

Rom. 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.



John 8:32 and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

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## HARSH WORDS FROM THE PROPHET

Jim Stauffer

*“But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? “Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance; and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham for our father’; for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham. “The axe is already laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”*

**(Matthew 3:7–10)**

As we consider the words of the prophet on this occasion, we might ask ourselves, why such harsh language. To the Pharisees and Sadducees he attributed very dishonorable names. We might ask what prompted the venom from him toward this people at this time.

We must consider what we know about these folks before we are critical of the prophet for his language. The Pharisees were the “spiritual” leaders of the Jewish nation at that time. They proudly referred to their heritage of Abraham and wore it as a cloak of righteousness. As Jesus later points out about these people (**John 8:39**), they claimed Abraham as their father but did not conduct themselves according to his life of faith in God.

The prophet is pointing out their failure to bear fruit in keeping with repentance, thus their practices were turned away from God and directed to their own comfort (**Mat. 15:9**).

What John teaches us on this occasion is how God views those who claim to be His children but do not do the things befitting a child of God. Children of God lead different lives than those of the world (**see 1 John 3:1**). John tells us just how low such a person ranks in the eyes of God. These people thought more highly of themselves than did God. *“For through the grace given*

*to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.”* (**Romans 12:3**)

The final nail in the coffin as we express today, is the judgment God will bring on those who are supposed to be His but conduct themselves like the world. The promise of God has always been to reward the righteous and punish the unrighteous (**John 5:28,29**).

John and Jesus both preached and taught the lost sheep of Israel and their purpose, as John says so powerfully here, is to bring them to repentance. That is, changing the way they live before God.

Jesus warns on several occasions the message He sent will, when it fails to reach those lost sheep of Israel, be granted to the Gentile world who will receive it more readily (**Mat. 8:10-12; John 10:16**). In fact we learn through prophecy and then the explanation of the death of Christ that His sacrifice was intended to bring all men to Him as the people of God would be those who responded to the gospel call (**Isa. 2:1-4; Mat. 11:28-30; Acts 2:39; Eph. 2:13-18**).

If, indeed, the harsh words of the prophet spoken to the Pharisees and Sadducees on that day could call our attention to the need for bearing fruit in His kingdom, we will all benefit from such language. We must never let the truth remain hidden from us simply because we are unable to bear up under its message.

### TODAY COULD BE THE DAY!

I awake just before the alarm and rub the sleep from my eyes. Suddenly the thought strikes me: **Today** could be the day! I am at once excited and anxious. I hurriedly prepare for my day. There is so much to do and so little time.

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Often throughout the course of the day, the thought recurs: **Today** could be the day! It causes a smile on my face and a spring in my step.

Just think. My hopes and dreams could be fulfilled **today**. This could be the day for which I have been waiting, working, praying!

Yes – **today** could be the day that the Lord calls me home! God will wipe away every tear from my eyes. There will be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor pain (**Revelation 21:4**). I will drink from the fountain of the water of life (**Revelation 21:6**), eat of the tree of life (**Revelation 22:14**), gaze on the jasper wall, see the gates of pearl, walk the street of pure gold (**Revelation 21:18, 21**). There will be no night there for the glory of God shines forth as its light (**Revelation 21:23**). I will be able to kneel before my Savior and King, thanking Him, praising Him. I will see the face of my God (**Revelation 22:4**). And I will live there throughout eternity!

I do not know the exact hour or day that the Lord will call me home, but I do know that **today** could be the day! I must be ready to meet my Savior each and every day (**Matthew 25:1-13**). While I am waiting, there is work that I must do (**Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 19:11:27**). My whole duty on this earth is to fear God and keep His commandments (**Ecclesiastes 12:13**). I must sacrifice my will and allow Christ to live in me (**Romans 12:1-2; Galatians 2:20**). I must encourage and help my brothers and sisters in Christ as we journey together toward heaven (**Galatians 6:1; Hebrews 10:24**). I must share the glorious news of the gospel with others (**1 Peter 3:15**). I must spend time listening to my God as He speaks to me through His word. I must speak to Him in prayer in thankfulness and praise. I must not delay in talking with my friends and loved ones about their souls. I must go about my Lord's work with a sense of purpose as well as a sense of urgency.

