

Spirit and Truth

Bible studies dedicated to helping the Bible student to know and worship God as he requires His followers to know and worship Him.

The true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth. John 4:23,24

Lesson 9

CARRYING OUT GOD'S
JUDGEMENTS

This lesson forms part two, following on from the previous study dealing with the subject of the judgements of God.

In part one (lesson 8) we studied the justice and mercy of God and learned that His reign as Supreme Ruler of the universe is a perfect balance of, protection for the law abiding citizen and, judgement and justice for the rebellious.

Some people find it difficult to accept that God can and does administer the penalty resulting from His judgements. Few would deny that there is a penalty for sin (Rom.6:23), yet, it is reasoned that, because God is love, He is not the one responsible for the carrying out of that penalty! Rather, it is expected that Satan, as he is the "destroyer," is the one responsible for the destruction of the wicked and for the execution of the judgements pronounced by Almighty God.

Our lesson today will aim to present examples that will demonstrate that the God who said "The wages of sin is death," is the same God who delivers that reward.

1. When Jesus comes He will reward certain people in a specific way. Whom did He say He will reward and what will be the issue that decides the nature of that reward?

Matthew 16:27b; Revelation 22:12

Compare John 5:29

Note: Jesus rewards both the good and the evil doer. He has promised, and we accept, that He will reward the one who does righteousness with everlasting life. But how might we understand that He is also responsible for the reward of eternal destruction upon those who practice and spread corruption?

The remainder of this lesson will cite examples of incidents of where disciplines and penalties have befallen individuals and nations as the direct

intervention of God alone. This is done, not to portray God as a "rod of iron," but to show that He can be *trusted to protect* His faithful, obedient servants, His beloved people. God will not allow anything to hurt or pollute the paradise home He has prepared for those who love Him (Eze.28:25,26).

Thus He will administer justice and in mercy bring an end to the miserable existence of those who have rebelled against life and their Creator. The examples to follow should clearly indicate that God is fully responsible for the executive judgement.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE ?

2. God has the authority and the power to carry out His judgements. What special prerogative does God possess that Satan does not have, concerning the destruction of the wicked?

Luke 12:4,5

Note: This passage cannot be read to say that Satan is responsible for the final destruction of the wicked. Notice the next question...

3. What was the result of the direct intervention of the Son of God when He cursed the fig tree?

Mark 11:12-14,20,21

Note: God's strange work -- He who had created the fig tree may also take the option to destroy it. It was not a living person, but this incident serves to illustrate that the God who gives life may also take it away! This becomes of profound importance when we realise that the primary application of this incident with the fig tree is to send a warning to all Israel and that includes you and me. The warning is clear, those who's lives are barren and void of the fruit of good works of righteousness will suffer the same removal of life, by the One who gave life, as did the barren fig tree (Isa.5:1-7; Rom.11:16-24; John 15:2; Heb.12:11).

4. What options were placed before the people that they may avoid the same fate as the cursed fig tree?

Deuteronomy 30:19

Note: In view of the unmistakable message contained in the fig tree incident, the two considerations God has placed before Israel are very serious. It is clear that "life" means -- *God will give eternal life*; and "death" means -- *God will arrange the eternal removal from existence of the unrepentant* (Eze.28:18,19). O that men would realise the alarming indifference they have toward eternal life. To many people eternal life is not a consideration or a reality (Deut.32:28,29).

5. How is the final destruction effected for unrepentant men and fallen angels at the end of this world?

Revelation 20:9,10

Note: The passage clearly states that fire came down from God out of heaven. It does not say that, *Satan and/or the evil host caused fire to come down from the sky*, thus making them responsible for their own destruction. Will God be the one to finally cleanse this earth? God does not change (Jas.1:17), He has clearly demonstrated His response to those who choose sin over His gift of righteousness...

6. When the LORD touched Sodom and Gomorrha what was the result?

Genesis 19:24,25

7. There is a lesson to be learned from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha. What does it mean for those living in the twenty-first century?

2Peter 2:6; Jude 7

Note: There is a striking similarity between the moral condition of Sodom and Gomorrha and that of the world today. However, the similarity does not end there, the destruction of this world is mirrored in the rain of fire that consumed those wicked cities filled with gross immorality. Thus we see the cleansing of the earth has a precedent.

