

“When the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel.” Deut. 32:8.

This remarkable passage of Scripture, – articulating a most important and comforting doctrine to the people of God, – goes like this; to wit: From the beginning of the world, God has so ordered and arranged all nations and peoples whatsoever, that they may bear a PROPORTIONALITY to what He has to do with His peculiar people; that he may so order and dispose of them, as that His design towards His own Elect may be accomplished. God has wonderful plans for each of His own; and nothing can thwart those plans in the least degree.

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” (Rom. 8:28)

God’s supreme PURPOSE to do His people good cannot be frustrated in the least degree whatsoever. *“For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall”* – (i.e., fall in vain, failing to germinate and fulfill its highest potential) – *“upon the earth.” Amos 9:9.* As when Christ said, *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone* (i.e., it will never reach its full potential, or any potential at all – *“it abideth alone,”* without harvest of plentiful reproduction, or any reproduction at all). (Jn. 12:24). And so, in the beautiful similitude of Amos 9:9, each kernel of corn, or each berry of wheat, represents one of God’s Elect, as the whole body of the Elect being scattered or sifted over the whole earth, during all the whole 6,000-year history of mankind.

Each of them will have an amazing story to tell of their own experiences; including all the dealings of God in recompensing all mankind and punishing all mankind in a way of outpoured vengeance for the way all mankind persecuted His Elect unto the death. You can be sure, Beloved, that not a single person or incident will be left out, and no part of the inhabited earth will be overlooked, and not a minute of the 6,000 years of the human experiment will be discarded as trivial or unimportant in the eyes of the King. But, *“His Lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” Mat. 25:21.*

All the stirrings, and shakings, and giant commotions that are in the world, are nothing but God’s siftings of all the nations of peoples, that His chosen ones may be fitted for Himself, and not lost in the chaff and human debris and reprobate-sinner rubbish, that we, even now, see all about us. See also Heb. 12:26,27; to wit:

“Whose voice then shook the earth; but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.” (Heb. 12:26,27)

All the shakings of the world’s nations and peoples – i.e., all the deadly tumultuous upheavals, overthrow of regimes, massive and bloody riots in the streets of the world, etc., – all are taking place at the manipulations of the hands of a sovereign God, in order that the unshaken interests of His saints may be established, fulfilled, and satisfied thereby.

“But I am the Lord thy God, that divided the sea, whose waves roared: The Lord of hosts is His name. And I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people.” (Isa. 51:15,16)

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Which is to say, that heaven and earth, and all things therein, are disposed of, in order that Zion (the church) may be built and well-established. Which is to say, that all God's works in this world lie in a total subserviency to this end and purpose. As it is said in the simple question and answer in the plain yet profound words of our text for today; to wit: "***What shall one then answer the messengers of the nations?***" (i.e., when they send their ambassadors, reporters and downright spies to inquire about the great phenomenon – the mystery – that is known worldwide as Westboro Baptist Church?) – well, sir, the answer is, "***That the Lord hath founded Zion (WBC), and the poor of his people shall trust in it.***" Isa. 14:32.

Beloved, think about it. Does God at any time prosper an evil nation? an anti-Christian nation? YES. Does He do it for their own sakes? Does He take care for oxen? Does He delight in the prosperity of His avowed and visceral enemies? NO (!) A thousand times, NO (!) It is only that they may be a rod in His hand for a little moment, and a staff for His indignation against the enemies and oppressors of His people, Isa. 10:5, "***O, Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in THEIR hand is MY indignation;***" to break, ruin, and destroy them all sooner or later, leaving them neither root nor branch. And, Beloved, ALL that the mighty God does to them is A RECOMPENSE FOR THE CONTROVERSY OF ZION, Isa. 34:1-10; to wit:

"Come near, ye nations, to hear, and hearken, ye people; let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it. For the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies; he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter. Their slain also shall be cast out, and THEIR STINK shall come up out of their carcasses, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood..... For IT IS THE DAY OF THE LORD'S VENGEANCE, and THE YEAR OF RECOMPENSES FOR THE CONTROVERSY OF ZION (THE CHURCH). And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch (i.e., burning and boiling oil), and the dust thereof into brimstone (i.e., burning sulphur), and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever; from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever." (Isa. 34:1-10)

