

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF MISSION

Class 7b: Amnestic Foundations Of Biblical Soteriology

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I. ABSOLUTE SOVEREIGNTY AND THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

- A. If God truly is *absolutely sovereign* over the heavens and the earth, having full dominion and control over all decisions made therein, then the inevitable question arises: “How can he, being all powerful and loving, allow evil to persist under his governance?” This is the classical question of “the problem of evil,” which has proven to be a universal plague to the consciousness of man:
1. If God exists, then God is omnipotent, omniscient, and morally perfect.
 2. If God is omnipotent, then God has the power to eliminate all evil.
 3. If God is omniscient, then God knows when evil exists.
 4. If God is morally perfect, then God has the desire to eliminate all evil.
 5. Evil exists.
 6. If evil exists and God exists, then either God doesn't have the power to eliminate all evil, or doesn't know when evil exists, or doesn't have the desire to eliminate all evil.
 7. Therefore, God doesn't exist.”¹
- B. The traditional answer, generally given by most theists, is that a perfect being may allow some evil, asserting that it will enable certain greater goods (usually *free will*), which can not be achieved without the allowing of such evils.²
- C. The theological and philosophical attempt to reconcile the existence of evil with the existence of God is classically known as “theodicy.”³ There are generally four theodicy traditions:
1. Denial Theodicy – this argument simply denies the need to justify God in the existence of evil. There is no “problem” because a problem presumes our judgment of God and the presence of evil.⁴ God is so far superior to humanity that God cannot be judged by

¹ Michael Tooley, “The Problem of Evil,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Edward N. Zalta ed., 15 March 2008; available at <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/evil/>.

J.L. Mackie most notably argued likewise: 1) a perfectly good being always prevents evil as far as he can; 2) an omnipotent and omniscient being can do anything possible; 3) so, if a perfectly good, omnipotent and omniscient being exists, he prevents evil, completely (from 1 & 2); 4) if God exists, then He is perfectly good, omnipotent and omniscient; 5) so, if God exists, He prevents evil completely (from 3 & 4); 6) there is evil; 7) so, God does not exist. [See “Evil and Omnipotence,” *Mind* (1955), collected in Robert and Marilyn Adams, eds, *The Problem of Evil* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).]

² See Richard Swinburne, “Evil, the Problem of,” *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, 2nd Edition, Ted Honderich ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

³ The term comes from the Greek *theos* (“god”) and *dikē* (“justice”), literally meaning “the justice of God,” though more appropriately “the justification of God.” The term was coined by Gottfried Leibniz in *Theodიც Essays on the Benevolence of God, the Free will of man, and the Origin of Evil* (1710). The purpose of the essay was to show that the evil in the world does not conflict with the goodness of God, and that notwithstanding its many evils, the world is the best of all *possible* worlds.

⁴ See David R. Stroop, “The Supposed Problem of Evil,” *Biblical Studies Journal* Vol. 6, Num. 1 (19 December 2002); archived at <http://www.biblicalstudies.org/journal/v006n01.html>.

humanity, and our assumption that we can tell God what a benevolent and all-powerful being can or cannot do is mere arrogance (cf. Job 38-42).⁵

2. Punishment Theodicy – Though rarely articulated, this position is widely held at a popular level. God is justified in evil and suffering because it is the result of His punishing them (cf. Job's friends). However, this does not account for undeserved suffering (i.e. small children, handicapped, nonhuman animals, etc., who are not morally responsible), nor does it answer the question of why evil was permitted in the first place.
3. Determinism Theodicy – As originally argued by Augustine (354-430) and reiterated by the Reformers, determinism argues that God has a righteous, sovereign, predestined plan, which involves true evil, but is intended for morally justified purposes, which are not always apparent to humanity. This *duality of intentions* is exemplified, for example, in Joseph's imprisonment by man and salvation of many by God (cf. Gen. 50:15-20). Assuming God's foreknowledge to be *causative*, then God's plan must work all things caused by him (good and evil) out for good, unbeknownst to man (cf. Rom. 11:28).
4. Free Will Theodicy
 - a) Arminian Theodicy – Originally articulated by Pelagius (c.354–c.420) and later popularized by Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609) and John Wesley (1703-1791), Arminianism argues that God's foreknowledge is *historical*, rather than causative. He simply has knowledge of future events beforehand, which does not imply his causing them. Because God does not cause this sin and because humankind is not fated to sin, God is not guilty of that sin and the resultant evil and suffering.
 - b) Openness Theodicy – Akin to its elder "process theology," open theism is a modern response to hyper-Calvinism.⁶ Open theism argues that sovereignty does not include "exhaustive definite foreknowledge" (EDF), but rather, the future is "open" to the decisions of freewill agents, and God knows the general outcome (which He is "sovereignly" working towards), and thus only the offender is responsible for the crime since God did not technically know it was going to happen.