Who performed that work? --- It was the Lord Jesus Christ, acting with the power and authority of Jehovah-God (Strong's 3068; lesson 4, p.7). The final destruction of this world will again be the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, working in the name of, and with the authority of Jehovah-God (John 5:22,25-30; Jer.23:5; Rev.22:12; Ps.2:5-9; 1Cor.15:27,28). The next two questions may help clarify this understanding.

8. What further evidence is there that it was the LORD God who was responsible for this judgement and not simply His absence that allowed another spirit to do the work of destruction?

Genesis 19:13, 29.....

Note: The LORD, who spoke with Abraham, sent two angels to destroy the cities (Gen.18:16; 19:1). What is the identity of this LORD who spoke with Abraham? -- It was the same LORD who made the promise to Abraham, Almighty God, in the person of Jesus Christ (Gen. 17; Rom.2:25-29; Jas.2:23). It was the same God who repeated that promise on this occasion as He visited Abraham near his tent (Gen.18:9,10) and, Who also declared to Abraham His intention regarding Sodom and Gomorrha (Gen.18:17-32).

9. Because the promise made to Abraham came from Almighty God it has all authority and is totally trustworthy. What is the substance of that promise?

Genesis 22:17,18; 26:4,5

Galatians 3:6-9,26-29

Note: Abraham chose to obey God in righteousness while in the midst of a society filled with idolatry and licentiousness. God's covenant with mankind has been the same ever since the fall of man --- *forsake the sin of the world, by the power of His Spirit, and receive everlasting life.* This is the covenant God made with Abraham; and He makes the same covenant with everyone else who does the same as Abraham --- that is, obey Him.

When the "Word of God," the Bible, states that God will give eternal life for obedience, we believe it with hope, thanksgiving and praise toward God. When the same "Word" *quotes God's actual words*, to the effect that, He is about to destroy the wicked cities, and then does it, why would we choose to **not believe** it and deny the Word by saying that another spirit is doing this work of God's retribution?

10. What is Christ quoted as saying concerning the dangers of attributing the work of God to the operations of Satan?

Mark 3:22-30

Note: By a misapplication of Scripture we place ourselves in a position where our foundation is false, thus setting a platform upon which we may build a further misinterpretation of the plain testimony. By holding to an error, we may be lead to make a wrong decision concerning our allegiance to Christ and thus lose eternal life!

If we believe that God does not carry out His stated judgements, it would be consistent to conclude that God is not as averse toward sin as the Bible states and that, the "penalty" for sin may be avoidable. Trying to overcome sin with this slant on the keeping of the commandments, we may easily see that there would be little motivation to strive against sin.... Result?.... See Luke 13:24-28.

11. Be it the judgement of individuals or the judgement of nations, we need to remember the two attributes of God in this matter. What are those attributes?

Psalm 89:14

12. What is God's attitude toward the discipline of men?

Lamentations 3:32,33

Revelation 3:19; Hebrews 12:5-11

Numbers 14:18

Psalm 7:11; Isaiah 5:24,25.....

13. Concerning the cleansing of the world from sin, what are God's feelings toward this unavoidable work?

Ezekiel 18:23,30,31,32

Note: God does not delight in afflicting those who are out of the way. His delight is to lead all men into the way of righteousness (Hos.12:7) and the discipline He uses may take whatever form necessary that sin may be purged out and the soul live (Heb.12:5-11). Notwithstanding God's patience and long suffering there is a time coming when the final judgement must be completed (Eccl.3:17; Acts 17:31; Ps.119:126).

From the forgoing we see that God is directly responsible for the issuing of the reward, both, for the repentant sinner who has stopped practising sin (he is reconciled to God by the blood of Jesus) and, for the unrepentant sinner who continues to indulge his wicked ways (he has rejected salvation).



Let us now consider some Bible examples that illustrate God's involvement in the execution of His judgements. We shall first consider God's dealings with individuals who violate His commandments and then we shall look at His response to nations that do proudly, boast against Him and go contrary to His word. To be misled on how God deals with sin will surely cost us eternal life (Col.2:8; Eph.5:6; Prov.14:12; 2Pet.2:1,2).

