

God's Pleasure in Men of the Old Testament

In our first lesson we discussed the dangers of abusing terms as Christians, when we talk about people being a "Christian". We defined terms: Alien Sinner, Hypocrite, Perfection, Christian, and erring Christian. We noted that all but two (underlined) would be classified as being lost by God.

We noted the dangers involved; to deceive our friends by then thinking we have declared them to be "Christian" and thus have hope to be saved. This deceives us as well, thinking we have no responsibility to teach them and bring them to repentance and obedience to God's plan of SALVATION!

Their likelihood will be that of never coming to the truth, and instead of having a home in "heaven", their home will be in "hell" for they will not have followed God's will.

They haven't listened to God telling them what to do, and haven't done what they are told by God's Word. Yet, some "Christian" has declared them to be a "Christian".

We are responsible to seek and save the lost! Last night, we discussed God's purpose or objective in Creation. Man, the creature, would choose to listen to Him and do exactly what He said to do. We discussed how God was proud of those who did obey Him, such as Job, and Adam & Eve, up to a point— when they didn't do what He said!

Tonight, we look at others, from the Old Testament, serving as examples, like Hebrews 1:1 speaks, of various manners as God spoke to men.

Men of the Patriarchs

- These were men, without a system of law, where God spoke individually with them, telling them specifically what to do. Like Job, when they did what He told them to do, HE WAS PROUD! Up until Adam and Eve did what He told them NOT to do, He was proud of them, and walked with them in the garden! This explains the phrase “walk with God” as being righteous without sin.
- These were known for their faithfulness to God. Each were unique in their task God gave them.
- God expected each to do as asked!! He blessed these as they obeyed, and cursed them when they disobeyed, even if just one instance of disobedience.
- To please God, we must choose to serve Him by listening and obeying what He wants, and how He wants it.
- Let’s look at the Patriarchs and then those under Moses’ Law of God:

Men of the Patriarchs

- Adam – Genesis 1-3. This was the first man and was given the charge to tend/care for God's Garden, the garden of Eden. He's the only one given that charge. In chapter 2:18-25, he was told what to do and what NOT to do. Don't eat of the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil", and the consequence, "in the day you eat thereof, you will surely die!" (Even though death had never happened, and he may not have understood what it was, he sure knew it wasn't a good thing.) Tending the garden included naming all animals, and then given oversight over Eve. (She was never an equal to him, but a helpmeet. She was equal in her responsibility to obey God, as told to submit to Adam.) God declared them both good/righteous, until they chose not to do what God said, and ate of the tree. Then their friendship with God was severed, and they no longer could walk with God in the garden, and was driven from the garden and cursed. Amos 3:3, they were no longer in agreement with God!
- **Lesson: Do whatever God tells you to do! STOP, and become a castaway!**

Men of the Patriarchs

- Noah – Genesis 6. According to chapter 5, the world's population grew, but they grew wicked also, living their lives their own way, not listening to God. Gen. 6:5, their imaginations were evil continually!
- In the midst of all this wickedness and corruption, stood a pillar of man that was yet righteous, Noah, his sons, and their wives. And, he “walked with God”, vs. 9. God repented of His creation of man (was disappointed), and decided to destroy them, but finding these righteous souls, provided them a way of escape! He told them to be an ark of safety, giving specifications to do so. To prepare for something that he had not experienced, a flood upon the earth.
- While building this ark, he would teach and warn his fellowmen, but still they didn't listen to God's warning, and scoffed at him. Noah did as God commanded and saved these 8 righteous and those animals God specified to board the ark. He was faithful in all this. In chapter 9:9-27, we know that the “knowledge of good and evil” was present in them, as they disembarked, and they were given more rules, ie. Can eat meats.
- Noah became a keeper of vineyards, got drunk and naked. Hamm lusted after him and told his brothers about their father, instead of clothing him. He was cursed for his actions. Shem and Japheth came in and clothed Noah, and God blessed them. Hamm's son, Canaan, would serve Japheth, who dwelt in the tents of Shem.
- **LESSON: The knowledge of good and evil continued to exist, but men had the ability to ignore it and still do what God told them. We DON'T have to indulge in that knowledge!**

Men of the Patriarchs

- Abram/Abraham – Here’s a man that was tested in extraordinary ways. He was told to leave his family and country, Ur of Chaldees, and go to an unknown place, that God would lead him. (This is faith!) Then after spending receiving the promise in Gen. 12:1-7, he prayed for a son to carry out his part. Years later, after Sara trying to help with Hagar, they had their son, Isaac. BUT, then God asked him to sacrifice this only son before God. To prepare this took extreme faith! **(How many would sacrifice their child before God today?)** This testified to his faith and trust in God. His faith is noteworthy, and in James 2:23, he is declared to be “the friend of God”. Why??
- **LESSON: He simply did whatever God told him to do! He was challenged/tested, and blessed for his service in obedience! We must do so also. (Note also in Hebrews 11, along with James 2.)**

Men of the Patriarchs

- Enoch – Little is known about this man specifically. We don't even know specifically, what God told him to do. Yet it is said **“he walked with God, and God took him”**. His son was the oldest man to ever live, but died, likely in the flood, a wicked man, not listening to God and Noah.
- **LESSON: Enoch is mentioned in the bulwarks of faith in Hebrews 11, thousands of years later, so was very noteworthy! He pleased God, and didn't die, being taken.**

