

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

11

2015

THE CHOICES WE MAKE (Righteousness or Sin = Life or Death)

Jim Stauffer

Throughout the history of man are recorded his successes and failures based on his choices.

Jas. 1:15 tells us clearly when our lust is conceived in sin it brings forth death. **Rom. 6:23** says, *the wages of sin is death.....* Adam and Eve first experienced such separation from God. (**Isa. 59:1,2**) As a result they were banished from the Garden and the Tree of Life. (**Gen. 3:22-24**) Mankind has faced mortality since and will not have access to the Tree of Life and its benefit again until he receives his heavenly reward. (**Rev. 22:1,2**)

Knowing then, the result of our dalliance with sin (**Rom. 3:23**), what shall or can we do to repair the damage it has caused. First, we must arrive at the point where we truly regret the things we have done. (**2 Cor. 7:9,10**) God has not tried to shield us from the simple fact that sin is pleasant to the flesh for the moment. (**Heb. 11:24-26**) We all have experienced weaknesses, thus the warning to Timothy by Paul to *flee youthful lusts*. (**2 Tim. 2:22**) The Bible is replete with the stories of those who failed in this regard. Lot and his daughters, David and Bathsheba and Solomon, who was granted much wisdom still succumbed.

We cannot choose life over death until there has been a change of heart. We must make the decision between God and the world. (**Mat. 6:24**) Jesus said it is the condition of the heart that indicates whether one is a good man or not. **Luke 6:45** *The good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth that which is evil: for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.*

Therefore, when Paul speaks to the Romans of their decision to serve the Lord he uses these words, **Rom. 6:16** *Know ye not, that to whom ye present yourselves as servants unto obedience, his servants ye are whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? 17 But thanks be to God, that, whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered; 18 and being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness.* Here he emphasizes 3 things in the conversion process. First, he says we all face the choice of obedience. Either we choose obedience to sin unto death or unto

righteousness. Second, he congratulates them on the wise choice of obedience unto righteousness. Notice he says this occurred when they responded favorably to *that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered.*

Third, verse 18 explains this obedience made them free from sin and the servants of righteousness.

Let us not move away from this passage with due emphasis on the phrase, *obedient from the heart to that form of teaching*. We are told Jesus is the author of eternal salvation to all those that obey Him. (**Heb. 5:8,9**) clearly obeying Him equates to being obedient to that form of teaching. That form of teaching, Jesus says in the truth. (**John 8:32**) He also said, *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.* (**Mat. 24:35**)

Jesus made it clear His message of salvation would be revealed to men He personally chose, by way of the Holy Spirit. (**John 16:13**) We read of those men being *endued with power from on high*. (**Lk. 24:49; Acts 2:1-4**) The revelation of the mind of God came to them from the Spirit of God, granting them verbal inspiration to reveal God's message to mankind. (**1 Cor. 2:10-13**)

The message of this revelation, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, is that God's grace will save the faithful. (**Eph. 2:8,9**) His grace came in the form of Jesus Christ, who died, rose from the grave and ascended into heaven as the *head over all things to the church*. (**1 Pet. 1:3,4; Eph. 1:22,23**) This message of Christ dying for all (**2 Cor. 5:14,15**) is the essence of this gospel. **1 Cor. 15:1** *Now I make known unto you brethren, the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, wherein also ye stand, 2 by which also ye are saved, if ye hold fast the word which I preached unto you, except ye believed in vain. 3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received: that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4 and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures;* The life that Jesus gave on Calvary was the price of our redemption from sin. It is therefore, His blood that cleanses us from our sin. (**1 Pet. 1:18,19; Rev. 1:5**)

Our choice to obey the form of teaching Jesus authorized is ultimately our choice for righteousness and life over sin and death. **Rom. 6:22** *But now being*

continued on page 2

made free from sin and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end eternal life. 23 For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

ATONEMENT

by Heath Rogers

The English word “atonement” is derived from the three terms which actually make up the word: “at-one-ment.” It denotes the state of agreement and togetherness between two people, with the understanding that the two people were at one time estranged from one another but have been brought back together into a state of harmony and peace.

