

Book of Remembrance

by Tricia Berg

Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, and the Lord listened and heard them; so a book of remembrance was written before Him of those who fear the Lord And who meditate on His name. Malachi 3:16

The above verse was written about a minority of people from among a group who for the most part had decided that there was no point in obeying God, since they couldn't see any benefit to it. The people who disobeyed seemed happy. God didn't strike them with lightning or anything like that, and they appeared to be doing just fine. So those who knew better and continued to follow God started to wonder "why bother?" Both Psalms 37 and 73 address the issue as well, but here is the rest of the above passage:

"Your words have been hard against Me, says the LORD. But you say, 'How have we spoken against you?' You have said, 'It is vain to serve God. What is the profit of our keeping His charge or of walking as in mourning before the LORD of hosts? And now we call the arrogant blessed. Evildoers not only prosper but they put God to the test and they escape.'" Then those who feared the LORD spoke with one another. The LORD paid attention and heard them, and a book of remembrance was written before Him of those who feared the LORD and esteemed His name. "They shall be Mine, says the LORD of hosts, in the day when I make up My treasured possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him. Then once more you shall see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him." Malachi 3:13-16

So we should still "bother" to care about what God cares about. We aren't saved by keeping the law, but only through Jesus. *Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him. John 3:36*

However, Jesus Himself said that if we love Him, we will keep His commandments (*John 14:21*), which He summarized as loving God first and our neighbor as ourselves. (*Mark 12:29-31*) Loving God first includes taking God at His own word rather than making our own revised version of His word and Him. He is Lord and the ultimate authority, and He never changes. Our neighbors include unborn babies, elderly and handicapped individuals who don't "contribute to society" and even our enemies. (If you think about it, how absurd is it to think that God would tell us to love our enemies but it's okay to kill the innocent and helpless? And unlike so many these days, He can count—a body inside of another body is a second body...)

The laws of this country are drifting farther away from God with every passing year. This should make us rend our hearts and cry out to God for forgiveness. To whom has been given much, much will be expected. People these days like to quote warm, fuzzy (including partial, twisted or out of context) sayings of Jesus and reject the rest of what He said. That is a form of idolatry by making Him into a man-made version of Himself.

"And that servant who knew his master's will but did not get ready or act according to his will, will receive a severe beating. But the one who did not know, and did what deserved a beating, will receive a light beating. Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom much was entrusted, more will be demanded. I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were already kindled! I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished! Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division." Luke 12:47-51

Some people say that all God expects is that we believe, and then we have done His will--all He expected and hoped for from us. They say we can do as we please with no fear of retribution whatsoever. I would suggest reading the above passage one more time. We are

given a LOT in this country. God expects more from us. That includes not only financial blessings, but an abundance of opportunity to KNOW God here--the Word is freely available. If we don't study the Bible for ourselves so that we can understand His will, it is because we choose not to. If we don't attend worship services or even listen to them on the radio or watch them on television (or even a PC or smartphone), it is because we choose not to. We can make time for whatever we really want to make time for--for whatever is most important to us.

Can anyone who claims to love God really say they are hoping for only a "light beating" from God for doing wrong despite knowing better? Don't we realize God knows our very thoughts? He most certainly knows whether we act out of ignorance or selfishness when we disobey Him. He DOES forgive our sins, but He expects us to turn from them after that! He equates doing His will with LOVE for Him and He IS paying attention to see who loves and who does not.

For myself, I want God to be pleased with the way I lived my life for His glory. I know what my entrance into heaven cost Him and I am not satisfied with doing the bare minimum--my faith was a gift from Him. I know that I could never have done anything worthy of deserving it and even my works done out of love for and thankfulness to Him are really done by Him through me. If we truly know Him, then we know we can trust Him and He is worthy of anything and everything He could ever ask us to do.

He never said we should compromise His message to make it more palatable to sinners who do not want to change. There are people out there today telling us what the Bible "really" says. God said this about what happens when people listen to prophets sent by Him:

"I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in My counsel, and had caused my people to hear My words, then they should have

*turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings.”
Jeremiah 23:21-22*

God defines "the beginning of wisdom" as the fear of Him. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever! Psalm 111:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction. Proverbs 1:7 Practice what? The fear of the Lord! (In other words, do what He says.) He said that **fools despise wisdom**, (i.e. despise fearing God).

