

John Newton: "A daily portion of both comforts and crosses, each one the most suitable to our case--is adjusted and appointed by the hand which was once nailed to the cross for us!"

The Baptist Catechism

AS PRINTED BY THE CHARLESTON ASSOCIATION IN 1813 *(Presented here as originally published – this does not constitute a full endorsement of the Riverside Baptist Church)*

89. Q. What doth every sin deserve?

A. Every sin deserveth God's wrath and curse, both in this life and that which is to come (Eph. 5:6; Gal. 3:10; Lam. 3:39; Mt. 25:41; Rom. 6:23).

90. Q. What doth God require of us that we may escape his wrath and curse, due to us for sin?

A. To escape the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin, God requireth of us faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life (Acts 20:21), with the diligent use of all the outward means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption (Pr. 2:1-6, 8:33 to the end; Is. 55:2, 3).

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Sunday Morning Bible Study -- 10:00 AM

Sunday Morning Worship -- 11:00 AM

Prayer and Bible Study Wednesday Evening 6:30 PM

WCWV 92.9 FM – 8:00 AM Sunday Morning

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST REPORT

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Pillar and ground of the Truth” -- 1 Timothy 3:15

Volume 14, No. 36

September 5, 2021

THE CURIOSITY OF ANGELS

Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into. (1 Peter 1:12)

The intent of Peter in this statement was to reinforce the importance of maintaining a view to “...the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.” In doing so, he calls three things to witness. First, he reminds them of the words of the prophets that had come to them as a result of the Spirit of Christ which was in them (See v. 11). Secondly, he would call their attention to the revelation of the truths the prophets sought in the Apostolic Gospel of the revelation of Jesus Christ. The third source of emphasis brought to bear is the intense interest of the angels. The prophets had realized much more than we might realize, and sensed, by the Spirit, the “sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow (v. 11b).” It was a matter of further revelation to them that what they understood was to come to pass in time to come. Peter is certifying to them that the time had arrived, and they were receiving the Gospel by that same Holy Spirit, now working in the Apostles and them that follow.

At the mention of angels several thoughts quickly emerge in the minds of men. Some reject outright that they exist while others have embraced the inventions of men in defining both their being and function. One of the worst things we hear of is the idea that humans become angels at death. In that all things are the creation of our God; we need look no further to the source of their existence. In that

we see their function described in various ways in Scripture, we need not theorize as to the purpose of God in their creation. We are aware that the elect angels are fully devoted to the service and praise of God, and they are ever about the matter of joyful submission to the will of God. Their attitude is exemplified in the actions of the Seraphims: *And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. (Isaiah 6:3)*. We know that a vast number of angels fell with Satan and cannot be redeemed; the rest are sinless creatures that have no need of redemption. Yet they have a curiosity concerning the work of redemption.

I would submit that the primary reason of their interest in redemption is that the glory of God is fully invested in that which we see in Christ Jesus our Lord. The language here indicates that they were bending down to see as of one trying to get a closer look at the details. James uses the same word to describe looking into “that perfect law of liberty.” The disciples bent down to peer into the empty tomb. So, the angels would know every detail of the glorious Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We find them being deployed in the things pertaining to redemption very early. After Adam and Eve were ejected from the Garden of Eden, it was cherubim with flaming swords that were placed at the entrance to guard the way of the

tree of life. Even this was an act of mercy in preventing men from living forever in sin. We see their function again as they appear with the Lord unto Abraham and then go on to deliver Lot from the destruction of Sodom. We fast-forward to the depiction of the cherubim with wings outstretched and bending over the mercy seat – perhaps symbolic of their never-ending attention to the glory of God to be seen in Christ our mercy seat. And we encounter numerous appearances of these devoted messengers of God with some message of deliverance to the Lord’s people. Two of them are named in Scripture. They are Gabriel and Michael the archangels. Both appeared to Daniel. Michael is mentioned in Jude as contending with Satan over the body of Moses. In the Revelation he is seen leading the angels in war against the dragon.

Of great significance to us is the role of Gabriel in announcing the incarnation of our Lord. First, he appears to announce the birth of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ. Then, he appears to Mary to reveal to her that she would be the mother of Jesus. And then, the glorious scene of the heavenly angel appearing to the shepherds and the heavenly host with a most magnificent display of praise for the newborn King Jesus. Angels would encamp round about Him throughout His earthly sojourn.