D. Amnestic Theodicy

1. This work puts forward an answer to the problem of evil in the form of *amnesticism*, maintaining the full sovereignty and benevolence of God, while explaining the presence of

⁵ "We are capable at least of negative wisdom. We can understand the necessary limits of our reflections on the subjects which are beyond our reach. This can easily be demonstrated and will put an end *once and for all* to the trial [that is, the trial of God before the tribunal of reason]." [Immanuel Kant, "On the Failure of All Attempted Theological Theodicies," M. Despland, trans., originally published 1791, in Michael Despland, *Kant on History and Religion*, 283-297 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1973), 290; emphasis in original.]

⁶ Process theology is a school of thought initiated by the process philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead (1861–1947) and later expanded and developed by Charles Hartshorne, John B. Cobb, Jr., and David Ray Griffin. Thomas Jay Oord integrates process theology with evangelical, openness, and Wesleyan Arminian theologies, arguing that it is simply part of God's essence as relational to provide freedom to others; thus, the theologies have a similar foundational. Its major proponents include Clark Pinnock, Gregory Boyd, John Sanders, etc. [See Clark Pinnock, et al., *The Openness of God: A Biblical Challenge to the Traditional Understanding of God* (InterVarsity Press, 1994); Clark Pinnock, *Most Moved Mover: A Theology of God's Openness* (Baker Academic, 2001); Gregory A. Boyd, *God of the Possible: A Biblical Introduction to the Open View of God* (Baker Books, 2000); Gregory A. Boyd, *Satan and the Problem of Evil: Constructing a Trinitarian Warfare Theodicy* (InterVarsity Press, 2001); John Sanders, *The God Who Risks: A Theology of Providence* (InterVarsity Press, 1998).]

wickedness as a restraint of execution of punishment on the part of God, motivated by love for the wicked.

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise (to judge the earth, cf. v.2-8), as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish (i.e. the wicked), but everyone to come to repentance (to be saved from the judgment). (NIV 2 Peter 3:9)

2. Amnesty explains why Jesus has not yet returned to judge the living and the dead (cf. Acts 10:42). It explains why the earth continues to get darker and darker, and why God, being all-powerful and all-loving, continues to allow evil to persist on the earth. He is vindicated as a righteous governor, since his allowance of evil doers is proportionately countered by his love of evil doers. Amnesty is the simple and loving answer to evil and its resultant suffering.
3. Moreover, this explains the issue of divine sovereignty. If Jesus has indeed been seated at God's right hand "far above all rule and authority, power and dominion... not only in the present age but also in the age to come" (Eph. 2:21), then why is his rulership so pathetic? No competent governor would allow such wickedness and lawlessness to persist under his dominion! However, if he is patient and long suffering, not wanting any to perish, then.
4. Summary: the "problem of evil" is simply the "problem of government." The universal crisis of all government is the desire of the governor to establish the well-being of the whole through the punishment of the lawbreaker (who causes ill-being/suffering). However, the governor's love of the whole necessarily involves love for the individual lawbreaker, and thus the governor desires to refrain from punishment, amnestically, until repentance is attained from and a substitutionary atonement can be applied to the lawbreaker. Though the governor has the power and desire to purge evil, he/she refrains out of love for the evildoer.

Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. ²³ Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, ²⁴ since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. ²⁵ Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism. (NIV Colossians 3:22-25; cf. Eph. 6:8)

II. AMNESTICISM AS THE FOUNDATION OF THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

- A. The doctrine of the "perseverance of the saints" is a logical consequence of one's doctrine of sovereignty and its resultant answer to the problem of evil. Thus it has been a long-standing Calvinist vs. Arminianist debate.
 1. The Reformed view, summarized by the popular phrase "once saved, always saved," assumes the reformed doctrine of sovereignty as predestination. Thus, God has chosen some men and women unto salvation (i.e. "heaven") through his causative foreknowledge

(the primary preserving agent of the saints), which cannot be changed or overturned.⁷ This view assumes no practical need for sanctification or discipleship, since those whom God has chosen have “eternal security” concerning their place in “heaven.”⁸

2. The Arminian position argues for a “conditional” preservation of the saints. Since God’s foreknowledge is historical rather than causative, the preserving agent of the saints is the *perseverant faith* (i.e. free will) of the saints.⁹ Thus, Arminian traditions are known for their “methodical” discipleship models. However, perseverance is still unto “heaven” rather than unto the Kingdom and resurrection, so there is little *real* hope for perseverant faith to take hold of. Moreover, there is no real system of rewards vs. punishments to be attained vs. avoided by perseverance, since there is no *real* government in “heaven.”

B. The Decline of the Western Church

1. Recent research argues that there are nearly 200 million “unreached” people in the US, making it one of the top four largest “unreached” nations in the world.¹⁰ Moreover, in spite of the rise of mega-churches, no county in America has a greater church population than it did ten years ago.¹¹ There are now nearly 60% fewer churches per 10,000 persons than in 1920.¹²
2. Dave Olson, director of church planting for the Evangelical Covenant Church, indicates that since 1990, each year 3,200 churches closed their doors forever while 3,600 surviving churches began, resulting in a net gain of 4,660 churches; but to keep up with the population our gain needed to be 38,802 new churches.¹³

⁷ “Perseverance, [Paul] teaches us, is due to the purpose of God, to the work of Christ, to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and to the primal source of all, the infinite, mysterious, and immutable love of God. We do not keep ourselves; we are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation.” (Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 3.16.8; archived at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/hodge/theology3.iii.ii.viii.html>.)

