

The Latter End Is Worse

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The scriptures will furnish a man unto all good work if he will study it diligently every day of his life. It is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness that he might be complete and furnished to do every good work God has ordained for him (2 Tim. 3:16-17: Eph. 2:10). The problem is that many do not study God's word to know the truth. They do not have enough faith to sustain them in the times of trial and temptation. They grow weary and turn back to the world from which they were delivered by the Lord. Most people do not consider this to be a great sin, thus not much thought and attention are given to it by Christians today.

Israel and Judah heard the prophets from Jehovah again and again, warning them of the consequences of their disobedience of His law, but they continued on the road to apostasy. Time and time again they fell into captivity and suffered for their disobedience. The apostle Paul told us that these things are written for us that we might have hope through patience and comfort of the scriptures (Rom. 15:4). This divine history of Israel was also written as an example to us not to disobey the word of God (1 Cor. 10:11).

The word of God says that one who turns back to the world after being saved by Christ is worse than before he was saved. How can that be; what does it mean? How can one be worse than the state of being an alien from God because of his sins? Think about it.

"For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, the dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire" (2 Pet. 2:20-22).

The state of one before he was redeemed by Christ is described by the apostle Paul in these words of the Spirit:

Dead in Sin

"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins . . ." (Eph. 2:1). The wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)" (Eph. 2:4-5). That which is dead is separated from life, and the life we are talking about is God, the only original Source of Life. James says the body without the spirit is dead, and he parallels that with faith without works and calls it dead (James 2:26). Isaiah 59:1-2 described why this is so. "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."

Walked After the Course of This World

“Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (Eph. 2:2). The course of this world refers to the manner of life common to men who are governed by the power of Satan. He is the god of this world (2 Cor. 4:4). Christ spoke of him as the prince of this world, and said he had nothing in him (John 14:30). Christ also said that the prince of this world would be judged (John 16:11). He invades the hearts of men and women who do not know truth and who have inclinations to submit to the appetites of the body and mind.

Satan is called the prince of the powers of the air. It is called the power of darkness from which we are delivered when we are "translated" into the "kingdom of his dear Son" (Col. 1:13). We are instructed to adorn ourselves with the whole armor of God in order to resist the onslaught of Satan. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12).

The apostle Paul called Satan "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." He is regarded as a real being who exists in this world to rule in the hearts of the disobedient. This is a life subject to the prince of the powers of darkness, the god of this world. He is following the standards and values of the flesh mind, and is enmity with God. This "spirit" does not rule in the hearts of those who are obedient to the word of Christ; they have been delivered from the powers of darkness, which is the realm of Satan's reign.

Satan enters the hearts of those who do not resist him and leads them away from God and the truth. He did so with Judas Iscariot (Luke 22:3; John 13:27). He filled the hearts of Ananias and Sapphira to lie to the Holy Spirit because of their greed. They died as the result of the "spirit" that works in the children of disobedience.

The gospel is to be preached to the lost "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me" (Acts 26:18). Paul said, "For some are already turned aside after Satan" (1 Tim. 5:15). When men become ignorant of the devices used by Satan, he gets the advantage of them (2 Cor. 2:11). He uses measures and schemes that make him even appear as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14). The working of Satan comes "with all power and signs and lying wonders" (2 Thess. 2:9).

Lived in the Lusts of the Flesh and Mind

"Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath even as others" (Eph. 2:3).

This is a life of gratifying the lusts of the flesh. The apostle Paul describes the works of the flesh: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19-21).

The carnal mind is opposite to the spiritual mind: "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. 8:6-9).

The Desires of the Flesh and Mind

This includes the sins of the heart as well as the lusts of the body. Hate, greed, covetousness, envy, jealousy, and evil thinking are as sinful as the overt act of adultery, fornication, lying, robbery, murder and idolatry. The desires of the flesh and mind ignite the fires of sin that will destroy the person in hell, unless he repents and turns from this style of life.

Were Without Christ

"That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. 2: 12.) Anyone without Christ is without salvation, because he is the Saviour of the world. Jesus said: ". . . I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

Aliens From the Commonwealth of Israel

Israel in the New Covenant is the church (Gal. 6:16). The church today is the holy nation, the peculiar people of God. "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light"(1 Pet. 2:9). To be aliens from the church is to be aliens from the covenant of Christ and his blood by which all men are saved. Christ adds to the church ALL who are saved, at the time of their forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38,47).

Strangers From the Covenant of Promises

They had no covenant with God either under the old covenant or under the new.

They Had No Hope

The promises of God were made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and then to those in Christ. The people addressed in Ephesians 2:12 had no hope. We are saved by hope. "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" (Rom. 8:24-25).

There is just one hope, as there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God (Eph. 4:4-5). "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began" (Titus 1:2). "And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life" (1 John 2:25). Hope is based upon the love, mercy and grace of God, what Christ paid for salvation, and the promises that God made upon the conditions of the New Covenant, and then upon what I have done in obedience to that faith once delivered to the saints. If I am without hope, I am of all men most miserable (1 Cor. 15:19).

Without God in the World

"Without God" translates from one word in the Greek, and it occurs only here in the New Testament. Christians in the first century used the word to describe pagans. Without God is the most miserable state one could imagine who has any knowledge of the fact that "in him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28).

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