

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.

THE LENEXA EDIFIER

January

25

2015

GOD IS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS

Jim Stauffer

There are those in our community who teach false doctrine concerning the subject of God's claim not to be a respecter of persons. The concept they set forth is as follows.

1. God is no respecter of persons, therefore:
 - a. To grant requests made through prayer for such things as the health, wisdom and courage in the face of temptation or trial would be calling for Him to be a respecter of persons if He actually granted our request.
 - b. This leads to the conclusion that one is not authorized to pray for the sick to get well or for any providential benefit from God through prayer.
2. Let us try to look at what scripture really says about each of these questions that arise from the study of God as no respecter of persons. Here is a list of many of if not all of the passages that use the phrase respecter of persons. There is a constant in each of these passages. Respect of persons is related specifically to the justice either temporally in this life or in the judgment of God on the souls of men. (Lev. 19:15; Deut. 1:17; 10:17,18, 16:19; 2 Chron. 19:7; Psa. 82:2; Pr. 18:5; 24:23; 28:21; Lam. 4:16; Mal. 2:9; Acts 10:34; Rom. 2:11; Eph. 6:9; Col. 3:25; James 2:1,9; 1 Pet. 1:17; Jude 16.) In each and every case it is clearly taught that God is no respecter of persons and condemns such a practice in mankind.
3. What we may have overlooked in our study from time to time is the relationship of justice to salvation. God's plan for the redemption of mankind is to bring him into a justified relationship with God. Scripture tells us He brings His just nature to the process as both the just One and the justifier of those who have faith in Christ. (**Rom. 3:24-26**)
4. From this we know God is a just God and will not be complicit in the respect of persons, which clearly refers to injustice temporally and eternally. God is a just God. **Deut. 32:4** *The Rock, his work is perfect; For all his ways are justice: A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, Just and right is he.* Since God is just, we become liars when we accuse Him of being a respecter of persons when He makes and keeps His promises to mankind. **Rom. 3:4** *God forbid: yea, let God be found true, but every man a liar; as it is*

written, That thou mightest be justified in thy words, And mightest prevail when thou comest into judgment. Jer. 9:24 but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he hath understanding, and knoweth me, that I am Jehovah who exerciseth lovingkindness, justice, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith Jehovah.

Let us consider some of God's dealings with mankind over the years to see if He is a respecter of persons when he deals differently with each person.

God had promised judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah. Yet when Abraham pleaded with Him (**Gen. 18:25**), He relented and agreed to withhold destruction based on a new agreement with Abraham. While Abraham was unable to save the cities, God did hear his plea and offered consideration to his effort to save them. Was God being a respecter of persons to grant this wish particularly to one man, Abraham? Of course not! God is a just God and his agreement with Abraham did not deny justice to any man. In fact, it allowed a righteous man, Lot, to escape the judgment, which was designed for sinners and was Abraham's original request.

God chose Abraham as the progenitor of the seed through which all nations would be blessed. (**Gal. 3:16**) Is God a respecter of persons because He selected Abraham over all others? Of course not! God is a just God. His choice of Abraham over others denied no man justice. It was just the opposite, the choice of the lineage through which would come the sacrifice sufficient to remove the sins of man and offer justice to all.

Was God a respecter of persons when He proved Abraham's faith by commanding him to offer Isaac as a sacrifice on Mt. Moriah? (**Gen. 22**) Before you answer, remember, he never asked all the rest of mankind to do the same. The answer is, of course not! God is a just God. We will all have our faith tried at one time or another; each in a different way. No one was denied justice on that occasion.

Was God a respecter of persons when He granted Peter the power to raise Dorcas from the dead? Many others died and were not resuscitated. The answer is, of course not! God is a just God. This occasion became a

continued on page 2

demonstration of the power of God and caused many in Joppa to believe. (**Acts 9:36-43**)

Now let us try to apply this Biblical principle of respect of persons to mankind today.

We are told by some that if God answers the prayer of one who prays for the health of another, He would become a respecter of persons because there are others who were not healed through prayer. What then did Paul mean when he said, *letting your requests be made known to God?* (**Phil. 4:6**) Is this not, *supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgiving be made for all men?* (**1 Tim. 2:1**)

It is obvious God never promised any kind of "spiritual communism or socialism" for mankind as servants in His kingdom. Therefore, the fact He has offered to hear our prayers does not deny justice to anyone. Remember, respect of persons in the Bible means to misappropriate justice for someone.

