
BLESSED IS THE NATION WHOSE GOD IS THE LORD

The Reconciliation of all things

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BEFORE WE consider the Bible doctrine of "the reconciliation of all things" we should give some thought to some Bible history in both the New and Old Scriptures.

Many Christians are surprised and even offended when told that the disciples did not know or did they preach the gospel of grace for all people until after Peter's vision and experience in chapters 10 and 11 of Acts. Acts 10:19-21 states:

"While Peter thought on the vision the Spirit said unto to him, Behold, three men seek thee. Arise, therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.

"Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, behold I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come:"..."doubting nothing, for I have sent them:" was said because up to that time Peter and the disciples, who had been with the Christ for three years, were not aware of the gospel of grace for all people.

Peter began his sermon in Cornelius' house as follows (verses 34-36):

"Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

"The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)"

"Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:" Peter had not perceived this until his experience in Acts 10. Neither had the other disciples for in Acts 11:1-4 we read"

"And the apostles and brethren that were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God.

"And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, Saying, Thou wentest into men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.

"But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, saying,"

Peter continued to relate his vision and experience to verse 17 where we read:

"Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I that I could withstand God?

"When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then God hath also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen traveled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only."

"Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." They were convinced and satisfied. This reminds us of what Christ said in John 16:12 and 13:

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he shall shew you things to come." It was the Spirit that told Peter to go to Cornelius' house. (See Acts 11:12 and Acts 10:19.)

We should also give some thought to several other statements by Christ which influenced the disciples' thinking prior to the coming of the Holy Spirit. Read verses 21-28 of Matt. 15 and not especially verses 24 and 26.

"But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

"Then she came and worshiped him saying, Lord, help me. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to dogs.

"And she said. Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table."

Why did the Christ say, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" and what did He mean by "the children's bread"? Without the knowledge and understanding of the Old Scripture and the Lord's kingdom parables these words of Christ are difficult to explain and account for.

There are more than a dozen great covenants by God in the Old Scripture and practically every one of these great covenants are with the Israel people, now the nations of Christendom—the nations where Christianity is the predominant religion. These great racial and national covenants are the framework for both the Old and New Scriptures. These covenants also serve as a blueprint and a schedule for God's workings throughout the ages, past and future.

In Romans 15:8, Paul the apostle wrote:

"Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers."

Circumcision was a sign and a mark given to Israel to show that they were God's special and chosen kingdom people. Therefore, both the forerunner, John the Baptist, and the Christ came preaching the gospel of the kingdom, for it was through the kingdom people that God purposed to bless all nations.

When God chose and called Abram to become the father of many nations of Christendom, in Genesis 12 God said in verse 2:

"And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing."

In Genesis 17 God enlarged his covenant and promise to Abram. You should read carefully the 17th chapter of Genesis. We quote verses 5,6, and 7:

"Neither shall thy name anymore be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham: for a father of many nations have I made thee.

"And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.

"And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee."

Verses 17,18, and 19 of Genesis 18 state:

"And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?

"For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him."

Since it was God's decree and purpose to use the descendants of Abraham to bless and help all nations, Christ's first mission was to accomplish redemption for Israel, or as Paul states in Galatians 4:4-5:

"But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."

The Israel people were the only people given God's national laws. They broke and "cast away" these covenant laws; therefore they had to be redeemed.

In Romans 2:14 Paul wrote: "for when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:"

Psalms 147:19-20 states:

"He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation; and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the LORD."

With these facts in mind we can understand why the Christ spoke of "the children's bread," and received her request when she said: "Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masers' table."

The Christ replied, "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Is it not strange that this woman of Canaan had such knowledge and faith in the Old Scriptures that she knew the Israel people were God's special servant people whom God would use to bless all nations as God covenanted with Abraham in chapters 12 and 17 of Genesis?

