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Will Evil Go Unpunished?

By Joel Wheeler

Almost two decades ago, the decomposed body of an eight year old girl was discovered in the bottom of a ravine near a lake in a mid-western state. Law men searched for clues, but never found the victim's killer and the case was dropped until recently when a witness to the crime came to the authorities and revealed the killer.

At the time of the murder, the witness was also a child and had blocked the crime out of her memory. About twenty years later, she had what the doctors called "flash-backs" of the crime and then went to the authorities to tell her story. The witness told police that her own father had struck a blow to the head of her friend and pushed the body off the side of a steep cliff.

Those police detectives which had investigated that mysterious case had given up. But, after almost twenty years of secrecy, the truth finally came to light and the killer was apprehended. The files had been closed. However, unlike man, God never closes the "files".

Moses said in the long ago "...and be sure your sin will find you out (Num. 32:23)." The truth of this matter is although we are finished with our sin, our sin is not finished with us. We may flee from it or try to cover it up with good deeds, but it will track us in every turn of life and we must pay the penalty some day. Every evil which is done will be evil to the doer. God told Adam and Eve that they may eat of the fruit of every tree in the garden except the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:16,17). The

Lord told them they could not eat it "lest ye die" (Gen. 3:3). Adam and Eve denied the divine law that says "every sin brings punishment" (Rom. 6:23). The first man and woman were driven from paradise and they died spiritually before the Lord.

Not every sin will be detected by others, but the sin will detect the man. It is like a shadow that follows him and suddenly it catches him. Many crimes will go undetected and will never be made known to man, but God knows them (Psalm 139:1-8).

Jesus said on one occasion "For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither any thing hid, that shall not be known and come abroad (Luke 8:17)." God will punish the evildoer at the day of judgment (II Pet. 2:9).

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Two Ascensions, Two Returns

By Eddy Gilpin

Somewhere around the year 1490 B.C. a man ascended a mountain on the southern end of the Sinaitic peninsula with the promise that he would return. That man was Moses. That mountain was Sinai. That event is recorded in Exodus 19-32. Chapter 32 reveals that the children of Israel became restless when Moses delayed in coming down the mountain. No

doubt many of them believed that he would not be coming back. Therefore, they commissioned Aaron to make them a god fashioned from gold. This was done despite the fact that every plague brought upon the nation of Egypt was directed toward one or more of their idols, thus revealing the futility of serving gods which "be no gods" (Acts 19:26). These Israelites had witnessed the powerful nation of Egypt, with its various gods, pale in insignificance before the God of heaven (Ex. 5-14). The record reveals that "the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play" (Ex. 32:6). But, there came a reckoning time (Ex:7:35).

Some 1520 years after this, another individual ascended from a point about 300 miles north of Mt. Sinai, with the promise that he would return. That individual was Jesus Christ, the Son of God. That point was Mt. Olivet, just outside Jerusalem. That event is recorded in Acts 1:1-11 (and other places). Since that time, many have erroneously concluded that he will not return again (II Pet. 3:1-4). Some have determined that his coming will be delayed (Mt. 24:42-51). Far too many have "sat down to eat and to drink" and "arisen to play." Man has fashioned for himself idols, gods which "be no gods." Fame, fortune and fun are proudly displayed as worldly man's actions proclaim, "These be thy gods, O Israel." Although he has the recorded history of the devastation of Israel because of such disdain for God, man continues to plunge headlong towards the same ruin (Rom. 15:4). Even though the many proofs of God's truthfulness assure the return of Christ (II Pet. 3:8-10), modern man continues to act as if such will never occur. But, there will be a reckoning day (II Cor. 5:10). "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11); and, "he will judge the world in righteousness" (Acts 17:31). Are you ready for that day?

FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS

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DOES YOUR SALVATION DEPEND TO ANY DEGREE UPON YOUR WORKING IN THE KINGDOM?

