

Fanning it into Flame
Sunday, November 21, 2010
The Lion and the Lamb

I don't think a more striking imagery of contrast could have been made revealing the nature of God in Christ. He is the lamb that takes away the sin of the world and yet is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. Lambs are gentle and don't have an aggressive bone in their body. You would never fear coming into contact with this tender creature. A Lion on the other hand is not called the King of the Jungle for nothing. They rule. The fierceness and penetrating nature of their roar sends a chill up the spine of every creature in close enough proximity. Jesus is both.

The Bible reveals the awesome character of God in the Old Testament with some shuddering stories of how he dealt with sin and rebellion. Yet he always did it with an eye on restoration. Time and time again God dealt with his people in very severe ways to teach the fear of the Lord. He was not to be trifled with. The whole Old Testament was a series of types and shadows that would point to the Lord Jesus Christ as God's ultimate plan for redemption. Jesus came to be the clear depiction of the very nature of God. He was the exact representation of the Godhead in bodily form. To see Jesus is to see the Father. John writes in his Gospel and the first chapter that the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

We must never assume that the New Testament is "God light" and the Old Testament is "God Heavy." They both reveal the nature of God. The austere God of the Old Testament is also the God of grace of the New. He tells us that he does not change. The question we must ask ourselves is have we embraced a God who is both the Lion and the Lamb, or have we eliminated the Lion side to make ourselves more comfortable?

Some people mistakenly embrace a God of grace who they believe doesn't really care about sin, because the law cannot save anyone. It is only by grace that we are saved. While they are right about the grace, they are wrong about how God feels about sin. Remember it was sin that nailed Christ to the cross. God still hates sin. He never changed his mind on the subject; however, the only way to defeat it was at the cross. Jesus paid the price for our victory. The victory is that sin no longer has dominion over us. Our freedom must not be viewed as a license to sin, but a freedom from the power of sin. It is no longer our task master. I am now free **not** to sin.

If we willingly walk in sin after receiving Christ as Savior and Lord, we are disrespecting what he has done for us. Another introspective question must be answered: Why do we serve God? Is it just to get what we want for our life, or as a demonstration of our gratitude and humble acknowledgment that he is Lord of all? God must be worshiped because he is God alone. The by-product of all that we receive because of our worship is secondary to honoring him as God.

There is coming a day when we will all stand before Almighty God to give account for all that we have done. Our works are not going to be considered regarding our salvation because Christ paid that price in full. As a matter of fact, we don't even belong to ourselves any longer because we were bought and paid for. We belong to him and must serve him in that regard. The judgment I'm referring to here is the Judgment Seat of Christ. (There is another judgment that is reserved for those who have not received Christ as their savior. That is the Great White Throne Judgment. Revelation 20:11-15)) The point here is that we need to be sensitive to our motives. Are we honoring God in our actions or doing just enough to get by, hoping to satisfy God's minimum requirements. His desire is that we passionately hunger and thirst for a deep relationship with him and honor him in all we do. Read the next page of Bible verses that will help to add clarity.

Proverbs 1:7

7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline. (NIV)

Proverbs 2:1-5

1 My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, 2 turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, 3 and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, 4 and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, 5 then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God. (NIV)

Proverbs 9:10 "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. (NIV)

Proverbs 10:27

27 The fear of the LORD adds length to life, but the years of the wicked are cut short. (NIV)

Proverbs 14:27

27 The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, turning a man from the snares of death. (NIV)

Proverbs 16:6

6 Through love and faithfulness sin is atoned for; through the fear of the LORD a man avoids evil. (NIV)

Proverbs 22:4

4 Humility and the fear of the LORD bring wealth and honor and life. (NIV)

Isaiah 11:1-5

1 A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. 2 The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him-- the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD—3 and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; 4 but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. 5 Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist. (NIV)

1Thessalonians 5:1-11

1 Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, 2 for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. 4 But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. 5 You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. 6 So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. 8 But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. 9 For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. 10 He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. 11 Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing. (NIV)

2 Peter 3:9-13

9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief.

The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. 11 Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives 12 as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. 13 But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. (NIV)

2 Corinthians 5:9-11

9 So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad. 11 Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience. (NIV)

1 Peter 4:17-19

17 For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 And, "If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?" 19 So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good. (NIV)

Hebrews 10:25-31

25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-- and all the more as you see the Day approaching. 26 If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, 27 but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. 28 Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know him who said, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," and again, "The Lord will judge his people." 31 It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. (NIV)

1 John 4:12-21

12 No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. 13 We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. 14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. 15 If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God.

16 And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. 17 In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. 18 There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. 19 We love because he first loved us. 20 If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. 21 And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother. (NIV)