

“The Apostles went away rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ, that they were graced so far as to be disgraced for the name of Christ.” –Thomas Watson

“To see a wicked man merry, or a Christ sad, is alike uncomely.” –William Gurnall

BENJAMIN KEACH’S CATECHISM

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

Q. 63. Which is the fourth commandment?

A. The fourth commandment is, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maid servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it." (Exodus 20:8-11)

Q. 64. What is required in the fourth commandment?

A. The fourth commandment requires the keeping holy to God such set times as He has appointed in His Word, expressly one whole day in seven to be a holy Sabbath to Himself. (Lev. 19:30; Deut. 5:12)

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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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NOAH, DANIEL, AND JOB

Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord GOD. Ezekiel 14:14

It is well known that the circumstances under which Ezekiel wrote were difficult. We tend to assume that having experienced judgment upon the land and having been taken captive to a heathen land that repentance might be somewhere in view. As we consider the passage before us and others, it appears that the general population and their religious leaders were unchanged by their experience. The things for which Jeremiah wept seemed to have continued with many into their captivity. Perhaps we are shown these things that we may know that no amount or degree of outward circumstance is ever sufficient to effect the change that must occur in the heart.

It is worthy of note that these three men are called to witness the wickedness of the Jews in captivity. It is an unusual thing that other figures were mentioned here, but not without significance. Their righteousness is brought to bear in the sense that it is to the exclusion of all other in being accepted with the Lord. But, it is especially significant in pointing out the degree of that wickedness and the intensity of the Lord's judgment that is brought to bear.

In the beginning of this chapter the situation is analyzed. The elders of Israel have come to the prophet and sat before him. On the surface this seemed a good thing. What followed revealed otherwise. Our Lord Jesus quoted Isaiah in this way: *This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.*

Matthew 15:8. Later, the Lord revealed to Ezekiel that ... *they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. Ezekiel 33:31.* The sins of Israel had been well documented in all that had been written before and had been more recently experienced. But, something here provoked an extremely strong expression from the offended holiness of God. The Lord exposed these that had come in this way: *Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face: should I be enquired of at all by them? Ezekiel 14:3.* Here a most hateful offence is revealed. That men should pretend to be seekers unto the Lord while clutching their idols to their hearts brings forth the strongest words of rejection and the declaration is that there is no remedy for them.

We have often been blessed in reading of the deliverance of a remnant in times of judgment and rejection from the Lord. We are reminded that the Lord told Abraham that He would deliver Sodom for the sake of just ten righteous souls. Had that been so the whole of wicked Sodom might have benefited. Here, however, no such idea appears and the thought of only selective grace results in deliverance.

Of course, such things as this lead to thoughts of conditions in our own land. It is with grave concern that we are often reminded of

the words of Paul in Romans 1 where it is said that “God gave them up to uncleanness,” and “God gave them up unto vile affections,” and “God gave them over to a reprobate mind.” Not only do we see the same conditions now, but we also see those who come in the name of religion doing the same as these elders did with Ezekiel. They build grand schemes and claim to appear before the Lord, but their hearts are still clinging to their idols and so they proudly strut about and speak of great things for the Lord.

Noah, Daniel, and Job had all been intercessors for the Lord’s people and others. A question is raised as to why Daniel, a contemporary of Ezekiel, is included here. Noah “found grace in the eyes of the Lord and of him it is written: *These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God. Genesis 6:9.* He moved in obedience to the Lord and it brought about the saving of his house. The first verse of Job describes him as one who feared God and hated evil. He is commended by the Lord in both the beginning and at the end of the narrative as Job’s so-called friends are directed to him for successful intercession. While yet a young man, Daniel had already established himself as being blessed with great wisdom and ability and so was proven in the midst of heathen opposition. Who can forget the powerful intercessory prayer of Daniel (Daniel 9).