What does it say about our country that God is banned from classrooms from the earliest ages through the highest levels? God is considered offensive in our schools. His name is only allowed to be mentioned in a negative light. Meanwhile, parents who object to this practice continue to be forced to financially support public schools through taxes while they pay additional fees to educate their children at home or in parochial schools. Parents who want to enable their children to earn a good living have to (for the most part) subject them to a godless higher educational system where they are pressured by professors and students alike to forsake the "archaic" beliefs of their parents (the ones who are often footing the bill). How ironic.

*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness **suppress the truth**. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools. Romans 1:18-22*

He warned us that truth would be replaced with foolishness, but He never said that if we "love" people, then we will go along with whatever they do. He said we should trust Him and not men. The friendship of the LORD is for those who fear him, and he makes known to them his covenant. Psalm 25:14 Fear of Him is both respect to do as He says and also a healthy knowledge that He is able to do whatever He pleases--that He is God and we are not. All roads do **not** lead to the same place. There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death. Proverbs 14:12 **How will people know if no one tells them?** And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. Daniel 12:3 If someone will please show me, I would like to know where it says in the Bible that Jesus died for us so that we could remain sinners, and God now loves sin. I just can't find it. Instead, I found these:

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Romans 6:1-2

For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another. But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. Galatians 5:13-17

I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present

your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.
Romans 6:19

Whoever corrects a scoffer gets himself abuse, and he who reprove a wicked man incurs injury. Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you; reprove a wise man, and he will love you. Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a righteous man, and he will increase in learning. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight. Proverbs 9:7-10

But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people. For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth. 2 Timothy 3:1-7

Here is an example of another king (besides David) who pleased God by his genuine distress over the sins of the people:

Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. ...And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD and walked in all the way of David his father, and he did not turn aside to the right or to the left... But to the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, thus shall you say to him, Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Regarding the words that you have heard, because your heart was penitent, and you humbled yourself before the LORD, when you heard how I spoke against this place and against its inhabitants, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and you have torn your clothes

and wept before Me, I also have heard you, declares the LORD. Therefore, behold, I will gather you to your fathers, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace, and your eyes shall not see all the disaster that I will bring upon this place.'" And they brought back word to the king. ...Before him there was no king like him, who turned to the LORD with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses, nor did any like him arise after him. 2 Kings 22:1-2, 18-20, 25

God minds whether we care about what He cares about or not. If we say we belong to Him, but approve of and participate in evil (as defined by Him) then according to Him, we don't know Him at all and we lie by saying we are His. His Spirit dwells inside of true believers, who are grieved by what grieves Him.

And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. Whoever says "I know Him" but does not keep His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps His word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in Him: whoever says he abides in Him ought to walk in the same way in which He walked. 1 John 2:3-6

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Ephesians 4:30

Let's not kid ourselves and pretend that God doesn't see or have time to "worry about" our behavior and attitudes. *The LORD looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. Psalm 14:2; 53:2 "Understand, O dullest of the people! Fools, when will you be wise? He who planted the ear, does He not hear? He who formed the eye, does He not see?" Psalm 94:8-9*

"You have wearied the LORD with your words. But you say, 'How have we wearied Him?' By saying, 'Everyone who does evil is good

in the sight of the LORD, and He delights in them.' Or by asking, 'Where is the God of justice?'" Malachi 2:17

This is an Old Testament (and therefore old covenant) passage, however it foreshadows what will happen again in the future:

And the LORD said to him, "Pass through the city, through Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations that are committed in it." And to the others he said in my hearing, "Pass through the city after him, and strike [those without marked foreheads]. Your eye shall not spare, and you shall show no pity. Ezekiel 9:4-5

In the last days, there will be 144,000 of the tribes of Israel sealed for protection from God's wrath against the earth.

Then I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, with the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm earth and sea, saying, "Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads." And I heard the number of the sealed, 144,000, sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel... Revelation 7:2-4

Satan will be imitating God by also marking people. Whoever takes that mark will suffer the same eternal judgment as he does.

Also [the beast] causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name. Revelation 13:16-17

And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also will drink the wine of God's

wrath, poured full strength into the cup of His anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name." Revelation 14:9-11

Let's examine ourselves to see if we believers are behaving in a manner that honors our God (*Ephesians 4:1*), or just going along with the flow--indistinguishable from unbelievers. Let's read God's word so that we know for ourselves what it says and believe Him, not the false teachers and prophets He warned us about. (*2 Peter 2:1-3*)

What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will make My dwelling in them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me, says the Lord Almighty." 2 Corinthians 6:16-18

Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. Philippians 3:17-19

For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And "If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?" Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good. 1 Peter 4:17-19

*And all the churches will know that I am He who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works.
Revelation 2:23*

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