

God showers his extraordinary gifts through ordinary means of grace, loves us through ordinary fellow image bearers, and sends us out into the world to love and serve others in ordinary callings. —Michael Horton

THE NEW HAMPSHIRE CONFESSION OF FAITH

By J. Newton Brown -- 1833

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

XVIII. Of the World to Come

We believe that the end of the world is approaching; that at the Last Day Christ will descend from heaven, and raise the dead from the grave to final retribution; that a solemn separation will then take place; that the wicked will be adjudged to endless punishment, and the righteous to endless joy; and that this judgment will fix forever the final state of men in heaven or hell, on principles of righteousness.

I Peter 4:7; I Cor. 7:29-31; Heb. 1:10-12; Matt. 24:35; I John 2:17; Matt. 28:20; Matt. 13:39-40; II Peter 3:3-13; Acts 1:11; Rev. 1:7; Heb. 9:28; Acts 3:21; I Thess 4:13-18; I Thess. 5:1-11; Acts 24:15; I Cor. 15:12-58; Luke 14:14; Dan. 12:2 John 5:28-29; John 6:40; John 11:25-26; II Tim. 1:10; Acts 10:42; Matt. 13:49; Matt. 13:37-43; Matt. 24:30-31; Matt. 25:31-46; Rev. 22:11; I Cor. 6:9-10; Mark 9:43-48; II Peter 2:9; Jude7; Phil. 3:19; Rom. 6:23; II Cor. 5:10-11; John 4:36; II Cor. 4:18; Rom. 3:5-6; II Thess. 1:6-12; Heb. 6:1-2; I Cor. 4:5; Acts 17:31; Rom. 2:2-16; Rev.20:11-12; I John 2:28; I John 4:17; II Peter 3:11-12

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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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THE CONSEQUENCE OF FORGETTING GOD

The heathen are sunk down in the pit that they made: in the net which they hid is their own foot taken. The LORD is known by the judgment which he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Higgaion. Selah. The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God. (Psalms 9:15-17)

We have witnessed increased immorality and overt wickedness over the years, and we have tended to be increasingly reminded of the words of verse 17 of our text. We have known of the existence of sin and were aware of it in our own hearts. Any, with even a superficial knowledge of the Bible, have been able to call it out. There remains that aspect of the image of God in us that bears witness to sin. It is clear that in many instances in Scripture open defiance before God was expressed and it is evident in time to come that such will be the case. We read descriptions in The Revelation of men crying out in pain but with no repentance. It has been so in the past, is occurring now, and will continue until the declaration of this passage is brought to conclusion – the wicked in hell along with all the nations that forget God.

We have in the history of redemption a long chronicle of the failure and the folly of those who indulge their sin. We are shown the misery into which they inevitably fall. We are shown the divinely ordered consequences. And we are shown that the things they experience are of their own doing. We read that the fruit of the Spirit is joy, among other things. But if true joy is spiritual then that which the world claims is the opposite. And while we witness what is the appearance of joy, it always ends in misery. There is no joy in sin. “The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.”

Even in my times of disobedience to parents, their disapproval was a matter of awareness to me and lasting joy eluded me. Despite all that has been declared and all that has been witnessed of divine judgment, openly defiant sin grows worse.

The “pit” and the “net” in this passage referred to the tactics used by hunters to entrap their prey. It is fitting here in that the mischief of the wicked is often directed against God through the Lord’s people and is designed to harm them. While we would not expect a skilled hunter to fall into his own trap, the intricate designs of the wicked destroy them. They become consumed with their opposition to righteousness personified in Jesus Christ. Even their hatred denies them any hope of happiness. Thus, the vices which they pursue destroy their physical health, and they plot in vain to destroy the Lord’s people. “Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird.”

We are reminded of many examples and we would cite a few. Saul became so obsessed with killing David that the true enemy of Israel killed him. He was in open defiance of what Samuel had told him, but he defied the Lord and became his own undoing. Who can forget the obsession of Haman with the destruction of Mordecai? Because this man saw his wickedness and would not bow to him, he devised an intricate plot to destroy the uncle of Esther. We

know the end. He built an elaborate gallows and was subsequently hanged on it himself. Even the demise of Israel was the consequence of their own rebellion against the Lord.

We might look at these things and think of poetic justice. But the fact is the hand of the Lord is evident in it all and we are reminded of, *Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face. (Psalms 89:14)*. That “The Lord is known by the judgment which He executes,” is especially precious to true believers. First, they delight in the Lord’s defense of His righteousness. Secondly, their faith is anchored in the fact that He executed the judgment due them upon Christ Jesus our Lord. It is there we learn of the true hatred of God for sin, but we also learn of the great love wherewith we are loved. The praises and prayers to which we are drawn in the Psalms are made more precious by seeing the contrasted way of the wicked and their end. *For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. (1 Corinthians 3:19)*.