The Edomite Jews were so ignorant and blind regarding the Old Scripture and the deity of Christ that they accused Him of having a devil. And what shall we say to Christians who insist that these Edomite Jews are God's chosen special servant people? For more than 1900 years these Edomite Jews have been the greatest anti-Christ and anti-Christian force on earth, while true Israel, the people of Christendom have heralded the Gospel of Christ to all nations with many other blessings as God promised throughout the Old Scriptures. See Isaiah 43:10-13.

There is another statement by the Christ in Matthew 10:5,6, and 7 which seems strange unless we are familiar with the covenants of the Old Scriptures and God's decrees and purposes. It states:

"These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not.

"But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

"And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Why "go not into the way of the Gentiles," and why, "But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel"? Undoubtedly for the same reason the Christ spoke as He did in Matthew 15:24.

It is evident in the Scriptures that God has certain and specific things He accomplishes and works out in the various ages or dispensation and that God's revelations come progressively.

In Matthew 13:10 and 11 we read, "And the disciples came and said unto him (unto the Christ), Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given."

We must realize and understand as we consider the subject of reconciliation that, in the New Scriptures there are two realms in which mysteries are set forth—the mysteries of the kingdom and the mysteries of the church. Christ set forth the mysteries of the kingdom, and He states in Matthew 13:17,

For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."

The Christ did not set forth the mysteries of the church—these are brought out in the writings of the apostle Paul. In Ephesians 3, the apostle Paul refers to his own ministry. Beginning with verse 1 we read,

"For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given to me to you-ward: How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit..."

I wish to point out that we cannot build church doctrine on the kingdom parables nor on the symbols of the Revelation. The basic church doctrines must come from the writings of the apostle Paul. He set forth the mysteries of the church. So far as the book of Revelation is concerned, the first three chapters are devoted to the church, but chapters 4 through 22 are devoted to the kingdom. The word "church" is used almost 20 times in the first three chapters (with only one reference to the kingdom. Just the opposite is true in chapters 4 through 22 where the "church" is mentioned only once, but "the nation" or "nations" 22 times.

The two great institutions of church and state, of course, run all through the Scriptures; but the apostle Paul was given a special revelation which even Peter did not have. Peter did not at first understand the gospel of grace for "whosoever will," You will recall that he had to be given a special revelation before he would go to Cornelius' house.

In Colossians 1:25 Paul writes, "Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."

The apostle Paul set forth the gospel of grace for the church age, under which anyone can become a member of the body of Christ. Peter and the disciples were given the mysteries of the Kingdom. After giving these seven kingdom parables, Christ asked them in Matthew 13:51:"...Have ye understood all these things?" They said"Yea, Lord." But they did not understand the mysteries of the church. Paul was the first man by whom God revealed the mysteries of the church

With these thoughts in mind, let us consider this subject of the reconciliation of all things. Our first reference is from II Corinthians 5 beginning with verse 17: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature (personal salvation, the new birth); old things are passed. Away; behold, all things are become new." The instant we receive the Lord Jesus Christ we receive a new spirit, and for the balance of our physical lives, that new spirit renews our minds in a progressive growth in grace and Christian character.

"And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ..." We believers are reconciled to God through receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. Who did this? The verse says, "all things are of God," so it was God who brought us to a place of

reconciliation; there was nothing we could add.

"...and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation (preaching and teaching and getting Word out to as many as we can)." Our reconciliation and being made partakers of Christ is all a work of the Holy Spirit. God took the initiative because no one can come to Christ except God draws him. Note the words "reconciled" and "reconciliation" are both used in this one verse. The doctrine of the reconciliation of all things is peculiar to the apostle Paul. While other writers make passing reference to it, Paul is the only one who fully expounds this doctrine.

Continuing on from verse 19 in this passage we read, "to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself..." We as born again believers (the church or body) have been reconciled, but we read here that God was in Christ, and through the death and resurrection of the Christ, God reconciled the world to Himself. As yet that has not been accomplished, but the question is—will it be? Will this actually become a reality? Will God actually bring this to fruition?

"...not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." God has reconciled the world unto Himself, and He has committed unto us this message, this ministry of reconciliation.

