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Looking Out Upon Another Year

"For we are consumed by thine anger and by Thy wrath we are troubled. Thou has SET OUR INIQUITIES BEFORE THEE: our secret sins in the light of thy countenance." Psalm 90:7-8

"Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ who gave himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present Evil age." Galatians 1:3-4

Substance of a recent message by Dr. Ronald Cooke

Introduction: A good world but an evil age

As the New Year dawned I was reading the 90th Psalm. Here Moses speaks of God being the everlasting God the dwelling place of His people as he compares the eternal God with ephemeral man, and reveals how God carries away the generations like a flood. Delitzsch notes in reference to this flood that, when one generation is swept away during the night, another one blooms forth in the morning, which in turn withers away in the evening.

Here the brevity not just of man's life, is set before us, but the brevity of entire generations.

He also notes that man's life is not only brief but it is also consumed by God's anger and troubled by his wrath.

As many commentators have shown here, the world that God created was not evil but good. There was nothing wrong with God's original creation. But something happened in it, which changed it. The man that God created rebelled against his Creator and fell from his first estate and he became a sinner. God then punishes man the sinner with the penalty of death. So far from being the normal or natural end to man's life, as Pelagius first taught, death is the penal judgment of God upon sin, and a constant reminder of the anger of God. The funeral of every ungodly person is a constant reminder of the penalty of sin imposed upon the human race as a result of God's wrath.

I. THE RECOGNITION OF MAN'S FALLEN STATE REVEALED BY MOSES

Moses says that God has set our iniquities before Him, our secret sins in the light of his countenance. Man does not understand that God sees hidden sins that he does not see... Luther said,

"That Moses calls sin a concealed thing whose extent no human mind can comprehend and there is on account of the ruin of our nature something which is still hidden and concealed which however is not excused or counted underserving of punishment simply because it escapes our observation or that of other men. There are many who give themselves up to this delusion to their ruin. They fail to understand the relation of sin to death."

Philippine Relief Efforts



The Ministry Committed To Us Letters

"Lovely greetings from the Philippines!

Your prayers and encouragement meant a lot to us as we face the challenges with our brethren here who had been typhoon victims. We really appreciate your thoughtfulness and loving concern, as we are one in the family of God. We really appreciate the impact of the Bibles we gave to the typhoon victims to strengthen and encourage them to face these challenges.

May the Lord bless and protect us as we continue to go for this mission. I know it is still devastating that people are begging for more assistance to their pitiful condition.

Please pray with us that there are more people who will surrender their lives to the Lord Jesus Christ and not just for their physical condition only but their spirits as well for salvation. It is not God's will that anyone should perish. "

In Christ

Pastor Rebecca Regino

Special thanks to the Cleveland Park Bible Church, Altoona EMC, and Hope EMC for their generous donations to assist Pastor Regino with his relief effort.

Pastor in Zambia

"Thank you for being a part of my spiritual journey here. Your books are playing a big part in meeting my spiritual needs. Your messages of hope and truth in them are bringing real comfort and reassurance, and inspiring me to carry on despite the odds. I always appreciate your support. Many souls are being reached thanks to your help. Here we do continue to pray for you and your ministry."

Your co-worker in Christ Jesus,

Pastor Edward Mulenga

**Death Row Inmate
In Zambia**

"Many thanks and much delighted to receive your help. We thank the Lord for you for the good parental gesture you have continued to display towards us the downcast. We have shared the items you sent among ourselves. May God be with you and keep you."

Joseph Musonda



Simply put, man cannot see how sinful he is, nor does he understand the relation of sin to death, and the relation of God's wrath to sin. Patrick Fairbairn said, "Sin is in God's eyes a much viler thing than it is in man's eyes." This truth seems to be lost upon this dying race and upon the self-righteous church of today.