A) THE JUDGEMENT OF INDIVIDUALS

Our first subject will be Saul, the first king of Israel.

14. How did Saul die?

1Chronicles 10:4,5

15. What part did God claim to play in the death of Saul?

1Chronicles 10:13,14

Note: Saul committed suicide by falling on his sword and God said that He slew him. This has been interpreted to mean that God takes the responsibility, even when it was not His direct act. Thus it is concluded that the carrying out of the death penalty for sin is not God's doing.

God is free to arrange the fulfilment of His purposes any way He wishes. The means of discharging His judgements is of secondary importance, the end result is the same. In this case, God showed His dissatisfaction with Saul by not communicating with him. Saul understood the meaning of this and hence lost all confidence and hope. He then become terrified by the Philistine army, and in despair, took his own life (1Sam.28:15-20; Isa.66:4). Had Saul been faithful to God, the LORD would have delivered the Philistines into the hand of Israel's king.

16. Give another example of a judgement of God involving the death penalty against an individual for arrogant violation of God's express command.

Numbers 15:30-36

Note: This sentence was by direct command of the LORD, for Moses spoke face to face with God (Ex.33:11; Num.12:7,8), as did Abraham, thus there could be no mistake. Without God's command, Moses would have been guilty of presumption and murder.

17. Describe what would have happened to Balaam had he continued in his defiance of God's commands. Mention how Christ regarded his behaviour...

Numbers 22:22,31-34

Note: The "angel of the LORD" is a name often used in reference to Christ (Acts 7:30,32). It was therefore Christ who imposed this judgement upon Balaam, for He was **angry** at this man's disregard for His earlier

commandment (Num.22:12) and for his lust for riches (2Pet.2:15,16; Jude 11).

18. What happened to the sons of Aaron, the high priest, for their disobedience when officiating in their holy office?

Leviticus 10:1,2

Note: These two men, priests in the sanctuary, were struck dead for taking ordinary fire by which to burn incense as they conducted the holy services. As the service of the sanctuary was highly symbolic of the sacrifice and atonement wrought by Jesus Christ for the fallen race, this act of Nadab and Abihu was seen as an act of contempt and a direct insult to the God of heaven (Lev.6:12,13; 16:12).

God reminded Aaron of the prohibition on the use of alcohol by the priests when on duty in the sanctuary and made sure that he understood the penalty that its violation carried (Lev.10:8-10). As this command followed immediately upon the judgement of Nadab and Abihu, it strongly implies that these men could have been under the influence of alcohol at the time.

Did God kill Nadab and Abihu, or was it the devil who was allowed to step in for that moment? God told Aaron He would not accept those who defile their holy office when they come before Him. God also said that Aaron was not to mourn, or bewail the death of his sons lest he also die for showing sympathy toward those who show contempt for God and insult Him (Lev.10:6,7). Normally, it would be acceptable for a priest to mourn the death of his sons, but not in this case (Lev.21:1-5). Those who disobey these commands will face the *wrath* of God and certain death.

With this kind of warning from God, will Jehovah leave the carrying out of His judgements to Satan, His enemy (Matt.13:39), he who would delight in doing just the opposite to what God wanted? Why would Satan kill someone who blasphemes God? In so doing, he would frustrate his aims to insult the Most High. To kill those who rebel

against God would only cause people to fear Jehovah, and thus, not defy Him (Eccl.8:11-13; Mark 3:23-30).

19. What was God's response to the complaints of Miriam and her brother, Aaron, against His appointment of Moses as leader in Israel?

Numbers 12:9,10

Note: God was angry (wrath) with these two people and showed it by removing His presence from the tabernacle and leaving Miriam, the chief offender, stricken with leprosy. Did Satan take advantage of God's absence and afflict Miriam? Neither Aaron, nor Moses, believed that to be the case, but recognised Miriam's leprosy to be the judgement of God (vv.11-15). God further showed His displeasure and His involvement in this penalty by banishing Miriam from the camp for seven days. (vv.14,15).

