

THE PENTECOST

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THE PENTECOST



Anger is an emotion that burns and stews within people. However, anger does not usually stay bottled up. It finds a way of expressing itself. What does the Bible have to say about anger and how do we deal with it in a positive way? In this February, 2014 issue, we will attempt to clarify this issue. God bless you.

Shawn Stevens

Is it wrong to be angry? Or is it how we act upon that anger that can be wrong? We all face it, so let's look at it together with the truth of God's Word. God bless you.

Ramona Stevens

P. O. Box 933, Lynden, Washington, 98264

U. S. A.

info@zionchristianministry.com

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ANGER

Have you ever noticed that people will often do the most illogical things when they are upset? A child will throw a tantrum and burst out screaming. A teenager will slam his body into a locker. A mother will burst out in a thousand words, all spoken at such a rapid speed so as to be undecipherable. An adult man can lash out in any number of ways, even in violence. All of these are crazy behaviours, when looked at in retrospect, however, they are anything but humorous. Uncontrolled and unrestrained anger has resulted in untold damage and lasting hurt in people. In many cases, it has led to the destabilization of whole countries and regions. It is a worthy goal to overcome and heal from negative anger.

Is all anger negative anger? The Bible teaches that some anger is acceptable. The Apostle Paul taught; “Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:” (Ephesians 4.26). Here, we are told to be angry but not to sin. In other words, all anger is not sin. A man or woman might be legitimately angry over injustice, over crime or over sin in their own life. It is right to have a righteous anger towards evil, towards sin itself. However, the Christian makes a distinction between hating the sin and hating the sinner. A Christian hates sin but should love the sinner, a person whom Christ died for.

While some anger in the right context is acceptable, much anger that we see in the world, and in our hearts, is not. God's Word has much to say about negative anger. (See Proverbs 22.24-25; Proverbs 27.4; James 1.19-21; Colossians 3.8). The scriptures give us instruction in dealing with negative anger and warn us against it. Have you lost your temper recently? Are you giving vent to this kind of negative anger?

Negative anger expresses itself in two ways, spewing and bottling. Some people spew their anger, that is, they let it fly. Out it comes in a fury of words or actions. It is like a burst dam. Such people often justify their spewing and say they need to get it off their chest. However, spewers are just hot-heads and they usually have long track records of broken friendships and broken relationships. There usually can be found a long trail of people whom they have hurt, often loved ones and family. No one likes a hot-head and they have difficulty keeping friends and earning respect. This further compounds their anger issues because they are angry that they are not respected. It becomes a vicious spiral into further anger. The Bible calls such ones fools; “A fool uttereth all his anger; But a wise man keepeth it back and stilleth it.” (Proverbs 29.11).

Another way in which negative anger is expressed is in bottling it up. Negative anger can be suppressed and pushed down inside of us so that it is not easily seen. Some people are very good at doing this and onlookers may say that these ones have no anger issues. However, bottled-up anger has a way of leaking out. It is like toxic waste that is buried in the ground. People can't see it right away but they become sick from walking over the spot where it lies. Bottled-up anger harms the person who is holding it in in many ways, physically, mentally and spiritually. It can surface years later, as well.

Some might say, “Isn't this the only two ways of handling anger, spewing or bottling?” No, it isn't. For the man or woman who has a relationship with God, there is a third option and that is the act of giving your anger over to God and letting Him take it out of you. This starts with forgiveness. We can respond to wrongs by forgiving the perpetrator and then asking God to take the anger away. Forgiveness is not always easy, in fact, it seldom is easy. However, it is possible for persons who have God in

their lives as their Lord. Forgiveness is a radically different way of handling anger from spewing or bottling. Granting forgiveness leads to a radically different outcome than does bottling it up or spewing it out. It brings healing to ourselves, and often resolution to the situation in conflict.

Why should we care about how we handle our anger? We should care because we can do so much harm with anger. Hurt relationships are harder to repair than they are to maintain. Relationships can be maintained by forgiveness and patience. They can be repaired by the same but, usually, only after much humbling, confession and passage of time. When you are angry, you are vulnerable. You are vulnerable to saying something rash, that you will regret later. You are vulnerable to acting in a way that you will later be ashamed of. We need to replace anger with patience and forgiveness. Anger often leads to retaliation. The Bible instructs us:

See that none render unto any one evil for evil; but always follow after that which is good, one toward another, and toward all.

