

Truth For the Final Generation

Midday Message

“Commands to Destroy, the Hebrew Idiom of Permission and Preserving God’s Justice and Mercy”

Opening Hymn: 225 NH “God is Working His Purpose Out”

Scripture Reading: Romans 3:23-26

Introduction:

Last time we saw that God is for us and never against us (Romans 8:32), in fact Jesus has so plainly revealed the heart of the Father that when the Son is seen in the New Testament it was really a revelation of the Father! (John 16:25-27) So the entire plan of salvation, the investigative Judgement is God’s plan to save all those who through faith have chosen the way of agape or caritas. It is clear that God never wanted His people to see war or to use compelling power (Zechariah 4:6) but they stubbornly chose their own way and reap what they sowed (Galatians 6:7, 8).

Commands to Destroy

¹⁵Samuel also said unto Saul, The Lord sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel: now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the Lord. ² Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. ³ Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass. 1 Samuel 15:1-3

Bible Language

Did God send Samuel to anoint Saul as King? Yes. Was it the will of God that Israel should choose a king? No. Yet God did it anyway. The prophet Samuel appeals to God’s decision as a reason for King Saul’s obedience.

The Command

God commanded the utter destruction of Amalek. All the men women and children. Even the destruction of animals was included. Was God ordering the utter destruction of Amalek? Is this consistent with His character of love?

Applying The Principles

God is Love and Love does no ill to His neighbour. It is obvious that killing or murder is ill and thus God cannot be responsible for or even “command” murder or killing.

⁷ Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. ⁸ He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. 1 John 4:7, 8

⁸ Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. ¹⁰ Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. Romans 13:8,10

How are we to understand this and other seeming contradictions? Firstly,

³ Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass. 1 Samuel 15:1-3

The reason for their “judgement”

² Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. 1 Samuel 15:2

¹⁴ And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. ¹⁶ For he said, Because the Lord hath sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation. Exodus 17:14, 16

¹⁷ Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt; ¹⁸ How he met thee by the way, and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary; and he feared not God. ¹⁹ Therefore it shall be, when the Lord thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about, in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it, that thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget it. Deuteronomy 25:17-19

For 400 years the divine sentence lingered that Amalek may have room for repentance, but with each succeeding generation they got worse not better until they were finally cut off as a nation.

After delivering the reproof at Gilgal, Samuel had little intercourse with the king of Israel. Saul resented the prophet's stern rebuke, and avoided him as far as possible; and Samuel did not intrude his presence or his counsel. But the Lord commanded him to bear another message to the king. God purposed again to work through Saul, to destroy the enemies of Israel. ST August 24, 1882, par. 1

Obedying this command, the prophet reminded him that he had been commissioned by the Lord to anoint him king, and that he still spoke by the same authority. Then he declared the divine message. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not." ST August 24, 1882, par. 2

After denouncing judgments against the Amalekites, the Lord waited long for them to turn from their evil ways; but they went on in sin until their iniquity had reached its height, till their day of probation ended, and divine justice demanded their destruction. That wicked people were dwelling in God's world, the house which he had prepared for his faithful, obedient children. Yet they appropriated his gifts to their own use, without one thought of the Giver. The more blessings he poured upon them, the more boldly they transgressed against him. Thus they continued to pervert his blessings and abuse his mercy. They strengthened their souls in iniquity, but God kept silence; and they said in their hearts. "How doth God know? and is there knowledge with the Most High? "But the dark record of their crimes was constantly passing up to Heaven. There is a limit beyond which men may not go on in sin, ST August 24, 1882, par. 5

"A hidden boundary between God's mercy and his wrath." ST August 24, 1882, par. 6

The Hebrew Idiom of Permission

Bible students have long recognized that the language has certain points that are unique to that language. Certain expressions that can be misinterpreted if not rightly understood. An idiom may be defined as a set of words, when taken together, whose meaning convey something different than the literal words.

For instance, we would say “breaking the ice” which means making someone comfortable especially in conversation. Or “kick the bucket” which means to die not literally to kick a bucket.

In the bible we observe the following:

“And the Lord hardened Pharoah’s heart, ...” Exodus 9:12 means God allowed Pharoah’s heart to be hardened

“And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie” 2 Thessalonians 2:11 means God permitted them to receive error because they rejected His truth,

How The Spirit of Prophecy Saw It

David had neglected the duty of punishing the crime of Amnon, and because of the unfaithfulness of the king and father and the impenitence of the son, the Lord permitted events to take their natural course, and did not restrain Absalom. When parents or rulers neglect the duty of punishing iniquity, God Himself will take the case in hand. His restraining power will be in a measure removed from the agencies of evil, so that a train of circumstances will arise which will punish sin with sin. PP 728.1

God is described as doing that which He did not prevent or permitting the events to run their course because of their natural consequences.

The Heart of The Gospel

²³ For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; ²⁴ Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: ²⁵ Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; ²⁶ To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Romans 3:23-26

The Apostle brings to sharp focus the facts of the gospel and the character of God. He makes it clear that all are sinners and in need of divine grace. Also, Paul says that ALL have been justified freely by the grace of God!

In verse 25 Paul links the sacrificial death of Christ to the sanctuary service by showing that Jesus is our “propitiation” or mercy-seat (hilastérion). This dual application shows

that the Justice of God has been met in Christ and the mercy of God freely flows from the throne/ heart of God to every repentant believing sinner!

Let's read verse 25 and 26 in some modern translations

²⁵ God offered him, so that by his blood^[a] he should become the means by which people's sins are forgiven through their faith in him. God did this in order to demonstrate that he is righteous. In the past he was patient and overlooked people's sins; but in the present time he deals with their sins, in order to demonstrate his righteousness. ²⁶In this way God shows that he himself is righteous and that he puts right everyone who believes in Jesus. Romans 3:25-26 Good News Translation

²⁵ God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement,^[b] through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—²⁶ he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus. Romans 5:25-56 New International Version

Through the grace and mercy of God the sin of Adam's transgression and the sins of the world have met their full punishment in Christ! At the same time, God has revealed His gracious character in order that mankind may be won back to faith and trust. God has demonstrated that "...the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life. Romans 6:23"

Appeal

How many people have wished that they could hear an angel direct from glory say to them what Gabriel said to Daniel, "Thou art greatly beloved"! The apostle Paul wrote by direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and so the message of love came as directly from heaven to the Romans as it did to Daniel. The Lord did not single out a few favorites by name, but declared that all in Rome were beloved of God.

Well, there is no respect of persons with God, and that message of love to the Romans is ours as well. They were "beloved of God" simply because "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." Jer. 31:3. And this everlasting love to men is not shaken, although they

forget it; for to those who have turned away, and fallen by their iniquity, he says, "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely." Hosea 14:43. "If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful; He cannot deny Himself."

Yours in our Master's Service

Elder Ryan Griffith

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