20. What did God do with Korah, Dathan and Abiram as a reply to their challenge and rebellion against Him?

Numbers 16:28-33

21. How did God respond to the two hundred and fifty men of influence in Israel who united with Korah, Dathan and Abiram in their rebellion?

Numbers 16:35

Note: Were these acts of retribution the work of Satan, or the judgements of God? God said that He was going to consume the whole congregation. Moses mediated for the people saying "Would God be wroth (angry) with all the people for the sins of one man?"

God then said that He would destroy Korah, Dathan and Abiram and all they owned. Moses told the people that if these men die a natural death then the LORD has not sent him with the message of reproof for the rebellious. But if they die by the ground opening up and swallowing them, they would know that they have provoked the

LORD. Then the ground opened and the three men and the consenting members of their families and all that they owned went down into the pit (Num.16:20-33; 26:9-11). God is taking full responsibility. He gave Moses the test that proved to the people that He was the One who brought this judgement (Num.16:28).

Following the consuming of the three rebel leaders, God sends a plague that strikes at the lingering doubts of the people. Moses acknowledges that it was God who was wrath with the rebellious people and in His anger sent the deadly plague which took the lives of many of the people.

Aaron, as a type of Christ, offered an atonement to reconcile the people to God and the plague was stopped (Num.16:41-50). We note from this incident that it was God who sent the plague, and it was He who punished the people. To assume that God did not send this discipline could lead us to reason that He does not really mean what He says!

Another incident, though more passive than the previously cited case, God identifies His chosen instrument by performing a miracle with the rod (dry stick of wood used as a walking stick) belonging to Aaron. Aaron's rod actually budded and brought forth leaves and fruit, while the rods belonging to all of the other contenders were left barren (Num.17:1-10). God is demonstrating that He is the One issuing the terms pertaining to blessings for obedience and penalties for disobedience. Concerning man's rebellion, His mercy and longsuffering extends well beyond the magnitude of our sin, and in spite of the evidence and chastening He sends, the wicked show that no amount of compassion on God's part would induce them to repent (Isa.26:10).

22. Why did God do these acts of retribution against the disobedient and rebellious?

Numbers 26:10 (last phrase)

Note: They were a sign, a warning, that others will fear God and realise that He means what He says. God leaves no question about how He regards and distinguishes between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth the LORD and him that serveth Him not (Mal.3:18; Josh.24:20; Rom.11:11-24, note v.22; Mal.3:16-18).

B) THE JUDGEMENT OF NATIONS

The nations we shall consider will be Israel, Assyria, Babylon and Egypt. Not that these are isolated cases, for history will prove the principle borne out by them, namely... *Righteousness will exalt a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people* (Prov.14:34). The nation that falls into decadence will be stricken of God; He may use pestilence (disease), war, and /or famine (Jer.44:11-13), He may even remove them from the world stage (Jer.51:11; Dan.2:31-45). Other examples would be -- The Medes, Persia, Greece, Rome, Tyre, Incas, Aztecs. God also brought a halt to the rise in power of such men as Wilhelm, Napoleon and Hitler.

23. Cite two examples of where God used certain nations to discipline Israel and Judah for their wicked practices?

Isaiah 10:4-6.....

Jeremiah 25:5-11

Note: Assyria, under king Shalmaneser (722BC) (2Ki.17), was the disciplining hand of God as the fulfilment of this prophecy in Isaiah. Babylon, under king Nebuchadnezzar (606-605BC) (2Ki.24,25), fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah. Note the graphic description of the sins of Israel (ten northern tribes) given in 2Kings 17:7-17. They had been warned (Num.33:51-55; Josh.23:10-16; 24:15-22).

The description of the sins of Israel have a parallel in today's world and is therefore worthy of our closest attention, for the prophesy points directly to us (Eze.22). In the greater part of Christendom the professed people of God have a facade of worshipping the true God,

while their hearts worship the god of this world: money, pleasure, appetite indulgence and have little regard for the sacrifice of their children to the god of television, Godless education and liberal social values (2Ki.17:32,33).

Thus, we have stolen each generation from God and, as He punished Israel of old, so He will punish each generation of evil doers. He is long suffering, but there is a limit, and when the cup of man's iniquity becomes full He will destroy all who will not repent (Isa.10:7).