1 Thessalonians 5.15

Also:

17 Render to no man evil for evil. Take thought for things honorable in the sight of all men.

18 If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, be at peace with all men.

19 Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto the wrath of God: for it is written, Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord.

Romans 12.17-19

And:

And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord.

Ephesians 6.4

There is much anger in our world. Not all anger is

wrong but much, and probably most of it that we see, is negative. People bottle up their anger or they spew it out. However, there is another way of handling anger, and that is to give it over to God. If you are struggling with anger, let Him remove it from you and heal your heart. God bless you.

Shawn Stevens

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Scripture taken from the American Standard Version.

ROMANS : CHAPTER 8

OUTLINE :

I Freedom In Christ 8.1-11

II Sonship In Christ 8.12-17

III Suffering And Redemption Of Body 8.18-28

IV Predestination And The Faithfulness Of Christ 8.29-39

I Freedom in Christ

1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Romans 8.1-11

Verse 1, Chapter 8, of the Book of Romans, in the King James Version, reads:

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (vs 1)

This chapter opens with good news for the Christian. According to the King James Version, the Christian, who does not walk according to the flesh but, rather, who walks according to the Spirit is free from condemnation. Many modern translations, including the American Standard Version, do not have the second part of this verse; “... who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” The translators claim that it does not appear in the earliest manuscripts in this spot but, rather, in verse 4. The word “condemnation” is “katakrima” in the Greek and the word relates to the sentencing of a criminal with the focus on the penalty.¹ In the context of Christ's kingdom, the Christian is spared from hell.

We read further:

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

Romans 8.3

Here, the Apostle Paul says that the law could not provide salvation because it was “... weak through the flesh, ...”. This is not really a criticism of the law but, rather, of our own human flesh which does not have the strength to fulfil the law. It is like a shovel with a steel blade and a wooden handle. After some use, the handle breaks, but not the metal. In this illustration, the metal is the law and the wood is our flesh. We read; “... his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, ...” (vs 3). This is not saying that Jesus did not have a flesh body. I believe that it is simply saying that His flesh was not sinful. Elsewhere in Scripture, we read; “Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.” (Matthew 1.18) We read further; “... condemned sin in the flesh:” (Romans 8.3). The sacrifice of Jesus Christ defeated and condemned sin.

We also read:

5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

Romans 8.5-6

In “... do mind ...”, the verb “Phroneo” is used and means “basic orientation, bent and thought patterns of the mind ...”.² Being after the flesh and minding the things of the flesh is being carnally minded, resulting in death. Being after the Spirit and minding

the things of the Spirit is being spiritually minded, resulting in life and peace.

We read further:

9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Romans 8.9-11

These verses show the importance of the indwelling of the Spirit of God. A Christian is a temple of the Holy Spirit. A Christian, with God's Spirit indwelling, will receive life to their mortal body. This is probably a reference to our future resurrection.

II Sonship in Christ

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

Romans 8.12-17

Translations such as the American Standard Version refer to the Spirit as "himself" rather than "itself" in verse 16. I prefer the American Standard Version's rendering in this case. Jesus did more than forgive us. Through Him, we are adopted into God's family. Adoption is "huiothesia" in the Greek and means "a placing as son." 3 Paul is the only one to use this word in the New Testament. The act of adoption is loving, gracious and heroic. We see adoption in the Old Testament before we come to it in the New Testament. Pharaoh's daughter found Moses in the bulrushes in a basket and raised him. Adopted, as sons, also makes us heirs, heirs of God. (See Matthew 25.34 and Lamentations 3.24).

III Suffering And Redemption Of Body

18 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.

19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

20 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope,

21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?

