness to the truth of the Gospel in a nation that is under judgment. Someday there may be a cataclysmic reckoning, but we are paying for our sins right now. When God told Israel that disobedience would have severe consequences, He ended by saying, "Your sons and your daughters will be given to another nation, and you will wear out your eyes watching for them day after day, powerless to lift a hand" (Deuteronomy 28:32). The severest judgment was the scattering of Israel's families.

Erwin Lutzer *Where Do We Go from Here*

God's Jewels

(Arthur Pink, "God's Jewels")

And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Malachi 3:17

It almost surprises one to learn that the great and self-sufficient God has 'jewels,' but our surprise increases to astonishment when we learn that these 'jewels' are living creatures. And astonishment gives place to overwhelming amazement when we discover that these living creatures are fallen and depraved sinners redeemed from among men! Truly, nothing but Divine grace would ever liken such wretched worms of the dust, unto precious jewels! Yet that is the very thing which we find God doing in our text. It is not the unfallen angels, nor the holy seraphim and exalted cherubim who are spoken of as Jehovah's valued treasure--but lost and ruined sinners saved by amazing grace!

The Lord has likened His people to 'jewels' because of their inestimable value in His sight. This is an exceedingly hard thing for the Christian to really grasp, for he feels such a wretched and worthless creature in himself. That the Lord of Glory should deem him of great worth, is difficult to conceive. Yet so it is!

From the earliest times, men have thought much of precious gems, and fabulous prices have been paid for them. With great ardor and toil, do men hunt after gold; but with even greater eagerness and labor will they seek the diamond. Hundreds of men will labor for a whole year in one of the diamond mines of Africa, and the entire result of their efforts may be held in the palm of your hand. Princes have been known to barter their estates in order to obtain some gem of peculiar brilliance and rare excellence.

Yet more desirable still, are His saints in the esteem of the Lord Jesus. The value of a thing in the eyes of its possessor, may be gauged by the price he was willing to pay for it. So valuable was the Church unto Christ that He gave Himself for it, and shed His precious blood to purchase it for Himself. Thus, the saints are likened unto 'jewels' because of the great value which the Lord places upon them.

"You will be a glorious crown in the Lord's hand, and a royal diadem in the palm of your God." (Isaiah 62:3) What marvelous words are these for faith and hope to lay hold of! Our feeble intellects cannot grasp them! Wondrous is it to think of rough stones, which first look like small pebbles, being found in the mud and mire of earth; then cut and polished until they scintillate with a brilliancy surpassing any earthly object, and being given an honored place in the diadem of a monarch. But infinitely more wonderful is it, that poor lost sinners, saved by sovereign grace, should be among the crown-jewels of the Son of God!

Good works begin with praise, worship, and honoring and exalting of God as the temper of one's whole waking life. Evil works start with neglect of these things, and coolness with regard to them. So I must labor to keep my heart actively responsive to God. J. I. Packer