"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." That is our ministry, whether we preach the personal or national message—"Be reconciled to God." In other words, accept and receive the reconciliation that has already been accomplished, settled and finished through the death of Jesus Christ.

"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be the righteousness of God in him."

The first chapter of Ephesians is to my mind one of the most beautiful, wonderful chapters of the Bible. Starting with verse 3 we read,

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love..."

What a tremendous, startling and overwhelming truth that if you are a Christian believer today, you were chosen before the foundation of the world! In God's plan and purpose you were destined before the foundation of the world to be in the select body, the church.

But what about the world? We were told in Corinthians that God had reconciled the "world" unto Himself. Perhaps we will get light as we read on in Ephesians.

"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will..." Please understand that predestination is based upon God's foreknowledge. God does not arbitrarily predestine some people to be lost and others to be saved; He predestines people on the basis of His foreknowledge. It is true that God predestined certain people to particular ministries; but here we are considering salvation.

"To the praise and the glory of his grace wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved (in Christ). In whom we have redemption through his blood (not only salvation but also redemption through His blood), the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence.

"Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good purpose which he hath purposed in himself..." Here is the secret of God's purpose, the mystery that is not generally known. And does it not seem stranger that after almost 1900 years of gospel preaching it still seems largely a mystery even to thousands of Christian people?

Seemingly there is nothing that antagonizes some Christian people more than this teaching that the people whom they have sentenced to hell will not be tormented forever. Of all people, Christians (if they have the love of God and mercy in their hearts) should appreciate and rejoice in Paul's doctrine on reconciliation. Certainly there is no question that there will be reward, judgment, and punishment in the next age. And it is also well to understand that this judgment of the individual apparently is still in the future.

But the teaching that an unsaved person goes to a place of torment the instant he dies is not scriptural. It is contrary to the law God gave us for dealing with criminals. Both the Old and New Scriptures state repeatedly in the law and in example that no man is to be punished or sentenced until he has been heard or tried.

One reason we believe the judgment is still future is because of what Christ said in Matthew 10, 11 and 12. You will recall He upbraided the cities where He had performed His miracles, saying it would be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah, also for Tyre and Sidon, in the day of judgment than for these people. Again and again He uses the expression "in the judgment" indicating this is still in the future.

Where are the unsaved dead? They are in God's custody. They have been arrested and taken by the Almighty out of this world. Are they tormented? No, not now. It might interest you to know that the word "hell" is not found once in the writings of the apostle Paul. Is it not strange with the tremendous emphasis of the apostle Paul on the doctrine of reconciliation and the world

being reconciled that there is so much preaching on a literal, burning hell? Where does it come from? Actually it dates back to the Dark Ages when the Catholic church used it to fill the church coffers and to subdue the people and get dominion over them.

Ephesians 1:10 tells us God's pleasure and purpose: "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times (note this is plural—in the ages or cycles to come) he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him."

Quite a challenge! "All things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth."

God promised and purposed some things in the time cycles of Adam and Eve, but did He do them immediately? No, ages and generations passed; Christ came. God decreed certain things to Abraham, but did they come to pass immediately? No, one dispensation passed and another came, and here we now see the great prophecies and promises to Abraham fulfilled long after he died.

Verses 11 and 12 of Ephesians continue, "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ." Since we are the "first," there must be others. The Scripture does not say that this is the only age of reconciliation. Luther said, "God forbid that I should limit the Almighty in His work of reconciliation to this present brief age."

Let us turn next to Philippians 2:8-12.

"And being found in fashion as a man, he (Christ) humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name."

Here is the purpose: "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

There are two teachings on this passage, one being that people in torment in hell will bow their knees and confess. I believe the correct interpretation, however, is that in the ages to come, God through His working will cause every knee to bow in worship, reverence and praise to Himself.

Every Christian must accept that every knee will bow, but what happens when they do bow and confess? The first teaching mentioned says they stay in their torment age after age. It actually makes a fiend out of God and is not the teaching of the Scripture; it would not be "to the glory of God the Father."