*"He who testifies to these things says, 'Surely I am coming quickly.' Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"* (**Revelation 22:20**)

**Today** could be the day!

*By Terry Bennett*

## Doy Moyer

People are concerned that there is evil in the government. Not to be trite, but of course there is evil in the government. It is the nature of human governments. There is a reason why Scripture uses the imagery of beasts to represent world empires (**Dan 7; Rev 13; Isa 27:1**). Every human government ultimately comes

under the sway of the dragon of old. Every human government becomes Babylon, in which God's people are in exile. Christians are told to come out of them, to trust God, and to rely on the blood of the Lamb. Christians who trust God will not resort to violent overthrows or become insurrectionists. No good will be accomplished in the name of Christ by these means. We may be persecuted, beaten down, afflicted, and perplexed, but not driven to despair, not forsaken, and never destroyed (**see 2 Cor 4:7-12**). Let us take the perspective of heaven.

Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.

## WHEN YOUR FAMILY DOESN'T BELIEVE

*"Therefore, His brothers said to Him, 'Leave here and go into Judea, so that Your disciples also may see Your works which You are doing. For no one does anything in secret when he himself seeks to be known publicly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world.'" For not even His brothers were believing in Him"* (**John 7:3-5 NASV**). It is a comforting blessing, when families unite in their faith—faith in Jesus Christ, God's Son. Mutual commitments to the Lord such as, worship, prayer, Bible study, and a common lifestyle, bind hearts together; what greater commonality can we have than serving our Savior. What happens, though, when even your closest family members will not unite with you in true faith?

We could assume that Jesus' brothers (earthly family members cf. **Matthew 13:55**) really did want Jesus to go to Jerusalem and continue His mission as the Messiah. They had seen His works; why keep these things hidden; why not go to Jerusalem and let more people know who You are? The Feast of Booths (or, Tabernacles, mentioned only in John) insured that throngs of people would fill the city; what an opportunity! What are we to make of **verse 5**: *"For not even His brothers were believing in Him"*? How sad when our loved ones speak with doubt, ridicule, and scorn. Clearly, Jesus and His brothers were following different time schedules. It was not time (as opposed to *"My hour has not yet come"*) for Jesus to go to Jerusalem. He did go, but at first, He delayed. If great crowds were Jesus' priority, He could have gone immediately to the city.

*"The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil."* Why did the world hate Jesus? Why were the Jews seeking to kill Jesus (**John 7:1**)? If Jesus is doing only what His Father wants Him to do, why would opposition to Jesus

increase (**John 5:19**)? The world (**John 3:16**) is people; all who have lived or ever will live; Jesus died for all. The Light brought judgment to the world of darkness (**John 3:19**). *“Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out”* (**John 12:31**). When Jesus went to Jerusalem, He showed Himself to the world—a world of religious leaders, guardians of the Law; they were outwardly religious. Yet, they refused to receive God’s only Son. The Jews who walked the halls of the Temple daily, saw Jesus as a threat to their own self-interests. Through it all, Jesus loved them.

And so, what are we to make of the fact that even Jesus’ loved ones did not believe in Him? According to the Gospel of **John (20:30-31)**, the teaching and actions of Jesus were designed to produce saving faith in Him as the Savior. But what about His brothers? And what about our loved ones—those near and dear to our hearts—those who scarcely leave our thoughts? Who belongs to the family of Jesus? *“My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it”* (**Luke 8:21**). We find comfort in the cliché, “As long as there is life, there is hope.” Because of Jesus, this is more than a cliché. By the way, read **Acts 1:14**.