The same people misinterpret **James 1:5** because of this misunderstanding of the subject of respect of persons. We are told James is teaching the "twelve tribes of the Dispersion" to pray for miraculous wisdom. The reasoning is since the Bible was not complete and *that which is perfect is come* (**1 Cor. 13:10**), had not yet happened they were being taught to pray for miraculous wisdom/knowledge of God's word. Since we live in the post miraculous age, (that which is perfect has come) we are told this passage has no application to us.

Miraculous wisdom was one of the spiritual gifts named in **1 Cor. 12:8**. These gifts were given by the laying on of the hands of the Apostles. (**Acts 8:17; 19:6**) This by Divine plan brought an end to the spiritual gifts when the revelation of God was complete. If men were allowed to appropriate spiritual gifts simply through prayer, there would have been no end to them, which is exactly what is erroneously taught by some men in the world today.

In summary, the erroneous position we have seen exposed here occurred when one of the primary principles of hermeneutics was violated. That principle is when one passage can be clearly understood by all, subsequent more complex passages cannot be allowed to contradict what we already know to be the truth. What we know is God is a just God who is not a respecter of persons. He denies no man justice and demands we do likewise. It is a sad day when brethren differ over unnecessary things such as this. This is a clear case of studying scripture with an agenda or at the very least a mind clouded with biases.

As Jehovah says through Isaiah, *come let us reason together.* (**Is. 1:18**) The Bible message is clear. We must be sure our minds are when we study it. Far be it from any of us to desire to serve our own selfish purposes in our study and teaching of scripture. For when we do there is a prescribed method of separation from such error given in scripture. **Rom. 16:17** *Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned: and turn away from them. 18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Christ, but their own belly; and by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent.*

BY THE GRACE OF GOD

One of the gravest dangers faithful people of God can fall prey to is self-righteousness and arrogance toward the world. Jesus spoke about this problem among the religious leaders of His day in **Lk. 18**, where He gave the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector who went up to pray at the same time (**Lk. 18:9-14**). It is clear from Jesus' telling of the story that the Pharisee went to the temple to exalt himself rather than to pray. "God," the Pharisee said, *"I thank You that I am not like other men -- extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even this tax collector,"* (**18:11**). Meanwhile, the tax collector prayed humbly to God for mercy.

Jesus spoke this parable, Luke tells us, to get a point across to those *"who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others,"* (**Lk. 18:9**). The Pharisee in His story certainly met this description: he trusted in his own righteousness and despised other sinners. He was arrogant and prideful in his religion and hateful toward those who had fallen short in his estimation. Rather than pull sinners up to worship God, he pushed sinners down to glorify himself.

It is clear that this Pharisee's style of religion was repugnant to God, yet this did not keep many in Jesus' time from behaving exactly as Jesus described. This sort of religion has long been a problem, and it was not unique to the Pharisees and scribes. Indeed, it is clear from evidence in Paul's letters that this sort of problem was beginning to sprout among the Christians of the first century. In writing to the Ephesians, Paul took pains to remind them that it was God's grace not good works that saved them; boasting about one's religion was therefore forbidden. He wrote, *"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast,"* (**Eph. 2:8,9**). While no specific charge of religious arrogance is mentioned in Paul's letter, simply including this language indicates that religious snobbery was a potential problem.

It was not only to the Ephesians that Paul gave such a warning. In **Rom. 11**, he urged Gentile Christians not to boast over Jews who had not come to Christ by reminding them that it was only through God's grace that salvation had come to them. Rather than boast over the branches cut off, Paul exhorted them, they should fear the power of God both to cut them out and to graft in again those He had once removed, (**Rom. 11:17-24**).

Boasting of one's salvation at the expense of those who remain in sin is a very strong temptation. It infected the religious leaders of Jesus' time; it began to seep into the minds of first-century Christians; and, sadly, it taints some Christians today. Knowing we have been separated from the world and sanctified by the blood of Christ sometimes creates within us an attitude that we are somehow better than the world. We become spiritually arrogant, assuming that we have some special favor in God's sight that is not available to all

men. When we become this way, we tend to scorn the world and lock ourselves in the church building, never reaching out to those who desperately need the Gospel. Like the Pharisees, we become insular and cliquish, boasting about our righteousness at the expense of those outside the church.

This sort of attitude is simply not acceptable for the Christian if he/she hopes to be pleasing to God. The New Testament is clear: grace has been extended to all (**Rom. 5:18**), God wishes for all to come to repentance (**2 Pet. 3:9**), and Christians need to be spreading the good news of Jesus Christ to every creature (**Mk. 16:15**). For this reason, we must resist the temptation to become spiritually arrogant.