It is a mark of the self-righteous person that he does not see himself as a sinner, and subject to the wrath of God because of his sin. Delitzsch says, "When men sin and refuse to recognize their sin and confess it, their forgiveness is inadmissible. Their sin makes them an object of punishment. The countenance of God is a (figurative expression) of God's nature in its inclination towards the world. The face of God toward the world is a gracious face toward everything conformed to His will, it is a wrathful face against everything opposed to Him and His will."

So looking at man in the light of his sinfulness, all his days are passed away in God's anger, and troubled by His wrath. The fact that God sees our hidden sins, that we do not see should humble us and bring us to the confession of our manifold sins both of commission and omission. But in today's country club church there is little or no confession of any sins, whether sins of omission or commission. So everyone must be perfect or almost perfect, for there is little or no recognition of sin. C. H. Spurgeon said that a prayer without confession of sin was a Pharisee's prayer. The Pharisee said that he was not as other men are, he confessed to no sin or shortcoming. He merely told God how good he was and the good things he thought he did. If people pray such prayers it is obvious that they have no idea of the sins that God sees and sets before His face. The self-righteous person can see none and therefore confesses to none just like the Pharisee.

I was looking at verse 8 and 9 of this Psalm in the Septuagint and noticed that those early Hebrew Scholars translated the verse in this way: "Thou hast set our transgression before Thee: our AION in the light of Thy countenance." So instead of secret sins, being set before God, the Septuagint says, "Our AGE" is set forth in the light of God's countenance.

That such a translation however, can be sustained, is unlikely. No one else in all the versions I looked at and all the various personal translations done by commentators follow the Septuagint here. But Paul definitely says this present AION is an evil one. Both in Galatians and Ephesians, Paul sets forth this age as an evil one. Perhaps those early translators thought that an evil age helped to hide our sins from us; for Paul certainly connects this evil age to man's sinful conduct.

Writing to the Ephesians he says, "In time past we walked according to the course of this age, according to the prince of the power of the air Satan the spirit that works in the sons of disobedience." This walk also was marked by our conduct that "fulfilled the lusts of the flesh and mind and we all were by nature children of wrath" That is, subject to wrath. He also in our text, says plainly, "Christ gave himself for our sins that he might deliver us from this present evil age."

Edward Payson, who has been called the last of the Puritans said, “We must IN OUR THOUGHTS leave this dark sinful world (age), where God is unseen and almost forgotten, and were consequently, the evil of sinning against Him cannot be fully perceived, and place ourselves and our sins in the light of God’s countenance.”

Payson saw the veil that this evil age puts over our eyes so that many times we cannot even see the evil that we are involved in, until the light of Scripture by the power of the Holy Spirit, illuminates our minds.

Luther intimated that when men ignore evil, sin, death and the wrath of God which sin deserves, they lose all fear of God and begin to act wickedly. Paul also notes, that in Romans 3, after he gives a long catalogue of the sins of mankind adds THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES. This is one of the key marks of this present evil age.

Think of all the denials of God’s creative act in Genesis that this evil age puts forth, and then all those professing Christians who follow this evil age in its denials of God’s word. Their sin is completely hidden from them and from the scholars they sit under, who have been overwhelmed by the wisdom of this evil age.

II. THE RESCUE FROM OUR FALLEN STATE REVEALED BY THE APOSTLE PAUL.

Luther said that,

“Moses kept within the teachings of the law, and so he does here. For he preaches death, sin, and condemnation; in order to

terrify the presumptuous who are secure in their sins, and sets before them their guilt and iniquity.”

He also notes that when men do not understand the relation of sin to death, they begin to have less dread of the wrath of God. Adding, “Men convey to the tomb one dead body after another, and yet will not be persuaded to destroy the sting of death by faith in Christ, and free themselves from the wrath of God.”