"Wherefore, beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." Because of this, we are exhorted to be diligent, active and fervent in proclaiming the message of the gospel of reconciliation. Some insist the doctrine of reconciliation would have the opposite effect, but that is not true. That position cancels out the working of the Holy Spirit, bringing everything down to a human level. Can you imagine any Scriptural doctrine working against the Holy Spirit?

Our next reference is in Colossians 1:19-21:

"For it pleased the Father that in him (in Christ) should all fulness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled."

Notice the use of the word "reconciled." As individual Christians we have been reconciled, and we accept that. What about also accepting that in the ages to come God will reconcile "all things" unto Himself. It is simply a question of whether we will believe the Word of God or not.

Let us consider still another reference—Revelation 5, beginning with verse 9:

"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on earth."

This is the body of Christ, the church, that has been called out, selected, tested and tried, purified and prepared for the next age. But that is not God's entire objective. He has something else in mind, and as we read in Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Corinthians, He will reconcile all things unto Himself—not in this age, but in the ages to come.

"And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands: Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory and blessing." Christians accept and believe that. Will you also believe what follows?

"And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

What a very wonderful brief statement of God's great plan and purpose—first taking out the church or the body of Christ in this age and giving us the ministry of reconciliation—then in the ages to come reconciling every creature which is in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea. Quite inclusive! Every creature! It appears that the Lord will accomplish His work of reconciliation. This is the progressive deliverance, restitution and reconciliation of Paul's gospel.

We should also look at the great redemption chapter—Isaiah 53. Verses 10 and 11 read, Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief (a prophecy concerning Christ): when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand."

What is the pleasure of God? What is His purpose? Scripture makes it very plain that the reconciliation of all things is the purpose of God. That every knee should bow and every tongue confess is His pleasure and purpose. Is God big enough and wise enough to do it? Certainly.

"He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." John said concerning Christ, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," How much sin, and how much of God's creation did Christ travail for? The whole creation. He will see the travail of his soul and be satisfied. He will accomplish His purpose, not entirely in this age but in the ages to come as Paul wrote in Ephesians 1:9-10.

In Psalm 22:29 we read:

"All they that be fat upon the earth shall eat and worship all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul." Psalm 22, as you know, is one of the most beautiful prophecies in the Bible on the crucifixion of Christ. How will "all that go down to the dust...bow before him"? In worship, reverence and submission, receiving forgiveness and reconciliation.

Psalm 72 is a prophecy concerning the coming in of the kingdom and the kingdom age. Beginning in verse 7 we read,

"In his days shall the righteous flourish; and the abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust.

"The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him."

If all kings will bow before Him and all nations serve Him, what about millions of poor, innocent, humble souls who have never heard the gospel nor had a clear understanding of the gospel? Is God able to bring them into reconciliation? Of course He is—if He will bring all kings and all nations He can bring about the reconciliation of every individual who has gone on before.

Psalm 135:3-6 reads, "Praise ye the LORD; for the LORD is good: sing praises unto his name: for it is pleasant. For the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure {The Anglo-Saxon people are His peculiar possession, His servant people).

"For I know that the LORD is great, and that our LORD is above all gods." I believe He is greater than Satan; I believe He will accomplish everything He desired and purposed.

"Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places." What is His pleasure? We have been reading it throughout the Scriptures and here we read it again.

In Psalm 136 there is a phrase I want you to note—it appears again and again, in fact it is repeated in every verse in this chapter, as you will see:

"O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endureth forever.

"O give thanks unto the God of gods: for his mercy endureth forever.

"To him who alone doeth great wonders for his mercy endureth forever.

"To him that by wisdom made the heavens: for his mercy endureth forever.

Some people seemingly do not like that God will show mercy, and such a spirit may well be questioned, but this is God's Word.

