

BLESSED ASSURANCE

God has never promised that if one would become one of His children, all things would be great. The old idea that if something goes wrong, its because you or not living right just won't float. God has never promised that you would be rich in this worlds material goods. God has never promised that the physical health of this temporal body in which you dwell will always be sound. God has never promised that you will be the most popular person around. In fact, God has promised that you will have hardships. Paul wrote, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (II Tim. 3:12). To the Corinthians Paul wrote, "There hath not temptation taken you but such as is common to man..." (I Cor. 10:13). Everyone has them. You are not the only one who suffers trials, tribulations and temptations. We all do.

However, God has made a few promises that ought to relieve us of our frustration concerning the hardships of this life. First, from the same verse just noted, Paul continued, "...but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Cor. 10:13). Also, God has promised that in the long run, we shall be rewarded if we simply keep on struggling down the path He has proposed. Paul wrote, "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9). Our society seems to be one that almost demands instant gratification. We want our rewards "right now". But, God's way doesn't guarantee instant gratification. But, Paul did write, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (I Cor. 15:58). And, James wrote, "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain" (James 5:7), In fact, Paul said, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18).

It is a simple fact that God has never promised to shield us from all harm, sickness, poverty and hardship, but He has promised us that if we will obey Him and remain faithful to the end, the reward that we shall receive will be more than worth it all.

Robert

WHAT IF WE HAD TO PAY A FINE?

On a number of occasions we have heard someone comment on the death of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5) and say that if Christians were to fall dead every time they lied about their giving or their reason for absence or some such, it would not be long before we had no members left. But, what if Christians had to pay a fine for every sin they committed? Under the old Law of Moses, sinners did have to pay a fine for their sins. One of many scriptures showing this says, "And it shall be, when he shall be guilty in one of these things, that he shall confess that he hath sinned in that thing: And he shall bring his trespass offering unto the Lord for his sin which he hath sinned, a female from the flock, a lamb or a kid of the goats, for a sin offering; and the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his sin" (Lev. 5:5-6). Every such sin cost this man another sheep or goat from his herd. Now, that would certainly thin out a herd or else cause one to be very careful about walking as God instructed.

What if we had to pay a fine for our every sin? What if each lie told cost us a hundred dollars or each willful missing of an assembly of the saints another hundred? It would surprise me if we were to find the members being much more faithful, lest they be in complete poverty. That would be hitting where it really hurts, in the old pocketbook.

Solomon the wise stated, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Ecc. 8:11). Just as our ultimate blessings may not come immediately, but will definitely come, so the punishment for our sins do not come immediately, but come they will. Though we may have even forgotten multitudes of un-repent-ed of sins, the Lord knows them and has not forgotten them. The apostle Paul stated, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Cor. 5:10). He didn't say those things done in the past week or so, but done in his life.

The good news is that the price for our sins has already been paid. Jesus was the Lamb of God' which taketh away the sin of the world (John 1:29). However, there are conditions upon which His blood pays for our sins. "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7). Think about it!

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