Guidance for overcoming this very temptation can be found in Paul's brief letter to Titus. Paul knew that the problem of spiritual conceit was already drawing the minds of some and understood the problem would only grow with time. Therefore, he counseled the young preacher about resisting this problem in chapter 3 of his epistle. His directives to Titus remain enlightening for us today as we confront this problem.

REMAIN HUMBLE. The first key to combating the sin of spiritual arrogance is to remain humble. Paul wrote to Titus, *"Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men,"* (**Titus 3:1,2**). Given the world of the first century, it would have been tempting for Christians to look down their noses at the people around them. Idolatry, immorality, and license reigned in both Greek and Roman worlds. Christians had left these things all behind, often suffering persecution for doing so. It would have been very easy for them to show equal contempt for the world. Paul, however, taught that they should remain humble and willing to serve all men, just as Jesus had in His times of persecution.

REMEMBER WHERE YOU CAME FROM. The key to humility, Paul taught Titus, lies in remembering that you also were once stained by sin. Remember that *"we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another,"* (**Titus 3:3**). In other words, we all were once in their position. There is no room for boasting when we remember that we once also stood apart from God. Instead, this knowledge should prompt us to search out opportunities to bring others to the grace we have received.

BY THE GRACE OF GOD. The greatest key to avoiding spiritual arrogance is to remember that it is ultimately through God's grace that we have been saved. Paul wrote to Titus *"But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us..."* (**Titus 3:4,5**). We must remember that it is only through God's loving mercy and grace that we are saved. When we truly recognize our dependence on God, any inkling of spiritual arrogance quickly fades in the light of His mercy.

By - Evan Bennett, The West End Way, via. Gospel Power.

Temptations of the World

Picture this: it's a sunny, hot Monday afternoon and a little ice cream truck with a catchy tune runs through the neighborhood streets. The driver is expecting business to be better today, what with Sunday off and all.

A little girl runs to meet the truck. She wants a popsicle. She plans on having one every day. There are many flavors. She has her favorites, but tries most at least once. She looks forward to her popsicle every day and misses it on Sunday when the truck takes a day off.

So, it tastes a little better on Monday after a day without it. She feels it cool on her tongue. It refreshes her. It makes her cares go away. It makes her happy.

Some Christians are like this little girl. They lick the world and it tastes good. So, they plan on a lick a day... and there are many flavors. Almost too many to mention, and some can get to be our favorite. Lick after lick, we get closer to the world.

When we are tempted by the world, it is easy to be like the person that James describes who forgets what kind of man he is: *"For if anyone is a hearer and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was."* (**James 1:23-24**)

Every day there is a tune we hear. It's the world singing to us. Often times, we can be eager to listen. We can forget who we're supposed to be.

James points out in **Chapter 1, Verse 27** that one of the things required of Christians is *"to keep oneself unspotted from the world."*

Christians are to be set apart from the world. The majority, perhaps, are chasing a tune for one more lick of the world. The world is happy to play the tune. We have to choose to ignore this tune and focus on being the kind of people God wants us to be.

-Anonymous

Taken from The Sincere Milk of God's Word, by Michael Hickox

Knowledge without wisdom is as dangerous as a car with neither steering gear nor brakes.

We worry about our children, and forget that our parents used to worry about us.

"Nothing in a name." Well, there is nothing in some names I know.

Also, it is just as evident that elephants were once boll weevils, for both have snouts.

R.L. Whiteside

There'll be no flooding in heaven
The streams there will placidly flow
Past the dwellings of faithful believers
Immersed in "much water" below

Grant Clothier

Eph. 2:19 *So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;*

1Pet. 2:9 *But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:*

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

OUR ADDRESS IS:

7845 Cottonwood Dr.

Lenexa, Kansas 66216

913-764-9170

Check out the following websites

thelenexaedifier.com

facebook.com/LenexaChurchofChrist/

lenexachurchofchrist.org

NEWS AND NOTES:

PLEASE REMEMBER THE
FOLLOWING IN YOUR PRAYERS:
J.R. DANIEL, GRANT CLOTHIER,
MARY CZIRR, AND JAN PATRICK.
LORETTA TAPP HAS RETURNED
HOME.

OUR CURRENT STUDIES ARE:
SUNDAY MORNING AND
WEDNESDAY EVENING:
EVIDENCES

SERMON SUNDAY AM: CALVINISM
- LIMITED ATONEMENT



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