So far as the word "hell" is concerned, generally it refers to the grave or a place of abode for departed spirits until they come out for judgment and examination. I am satisfied that both the saved and unsaved dead are in God's custody, not being tormented before they are judged. And you can rest assured that everyone will receive a just "deal." As Abraham said, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. 18:25)

Let me reemphasize what was brought out in the beginning of this article, namely that we cannot build church doctrine on the kingdom parables. Church doctrines must be based primarily on the writings of the apostle Paul, to whom God gave the mysteries of the church. Church doctrine is not even found in the writings of the apostle Peter, James and John. Exhortation to Christian living is found there, but all of the great church doctrines are found in the writings of the apostle Paul. Furthermore, we cannot build church doctrine on the symbols of the book of Revelation.

If one considers how fire is used in the Bible, He will get a better understanding of the words "hell fire." We are told in one

reference, for example, that John preached that Christ would baptize people with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Was that literal fire? Hardly. What, then, does fire mean or symbolize? It symbolizes a spirit or a power that would do certain things.

What does fire do, or what service does it render? For one thing it purifies—certain items are put into a fire to purify them. When other things are put into a fire, the elements separate or part. Fire also molds, or brings things together. There is a fire of cleansing and purging.

One does not use the same amount of fire on all materials—a torch for welding iron, for example, is not turned on a fabric. Certainly God will use similar judgment.

And let us understand this, also—we do not take advantage of the mercy and grace of God. Those who do, need not wait until the next age for judgment and punishment—it can come upon them in this life.

We quote Christ's words from John 12:32: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." Will He, or will He not?

It is very important and very necessary that the apostle Paul's doctrine on the reconciliation be preached and taught in balance and in harmony with the other great doctrines set forth by the apostle Paul. Certainly there is a judgment with rewards and punishments after the resurrection

But how can anyone read and believe Ephesians 1:9-10, Philippians 2:9-11, and Colossians 1:19-20 and teach that people who have never heard the gospel will be tormented in a literal hell fire for ever and ever is one thousand times a greater mystery than Paul's doctrine on the reconciliation of all things.

Romans 11:32-33 tells us,

"For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

How, when and where God will have "mercy upon all" is known only to God.

How many future ages will be required before God completes His work of reconciling all things to Himself is not stated. In Matt. 12:32 Christ said:

"And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." Here is food for thought. Why did the Christ say, whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world (age) or in the world (age) to come." Was this a sentence for this particular sin and how long will the next age be?

In the laws of the Old Scriptures God gave strict instructions that the punishment must fit the crime or the sin. Certainly God will abide by His own law. Wilful, presumptuous and defiant sin and crime were given a longer and more severe punishment than sin and crime due to human weakness and adverse circumstance.

The idea that a person can live for the world, the flesh and the devil and be arrogant and defiant toward Christ and the Gospel and be reconciled to God the instant he dies is one of the devil's many lies. It is utterly unscriptural and makes a mockery of everything that is right and just, and even God is mocked by such teachings.

Those who turn "the grace of God into lasciviousness" and make grace a license for sin and rebellion should ponder the judgments and sentence of God recorded in the Scriptures.

The sentence pronounced upon Adam and Eve is recorded in Genesis 3:16-19:

"Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

"And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

"Thorns also and thistles shall it bring to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;

"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it was thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return."

Genesis 4:13 reads, "And Cain said unto the LORD, my punishment is greater than I can bear."

Noah's generation perished in the flood. Sodom and Gomorrah were turned to dust and ashes. "Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." (Jude verse 7) the word "eternal" is rendered "age long" in the Greek.

God's chosen and special kingdom people were sentenced to 2520 years of punishment for casting away and rebelling against God's national laws for human government. Those who accused Christ of being possessed by the devil have no forgiveness either in this age or the age to come. Those who imagine and teach that the unsaved will be reconciled to God the instant they

die had better read both Bible history and Bible prophecy.

In John 5:28-29 we read:

"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice. And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

"Damnation" in the Greek means to be accused and sentenced.

Daniel 12:2-3 states,

"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever." "Everlasting" is age long in the Greek.

"For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice of sins.

But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

"He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:

"Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy. who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

"For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompence, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.

"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (Hebrews 10:26-31).