

Hartford Bible Students

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Maintaining Faith in an Unstable World

It is very hard to maintain faith in this unstable and frightening world. It takes an extreme, educated faith to believe that God's plan will provide a constructive end to all the tears caused by evil — to believe that God is not indifferent to every sorrow. The Scriptures declare that He desires mankind to live in a world without fear, but He now allows Satan to rule for a limited time in order that each individual may learn valuable lessons — experiencing the results of evil and selfishness.

A War Against Evil

The world is quickly learning that it is helpless to win a war against evil. "This sore travail has God given to man to be exercised therewith." (Ecclesiastes 1:13) It is comforting to know that when God finally says through His Son, It is enough — peace be still, we can rest assured that there will be great changes in the earth, and all will begin to see that the permission of evil was both educational and preparatory to the ushering of mankind into the ages of blessing to come, wherein "all the families of the earth will be blessed." (Genesis 28:14)

The promise is that once God, through His Son, puts an utter end to all evil, "affliction shall not rise up the second time." (Nahum 1:9; Job 34:29) In other words, the harsh lessons of evil will never be necessary again when all the families of the earth learn, by contrast, that love, peace, righteousness and unselfishness are far more preferable than living in this present evil world. The depth of God's wisdom is shown in His foresight to devise a plan that provides for man's free choice and experience with evil, but nevertheless brings redemption through Christ which will result in eternal happiness.

A Basic Foundation of Faith and Trust

Evil is a reality. "God is love" is a reality. How can we find harmony in these two statements? To

believe in God, one must have faith that He is loving and wise, and providing all things for man's ultimate good. It would truly be a horrible thought that a God, who claims to be love, would create billions to live on earth in sorrow, only to send them to a future of eternal torment. We know that God is just and good, and hates evil of every kind. "Thou are not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee..." Psa. 5:4

To understand why God permits evil, we must first realize the difference between permitting and causing. God has permitted man to have a temporary experience with evil, so that all will come to know firsthand the contrast between living righteously, or selfishly in disobedience. And, by faith we trust that God would not permit this experience with evil to last forever.

The Desire of All Nations Shall Come

Though God has permitted Satan's evil influence for a relatively short time, He will soon put a stop to all evil and usher in His everlasting righteous Kingdom. Then the Scriptures assure us that all of "the inhabitants of the earth will learn righteousness" when the "knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the deep." (Isaiah 26:9; 11:9)

The love of God will abundantly bestow blessings of life, peace and happiness upon all. Yes, the influence of God's benevolent Kingdom will have an overwhelming transforming effect on the hearts of men. Of this mighty future work we read, "And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh: That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God." Ezekiel 11:19-20

Just as the terror of today was prophesied, the resurrection of all who have ever lived is also assured in prophecy. Then, all those who perished in the terrors of this day will be reunited with their loved ones, and “The desire of all nations shall come.” Haggai 2:7

Thy Kingdom Come Thy Will Be Done on Earth

God’s Kingdom to come on earth, with Christ as King, will bring to mankind a time of restoration and renewal. Satan will be restrained during this thousand year Kingdom, and righteousness will be the rule rather than the exception. (Isa. 32:17; Rev. 20:2) This will be the first real chance for man to know their loving Creator under ideal circumstances. Everyone will then have a fresh start in life; a new life. If obedient, they will live forever, and having learned by experience the truth that “the wages of sin is death,” they will want no more of sin but will gladly follow righteousness. Rom. 6:23

Those Who Choose Righteousness Now

Only a few in this present evil world escape the corruption that is in the world now. (2 Pet. 1:4) Jesus called these his “little flock,” and Paul called them “the Church.” They have not only received the invitation to the “high calling of God in Christ Jesus,” but they have answered this call. (Phil. 3:14) This small company of Jesus’ followers who choose to live righteously now are counted worthy

to share in Christ’s sufferings and are rewarded to sit with Christ on his throne. “Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.” Phil. 1:29 The scriptures are clear that the suffering of the little flock of Christ will be rewarded: “If we suffer, we shall also reign with him;” “Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life;” and “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection... they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.” 2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 2:10 & 20:6

The Everlasting Lessons

If there is, then, a “first resurrection,” by implication there must be a second resurrection of the dead. This is the purpose for which Christ and his Church reign a thousand years—to bring the resurrected world of mankind up the highway of holiness to perfection. “...when thy judgements are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.” Isa. 26:9; 35:8

Yes, God chastens to heal! The permission of evil will have been a useless torment unless man is given an opportunity to use his experience to make positive choices. To return to the days of one’s youth is to begin again! All the troubles and tribulations of the past, instead of being worse than useless torments, will be valuable guides. Death is not the irrevocable end of human existence; it is the final experience of an everlasting lesson

Send to: Hartford Bible Students

P.O. Box 493 * Manchester, CT 06045

E-Mail: bibletruthkeys@gmail.com

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