Men of the Patriarchs

- The Patriarchs were unique in that there was no “system of law”, like the “law of Moses” given to the nation of Israel. Each were told specifically what to do by God, and expected to do it!
 - **Noah- the only one to build an ark for safety.**
 - **Abram – the only one told to sacrifice his son.**
 - **But they were noteworthy because God saw their faith, including their obedience. He told them what He wanted, and they simply did it!**
 - **(Remember they all had the “knowledge of good and evil”, so they knew what not to do to please God, and what to do to please God.)**
 - Without a “system” of law, FAITH is mandatory, and obedience pleases God, no matter what dispensation of mankind we are discussing.
 - **LESSON: The picture is clear that God made man to simply listen and do, but by his choice, not as a puppet of God. If this premise is true, we will see the same picture through the Mosaic Age and Law of Christ!**

Men of Moses' Law from God

- Moses – The lawgiver to the “children of Israel”. He grew up with faith in God. He was chosen at a “burning bush” to lead God’s people.(Ex. 3:5) God chose him to do miracles before Pharaoh, to convince Pharaoh, and the people of God, that He would deliver them from bondage through Moses. He led them out of Egyptian bondage through Moses and Aaron, as his spokesman.(vs. 6-4:14) pled for mercy for the people after their sins in the wilderness. BUT THEN, he struck instead of speaking to the rock for water as God told him. (Num. 20:8-12) (This was different from the time before.)
- One act of disobedience, and he couldn’t enter the promised land. (In fact, none that left Egypt entered but Joshua and Caleb, for their belief in God.)
- **LESSON: Serve God all your life to please Him! One transgression can destroy that relationship with God!**

Men of Moses' Law from God

- Nadab & Abihu – These were sons of Aaron, taught to be prepared to be High Priests. They would know the law, and responsibilities to serve God. They would know where the fire came from to burn incense, Leviticus 10:1-7.
- They used an unauthorized fire/strange fire, and God consumed them with fire from heaven. (Don't even know where the fire came from.) Aaron and sons were not allowed to grieve over God's actions.
- **LESSON: There are consequences for disobedience! We PERISH!**

Men of Moses' Law from God

- David – The “man after His (God’s) own heart...” 1 Samuel 13:14. As a lad, he believed in God and trusted Him. With 3 stones and sling, he slew the giant, Goliath, whereas even the great King Saul, would not attempt, 1 Samuel 17. Through other trials, he proved himself to serve God, and God’s kindness was upon him. He was anointed as King over Israel. THEN, there was Bathsheba, that he lusted after, committed adultery with, and set her husband up to be killed in battle, trying to hide his sin. He married her, (and others) and their son became his mortal enemy.
- **LESSON #1: You can’t hide your sin from God!** He then grieved for his transgression and begged for forgiveness from God. He learned a major lesson.
- **LESSON #2: To be God’s friend, you must realize your transgression and seek God’s forgiveness.** He trusted in his heritage, Jesus’ birth, life, and death. His desire became to know God’s Will/Law, Psalm 119. He trusted in these to rebuild his relationship with God. Toward the end of his life, he requested to build the temple for God, but was denied. His son, Solomon would do so. Psalms serves as a testimony of the grief of his sin, the penance, and requests for forgiveness/mercy, and desire to serve God. His dependence became God.
- **LESSON #3: We must develop the same attitude toward God!**

Men of Moses' Law from God

- Solomon— Here is the wisest of all mankind, which was a blessing from God. (What more could a man ask?) Solomon wanted to know and experience everything in life, “under the sun”. He wasn’t satisfied with God’s wisdom. Ecclesiastes 1-12 gives his quests and results. Having done so, he realized these were not the important things in life, nor substance of life. “Vanity and vexation of spirit!” Instead, “Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth...”, Eccl. 12:1, temptations will come and you’ll need to remember God and depend on Him. Vs. 13-14, “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter; Fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil”.
- **LESSON: It is vital to understand life and fulfill life, that we KNOW God and keep His commandments. (Just as we have seen from these prior examples.) By doing so, we serve the purpose of God creating man!**

Men of Moses' Law from God

- Elijah – One of the great prophets of God in the O.T. What trials He endured as he trusted in God! He, also, performed miracles, praying for a drought and then rains! He stood against the 450 prophets of Baal, and God established him as His prophet. He trusted in God and God prevailed, and support him.
- **The highest praise from God, he didn't die!** God's law is that IF you sin, you will die! – Rom. 6:23. 1 Kings 18 described him as a “man of the Lord”. Obadiah, another prophet, didn't trust God, like Elijah did. He feared King Ahab, but not Elijah. In vs. 36, he announced himself to be a servant of the God of Israel, and did all these things at “thy word”. His heart was right with God, and was faithful in all things. He was so respected as a “man of God”, that kings would inquire of him what was the “word of the Lord” during various circumstances. In 2 Kings 2, we read that he was taken up “in a flaming chariot of fire, to the skies and off to be with God”. He didn't fear kings, but feared God. The result: He was rewarded by God. No death for Elijah!
- **LESSON: Listen and obey God, fearing God, not man, even if threatened with death!**

Conclusion

- We could also speak of King Saul, who let people guide him away from serving God.
- Then Jesus, who lived under this same law, but said he came to “do thy will O’ God”. (Heb. 10:7)
- In our next lesson, we will consider the failure of mankind to serve God, God’s love for His creature, and His law of Pardon, through Jesus.