The word “atone” means “to make amends or reparation for wrongdoing or a wrongdoer; to bring into agreement; reconcile.” “Atonement” means “satisfaction given for wrongdoing.”

The words “atonement” and “reconciliation” are connected in meaning, but there is a significant difference between the words. While “reconciliation” focuses upon the action of bringing two separated parties back together, “atonement” focuses upon that which was necessary in order to bring them together.

Christians should be very interested in understanding the meaning of the word “atonement.” In the Bible, the word “atonement” refers to that which satisfies the penalty for our sin, thus allowing us to escape the wrath of God and be reconciled back unto Him.

The Law of God states that the penalty for sin is death (**Gen. 2:17; Ezek. 18:20**). God allowed the sacrificial offering of the blood of animals as a means of satisfying this penalty: *For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul (Lev. 17:11). And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission (Heb. 9:22).*

The Patriarchs offered animal sacrifices as an atonement for the sins committed by themselves and their family members (**Job 1:5**).

Under the Law of Moses these sacrifices for atonement became much more specific and numerous. An interesting observation is that in the New King James Version, the word “atonement” appears 99 times – but all of these appearances are in the Old Testament. In fact, the word appears 83 times in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy – the books which provide the details of the Law of Moses.

This does not mean that the idea of atonement is not found in the New Testament. The entire life of Jesus Christ, especially His death, could be summarized by the word “atonement.” Jesus said of Himself, *just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many (Matt. 20:28).*

Through the death of Jesus Christ, one perfect sacrifice was made to provide atonement for every sin.

For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins... By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all... For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified (Heb. 10:4, 10, 14).

The Omniscience of God

I accept with a great deal of humility, the offer to write an article on this great subject. I have contemplated for many hours how I will try to explain my understanding of this subject. The best that I can do is to fail miserably in even coming close to explaining the full impact of such a subject.

It is absolutely beyond human comprehension to fathom all of the intricacies of this subject. My first thoughts on this subject brought me to the harsh reality that there is not much to say. In the simplest of terms, “GOD KNOWS EVERYTHING - AND WE BETTER REMEMBER IT”.

The secret things belong to the Lord our God...

Deut 29:29. God has chosen to reveal just a small portion of His infinite knowledge. What He has revealed has been done so for the purpose of teaching us (humanity) lessons to be learned. As we read from the pen of Paul; *The things written aforetime were written for our learning...* **Romans 15:4.** In fact, every word of God recorded in Scripture is written to instruct us to remember our God, and our subjection to Him (**Ecclesiastes 12:13**).

Just try to imagine this. Every word ever written on paper, wood, papyrus, bathroom walls, chalkboards, computers, typewriters, or wherever is known by God. Every word ever spoken, and for that matter, every word that will ever be spoken by anyone in any language is already known by God. Add to this fact the knowledge that God knows the number of hairs on your head, as well as the number of cells within each strand of hair and the number of atoms and molecules of each. As we continue, God also knows every thought that has ever come out of the mind of any and every man (human) (**Jeremiah 17:10**). And, He is aware of every emotion that has ever effected your actions.

There is implication that God knows our every thought and would even know what our thoughts and actions would be if our circumstances were different. Many of the readers who read this article will consider themselves in good standing with the Lord. Many of them have their hearts purified with a clear conscience, and are interested in the things of God in order to learn how to be pleasing to Him. We can all be thankful for our present condition; also realizing there is room for improvement.

It also appears to us that God chooses NOT to know certain things. We may appeal to scripture in Genesis **22:1-12** where Abram attempted to offer Isaac and God’s statement, *Now I know...* appears. I might suggest that God DID know already the actions that would take place, and God DID know this before He laid the foundations of the world. We read in several places where God deals with the children of Israel, and does

something for them as a test "to see if they would be faithful" (i.e. the instructions pertaining to the collection of manna). Well, God already knows everything, and it would be foolish to suggest otherwise. A word of caution though. We must never confuse foreknowledge with foreordination. The false doctrine of Calvinism is based upon that misconception.

We must remember though, that the Bible was written for OUR instruction, and not God's. God already knew what Abram would do, but Abram was not sure if he could make such a sacrifice. We learn many lessons from that story about making the ultimate sacrifice for God if necessary. (And then we thank God because it is not necessary).