The open wickedness we see in our land today is what happens when God gives a people over to their own devices and evil designs. This is not about politics; it is about morality and the fact that the things of God and the people of God are the objects of scorn by such people. These are the more obvious things. But we must be reminded that there are those who, while not participating, are not bothered by what is taking place. It is these that are named as “forgetting God.” These are they who are deceived into believing that because they are not profligates that they are accepted with God.

God will be remembered and will be worshiped and will be obeyed in the matter of His Son, the risen Christ. Consider the comment of Charles Spurgeon on verse 17: “The justice which has punished the wicked, and preserved the righteous, remains the same, and therefore in days to come, retribution will surely be meted out. How solemn is the seventeenth verse, especially in its warning to forgetters of God. The moral who are not devout, the honest who are not prayerful, the benevolent who are not believing, the amiable who are not converted, these must all have their portion with the openly wicked in the hell which is prepared for the devil and his angels. There are whole nations of such; the forgetters of God are far more numerous than the profane or profligate, and according to the very forceful expression of the Hebrew, the nethermost hell will be the place into which all of them shall be hurled headlong. Forgetfulness seems a small sin, but it brings eternal wrath upon the man who lives and dies in it.”

It was said to the rich man in hell, “Son remember!” There will be no forgetting of God in hell. The hated truth of the holiness of God will resound loud and clear to those enduring the judgment of God. There is no joy to be had as we witness the wickedness being embraced in our beloved nation. But we must conclude that she has taken her place among the “nations that forget God.” In verse 16 we find the words “Higgaion” and “Selah.” The meaning is that these things are to be the subject of serious meditation and pause. May it be so with us.

It all seems impossible to redeem, but with God all things are possible. *bhs*

IF GOD SENT HIS OWN SON TO WALK THROUGH THE VALLEY OF CONDEMNATION, REJECTION, AND HELL, YOU CAN TRUST HIM AS YOU WALK THROUGH YOUR OWN VALLEYS ON YOUR WAY TO HEAVEN.

—DANE ORTLUND

The Lord's Inefficient Plan at Caesarea by the Sea

In getting things done, God sometimes seem amazingly inefficient.

He chooses some people to do a job when others are far more competent—or close. Peter's trip to Caesarea shows us why.

The Lord wanted a man named Cornelius to hear the good news about Jesus Christ—that whoever believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins. In order to share this wonderful news, God chose what seemed an inefficient way and an unqualified person. The reason why offers insight into God's inefficiency in our lives.

In order for Cornelius to hear the gospel, the angel told him to dispatch some men more than 35 miles south to Joppa. There they would find Simon Peter and bring him back to Caesarea.

But two other options would have proved far more efficient:

1. The angel could have given the message to Cornelius. After all, the angel would have expressed the message perfectly—and immediately!

2. Philip could have shared with Cornelius. This option makes total sense. After all, Philip was an evangelist, and he already lived right there in Caesarea (Acts 8:40; 21:8)!

God's choice made no sense. Why make such an inefficient plan? Why chose someone four days away and far less qualified?

Because God wanted to do more than change Cornelius' life. He wanted to change Peter's. God wanted to do more than work through Peter. He also wanted to work in Peter.

Same true with us.

God Working In Us and Through Us

God's working in our lives seems at odds with common sense, because we make choices based on efficiency. God makes choices from another priority.

○ We see the shortest distance between two points as a straight line. The goal of any task is its completion—the sooner the better.

○ God sees the two points as (1) who we are and (2) who He wants us to be. He often closes that gap with a zigzag line that focuses on growth of character as the goal of the task.

Before the Lord works through us, He wants to work in us. It's His greatest work in our lives.

God will likely take you the long way this year—a way that seems amazingly inefficient. As He leads you along the zigzag path, remember His priority.

He first wants to work in you and then to work through you.

--Wayne Stiles

WHAT A DIFFERENCE!

When I look at the world of humanity, I see people of all sorts exalting themselves and rejecting Christ and blaspheming God. I see also hatred and strife between genders, cultures, classes, and ethnicities.

When I look at the church of Christ, I see men and women of all cultures and classes and ethnicities at peace with one another and united in praising God and Jesus Christ for their salvation (as in Revelation 7:9ff).

What a difference is made in people by God's grace and Christ's blood!

– Daniel E Parks