We may be tempted to think that Assyria's move against Israel was a result of their own decision, independent of any other influence. On this point, God said... Because you (Assyria) claimed the victory by your own strength, in your own pride, I will discipline you, that you will understand that it was not by your power that you functioned in the destruction of Israel, *but Mine!* (Isa.10:11-15).

Again, the assault of Babylon was the direct command of God (2Ki.24:1-4), not the whim of Satan. The LORD God of Israel responded --- I will send the Chaldeans (Babylonians Jer.25:12) against this people who have forsaken Me. Jehovah claims full responsibility for this judgement against Israel. Note His comments that the Chaldeans will think that they will have done it all under their own power and ascribe the victory to their own god (Hab.1:5-11). But the living God says that He did it all! Just as God punished Assyria for her pride and cruelty, so He took vengeance against Babylon for the greatness of her sin and pride (Jer.51).

God has placed these, and many other accounts, on record to show that He means what He says. Though longsuffering, He must finally initiate and execute His judgements against those who will not turn from their sin. The giver of life then becomes the taker of life (Job 1:21; Deut.32:39).

24. Who was responsible for the destruction of the Egyptian army at the Red Sea?

Exodus 14:13–31, note vv.23–28

Psalm 136:13–15

Note: The One responsible is the same One who also received honour and glory for this very act of destroying the enemies and oppressors of God's people. And so shall it be with the destruction of the wicked when Christ purifies this planet. Just as Moses sang victory songs of praise to God for their deliverance from the power that would destroy them, so the redeemed from the earth sing victory songs to God in praise and thanksgiving for their deliverance from the oppression of wicked men and demons (Ex.15:1–7; Rev.15:2–4; 16:13,14).

Some would argue that God simply stood back, leaving Satan, the Destroyer, to do the actual work of killing the enemies of God. To see that this is not a reasonable conclusion – consider the following... Who opened the Red Sea to save Israel?... It was God. Who closed it again?... Was it Satan!?... Not likely. When God opens, no-one closes, and when God closes, no-one opens (Rev.3:7; Num.23:19,20; Eccl.7:13; Deut.32:39; Psalm.136:13–15). If Satan had been the one to open the Red Sea and close it again, he would have allowed the Egyptians to pursue their fleeing slaves. The Egyptians would not have been his target, he already had them, it would have been the Hebrew, the nation to whom was given the oracles of God, through whom the world was to be evangelised and through whom the Messiah would come (Rom.9:4,5; Isa.49:6; John 4:22).

25. What is one of the many things God does on behalf of His people?

2Chronicles 20:15–17

Joshua 23:10

Note: To be the enemy of God is to face certain death (Deut.7:9,10). God does fight for His people, notice the outcome of the case cited in 2Chronicles 20 and recorded in verses 18–30.

Life and death would be the most serious contemplations to occupy the human mind and the questions we are considering in this section

of our study reveal a God who will not abide (allow) sin, yet will be abundantly merciful and mighty to save toward the one who will forsake sin (Isa.55:7).

26. God fought for Israel. How did He "persuade" Pharaoh to release the Hebrew slaves?

Exodus 8:1,2, 16,17, 20,21; 10:3,4,5

Note: Some have attempted to explain the ten plagues of Egypt in a manner that divests God of the responsibility for their administration. They claim that God simply removed His constraining hand from Satan and Satan did the actual act of afflicting the Egyptians with the ten plagues. As we have observed throughout this series, Satan has never been trusted to be the administrator of God's judgements (2Cor.6:14,15) and as we continue it shall again be verified that Satan is God's enemy (and man's enemy Matt. 13:28,29).

27. What did God permit Satan to do concerning two of His faithful servants?

Job 1:12; 2:6

Luke 22:31

Note: Is God here allowing Satan to punish these men for their transgressions? Or is Satan performing his usual task of afflicting God's people to the limit that God permits (Rev.12:12; Rev.2:9,10 1Cor.10:13)? When Satan comes in like a flood God provides for the strength of His dear children (Isa.59:19), for everyone who enters heaven will have passed through the fire of affliction (Luke 22:32; 2Cor.12:9,10; Isa.48:10). Note that there is a time coming when Satan will be unrestricted in his ability to torment men. At this point God's faithful people will be sealed such that their characters will be irreversible (Rev.7:1-3). Therefore, Satan will have no power over their minds.