⁸ Moreover, when people “fall away” it is simply accounted that they were never “saved” in the first place, a completely absurd *a posteriori* deduction.

⁹ “The Arminian position is accurately portrayed by someone throwing a lifeline to a drowning man and saying ‘grab hold of this and keep holding on tightly until I pull you to safety.’ I would maintain that no one rescued in this way would dream that he had saved himself or even made a ‘contribution’ which merited his rescue. He would be filled with gratitude towards his rescuer.” [David Pawson, *Once Saved, Always Saved? A Study in Perseverance and Inheritance* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1996), 106.]

¹⁰ “The American church is in the midst of one of the largest mission fields in the world today. Only three other nations—China, India, and Indonesia—have more lost people.” [Justice Anderson, *Missiology: An Introduction to the Foundations, History and Strategies of Word Missions*, ed. John Mark Terry, Ebbie Smith, Justice Anderson (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1998), 243.]

¹¹ Ron Sylvia, *High Definition Church Planting* (Ocala: High Definition Resources, 2004), 26.

¹² In 1920 there were 27 churches per 10,000 citizens; in 1950 there were 17 churches per 10,000 citizens; and in 1996 there were 11 churches per 10,000 citizens. [See Tom Clegg and Tim Bird, *Lost in America* (Loveland: Group Publishing, 2001), 30; see also Bill Easum, “The Easum Report,” March 2003; available from <http://www.easum.com/church.htm>]

¹³ David T. Olsen, “Quick Facts about the American Church,” *The American Church* (2006); available at <http://theamericanchurch.org/sample/QuickFacts.ppt>; see also David T. Olson, *The American Church in Crisis: Groundbreaking Research Based on a National Database of over 200,000 Churches* (Zondervan, 2008); and Jennifer Riley, “SBC Urges Members to Combat U.S. Church Decline,” *The Christian Post*, 27 March 2008; available at <http://www.christianpost.com/article/20080327/sbc-urges-members-to-combat-u-s-church-decline.htm>.

3. Church Growth analysts universally acknowledge that there has been a mass exodus of youth from the church in the West in recent decades.¹⁴ For example, in America involvement in church and Christian faith by generations: Builders (born before 1946) 65%, Boomers (1946-1964) 35%, Busters (1965-1976) 15%, Bridgers (1977-1994) 4%.¹⁵
4. George Barna tracked the decline of the Church for almost twenty years and released his research in the book, *State of the Church 2002*, a scathing exposé of the church in America. The book in a nutshell argues that the vast majority of Americans have responded at least once to an evangelist's plea for them to repeat a "salvation prayer." However, only 5-8% are genuine, bible-believing "Evangelical Christians".¹⁶

C. Decline of the Western Church Primarily Based on Lack of Perseverance

1. Statistics consistently showing an 84 to 97 percent fall-away rate are not confined to crusades, but are typical throughout local church evangelism.¹⁷
2. In 2002, the Southern Baptist Convention's Council on Family Life reported that roughly 88 percent of evangelical children are leaving the church shortly after they graduate from high school.¹⁸

¹⁴ A recent Barna study concurs, "Since 1991, the adult population in the United States has grown by 15%. During that same period, the number of adults who do not attend church has nearly doubled, rising from 39 million to 75 million—a 92% increase!" (The Barna Group, "Number of Unchurched Adults Has Nearly Doubled Since 1991," *The Barna Update*, 4 May 2004; available at <http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=BarnaUpdate&BarnaUpdateID=163>.)

¹⁵ Thom S. Rainer, *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched and Proven Ways to Reach Them* (Zondervan, 2008), 33-34.

¹⁶ Over 75 percent of Americans believe they "have made a commitment to Jesus Christ that is still important in their life." [George Barna, *State of the Church 2002* (Ventura: Issachar Resources, 2002), 66.] Barna breaks down the American Church (generally reflective of the entire Western Church) into three areas: 1) "Notional Christians" 37% (p.98), 2) "Born-Again Christians" 35% (p.127), and 3) "Evangelical Christians" 5-8% (p.125).

¹⁷ Patrick McIntyre, *The Graham Formula: Why Most Decisions for Christ Are Ineffective* (White Harvest Publishing, 2006), 12; archived at <http://www.christianebooks.com/TheGrahamFormulaDownload.pdf>.

¹⁸ Jon Walker, "Family Life Council says it's time to bring family back to life," *2002 SBC Annual Meeting*, 12 June 2002; archived at <http://www.sbcannualmeeting.net/sbc02/newsroom/newspage.asp?ID=261>.