25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

Romans 8.18-28

We read:

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. (vs 18)

This is one of the most encouraging scriptures in the Bible. What we suffer in this lifetime will be worth it in the end. We also read; “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” (vs 28). If verse 18 is one of the most encouraging scriptures for the Christian who is suffering in the will of God, then verse 28 is equally encouraging. The details of a Christian's life are all a part of a master plan, a plan that ends in good. The words “all things” mean that in everything, God is interconnecting and working out good for those who love Him.

IV Predestination And The Faithfulness of Christ

We read:

29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Romans 8.29

This has been a much debated verse. What is predestination? “Predestinate” is “proorizo” in the Greek. 4 “Pro” means before and “horizo” means boundary or, more specifically, “mark off by boundaries.” 5 How much meaning are you going to attach to this word? It simply means to mark off by boundaries beforehand. Does this speak of God's marking or choosing of us before our births? I believe so, but I don't want to stretch the word beyond what Paul is trying to say. How much will you pack into the meaning of this word? God marks and calls us but this, in itself, does not eliminate free will. We read; “For whom he did foreknow, ... ” (vs 29). Who is whom? The predestined. Who is He? God. What does God foreknow about them? It does not specifically say. An Arminean interpretation says that those whom God foreknew would choose Him, He predestined.

We read further:

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8.35-39

We have said that verses 18 and 28 of Romans, Chapter 8, are some of the most encouraging verses

of Scripture for those suffering in the will of God. Verses 35 to 39 are in the same category.

Chapter 8 in the King James Version, opens with the good news that we are not under condemnation if we are in Christ Jesus and do not walk according to the flesh but walk according to the Spirit. Jesus did for us what the law could not do; He condemned sin in the flesh. In this chapter, we see two pathways; we see the path of those who set their minds on the things of the flesh and the path of those who set their minds on the things of the Spirit. We learn that a believer is an adopted son of God. We are comforted that suffering is worth enduring and even that all things are working for our good if we love God and are called according to His purpose. The Christian is dear to the Lord and no external force can separate him or her from God's love. Praise God.

Shawn Stevens

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ROMANS CHAPTER 9

OUTLINE :

- I Paul's Broken Heart Over Lost Israel. 9.1-5
- II The Unbelief And Lostness Of Much Of Natural Israel And The Faith And Salvation Of Gentiles Can Both Be Taking Place Without Being In Contradiction With God's Word 9.6-33
 - 1) It is consistent with God's promises. 9.6-13
 - A) Spiritual Israel and Natural Israel 9.6-12
 - B) Side point - reincarnation is not true. (vs 11)
 - 2) It is consistent with God's Person. 9.14-24
 - A) Free will vs Calvinism
 - 3) It is consistent with God's prophetic revelation. 9.25-29
 - 4) It is consistent with God's way of salvation by faith. 9.30-33

I Paul's Broken Heart Over Lost Israel

We read:

2 That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.

3 For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:

Romans 9.2-3

The Apostle Paul loves his countrymen and wants to see them saved. He is the apostle to the Gentiles but he still has a heart for his kinsmen.

II The Unbelief And Lostness Of Much Of Natural Israel And The Faith And Salvation Of Gentiles Can Both Be Taking Place Without Being In Contradiction With God's Word

Is the unbelief of, and lostness of, much of natural Israel and the faith and salvation of the Gentiles, both occurring, contradictory to, or consistent with the whole Bible? No and yes. Unbelieving natural Israelites are acting contrary to God's Word by not putting faith in Jesus Christ and becoming saved. However it is not contradictory for God to save both Jews and Gentiles who put their faith in Jesus Christ. It is not contradictory; it is consistent. Some would still ask, "Would there not be a contradiction or an inconsistency between God choosing Israel and Israel not believing Him and not accepting His way of salvation?" It is an irony, but not a contradiction or inconsistency on God's part.

It is consistent with God's promises. (See Romans 9.6-13). God is only committed to grant spiritual salvation to those who are His spiritual children. Such ones can also be called spiritual Israel. Paul distinguishes between spiritual Israel and much of natural Israel.

6 Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:

7 Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.