Concerning God's part in the delivering of the ten plagues upon Egypt, God said that He would bring His people out of bondage, and convince Pharaoh that he was to co-operate with that plan (Ex.6:4-6). Satan would

have been opposing every effort to release the Hebrew nation from captivity, for He delights in cruelty and in having wicked men control other men. Satan would also confine, or destroy, the people who are to be a light unto the Gentiles (Isa.42:6,7; 14:16,17; Rev.9:1,11... Apollyon, Abaddon = Destroyer, Luke 10:18).

God performed miracles and visited plagues upon Egypt to convince Pharaoh of His power and authority (Ex.10:1). God's first confrontation with Pharaoh was an inoffensive miracle, Aaron's rod became a living serpent. To down play the wonder appearing before his eyes, Pharaoh had his own magicians duplicate the miracle and produce serpents from sticks (Ex.7:10-12). Surely, the magicians' serpents were a deception (hypnosis, enchantments, sorcery, power of Satan Ex.7:11), they could have been demons manifesting themselves as snakes. Satan does not have the power to create a real live anything. God then displayed His superiority by having His serpent devour the false serpents.

Suppose that God may have allowed Satan to afflict Egypt, Satan would not have delivered the plagues according to the word of God to Pharaoh, for Satan would have welcomed an opportunity to discredit and embarrass God before the Egyptian king (Mark 3:23-26).

Notwithstanding that Satan brought forth frogs (Ex.8:7), Satan could not have created real living frogs. Following this, he was not permitted to even give the illusion of being able to duplicate the lice, and the record does not indicate any attempt, by Satan, to produce flies and locusts by enchantments (sorcery). The true God is distinguished by His ability to create and give life, no other being has that power (Jer.10:10,11; Isa.46:9; Deut.32:39).

28. By the power of Satan, the Egyptian magicians were able to perform an illusion of snakes and frogs. They were unable to remove the plague of frogs or any other plague and God prevented their creating an illusion of lice. What did this frustration of their power cause them to admit?

Exodus 8:16-19, note v.19

Note: Some have suggested that Satan is the one responsible for the plagues that occurred in Egypt. However, the above situation indicates that God was in control. Satan would have done all he could to frustrate God's efforts as God worked to both, convince the Egyptians of His authority and, to inspire Israel with confidence in their God.

The fact that Satan could not remove the plagues indicates that he was not the source of them. Pharaoh, who used the power of Satan to turn sticks into snakes, had to entreat Moses (hence God) that the plagues be removed (Ex.8:8,28,29; 9:11,27,28; 10:16,17).

29. What did God say would be the result of Pharaoh witnessing each manifestation of His power?

Exodus 7:3,13

Note: "I will harden Pharaoh's heart." Does God render a man incapable of submitting to Him? Never! (Rom.8:32; 2Pet.1:3; Ps.86:5). It is our love of sin and the hold of Satan, that binds us to sin and separates us from God (Prov.5:22,23; Isa.59:2; 2Tim.2:26; Jas.1:13-15). Pharaoh hardened his own heart (Ex.7:14; 8:15,19; Heb.3:13). Christ came to break that hold of sin and to set the captives free, but the captive must desire to be free or the Lord can do nothing for him (Matt.19:16-24; Heb.10:26).

30. Why did God demonstrate His power over Egypt and what characteristic of Pharaoh opened the way for God to repeat those demonstrations with increasing force?

Exodus 7:4,5; 10:1; Rom.9:17

Exodus 4:29-31; 6:4-9

Note: There were two main reasons for this manifestation of the power of God: — That the name of God would be known among the heathen and in all the earth, and to instil confidence and faith in the people He was working to deliver.

Did God put it into the heart of Pharaoh to resist Him? It was the

man's free choice to respond as he did to the given evidence that there is a God stronger than Pharaoh. A different king in Egypt might have chosen to accept the word of God more readily than did this king, possibly, even with the first manifestation of God's power. Frequently, the same set of circumstances on two different individuals will reveal two, quite different, responses and characters (2Cor.2:15,16).