3. Retention rates for evangelism in the Western Church are difficult to track, for obvious reasons.¹⁹ Though renowned evangelists, such as Billy Graham, attribute this poor retention rate to intrinsic spiritual realities (as reflected in the Parable of the Sower), the lack of perseverance in the Western Church is much more likely the result of a *lack of hope* inherent in the message it proclaims.²⁰

D. The Mechanics Involved in the Lack of Perseverance

1. Though rarely articulated, people are leaving the Church in the West in droves primarily because of the perceived lack of justice in God's kingdom (i.e. the problem of evil). Put bluntly, God is not doing anything about suffering and evil in the world, so why continue in this farce called Christianity, which claims that all authority in heaven and earth has been given to Jesus (cf. Mt. 28:18)?
2. Because of a lack of understanding of government, the doctrine of sovereignty is taken out of context, and because of a lack of understanding of amnesticism, the doctrine of sovereignty is not truly believed within the individual heart. Thus, there is not a sufficient answer to the persistence of evil and suffering in the world, which over time results in disillusionment and falling away.
3. It is a paradigm of current sovereign amnesty and a coming Messianic Kingdom of Justice, that strengthens the heart in the midst of persecution *and* blessing. When the wicked are not punished and the righteous are not rewarded in this age, the believer does not give up and loose hope, because the ultimate end of salvation is not an ethereal "heaven" (which has no real government or recompense), but rather a real kingdom on the earth that *will* purge the earth of evil and injustice. Moreover, when blessing and prosperity comes, it is

¹⁹ Ray Comfort gives the following description of the situation: "Charles E. Hackett, the division of home missions national director for the Assemblies of God in the U.S. said, 'A soul at the altar does not generate much excitement in some circles because we realize approximately ninety-five out of every hundred will not become integrated into the church.' ... In 1991, organizers of a Salt Lake City concert encouraged follow-up. They said, 'Less than 5 percent of those who respond to an altar call during a public crusade... are living a Christian life one year later.' In other words, *more than 95 percent* proved to be false converts... In November 1970, a number of churches combined for a convention in Fort Worth, Texas, and secured 30,000 decisions. Six months later, the follow-up committee could only find thirty continuing in their faith. A mass crusade reported 18,000 decisions—yet, according to Church Growth magazine, 94 percent failed to become incorporated into a local church... A leading U.S. denomination reported that during 1995 they secured 384,057 decisions but retained only 22,983 in fellowship. They couldn't account for 361,074 supposed conversions. That's a 94 percent fall-away rate. In the March/April 1993 issue of *American Horizon*, the national director of home missions of a major U.S. denomination disclosed that in 1991, 11,500 churches had obtained 294,784 decisions for Christ. Unfortunately, they could find only 14,337 in fellowship. That means that despite the usual intense follow-up, they couldn't account for approximately 280,000 of their 'converts.' ...

"Statistics such as the preceding are very hard to find. What organizing committee is going to shout from the housetops that after a mass of pre-crusade prayer, hundreds of thousands of dollars of expenditure, truckloads of follow-up, and the use of a big-name evangelist, initial wonderful results have all but disappeared? Not only would such news be utterly disheartening for all who put so much time and effort into the crusade, *but the committee has no reasonable explanation as to why the massive catch has disappeared*. The statistics are therefore swept under the hushed carpet of discretion. A Southern California newspaper bravely printed the following article in July 1993: "Crusades don't do as much for nonbelievers as some might think," said Peter Wagner, professor of church growth at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena. Three percent to sixteen percent of those who make decisions at crusades end up responsible members of a church, he said. "That's not counting Christians who recommit their lives." These statistics of an eighty-four to ninety-seven percent fall-away rate are not confined to crusades, but are general throughout local church evangelism." [Ray Comfort and Kirk Cameron, *The Way of the Master* (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 2004), 61-64.]

²⁰ "The parable of the sower, in which Jesus indicated that there were four types of soil that the Word of God lands on. And a fourth of those are, will go on to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ and become true disciples, but three fourths of those will not. ... I've always thought in any group that comes forward to make a commitment, if I've preached the Gospel faithfully, a fourth of them will be there five years from now or ten years from now." ["Reverend Billy Graham talking with David Frost," *PBS*, 23 January 1993, as quoted in David Frost and Fred Bauer, *Billy Graham: Personal Thoughts of a Public Man* (Chariot Victor Publishing, 1997), 71-72.]

not regarded as the norm (nor is it grieved over when lost), because it is simply interpreted as a sign of the future reward that will be given to the saints.