The thrust of the message here is that these men believed God and, as with Abraham, it was accounted to them for righteousness. Such who believe God are certainly heard by Him and we rejoice that this is both stated and implied throughout the Word of God. These men, by the grace of God were elevated to a place of great prominence among men and in great favor with the Lord. But, while their influence had prevailed in the past, it would have been of no effect here. Men have certainly been called away from idols. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, “...ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.” The attempt by these men coming to Ezekiel was to invoke the blessing of God on their idols – idolatry at its worst.

The thought here is not the salvation of these three men. It is rather that they were kept in the love of God when all else was perishing. We are here strongly reminded that salvation is an individual thing and that there is no such thing as being saved on the merits of any but Christ. Thus, we must possess the same perfect righteousness these men had and that is the righteousness of Christ. How we rejoice at the mercy of God wherein righteousness is imputed and imparted, and it is to the delivering of our own souls. *Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Psalms 51:10. bhs*

THE OLD CROSS AND THE NEW CROSS

But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. —Galatians 6:14 The old cross slew men; the new cross entertains them. The old cross condemned; the new cross amuses. The old cross destroyed confidence in the flesh; the new cross encourages it. The old cross brought tears and blood; the new cross brings laughter. The flesh, smiling and confident, preaches and sings about the cross; before that cross it bows and toward that cross it points with carefully staged histrionics—but upon that cross it will not die, and the reproach of that cross it stubbornly refuses to bear. I well know how many smooth arguments can be marshaled in support of the new cross. Does not the new

cross win converts and make many followers and so carry the advantage of numerical success? Should we not adjust ourselves to the changing times? Have we not heard the slogan “New days, new ways”? And who but someone very old and very conservative would insist upon death as the appointed way to life? And who today is interested in a gloomy mysticism that would sentence its flesh to a cross and recommend self-effacing humility as a virtue actually to be practiced by modern Christians? These are the arguments, along with many more flippant still, which are brought forward to give an appearance of wisdom to the hollow and meaningless cross of popular Christianity. Help me today to deny myself, to take up my cross and to follow You. Amen.

–A. W. Tozer

Cory Byrne was showing off his pet. Draped over his neck and shoulders was his nine-foot-long, twenty-five-pound boa constrictor. To the horror of a watching friend, the reptile’s large, lumbering coils began to tighten around its owner like a noose. Slowly, irresistibly, the great snake squeezed Cory’s life away. His air supply was cut off. His face turned red and he passed out. Unable to remove the snake by herself, Cory’s friend called for emergency help. But several hours later Cory died in a local hospital. Some animals cannot be tamed. You may call a snake your pet and give it a cute name, but that doesn’t take the wild out of it. No matter how long you’ve housed, cared for, and fed a boa constrictor, it may still turn on you. After all, it is still a snake. It is much the same with sin. You may cuddle sin like a pet, but that doesn’t take the wild out of it or make it less dangerous. Evil cannot be domesticated. Sin is poised to attack your faith at any moment. Sometimes it bares its fangs and strikes in a surprise attack. Sometimes it is cunning enough to play dead and subtle enough to pose as something good. But either way, sin is wired to kill. Slowly, cleverly, when you’re not paying attention, sin will squeeze the faith, love, and holiness right out of you. This is the nature of sin. Left unchecked, it always destroys. Sin’s hostility is both unchanging and fatal. Sin defiles the human conscience, hijacks human relationships, and weighs down the world with brutality and injustice. Worst of all, sin creates a gulf between us and God. Our intention towards sin must therefore mirror its hostile intentions towards us: death and destruction. This was precisely Paul’s point when he wrote, “if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live” (Romans 8:13). Or in the words of seventeenth-century pastor John Owen, “Be killing sin or it will be killing you.” –Brian Hedges (reprinted from Oct. 2013)

From Paul Miller and David Powlison in *A Praying Life*:

“Learned desperation is at the heart of a praying life.”

“If you try to seize the day, the day will eventually break you. Seize the corner of his garment and don’t let go until he blesses you. He will reshape the day.”