Out of arrogance and pride, Pharaoh stated, "Who is the LORD that I should obey His voice." (Ex.5:1,2). At this, God saw fit to show all of Egypt that He was the true and living God, the Creator, the only God with power, for the Egyptians were a people heavily steeped in the worship of idols and of the sun. One reason God brought the plagues upon Egypt was to discipline a stubborn, proud and cruel king (Ex.10:3).

31. What was the final display of God's power that Pharaoh could not resist?

Exodus 12:23–30

Psalms 136:10,11

Note: Was it God or Satan who brought this devastating plague? Consider the following.... Who delivered Israel out of Egypt? -- God or Satan? The Psalmist says, God did. Who brought the Egyptians to the point where they would release Israel? -- God or Satan? The Psalmist says, God did.... However God did it, He is claiming responsibility and He is taking the credit and the praise for it (Ps. 136).

Some may consider God severe in pouring out this tenth plague, yet, they fail to understand the stubborn resistance of those who refuse to listen to God's instruction and who stiffly harden their necks against Him. When the resistant man repents, falls on the Rock and is broken, he enters into the salvation of Christ. On the other hand, when the arrogant and proud man falls under this Rock he is ground into powder (Jer.17:23; Matt.21:44).

Pharaoh's submission was that of a beaten man recognising and admitting to the superiority of his foe. He did not yield out of

contrition and repentance, which, if he had, would have meant his salvation (Ps.51). He later showed that his surrender was not a conversion, nor an acceptance of God's will, for he soon repented of his moment of yielding and again took up the very determination that ran him head to head with God (Ex.14:5-9).

32. What may we understand from this example of stubborn resistance of the wicked to the discipline of God in respect to allowing the unconverted into heaven?

Isaiah 26:10

Note: If God should allow the rebellious into heaven, His favour would not be appreciated, they would not change their hearts and the curse of sin would not be ended. The discipline and love of God either draws us to Himself in surrender, or hardens the heart in stubborn resistance (2Cor.2:14-17).

33. How do the wicked demonstrate that they acknowledge and recognise Jesus as Lord and rightful King?

Philippians 2:10,11

34. Even though the wicked, including Satan and his evil host, recognise Jesus as Lord and acknowledge His justice and mercy, how do they demonstrate their true feelings toward Him?

Revelation 20:7-9

Note: In bowing the knee to Christ and acknowledging Him as Lord, the wicked of all ages are not converted, they do not give a homage of love. In a manner similar to Pharaoh's situation, as soon as they are able, they demonstrate their true heart's intent and assault the New Jerusalem with the purpose of destroying the inhabitants and seizing the city for themselves (Phip.2:10,11; Rev.20:7-9).

For the preservation of His kingdom, God must remove every trace of sin. Either it will be from the heart of the sinner, with the co-operation of the soul, or it will be the removal the soul (who will not separate

himself from his sin) when sin is cast into the lake of fire.

35. Compare God's dealings with the righteous and with the wicked...

	Righteous	Wicked
Ezekiel 28:26		
Psalms 37:28		
Romans 11:22		

CONCLUSION

We have seen a number of examples where God and /or Christ claims full responsibility for disciplines and judgements placed upon individuals and nations. He is not just assuming responsibility in a legal sense, saying that because He made the sinner He is responsible for the actions of that individual, as one might conclude from the case of king Saul (Q.14, 15). He is taking responsibility as the one who actually did the act and as the one to be held accountable.

We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip, for if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first, began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him. Hebrews 2:1-3.

There is salvation in Christ, the Son of God, whom the Father of glory sent to reconcile us to Himself. He must cleanse this earth and, as He provided a way of escape for His people in Egypt at the time of the ten plagues, so He has made a way of escape for us, when He brings His final judgements upon this wicked world.

Our next lesson will discuss the way of escape, the meaning of the Passover lamb and its application to Christ, our Passover. We shall also see how Satan really views the destruction of the world and why God must take into His own hands the responsibility for the judgement and the removal of all sin before His kingdom may be set up upon this earth... Even so, Lord Jesus, come!

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