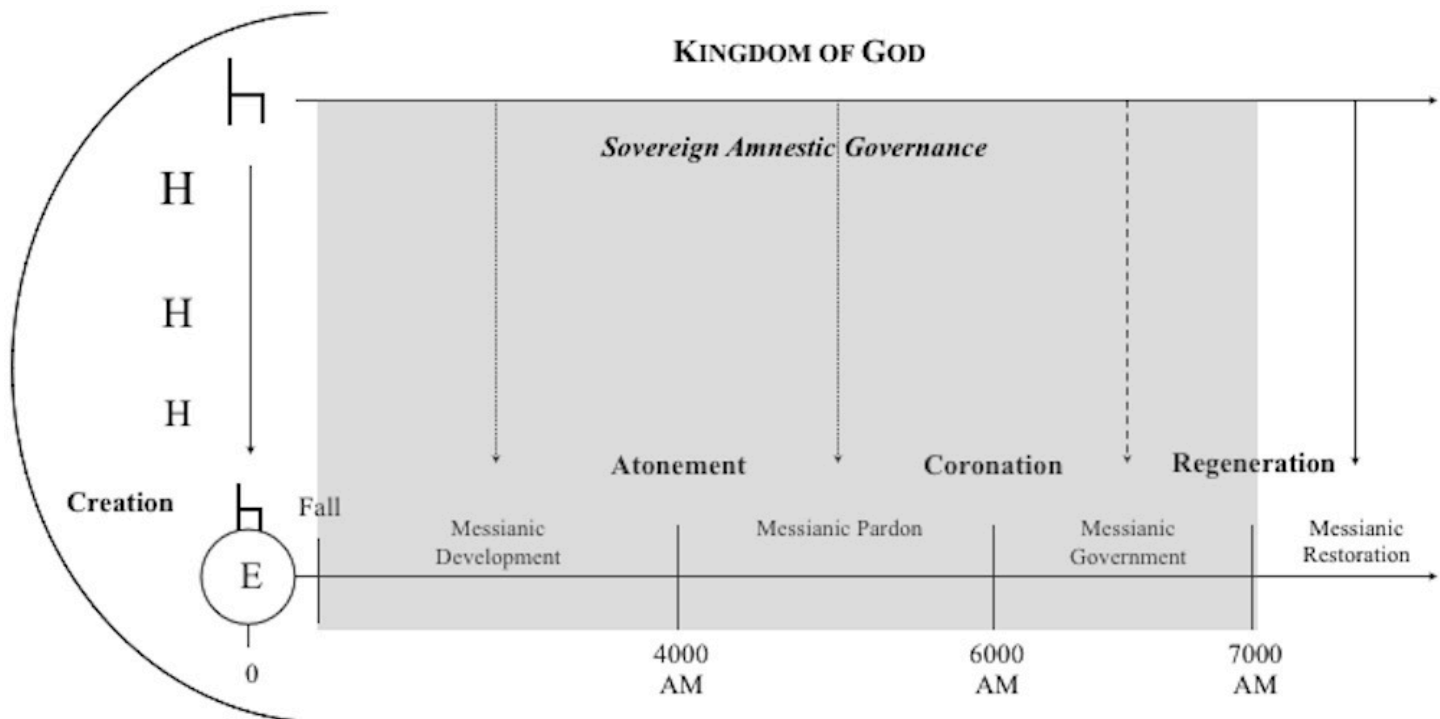
III. REDEMPTIVE HISTORY IS ESSENTIALLY AMNESTIC IN NATURE

A. History According to Perfect Justice.

Gen. 3:6 **When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.** ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. ⁸ Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God...

Rev. 20:11 I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them... and [man] was judged according to what [they] had done... ^{22:6} "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End... their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death." (NIV Genesis 3:6-8; Revelation 20:11-21:8)

- **Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits,** ³ **who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases,** ⁴ **who redeems your life from the pit** (i.e. Sheol, cf. resurrection), **who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy...** ⁸ **The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love...**¹⁰ **He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities** (cf. Gehenna). ¹¹ **For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;** ¹² **as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.** (ESV Psalm 103:2-12)



B. Amnesticism: the essential difference between "this age" and "the age to come".

Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come. (^{NIV} Matthew 12:32)

"I tell you the truth," Jesus said to them, "no one who has left home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God ³⁰ will fail to receive many times as much in this age and, in the age to come, eternal life." (^{NIV} Luke 18:29-30)

Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away (in the age to come). ⁷ But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. ⁸ None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. (^{ESV} 1 Corinthians 2:6-8)

Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, ¹⁰ and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive. ¹¹ For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. ¹² It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, ¹³ while we wait for the blessed hope-- the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. ¹⁵ These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority (concerning submission to unjust authority). Do not let anyone despise you. ^{3:1} Remind the people ("Put them in mind" KJV) to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, ² to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men. (^{NIV} Titus 2:9-3:2)

C. The recompense of the Day of the Lord is coming, not yet being administered.

For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then (not before) ***he will reward*** (Gk. apodidomi, "repay" ESV/NRSV, "recompense" NASB, "judge" NLT) ***each person according to what he has done*** (cf. Job 34:11; Ps. 62:12; 96:13; 98:9; Is. 3:10f; Jer. 17:10; 32:19; Ez. 18:30, etc.). (^{NIV} Matthew 16:27)

Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent, ³¹ because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead. (^{NASB} Acts 17:30-31)