**Randy Harshbarger**

## **Was The Thief Saved Without Baptism?**

**Robert Harkrider**

We actually know little about the salvation of the thief. Whether he knew anything of salvation from sin through Christ would be difficult to prove. In fact, whether or not he had earlier been baptized by John the Baptist and since that time fallen into sin would be of question (**Matthew 3:1-6**). Without quibbling over these incidentals, the salvation of the thief was miraculous and none can be saved that way now.

The New Testament teaches that while Christ was on earth He had the power to forgive sins, as He chose. To the man sick of palsy Jesus said, *“Thy sins be forgiven thee.”* Certain of the scribes questioned His power to do this, and Jesus replied, *“But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of palsy), Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house”* (**Matthew 9:1-6**).

Christ had the power to forgive sins on whatever conditions He chose while on earth, but He had laid down conditions of salvation to take effect after His death which will last throughout all generations. The Hebrew writer gives an illustration which explains, *“For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are*

*dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth* (**Hebrews 9:16-17**).

A man’s last will and testament is not fixed until after his death. As long as he lives he sustains the right to change the gifts or even the beneficiaries. But after his death, the will is sealed and cannot be changed even by the courts of the land. So is the will of Christ; it became of force after His death.

To illustrate, consider a man who has two sons, and he stipulates in his will if each son is twenty-one years of age and married he shall receive his portion of the inheritance. But if shortly before his death the father finds some reason to favor one of his sons, and he gives the inheritance to him before he is married, does not the father have the power (right) to do this? We can also understand that the other son will not receive of the father until he is both twenty-one and married even though his brother was granted such without marriage. After the death of the father the will becomes effective and cannot be altered.

Before His death Christ had the power to forgive sins of whomever he wanted and whatever conditions he desired. But after the death, burial and resurrection of Christ the Lord’s will reads: *“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved”* (**Mark 16:16**). Both conditions of the will must be obeyed if we *“shall be saved.”* We cannot look to the thief to justify ourselves anymore than one brother could annul the father’s will upon the of what had happened to the other son. (**Read Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21; Galatians 3:27; Romans 6:3-5**).

*~via Gospel Guide; Vol. 25 No. 9; Taken from the Market Street Messenger*

### **Jesus Christ...**

Came into the world...that we might enter into heaven.  
Was born in the flesh...that we might be born of the Spirit.

Was born of woman...that we might be born of God.  
Became the son of man...that we might be the sons of God.

Left riches for poverty...that we might leave poverty for riches.

Was rejected of men...that we might be accepted of God.  
Became a man of sorrows...that we might be children of glory.

Was put to death by men...that we might be made alive by God.

Became cursed on earth...that we might become blessed in heaven.

Was made to be sin for us...that we might be the righteousness of God.

anonymous

**Psa. 1:1** *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.*

## **HOURS OF WORSHIP**

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

**Visitors welcome**

**We conduct in home Bible Studies**

**We offer Correspondence Courses**

**Evangelist and Editor Jim Stauffer**

**Elders:**

**Ron Peck and Jim Stauffer**

**Deacons:**

**Bill Miller**

**Brandon Jamison**

**Joe Hurd**

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**Check out the following websites:**

[facebook.com/LenexaChurchofChrist](https://facebook.com/LenexaChurchofChrist)

[lenexachurchofchrist.org](http://lenexachurchofchrist.org)

### **News and Notes:**

Alma Baumgartner, Jan Patrick, Trudy Mullen, Denese Goring, Brooklyn Boyer and Merry Dee Wood.

Tracy Richardson's surgery was successful she now recuperates at home

Pat Gaines; Surgery improved issues in his spine. He now will attempt to recuperate and see what his capability is. L.A. Stauffer recuperating at home.

Sunday Morning Bible Class - Messianic Pathway - OT to NT - Jim Stauffer

Wednesday Evening Bible Class - Home and Family - Ron Peck

Sunday Morning Sermon - Understanding Christ (the central theme of Christianity)



### **What Must I Do To Be Saved?**

**Hear** the gospel - Romans 10:17

**Believe** in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

**Repent** of sins - Acts 17:30

**Confess** Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

**Be Baptized** for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

**Be Faithful** unto death - Revelation 2:10