And, Beloved, as a part of our regular worship schedule, routine, and services in heaven – and throughout eternity – we and all God's Elect will ceremonially and deliberately contemplate these miserable, tormented, "***STINKING***" "***CARCASES;***" to wit: "***And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another,***" – (i.e., regular worship services, here described in Old Testament terms, but could as well be described in New Testament terms, and referring to the routine of worship services that will delight the saints in Heaven) – "***shall all flesh***" – (i.e., all God's Elect in Heaven, as distinguished from the glorious, "***innumerable company of angels***" in Heaven, who are spirits, and not glorified flesh as of God's Elect) – "***come to worship before me, saith the Lord. And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me;***" – (i.e., as a part of our regular worship services in Heaven, we will praise and glorify the King by going forth and looking upon the everlasting sufferings of the damned; there and then to contemplate the grace and mercy that has spared us a similar fate – with profoundest thanksgivings and adorations and never-ceasing praises to the Lamb); – "***for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.***" Isa. 66:23,24.

That this passage is talking about the everlasting fire and brimstone sufferings of the damned in Hell, our Lord Jesus Christ has removed all uncertainty at Mark 9:43-48; to wit:

"And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched; Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." (Mk. 9:43,44)

The immediate context to this thrice-related description of Hell, is a startling revelation as to why the inhabitants of Hell are treated with such disdain and contempt by the inhabitants of heaven

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when they regularly visit their stinking carcasses and look upon them and abhor them; to wit: **“And they shall be AN ABHORRING UNTO ALL FLESH.” Isa. 66:24(c).** Where **“all flesh”** means all God’s Elect, as so identified in the immediately forgoing verse, where **“all flesh”** means the true worshippers of God, or, all God’s Elect; to wit: **“(Then) shall ALL FLESH come to worship before me, saith the Lord.” Isa. 66:23(b).**

Now, Beloved, let us digress briefly to consider further the immediate context of our Savior’s description of Hell at **Mark 9:43-48**, as supplemented by Matthew’s account of the incident at **Matt. 18:8,9**; to wit: **“Wherefore if thy hand or foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee; it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee; it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.” Matt. 18:8,9.** First, take Mark’s account. Immediately before discoursing on the fearsome subject of Hell, the Savior declares that all of mankind has a positive duty to help God’s Elect in their service for the King, inferring that a failure to perform that duty will land them in Hell; to wit: **“For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink IN MY NAME, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.”** – (i.e., by a meiosis, [a severe understatement for effect]; meaning,) **“he shall not go to Hell, ergo, he shall go to Heaven.” Mk. 9:41.**

Next, the Savior declares that all mankind has a negative duty NOT TO OFFEND God’s Elect in their service for the king, plainly inferring that a failure to perform THAT duty will likewise land them in Hell; to wit: **“And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones THAT BELIEVE IN ME, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.” Mk. 9:42.** The operative language is **“because ye belong to Christ,”** in verse 41, and, **“that believe in me,”** in verse 42.

Gill: **“‘Because ye belong to Christ;’ that is, are called by His name, are partakers of His grace, bear His image and likeness, are loved by Him, interested in Him, given to Him, redeemed by Him, called by His grace, and shall be with Him. ‘And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me,’ that is, whosoever shall do the least injury to the lowliest most insignificant saint that believes in Christ, who are lowly both in their own eyes, and the eyes of others; for Christ is not speaking of little children in age, who are neither capable of believing in Christ, nor are they ready to take offense; but of such as belong to Him; His disciples and followers, of whom he is speaking in the preceding verse; ‘it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.’ Christ’s sense is, that such who give offence to any of His ministers or people, how mean, lowly and insignificant soever they may appear, shall undergo the severest punishment possible in Hell forever.”**

At the conclusion of His thrice-related description of Hell, (**Mk. 9:43-48**), the Savior added even more horrific language to Hell’s description, relating to Hell’s savor (or, Zeitgeist) and longevity; to wit:

