



Anchor of the Soul

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The Testimony of Seasons

John R. Hurt

In the changing of every season, we see powerful, convincing testimony to the truthfulness of the Word of God. Note the reading of Genesis 8:22.

***"While the earth remains, seed time and harvest,
And cold and heat, and summer and winter,
And day and night, shall not cease."***

As we see the splendor of spring, the burgeoning flowers, the green sprouts and the whole of nature come alive again, we know that God's word is true. Just as surely as the green sprouts grow into summer's lush growth and each tender bud blooms into summertime's radiant blossoms, we can rest confidently in the unshakable fact that the Bible speaks the truth. With the coming of fall and all the beautiful colors that make the hues of the greatest Italian artists pale in significance, the Word of God is authenticated. Then, with the arriving of the harsh cold, the falling leaves, and the stark brown bareness of winter' landscape, you may be assured of the indisputable fact that countless centuries have shouted and proclaimed. While the earth remains it shall ever be so! The word of God is true!

In this tribute to the veracity of God, this miracle of his creation, do we not also see the answer to Job's ancient question, "If a man dies will he yet live again" (Job 14:14)? Each year we witness God taking the seemingly dead, lifeless plants and reviving again the germ of life within them. In the explosion of new life that follows, all nature is robed in brilliant splendor of the season. Surely, then, it is but a small thing for the creator of this vast universe to reach down to our narrow house beneath the earth and revive again the germ of life within the soul of man. Ah, the changing of the seasons attests to the irrefutable truth of God!

**Anchor of the Soul
P.O. Box 401
Spruce Pine, NC 28777**

Message From Death Row

By Ricky Don Blackmon

I hope I may have a moment of your time. I am writing to you from prison, yes prison....I hope to reach out in the way that Paul did while he was in prison....to help you live according to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

First, stop and think what it is that may or may not cause one of us to end up in prison. It is the same thing that can cause us to end up in HELL. What is that? SIN !!!

And one of the sins I want to speak about here today is: "REBELLION"

Rebellion is what most of us don't think about very much. Like not listening to our parents when they tell us something. Like not listening to God when He tells us something. Like not listening to Governing authorities. And one of the greatest and easiest things that cause this rebellion is your friends. Yes, your friends will try to get you to do something, and if you say "no,' often they will say; "come on, are you scared?" or they'll call you "chicken." Then most people will jump right in and do whatever it is, for most people don't like to be looked at like that by their friends....I know what I am talking about, for all I have said so far, landed me on death row....

Wild women, drugs, and fast living, was the road I took and look where it got me. Don't think it cannot happen to you, for if you find yourself on any of these roads, you will sooner or later run into a situation that may hurt not only you, but your loved ones as well. And when you say, "Oh, I know what I am doing," believe me, I said the very same thing, and see where I am.

I obeyed the gospel many years ago and fell away, and

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now I have come home to the Lord again....When I obeyed the gospel I was told through God's word what to do, and I fell away....But, PLEASE HEAR ME, clean up your life if you are in the wrong way of life. In the back of your mind you know who you are and the life you live. And if you say to yourself, like I said many times; "I know what I am doing," the TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE...has a number for you. Mine is 000893. I am only one of 340...people on death row here in Texas. And if you run with the wrong people YOU could get the death penalty. For example; say you are riding around with a friend, and you pull into a gas station. Your friend goes in to pay for the gas, and robs and kills the gas station attendant. You are only sitting in the car, but under Texas Law, a District Attorney can get a jury to give YOU a death sentence as well as the guy that did the killing.....Texas will execute people like that as if they were the one who did the crime....

It is my prayer that you will stop and think about your life...for we are all under...God's law. If we obey the Lord, then we can have eternal life, even if life on earth throws us a curve, like it did me. But I was able to repent of my sins, but I also could have been dead before I had a chance to repent, and I know without a doubt, had I done so I would be bound for Hell. But I did repent, and have the chance to meet you in Heaven come Judgement Day. So please, let's work for the goal together, OK?

Your brother in Christ Jesus, Ricky Don Blackmon

(After eleven years on death row, brother Blackmon was executed August 4, 1999, in Huntsville, TX.)