But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. ⁶ He will render (Gk. apodidomi) ***to each one according to his works: ⁷ to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; ⁸ but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury.*** (^{ESV} Romans 2:5-8)

Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; ¹¹ for it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." ¹² So then each of us will give an account of himself to God. (NIV Romans 14:10-12)

If any man builds on this foundation ("Jesus Christ") using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, ¹³ his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. ¹⁴ If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. ¹⁵ If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames. (NIV 1 Corinthians 3:12-15)

Set your minds on things above (i.e. the government of heaven), not on earthly things. ³ For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is your life, appears (Second Coming), then you also will appear with him in glory (i.e. the resurrection of the dead). ⁵ Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. ⁶ Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. (NIV Colossians 3:2-6)

They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰ and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead-- Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath. (NIV 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10)

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge... ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day-- and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing... ¹⁴ Alexander the metalworker did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done. (NIV 2 Timothy 4:1-14)

And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, ²⁸ so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him (by judging the ungodly). (ESV Hebrews 9:27-28)

Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ (Messiah), and He shall reign forever and ever!" ¹⁶ And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God, ¹⁷ saying: "We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty (Gk. pantokrator), the One who is and who was and who is to come (governmentally, i.e. dominion), because You have taken Your great power and reigned ("begun to reign" NASB/ESV/NRSV/NIV/NLT; i.e. execution of judgment and maintenance of law). ¹⁸ The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, and the time (implying a previous time of restraint from judgment) of the dead, that they should be judged, and that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, and those who fear Your name, small and great, and should destroy those who destroy the earth." (NKJV Revelation 11:15-18)

Behold, I am coming soon (i.e. future), bringing my recompense (Gk. misthos, i.e. reward & punishment; cf. Is. 40:10; 62:11) with me, to repay everyone for what he has done (cf. Ps. 28:4; Is. 3:10f; Jer. 17:10). ¹³ **I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. ¹⁴ **Blessed (reward) are those who wash (by the Atonement) their robes (during this amnestic age), so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates.** ¹⁵ **Outside (punishment) are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.** ¹⁶ **I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things (Jesus as the coming messianic Judge) for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star (i.e. Messiah).** (ESV Revelation 22:12-16)**

D. Temporal recompense ultimately meant to testify to the Eschatological Recompense.

There were some present at that very time who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. ² And he answered them, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way (temporal judgment)? ³ No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish (eternal judgment). ⁴ Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? ⁵ No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." (ESV Luke 13:1-5)

1. The "first death" is ultimately meant to communicate the reality of the "second death" (named accordingly), the culmination of divine recompense.

Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them (at the end of the thousand years), but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years. (NIV Revelation 20:6)

The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. ¹³ The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. ¹⁴ Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. (NIV Revelation 20:12-14)

He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son. ⁸ But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars-- their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death. (NIV Revelation 21:7-8)

- **But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life (i.e. resurrection of the dead, v.5). ²³ For the wages of sin is death (i.e. "second death"), but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (NIV Romans 6:22-23)**
- **Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life (i.e. resurrection of the dead) that God has promised to those who love him. ¹³ When tempted, no one should say, "God is**

tempting me." ... ¹⁵ Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death (i.e. "second death"). (NIV James 1:12-15)

2. Judgment in this age is ultimately meant to testify to the judgment in the age to come.

For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell (Gk. tartaroo, participial of Gk. Tartaros, cf. Hb. Sheol), and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved ("kept" ESV/NRSV, "held" NIV/NLT) unto judgment (cf. Mt. 26:41; Is. 66:24; Rev. 20:14; ⁵ And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; ⁶ And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly... ⁹ The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished. (KJV 2 Peter 2:4-9)

And the angels who did not keep (Gk. tereo, "stay within" ESV/NLT) their positions of authority but abandoned their own home-- these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day. ⁷ In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire. (NIV Jude 1:6-7)

You (church in Thyatira) tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols. ²¹ I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. ²² So I will cast her on a bed of suffering (temporal judgment), and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways. ²³ I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know (i.e. purpose of temporal punishment) that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds (with ultimate reward and punishment, cf. second death). (NIV Revelation 2:20-23)

- E. Redemptive history and the coming kingdom are ultimately interpreted amnestically through typology.

1. Passover

When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. ¹⁵ And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. ¹⁶ For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God." (NIV Luke 22:14-16)

In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." ²⁶ For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death (i.e. amnestic offer of forgiveness) until he comes (executing punishment). (NIV 1 Corinthians 11:25-26)

2. Flood

As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸ For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark... (NIV Matthew 24:37-38)