8 That is, They which are the children of the

flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

Romans 9.6-8

We read; "... For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel." (vs 6). To be a true Jew you must be a spiritual Jew, not just an ancestor of Abraham. This must have been a great shock to many natural Jews. By "natural" Jew, I mean a biological descendent of Abraham. However, a "spiritual" Jew (true Jew) is someone who is trusting in Jesus and has come to Him in repentance and faith by God's grace. This is shown by two examples. Isaac is chosen, not Ismael. (See vs 7). Jacob is chosen, not Esau. (See Romans 9.10-13).

A spiritual Jew means someone who has a personal, individual relationship with God. This concept was not developed clearly until the New Testament. Natural Jews have the honour of having God choose them historically, for a purpose. However, that does not mean that they are full sons or that they have salvation automatically. There are many Jews today who are secular and some who are atheists. They do not have salvation without faith in Jesus Christ. We read:

28 For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:

29 But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

Romans 2.28-29

Jesus did not regard as God's children the rebellious natural Jews who rejected Him. (See John 8.31-44). Instead, they were of their father, the devil. To be a true son of Abraham, you have to be of faith. We read; "Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye

therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.” (Galatians 3.6-7).

In Romans 9.11, we have a side point saying that reincarnation is not true; “(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)”.

Children who are unborn have done neither good nor evil. This refutes the concepts of previous lives, karma and reincarnation.

God has mercy on Jews and Gentiles alike. We read:

What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. (Romans 9.14)

For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. (Romans 9.15)

Paul goes on to defend his statements. I think that Romans 9.15-22 are the most difficult verses in the Bible. It is probably one of the most loved passages of Calvinist scholars. On a surface reading, it seems to support the idea of unconditional predestination. We read; “ ... I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, ...” (vs 15) and; “So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.” (vs 16) and; “Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.” (vs 18). All of this at first would seem to make a strong case for Calvinism. How do Arminean Christians, who believe in free will in choosing, interpret a passage such as this? Armineans point out that the context of the chapter is to do with God's choice of who the lineage of the Messiah would pass through and say that these verses are not meant to be applied to the salvation of individuals. They see the references to Ismael and Esau as being to nations, not individuals.

While the lineage of Christ is dealt with here, I feel that more is being said. It is hard to get away from the examples of individuals that Paul uses, such as Esau and Pharaoh. The case of Pharaoh is fascinating. In Exodus we are told numerous times that Pharaoh's heart was hardened as Moses was presenting the LORD'S word to him. (See Exodus 7.22; 8.19; 9.7). However, two times God hardened his heart. (See 7.13; 9.12). Then we read Paul's words:

17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.

Romans 9.17-18

If these verses are saying that God hardened a soft-hearted Pharaoh and that Pharaoh could not have chosen to have obeyed the LORD, then I do not know how to reconcile this with the rest of Scripture, which from cover-to-cover calls and commands men and women to choose God's way and repent.

However, I believe that something else is being said here. My understanding of this can be illustrated in this way. First, think of the sun. When the hot rays of the sun hit an object, they can either melt it or harden it. Whether something melts or hardens depends on the properties of the object. Similarly, God comes to a person's heart with His hot truth. A wicked, unrepentant heart is hardened by the truth but a humble, repentant heart is melted by the truth. I believe that God wants to melt, not harden human hearts. However, what people choose to do with His truth will either melt or harden them. The choice, I believe, is with the people and yet there is in this illustration a sense in which you could say that God hardened someone's heart when He brought to them His truth. I am not saying that I understand this fully

but, rather, this is how I look at passages such as this.

We read:

25 As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.

26 And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.

27 Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved:

28 For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.

29 And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrhah.

Romans 9.25-29.

The unbelief and lostness of much of natural Israel can be occurring without God being in contradiction to His Word. The faith and salvation of many Gentiles is consistent with God's way of salvation by faith. We read:

30 What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.

31 But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.

32 Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone;

33 As it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

Romans 9.30-33

Paul has a broken heart for those of his kinsmen, the natural Jewish people, who have not received Jesus Christ.

Shawn Stevens

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Zion Christian Ministry
Shawn and Ramona Stevens

Mailing Address
P.O. Box 933
Lynden, WA 98264 USA

E-mail: info@zionchristianministry.com
website: zionchristianministry.com