The wrath of God is not just an Old Testament, truth as one modern writer, I read recently, tried to prove. It is obviously a New Testament truth also. With the coming of Christ and his death upon the cross the wrath of God was taken care of judicially but not personally. As John in his gospel says plainly, those who do not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ the wrath of God abides upon them. Meaning that the wrath of God remains in effect upon them because they have not believed on the Lord Jesus Christ as their sin-bearer and their propitiation. So, the modern cry that is so popular today, that God is not angry with you, is unscriptural and anti-scriptural.

Fallen man must be saved from his sins and from the punishment his sins. G. C. Berkouwer, the Dutch theologian, surely set forth a very important truth when he said,

“Where personal guilt is obscured, the grace that frees men from guilt is also obscured.”

Surely the grace that so many speak of today is not needed at all if man is not guilty before God. Why would anyone need grace if they are not guilty of any sin?

We could add, wherever wrath is obscured; the mercy that frees from wrath is also obscured. For obviously, if there is no wrath there is no need of mercy. If man is not a sinner there is no need of forgiveness. For forgiveness is only necessary where there are sins that need to be forgiven. So much of modern preaching is Pelagian, for Pelagius denied the need of forgiveness for he believed that man could live without sinning. So modern preachers and teachers like Pelagius, ignore the REASONS why Grace, Mercy and Forgiveness are needed. So in essence deny the need of any salvation at all.

Fallen man is dead in trespasses and in sins. He needs grace, mercy and forgiveness, and Paul makes this abundantly clear in both Galatians and Ephesians. In recent days, I was looking at how the Greek words, KOSMOS and AION are used by Paul in his epistles. KOSMOS, as far as I can see is always translated WORLD. AION, on the other hand, is translated by three different English words: WORLD, AGE and COURSE.

In Eph, 2:2, AION is translated by the word COURSE. If it was translated by the word WORLD, as it is in some places, we would have a tautology: "Where in times past we walked according to the world of this world."

Or even if we translated it AGE, as it is translated several times, the verse would read,

"Where in times past we walked according to the AGE of this WORLD. The translators correctly here, gave AION a third meaning "Wherein time past we walked according to the COURSE of this AGE" In modern parlance we could say, "we walked according to the CULTURE of this age."

Paul after showing that fallen man is dead in trespasses and in sins, writes, "But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love with which He has loved us even when we were dead in sins, has quickened made us alive together with Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of His grace through Christ Jesus. For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it (faith), is the gift of God; not of works lest any man should boast."

So it is all of Grace. No human merit. No human works, No human effort. So in starting out his epistles Paul says, GRACE to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins why? To deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of God and our Father. Grace delivers from this present evil age.

Paul has much to say about this AGE. In Galatians he calls it THIS PRESENT EVIL AGE. However, in speaking of Demas leaving him, in his epistle to Timothy, he says, "Demas has forsaken me having loved THIS PRESENT AGE. He does not use the word PONEROS -evil- age, when writing about Demas. So what is the difference? In Galatians, Paul uses, ENESTOTOS-PRESENT, which Vine says means this whole age contrast with the future age-the age to come.

This whole present age is an evil age. Writing about Demas he uses the word NUN-NOW- This NOW age. Paul is looking at the PERSONAL involvement of Demas in this age and how he loved it, when he should have known it is an evil age, and not to be loved by anyone who is supposed to be delivered from it.

III. THE REJECTION OF THIS EVIL AGE

Demas loved (AGAPESAS) this NOW age fully. Demas was all caught up in loving the immediate involvement in this age. He is an example of those who are impressed with the attractions of this evil age and give themselves up wholly to them. Demas loved this present age because he did not see it as an evil age.

According to God's inspired Word, and not the teachings of men, this present age is evil. It is not going to become better, for the evil nature of it is total. This is why Christ gave himself for our sins, that He might DELIVER-RESCUE- us from this present evil age.

Not for a year, or a generation, but from an AGE long evil. This passage in Galatians is the death knell to all forms of Jesuit Reconstructionism. This age is not going to be reconstructed by a cultural struggle-rather God's people are going to be delivered from it.