Please call for in-home Bible Study

828-467-1463

The Reality of Hell

Part 2

By Byron Smith

As one continues to contemplate the reality of Hell, they find themselves compelled to grapple with the questions, "Is the existence of Hell contrary with God's love, mercy, and grace?" "Can one reasonably maintain that 'God is love', yet He will consign sinners to an eternal punishment?" "Does the doctrine of hell harmonize with God's justice?" Whether these questions are answered to one's personal satisfaction or not, ultimately has no bearing on the reality of hell. As it has already been established from Scripture, hell is real! One's struggle to reconcile that truth with their questions in no way negates that fact. Nevertheless, let's ponder the questions just the same.

Does the reality of hell collide with God's attribute of love? Those who think so fail to consider the dual character of God. They fail to give an accurate and balanced picture of God as He is depicted in His own Word. God is indeed a God of love (Jn. 3:16; I Jn. 4:8-9) and One who "delights in mercy" (Mic. 7:18; Ps. 103:8-13), but as sure as He is a God of love and mercy, He is a God of wrath who will execute judgment on the wicked (Rom 1:18; 2:5, 8-9; II Cor. 5:11; Eph. 5:6; Col. 3:6; Heb. 12:29). What the Bible says of God's indignation is as true as what it says of His love.

Man has a tendency to reshape God's image into what they want it to be, perhaps even like their own (cf. Ps. 50:21). One must let God be who He is and not who they would mold Him to be (lenient, permissive, and infinitely tolerant). Yes, God is longsuffering (II Pet. 3:9), but He draws the line (Num. 14:18). The doctrine of hell is not contrary to God love; rather it harmonizes with His wrath. Can you imagine facing God's wrath? Know for sure His wrath will punish the unsaved in hell! "Therefore consider the **goodness** and **severity** of God..." (Rom. 11:22).

What can one say then of God's justice? Certainly all

We show love of strangers by serving them. Matthew 25:34-40 assures us that every act of kindness shown another person is seen and rewarded by the Lord (cf. Matt. 10:40-42). The good Samaritan proved himself to be a neighbor by helping the stranger when he was in a helpless condition. Hospitality requires the use of our resources (such as time, possessions, etc.). It is therefore an unselfish and sacrificial act. Hospitality allows us the opportunity to be good stewards of our goods (1 Tim. 6:17-19). But you do not have to be rich to be hospitable. We should all help others as we would like to be helped (Matt. 7:12). Let us all give ourselves to hospitality!

More about the Spruce Pine church of Christ...

- We are undenominational (1 Pet. 5:2)
- We worship in spirit and in truth (Jn. 4:24)
- We preach ONLY the word of God (2 Tim. 4:2)
- We are a closely-knit spiritual family (Eph. 4:16)

Times of Services

Sunday.....Bible study	10:00 AM
Worship	11:00 AM
Evening Worship	6:30 PM
Wednesday....Bible study	7:00 PM

Directions

From Hwy 19 E in Spruce Pine, follow 226 South to McHone Road (located just before the Mitchell Veterinary Clinic). Once you turn onto McHone Road, turn right into the second driveway. You will see our sign at the top of the hill.

Visit our Website

www.LookingToJesus.com

The Love of Strangers

Joe R. Price

“Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.” (Deut. 10:19)

With this command God revealed His will that Israel show kindness and mercy toward all men, including those who were not Israelites. Israel had been shown kindness and mercy in Egypt during the days of Joseph (Gen. 47:11). Israel had also experienced tremendous hardships as a stranger in Egypt, enduring slavery for hundreds of years (Exo. 1:8-11). Israel knew both sides of the coin. So now, as a nation and as individuals of that nation, Israel was to love strangers.

Jesus commands Christians to love strangers, too (even our enemies, Matt. 5:43-47). Another word for this is “hospitality.” Christians are to be “given to hospitality” (Rom. 12:13) and we are to use hospitality “without grumbling” (1 Pet. 4:9). It is one thing to be kind to a stranger, and quite another to love to do so (cf. Titus 1:8). We are to be a people who “do not forget to entertain strangers” (Heb. 13:2).

We show love of strangers by seeking their salvation. Such an effort is the supreme expression of love (cf. Jno. 3:16). But we lose our opportunity to teach the gospel and save a soul if we are rude, abrasive or unkind in our demeanor and our words toward the stranger (Col. 4:6). It is essential that we convey to strangers our genuine care for them. Remember, our goal is to save the lost, not to elevate ourselves (cf. Lk. 18:9-14). There is a definite cause and effect which occurs between us and the person who needs to believe and obey the gospel. Hospitality will show your love for the lost. Hospitality understands the plight of the sinner and tries to help him out of sin’s bondage and death.