The placing of tests upon God's chosen ones was not to see if they would obey Him. God already knows the answer to those questions. The test was for the benefit of those being tested. When students in school take their tests, they are not trying to teach the teacher. The teacher is trying to show the students that they actually learned something in the class, or in preparation for the test. No test benefits the teacher (unless they are measured by how well their students perform).

The greatest lesson for us to learn from this study is the fact that God (being 'omnipresent') is everywhere and sees all things. In our hustle and bustle world, we sometimes forget that God is there wherever we are. God is there in the Movie Theater watching what sort of stuff you are filling your mind with. God watches what you watch on your cable TV programs. God hears your conversations, and knows your thoughts about others. God knows what you are reading and thinking.

When we think we are alone and nobody is watching, we might tend to get naughty. But if we will remember that God is present, we should behave ourselves much more excellently. With the knowledge that God KNOWS everything, it should serve as a deterrent to keep us on the straight and narrow.

We allow Satan to fill our minds with the absence of God. Because we do not see Him and do not hear Him in a physical sense, we allow our minds to think that He does not know what we are doing.

Does anyone really think that God was unaware of what Adam and Eve were doing after they ate the fruit? Do the questions in **Genesis 3** make sense from God's viewpoint? No! You will notice that the questions were offered to Adam so that Adam would realize the sin that he had committed. The questions were also for our benefit as well.

Our *whole duty* is to fear God and keep His commandments. Let us remind ourselves daily, hourly, and by the minute if necessary, that we are in the presence of God and we must behave with respect and awe for His majesty.

James 4:8-10 *Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye doubleminded...Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up.*

Remember: "GOD KNOWS EVERYTHING - AND WE BETTER REMEMBER IT"

By Carey Scott

HOW TO DIFFER!

by Robert Turner

Brethren frequently differ with one another, and that is not necessarily a bad thing. It may indicate conviction, and our concern that others share our understanding of God's word. Differences spring from various degrees of learning or experience, or from opinions expressed on moot questions. They may be avenues for greater learning and service, as all true saints will seek to keep differences within constructive bounds. But we must know HOW to differ constructively. Who will write a How To- study, with teacher's manual and work books? The need is here, in a wide field.

If I were writing such material I think I would begin by saying that we may differ with equals— on a compatible basis as neighbors. Childish weakness is evident in those who consider all with whom they differ as blood enemies. We must grow up.

Second: make all **possible effort to understand the other's position**. Can you state his affirmation so he will accept it? You may find that you agree on the principle, and differ only on its application to some practice. Say so, and study accordingly.

Next: try to **understand WHY your opponent thinks** as he does. Seek, by reasoning, to walk in his shoes. This will improve your attitude toward him and may enable you to help him. (I am assuming that saints maintain this goal in their differences.) Also, as error involves persons, we need to be aware that there is a brother on the other end of our lance.

Hearts are WON, not TAKEN by battle tactics. A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still. Real conviction cannot be **forced** on anyone, and carnal efforts to do so defeat legitimate purposes. (**2 Cor. 10**)

Listen — at least as much as speak. If your opponent takes unfair advantage of the time, give him a gentle reminder or two — then politely but firmly excuse yourself. A shouting contest wins no souls for Christ.

Be **honest!** If you cannot answer a question, say so and promise to study, then answer later. In such cases, let your opponent explain his answer, and proofs; then check these as you study the matter for yourself.

As much as possible, turn differences into mutual studies — two men, working together to determine truth, I am aware that ideal circumstances can not always exist, but we can try.

And remember, **he who best serves the Lord is the winner**— always!!

There'll be no suicide bombers in heaven
None who will maim or destroy
In that land of springtime eternal
Where pleasures untold we'll enjoy

by 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

MOVING: ERIC AND PENNY STAUFFER
WILL BE MOVING TO CRANE, TEXAS
AS HE UNDERTAKES A FULL TIME
WORK THERE AS THE LOCAL
PREACHER. ERIC AND CHILDREN WILL
LEAVE JAN. 19, PENNY WILL REMAIN
TO HELP SELL THE HOUSE.



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