Walter Bauer's Greek Lexicon adapted and translated by Arndt and Gingrich says of this word "in the ethical sense this word means, WICKED, EVIL, BAD, BASE, WORTHLESS, VICIOUS, DEGENERATE."

They also mention a second meaning HO PONEROS-the EVIL ONE -i.e. the DEVIL. Paul says that we walked according to the Prince of the power of the air, i.e. Satan. Paul calls Satan "the god of this age." This age is dominated by Satan, as Sir Robert Anderson said, not because God has abdicated His sovereignty, but because the world accords the Devil its homage. So the plain revelation of the word of God is

THIS IS AN EVIL AGE.

Christ gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present evil age. Millions caught up in the Jesuit cultural struggle who claim it is God's will to be so involved, ignore that this is an evil age. When Paul adds so clearly even a ten year old boy or girl could understand, that this deliverance from this present wicked age is according to the will of God our Father. Another deathblow to those who claim it is God's will to reconstruct this evil age. The Bible says no such thing, Paul in speaking of those who are the "ENEMIES" of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, who glory in their shame, and who MIND EARTHLY THINGS, points out that such people are not to be followed at all. Why? For our CONVERSATION, COMMONWEALTH, CITIZENSHIP, POLITEUMA, exist in heaven, from which we look for - literally- are awaiting the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ delivers us from this present evil age NOW, and will ultimately deliver us from it eternally.

Moses sees the need of the mercy of God, for he says, “So teach us to number our days that we might apply our hearts unto wisdom, O satisfy us early with thy mercy that we may rejoice and be glad all our days and let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us and establish thou the work of our hands upon us.”

The word translated beauty here is No’AM from the root NA-AM (from which the name NAOMI comes) means pleasure, pleasantness, delight, grace and beauty. Rev. J Fred McCurdy, in his commentary on the Psalms says this about this Hebrew word,

“There is no more beautiful and expressive word than NO ‘AM in ver 17 a, signifying primarily what is sweet, pleasant, or delightful; and all language fails to express the wealth of meaning it bears, when chosen by Moses, “the man of God, “ and the friend of God, to picture forth those attributes which on Him were the source of DELIGHT. It is not merely “beauty” in its widest sense, or “glory” or “goodness” but a union of them all.” (Emphasis his)

Yes, as we look out on another New Year let us like Moses and David desire ONE thing that is to behold the beauty of the Lord. To see His marvelous grace, mercy, forgiveness, and loving-kindness, all personified in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. For His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father and the Prince of Peace. Let us follow what Paul says, and rejoice that Christ Jesus gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the Will of God and our Father. Amen and Amen.



Breckbill Bible College



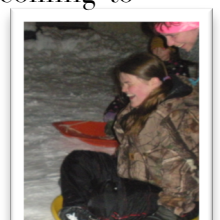
The spring semester at Breckbill has reached its halfway point. Special thanks to the Hess and Moore Families for their hard work in remodeling the school kitchen and dining room. Thanks also to those who gave to help with this project.

The winter has been a frigid one but the students have enjoyed some fun in the snow. The class of 2014 is looking forward to graduation on May 3, 2014 at 1 PM plan on coming to support them.

ENROLL NOW FOR FALL 2014

And

COME DISCOVER THE VISION!!!





The work in Malawi continues to grow under the leadership of Samson and Kitty Nkhono. The ladies groups were thrilled to receive Bibles and Hymnals thanks to a donation from the Ladies at Cedar View Independent Methodist Church.

Many building projects are in progress. Some of the churches in Malire district had to be repaired after the recent rainy season caused flooding. The Pastors continue weekly and biweekly meetings at the churches. They are grateful for a recent donation to provide new bicycles for them.

Over 30 boxes of yarn have been collected and are now prepared for mailing. We are so thankful for the many ladies who have donated to this project. We also have had a great response to the need for sunscreen. Please continue to pray for the people of Malawi.



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