Jesus informs us of much concerning the interest of angels in the matters of redemption. In Luke 15 we learn that there is joy in the presence of the angels over one sinner that repents. Jesus said (Luke 12:8-9) that those that confess Him would be confessed before the angels and likewise those that deny Him would be denied before the angels.

They were in attendance at the crucifixion of our Lord and were at the ready to both minister to Him (as they did at the temptation) and could have defended Him had He so called them. An angel appeared to Him in the Garden strengthening Him. There is no doubt that they were filled with wonder at what took place on the cross and waited and rejoiced at His resurrection. It was angels that were waiting for the women on that glorious morning to delightfully declare that “He is risen.”

Even in the Apostolic era they appeared to both deliver and protect God’s men as they went about the business of delivering the Gospel. An angel dispatched Philip to the Ethiopian and one appeared to Cornelius with the good news that he would be receiving the Gospel. And we take careful note of the profound roles given the angels in the Revelation. In all things they defer to Him who is declared to be “so much better than angels.”

If the angels have such an interest in the things prophesied, preached, and witnessed in the Gospel, how much more should be the interest of we who are the beneficiaries of redemption. Paul declares that He was “seen of angels.” It is evident that it was more than a casual glance. The angels bend to know more about our salvation. What should our posture be? Should we not be ever seeking to know more and be truly growing in His grace and knowledge. The angels are “sent forth to minister for them who shall be the heirs of salvation.” Even so they selflessly desire to know of the things that pertain to our salvation. We have much more reason to look into these things than they. May it ever be so with us all.
bhs

It is the way of God to bring all good out of evil, not only to overcome the evil, but to make the evil work toward the good. —Jeremiah Burroughs

Alexander MacLaren on Angels:

They do not share in the blessings of redemption, but they can behold what they do not themselves experience. The Seer in the Revelation was not mistaken, when he believed that he heard redeemed men leading the chorus to Him that had redeemed them by His blood out of all nations, and then heard the thunderous echo from an innumerable host of angels who could not say 'Thou hast redeemed us,' but who could bring praise and glory to Him because He had redeemed men.

The Stewardship of Persecution

When we are called to the stewardship of persecution it matters how we respond. First, we must have a single eye to the honor and glory of God. Remember, Jesus warned that it's easy to practice our righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, and in that there is no gain or reward (see Matthew 6:1-3). Similarly, it's easy to steward persecution in such a way that our aim is to actually further our platform, politics, or even social media clicks.

Second, as Christians we need to frame persecution in terms of privilege and not victimhood – the "woe is me" pity party that abounds in our society. Paul wrote: "For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake" (Philippians 1:29). This is why the Apostles upon being beaten rejoiced because "they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name" (Acts 5:41). And it is a privilege because it's identity with Christ – it's sharing in his sufferings (see 1 Peter 4:13).

Third, there needs to be a holy contentment that not all ill-treatment and hostility will be remedied in this life. As an innocent man Paul was legally persecuted in the presence of Festus but he used what avenues he could to appeal to Caesar (see Acts 25:11). But there comes a time when avenues are exhausted and there is no more earthly appeal – there comes a time when we must not love our lives even unto death (see Revelation 12:11). Rather, we embrace the sword of persecution as that which hastens us to the Lord Jesus and entrust ourselves to the Judge of all the earth who will do what is right.

While there's so much more, let me give one final response. In the midst of persecution we still seek to be Christians – to respect our authorities, to love our enemy, to guard our tongues, and to not repay evil with evil but repay it with good. In persecution our gospel holiness should shine the brightest. And perhaps one of the best ways to do that is to endure persecution without complaining. As Paul wrote: "Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world" (Philippians 2:14-15). Isn't that interesting? One of the best ways to stand out against a dark society and culture that is pushing hard against the claims of Jesus Christ, is to not complain. –Kyle Borg

Sometimes the growing Christian sinks under a sense of sin so miserable that he wishes he could tear open his chest, rip out his sin-blackened heart, and fling it as far from himself as possible. —Donald Whitney