By Earl Berry

I ask that you consider this question seriously because some teach that work is without merit in the plan of salvation. They teach: "Salvation is 100% by the grace of God." They teach: "Regardless of what one does or what one fails to do, has nothing to do with his salvation; that all deserve hell."

In view of this doctrine, I suggest that you give consideration to the scripture cited hereafter:

Matthew 25:21: "His lord said unto him; 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many. Enter thou into the joys of thy lord.' "

Matthew 25:34: "Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand: 'Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' "

Ask yourself this question: If all deserve hell regardless of what they do or fail to do, will any inherit heaven? If you answer "Yes," how do you explain the

following scriptures which affirm God is no respecter of persons: Romans 2:11, Ephesians 6:9, Colossians 3:25, Acts 10:34, and 1 Peter 1:17. Further, how can you explain 1 Timothy 4:8 in which Paul declares that God is a just God and Isaiah in Isaiah 30:18 affirms that God judges righteously?

A safe course to follow in trying to find the right answer is to search the scriptures as Christ directed in John 5:39, and as further emphasized by Paul in 2 Timothy 2:15 to study to rightly divide the Word. In John 8:32 Christ promised that the Truth would make us free if we know it. He explained in John 17:17 the Word was Truth.

A seeker of truth will never knowingly take a scripture out of context to support a doctrine and will never set one scripture against another, remembering that the Word is Truth, and Truth never contradicts itself. To do such is to place one in the class of the unlearned and unstable that wrest the scriptures to their own destruction - 2 Peter 3:17.

My purpose in this is as Peter said in 2 Peter 3:1 & 2, 2 Peter 1:12 & 13 & 20. I have not attempted to interpret the scriptures but to point out what the Word in the following scripture has said:

Philippians 2:7: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

James 2:24: "You see then how a man is justified by works and not by faith only."

Luke 6:46: "Why do you call me Lord and do not the things which I command you?"

Revelation 22:14: "Blessed are they that do his commandments that they may have right to the tree of life and enter in the gate into the city."

Titus 2:11 & 12: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching them that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world."

Hebrews 12:1: "Let us run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith."

Ephesians 5:15: "Walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise."

Ephesians 4:1: "I beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called."

Matthew 7:21: "Not everyone that saith, 'Lord, Lord', shall be saved, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

1 Corinthians 15:58: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be you steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord for as much as you know, your labour for the Lord is not in vain."

Romans 2:5: "But after the hardness and impenitent heart treasureth up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation and righteous judgment of God who will render to every man according to his deeds."

James 2:26: "Faith without works is dead being alone."

John 9:4: "Let us work while it is day for the night cometh when none can."

1 Corinthians 3:13: "Every man's work shall be made manifest."

2 Corinthians 5:10: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ that every one may receive the things done in the body whether it be good or bad."

Ecclesiastes 12:14: "God shall bring every work into judgment."

James 1:25: "But whosoever looketh unto the perfect law of liberty and continueth therein being a doer of the law, this man shall be blessed in his deed."

Galatians 6:5: "Let us not be weary in well doing for in due season we shall reap if we faint not."

Hebrews 11:6: "But without faith it is impossible to please God for he that cometh to God must believe that He is and is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him." Thus faith is a work.

2 Thessalonians 1:11: "That our God would count you worthy of his calling and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness and the work of faith with power."

Galatians 5:6: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth anything but a faith that works by love."

Hebrews 6:10: "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of

love."

John 6:25: "This is the work of God that you believe in Him whom He hath sent."

2 Corinthians 5:7: "We walk by faith, not by sight."

Ephesians 6:8: "Knowing that whatsoever any good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord."

1 Timothy 6:12: "Fight the good fight of faith; lay hold on eternal life."

2 Timothy 2:3: "Thou, therefore, endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

In view of the scriptures cited heretofore, please study Matthew 25:31 to 46 in which Christ gives us a picture of the judgment. Notice beginning with verse 34 that the Son of man is coming in glory with all the holy angels with Him and then He shall sit on the throne of His glory and He shall gather before Him all nations and He shall separate them one from another. He shall set the sheep on His right hand but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those at His right hand: "Come you blessed of my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." In verse 40 the King explains why these on the right hand inherit the kingdom. In verse 41 the King says unto those on His left hand: "Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." The following verses tell why those on the left go away into everlasting punishment. Does this picture indicate that the separation was based upon what some did and what some did not do?