- a) Global judgment with water (Gen. 6:7)
 - ~ Global judgment with fire (2 Pe. 3:7)
- b) 1st coming to Noah as warning: Ark as atonement (Gen. 6:13)
 - ~ 1st coming of Messiah as warning: Cross as atonement (Rom. 3:25)
- c) Command to build an Ark covered in pitch (Gen. 6:14)
 - ~ Command to build a Church covered in Blood (Mt. 28:18-20)
- d) 120 years of Ark building (Gen. 6:3)
 - ~ "Long time" (~2000 years) of Church building (cf. Mt. 24:48; 25:5, 19)
- e) 7 day warning before Flood (Gen. 7:4)
 - ~ 7 year Antichrist covenant before Second Coming (Dan. 9:27)
- f) Global delusion concerning coming judgment (Gen. 6:2)
 - ~ Global delusion concerning coming judgment (Mt. 24:38-39)

3. Snake on the Pole

Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, ¹⁵ that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. ¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world (the first time) to condemn (Gk. krino, "to judge" NASB/NLT) the world, but to save the world through him (by the atonement of the Cross). ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned (eschatologically), but whoever does not believe stands condemned already (anticipating the eschatological judgment) because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. (NIV John 3:14-17)

IV. THE BELIEVER'S RESPONSE TO GOD'S AMNESTY

A. Believers Exhorted to Function Amnestically in this Age

1. Believers are exhorted by Messiah to function amnestically until the establishment of the Kingdom.

But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous... ⁴⁸ Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (NIV Matthew 5:44-48)

This, then, is how you should pray (in light of the expectation of an imminent Messianic Kingdom, 4:17-5:2): "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, ¹⁰ your kingdom

come (i.e. Messianic Kingdom), **your will be done** (i.e. through punishment and reward) **on earth as it is in heaven.** ¹¹ **Give us today** ("this day" NASB/KJV/NKJV/ESV/NRSV vs. that eschatological "day of the Lord") **our daily bread.** ¹² **Forgive us our debts** (at the eschatological coming of the Kingdom), **as we also have forgiven our debtors** (in this age beforehand). ¹³ **And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.** ¹⁴ **For if you forgive men when they sin against you** (in this amnestic age), **your heavenly Father will also forgive you** (on the eschatological day). ¹⁵ **But if you do not forgive men their sins** (in this amnestic age), **your Father will not forgive your sins** (on the eschatological day). (^{NIV} Matthew 6:9-15)

2. Believers are exhorted by the example of Messiah to allow injustice to continue until the Second Coming

Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. ¹² **Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation** (Gk. *episcopē*, "judge" NRSV/NLT). ¹³ **Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution...** ¹⁸ **Servants** ("slaves" NIV/NRSV/NLT), **be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust.** ¹⁹ **For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly...** ²¹ **For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps...** ²³ **When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly** (at the end of the age). (^{ESV} 1 Peter 2:11-23)

3. Believers are exhorted by Messiah through parable to allow injustice to continue until the Second Coming

Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven (i.e. Messianic Kingdom) **is like a man who sowed good seed in his field...** ²⁸ **The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up** (cf. punishment)?' ²⁹ **'No...** ³⁰ **Let both grow together until the harvest** (i.e. amnesty)...' ³⁷ **The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man** (beginning at the First Coming). ³⁸ **The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom** (those chosen to participate in the coming Kingdom). **The weeds are the sons of the evil one** (those to be purged from the earth by the coming Kingdom), ³⁹ **and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.** ⁴⁰ **As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire** (i.e. judgment), **so it will be at the end of the age.** ⁴¹ **The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they** (not the Church) **will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil.** (^{NIV} Matthew 13:24-41)

4. Believers are directly commanded by Messiah to allow injustice to continue until the Second Coming

Then he told me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, because the time (of the messianic coming) **is near.** ¹¹ **Let him who does wrong continue to do wrong; let him who is vile continue to be vile; let him who does right continue to do right; and let him who is holy continue to be holy.**" ¹² **"Behold, I am coming soon!**

My reward (Gk. *misthos*, “recompense” ESV) **is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done** (i.e. punishment for the “wrong” and reward for the “right”)... ¹³ **I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End** (i.e. everlasting full dominion). ¹⁴ **Blessed are those** (cf. the “right” v.11b) **who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.** ¹⁵ **Outside are the dogs** (cf. the “wrong” v.11a), **those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.** ¹⁶ **I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony** (of present amnesty, v.11, and coming justice, v.12-15) **for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star** (i.e. Messiah/Judge).” (NIV Revelation 22:10-16)

B. Believers Commanded to Witness Primarily to Jesus as Messiah and His *Future* Judgment

1. The apostolic mandate from the Messiah is essentially amnestic in nature.

Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸ **This is my blood of the covenant** (“new covenant” Lk. 22:20), **which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins** (the primary purpose of the new covenant). ²⁹ **I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day** (after the amnestic age) **when I drink it anew with you in my Father’s kingdom** (i.e. Messianic Kingdom).” (NIV Matthew 26:27-29)

So when they met together, they asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel (cf. “the kingdom of God” v.3)?” ⁷ **He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.** ⁸ **But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses** (Gk. *martus*) **in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”** (NIV Acts 1:6-8)

We are witnesses (Gk. *martus*) **of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem...** ⁴¹ **He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses** (Gk. *martus*) **whom God had already chosen-- by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.** ⁴² **He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify** (Gk. *diamarturomai*) **that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead.** ⁴³ **All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.** (NIV Acts 10:39-43)

2. Thus, the apostolic witness is ultimately an amnestic witness, declaring the provision of the forgiveness of sins made by the New Covenant.