Bible believers will acknowledge His justice. In fact He is perfectly just (Neh. 9:33; Ps. 89:14; 97:2; 99:4; 101:1; 103:6; 111:7; Isa. 45:21; Rev. 15:3). But does His just character preclude the sentence of hell for the unsaved? Indeed it does **not**, it rather demands it. God’s justice is the very reason hell must exist. God cannot and will not overlook sin that has not been forgiven. Because God is just, sin must be punished.

It is not man’s place to define justice or to determine what is deserved for the sinner. Perhaps you would not send a person to hell, but that does not change what God would or would not do (Isa. 55:8-9). God has a right to do whatever His faultless justice demands (Rom. 9:20-21). Just as God’s justice required the perfect sacrifice of His own Son to atone for sin for those who will avail themselves (Rom 3:25-26), so His justice requires eternal condemnation for those who will not avail themselves of that atoning sacrifice. Furthermore and again because God is just, the punishment must fit the “crime”, and the crime is sin. Man’s failure to understand God’s justice as it relates to the existence of hell is directly related to his failure to grasp the seriousness of sin in the eyes of a God who is perfect in purity and holiness (Heb. 10:26-31). The best gauge of the enormity of sin is the punishment determined against it. Sin is not a trivial thing nor is the reality of a place called hell.

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Martyrs

From Fox's Book of Martyrs

Peter

Among many other saints, the blessed apostle Peter was condemned to death, and crucified, as some do write, at Rome; albeit some others, and not without cause, do doubt thereof. Hegesippus saith that Nero sought matter against Peter to put him to death; which, when the people perceived, they entreated Peter with much ado that he would fly the city. Peter, through their importunity at length persuaded, prepared himself to avoid. But, coming to the gate, he saw the Lord Christ come to meet him, to whom he, worshipping, said, "Lord, whither dost Thou go?" To whom He answered and said, "I am come again to be crucified." By this, Peter, perceiving his suffering to be understood, returned into the city. Jerome saith that he was crucified, his head being down and his feet upward, himself so requiring, because he was (he said) unworthy to be crucified after the same form and manner as the Lord was.

Paul

Paul, the apostle, who before was called Saul, after his great travail and unspeakable labors in promoting the Gospel of Christ, suffered also in this first persecution under Nero. Abdias, declareth that under his execution Nero sent two of his esquires, Ferega and Parthemius, to bring him word of his death. They, coming to Paul instructing the people, desired him to pray for them, that they might believe; who told them that shortly after they should believe and be baptized at His sepulcher. This done, the soldiers came and led him out of the city to the place of execution, where he, after his prayers made, gave his neck to the sword.

November Bible Reading

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
	1 Deut. 29-31 Lk. 14	2 Deut. 32-34 Lk. 15	3 Study With Us! 7 PM	4 Josh. 1-4 Lk. 16	5 Josh. 5-8 Lk. 17	6 Josh. 9-11 Lk. 18
7 Worship With Us! 11 AM & 6:30 PM	8 Josh 12-14 Lk. 19	9 Josh. 15-17 Lk. 20	10 Study With Us! 7 PM	11 Josh 18-20 Lk. 21	12 Josh. 21-23 Lk. 22:1-28	13 Josh. 24—Jdg. 2 Lk. 22:29-71
14 Worship With Us! 11 AM & 6:30 PM	15 Jdg. 3-5 Lk. 23:1-28	16 Jdg. 6-8 Lk. 23:29-56	17 Study With Us! 7 PM	18 Jdg. 9-10 Lk. 24	19 Jdg. 11-13 Jn. 1	20 Jdg. 14-17 Jn. 2
21 Worship With Us! 11 AM & 6:30 PM	22 Jdg. 18-20 Jn. 3	23 Jdg. 21—Ruth 3 Jn. 4:1-28	24 Study With Us! 7 PM	25 Ruth 4 -1 Sam. 2 Jn. 4-29-54	26 1 Sam. 3-7 Jn. 5	27 1 Sam. 8-11 Jn. 6:1-28
28 Worship With Us! 11 AM & 6:30 PM	29 1 Sam. 12-14 Jn. 6:29-71	30 1 Sam. 15-17 Jn. 7:1-27				