The conclusion may be found in the following: Revelation 2:10: "Be thou faithful unto death and I will give a crown of life", and in Ecclesiastes 12:13 & 14: "Fear God and keep his commandments for this is the whole duty of man." Sometimes confusion and misunderstanding arise because the Word has not been handled aright (rightly divided). Paul was a Jew and he wrote to the Jews in Rome, Ephesus, and Galatia who had become Christians but were holding on to some parts of the law of Moses as a condition of salvation; for example—circumcision. He reminds the Jewish Christians:

Romans 3:20; Galatians 2:6; Galatians 3:10; Ephesians 2:9 that salvation cannot be theirs by doing the works of the law of Moses, but by a faith in Christ that works by love--Galatians 5:6.

Acts 13:38 & 39 Paul said: "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sin, and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which he could not be justified by the law of Moses. The term, the law, in the New Testament, usually though not always, 150 times or more, does refer to the law of Moses."

Since Pentecost the law of liberty in Christ Jesus, as set forth by Christ and the apostles as shown by the scriptures cited herein that those who are to be saved must work. Not their own ideas, but must have a faith that works by love: bearing one another's burdens, doing good as we have opportunity, preaching and teaching the gospel. After all that has been said and all the scripture referred to one must believe that works alone will not save. The grace of God plus obedience to God's law, doing what God commands in the way that God demands it to be done motivated by a faith that works by love will free man from the guilt and penalty of sin.

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*The easy roads are crowded and the level roads are jammed;
The pleasant little rivers with the drifting folks are crammed.
But off yonder where it's rocky, where you get a better view,
You'll find the ranks are thinning and the travelers are few.
Where the going is smooth and pleasant you will always find the throng,
For the many, more's the pity, seem to drift along.
But the steps that call for courage, and the task that's hard to do,
In the end result in Glory for the never wavering few.*

HE WAS A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH

He was a member of the church. He said so whenever he was questioned as to his religion. He was a member, but he rarely ever attended services. His work kept him away part of the time, part of the time he used God's day to take pleasure trips; in fact, if he attended more than two or three times a year, it was unusual. He was a member of the church, but he gave little of his prosperity to further the cause of the Lord. Buildings were built, but not with his money. Mission work was done, but not with his money. Benevolent work was done, but not with his money. He had none to spare for the Lord, even though he was known as a "good spender" to his friends. He was a member of the church, but he gave none of his abilities to the Lord. He never helped in the song service. He never went to a home where sickness was placing a burden on those who needed his assistance. He never asked the elders or the preacher what he could do to help the cause of the Lord. He never spoke a word of encouragement or offered a helping hand. He never taught a sinner the way of salvation, either by word or by example. Yes, he was a member of the church. He brought shame and reproach on the kingdom of Christ. Hell will be populated with members of the church like that.

- Foster Ramsey
Via "Just a Moment"

EGOTIST - A man who tells you those things about himself which you intended to tell him about yourself.

HYPOCRITE - A man who sets a good example only when he has an audience.

PESSIMIST - One who, when he has a choice of two evils, picks them both.

PUBLIC SPEAKING - The art of diluting a two-minute idea with a two hour vocabulary.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; I Thess. 2:13).
2. Wears a Biblical Name (Romans 16:16).
3. Established at the right place (Isaiah 2:2,3; Acts 2).
4. Established at the right time (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2).
5. Established on the right person (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:36).
6. Saved are in it (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47).
7. Its members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
8. Membership in it is obtained by obedience to God's commands including baptism (Acts 2:41-47; I Corinthians 12:13).

GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

1. Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
2. Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
5. Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (I Peter 2:11, 12; Revelations 2:10).



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