This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ **and repentance and forgiveness of sins** (the primary thrust of the New Covenant) **will be preached in his name to all nations** (before the establishment of the Kingdom, cf. v.26, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ **You are witnesses of these things.** (ESV Luke 24:46-48)

And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized (inclusion rite) every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins (unto messianic inclusion), **and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.** (ESV Acts 2:38)

Now repent of your sins and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped away. ²⁰ **Then times of refreshment** (Gk. *anapsuxis*, cf. "resurrection of the dead" 4:2) **will come from the presence of the Lord, and he will again send you Jesus** (after the amnestic age), **your appointed Messiah.** (^{NLT} Acts 3:19)

Peter and the other apostles replied (to the Sanhedrin): **"We must obey God rather than men!"** ³⁰ **The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead** (as a firstfruits)-- **whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree.** ³¹ **God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior** (i.e. Messiah) **that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel** (before the messianic judgment). ³² **We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.**" (^{NIV} Acts 5:29-32)

Brothers, children of Abraham, and you God-fearing Gentiles (in Antioch), **it is to us that this message of salvation has been sent.** ²⁷ **The people of Jerusalem and their rulers did not recognize Jesus** (as Messiah)... ³⁸ **Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you.** ³⁹ **Through him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses.** (^{NIV} Acts 13:26-39)

"I (Jesus) will rescue you (Paul) **from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them** ¹⁸ **to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place** (in the Messianic Kingdom) **among those who are sanctified by faith in me."** ¹⁹ **So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven.** ²⁰ **First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also** (cf. Acts 1:8), **I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds.** (^{NIV} Acts 26:17-20)

3. The apostolic witness is thus ultimately expressed in martyrdom motivated by love.

When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals-- one on his right, the other on his left. ³⁴ **Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."** (^{NIV} Luke 23:33-34)

While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." ⁶⁰ **Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them."** (^{NIV} Acts 7:59-60)

This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant. ²⁴ **Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church.** (^{NIV} Colossians 1:23-24)

V. AMNESTICISM AS THE FOUNDATION OF THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

- A. Positive Motivation: Reward of the Righteous

But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, ¹⁴ and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous (in the eschatological Kingdom). (^{NIV} Luke 14:13-14)

The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor (i.e. perseverance)... ¹³ ***his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. ¹⁴ If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward.*** (^{NIV} 1 Corinthians 3:8-14)

God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. ⁸ For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption ("destruction" NIV, i.e. Gehenna), ***but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life*** ("everlasting life" NKJV/NLT, i.e. resurrection). ⁹ ***And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap*** (eternal life in the Kingdom), ***if we do not give up*** (i.e. perseverance). (^{ESV} Galatians 6:7-9)

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith (i.e. perseverance). ⁸ ***Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.*** (^{ESV} 2 Timothy 4:7-8)

So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: ² shepherd the flock of God (in perseverance) ***that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; ³ not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. ⁴ And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.*** (^{ESV} 1 Peter 5:1-4)

B. Negative Motivation: Punishment of the Wicked

We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith (in the Messianic Kingdom) ***is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing*** (in preparation for that Kingdom). ⁴ ***Therefore we ourselves boast about you in the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith*** (in the future messianic judgment) ***in all your persecutions and in the afflictions that you are enduring*** (i.e. perseverance). ⁵ ***This*** (steadfastness and faith) ***is evidence of the righteous judgment*** (vengeance) ***of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God*** (which will execute vengeance), ***for which you are also suffering*** (as Messiah did)- ⁶ ***since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you*** (negative motivation for perseverance under trial), ⁷ ***and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us*** (negative motivation for perseverance under trial), ***when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven*** (not before) ***with his mighty angels ⁸ in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.*** (^{ESV} 2 Thessalonians 1:3-8)

Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering. ³³ Sometimes you were publicly

exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. ³⁴ **You sympathized with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions (in the Kingdom).** ³⁵ **So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded** (positive motivation). ³⁶ **You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.** ³⁷ **For in just a very little while, "He who is coming will come and will not delay."** ³⁸ **But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him."** ³⁹ **But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed** (negative motivation), **but of those who believe and are saved** (positive motivation). (NIV Hebrews 10:32-39)

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ **and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade** (i.e. resurrected body)-- **kept in heaven for you** (cf. 2 Cor. 2:1-5), ⁵ **who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.** ⁶ **In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.** ⁷ **These have come so that your faith (in the messianic restoration)-- of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire-- may be proved genuine** (i.e. perseverance) **and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed...** ¹⁰ **Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care...** ¹³ **Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace** (i.e. reward) **to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed** (executing recompense). (NIV 1 Peter 1:3-13)