“For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.” (Mk. 9:49)

Gill: **“That is, every one of those that transgress the law of God, offend any that believe in Christ, retain their sins, and sinful companions; every one of them that are cast into Hell, where the worm of conscience is always gnawing, and the fire of divine wrath is always burning, with that fire every one of them shall be salted; that fire shall be to them, what salt is to flesh; as that keeps flesh from both putrefaction and corruption; so the fire of Hell, as it will burn, torture, and distress rebellious sinners, it will preserve them in their beings; they shall not be consumed by it, but continued in it; so that these words are a reason of the former, showing and proving, that the soul in torment shall never die, or lose any of its powers and faculties; and particularly, not its gnawing, torturing conscience; and that the fire of Hell is inextinguishable; for though all lost sinners will be inexpressibly tormented in it, they’ll not be consumed by it; but**

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the smoke of their torments shall ascend for ever and ever; and that they shall be so far from being annihilated by the fire of Hell, that they shall be preserved in their beings in it, as flesh is preserved by salt."

Salt in nature has two universally-recognized attributes: 1) Salt enhances flavor; and, 2) Salt preserves flesh indefinitely. Hence, the Lord required that EVERY sacrifice be attended with an offering of salt – WITHOUT EXCEPTION; to wit:

"And every oblation of thy meat offering shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat offering; WITH ALL THINE OFFERINGS THOU SHALT OFFER SALT." (Lev. 2:13)

Hence, for the Lord to say that every impenitent sinner in Hell, "***SHALL BE SALTED WITH FIRE,***" Mk. 9:49, is to guarantee that, 1) his carcass will stink forever; and, 2) his soul and body will burn in fire and brimstone forever. Period. Beloved, would you call that kind of preaching "*heavy-handed religious expectation?*" Add this to it; to wit: Any preacher who does not preach it that way is a Hell-bound heretic.

Like the idiot preaching in a former mattress factory at 21st & Gage, called Journey Church, an off-shoot of Topeka Bible Church, who was pastor of youth ministry for 10 years at Topeka Bible before starting Journey Church in Nov., 2007 – all according to a puff-piece in the Capital-Journal last week, touting the Journey Church as a place where everybody is casual and does his own religious thing; to wit: "*Those who come to Journey Church say they find in it a place where they can be themselves and where THEY ARE FREE FROM HEAVY-HANDED RELIGIOUS EXPECTATIONS.*" A member said: "*The thing that's unique about Journey is the name in itself. That's what the church is all about. We're all on the same journey, just different places on that journey. You come where you're at and God meets you there. They don't feel a sense of judgment here. Newcomers feel welcome. The church wants to help you realize God loves you and has a plan for your life.*" Come to think of it, Beloved, that's a pretty good description of just about every church I know anything about (i.e., except WBC); to wit: "*They are free from heavy-handed religious expectations.*"

We say it otherwise with pride, WBC members have chosen to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for they had respect unto the recompence of the reward. Heb. 11:25,26. Beloved, the expression "*to be free from heavy-handed religious expectations,*" is a clever satanic euphemism – (i.e., the substitution of an inoffensive term for one considered offensive). What the idiot-boy preaching in the mattress factory means is: "to be free from obeying the commandments of Jesus Christ;" to wit:

"He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." (Jn. 14:21)

What it means to be free from keeping the commandments of Christ – is to be free to go to Hell. Beloved, what it means to be "*FREE FROM HEAVY-HANDED RELIGIOUS EXPECTATIONS,*" is, to be free NOT to be blessed, and free from the right to the tree of life, and free not to enter in through the gates into the city (i.e., Heaven); to wit:

"Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." (Rev. 22:14)

Furthermore, what it means to be "*FREE FROM HEAVY-HANDED RELIGIOUS EXPECTATIONS,*" is to be free, inevitably, to join the damnable ranks of those cursed ones who must spend eternity, in torment, outside the gates of Heaven, in Hell; to wit:

"For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." (Rev. 22:15)

I love you. Amen.