

SEED & BREAD

Otis Q. Sellers, Founder

END OF INJUSTICE

One half mile from me a grandmother, heading to her car from the drug store, got bashed in the head and shoved to the ground by a young man who stole her purse and made off with her car in broad daylight.

A comment online: “This is terrible! Creeps like him are EVERYWHERE! Society has deteriorated to a new low! No one is safe! Until our politicians do something to control this crime, we will all be prisoners in our homes!”

If only we could count on our politicians for justice. Sadly, hanging our hopes for the well-being of society on politicians is doomed to failure, right along with placing our trust in education or social programs or any other solutions dreamed up by sin-cursed human beings.

Not until God reigns sovereign through His government on the earth, when He rules in grace and judgment (Psa. 101:1) will come the end of all injustice in the world. God in His kingdom will see to it that lawbreakers reap what they sow. Rewards and punishments will come at His direction through His power without delay (Ecc. 8:11). For now, we remind ourselves that God’s promise to sinners—that they will reap what they sow—was directed to Israel, not us; given in the Acts Period, not the Dispensation of Grace.

DON’T COME UP SHORT

Recall the pedestrian and his dog? The hit-and-run driver who killed them got caught eventually and was sentenced to all of 36 months in prison with credit for time served. So much for reaping what he sowed. Some will get mad at God for this injustice. “God is a liar. He doesn’t keep his promises. I can’t believe a word the Bible says. I don’t even believe there is a God!” Sadly, many are those who lose their faith in God and His Word, and all for failing to rightly divide (2 Tim. 2:15) the Acts Period from the Dispensation of Grace and the teachings particular to each—the departments of Scripture where we shop for our own doctrine. All of Scripture is *for* us, but not all is *to* us (2 Tim. 3:16).

If out of habit we catch ourselves uttering, “you reap what you sow,” no harm no foul so long as we leave God out of it. You reap what you sow, yes, but by your own decisions and your own actions, not God’s.

Expecting God to dole out punishment today just doesn’t fit. It comes up short. Just keep in mind my Petite-size jeans.

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P.O. Box 1609, Canyon Country, CA 91386 seedandbread.org

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WHEN REAPING WHAT YOU SOW COMES UP SHORT

By Candy Davis

When a pedestrian and his dog were run down and killed by a speeding driver who fled the scene, our community was in an uproar. “You’ll get yours, Buddy! You reap what you sow!” This warning, a spontaneous outburst of anger at a hit and run driver, was first spoken in the Holy Scripture. In Galatians 6:7 (NKJV throughout) we read, **Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.**

You reap what you sow. Many draw assurance from this verse: assurance that God is in control and that He will avenge every injustice. Take the following case as an example.

A college coed was left paralyzed at the waist from a knife attack by her boyfriend. After serving his sentence the boyfriend—in a barroom brawl—took a gunshot to the spine and astonishingly was left paralyzed himself from the neck down. If a more compelling illustration exists where God faithfully and directly delivers retribution, I cannot think of it.

This idea of God avenging every injustice may bring us comfort, but is it true? Does it match our current reality? Not by a long shot. Our society has spun upside down. Evil is now called good, and good is called evil (Isa. 5:20). Take my own city, where council members are working to defund and dismantle our police department. Meanwhile brazen crime is ramping up and up, terrifying our citizens, with some offenses so ugly, so vile that God Himself would not have imagined them (Jer. 32:35).

WHY GOD, WHY

Why is God allowing such lawlessness? Whatever happened to you reap what you sow?

The answer makes me think of a pair of jeans I brought home from the mall before trying them on. When they would not budge past my kneecaps, I checked the tag. These were my size all right, a 10, but a second look revealed my mistake. These were a size 10**P**. That’s P as in **Petite**. I had shopped in the wrong department.

Something along these lines happens when we want to apply “you reap what you sow” to ourselves and our situation

today: it does not fit. The reason why has to do with where we “shop” in Scripture. Every passage in the New Testament dealing with reaping and sowing finds its home in the Acts Period books of Paul (Gal. 6:9; 2 Cor. 9:6; Rom. 2:9-11; 2 Thess. 1:6). Paul’s audience here is Israel in the early stage of her Kingdom. God at that time was governing with justice. He was intervening with His divine power to deliver rewards and punishments to His people as laid out in the law (Lev. 26, Deut. 28). Sow obedience and righteousness, reap reward; sow disobedience and wickedness, reap punishment (Isa. 3:10-11). God delivered punishment in two ways: directly by His own power as when he rained fire and brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrah, and indirectly through agents such as enemy armies, when God stood aside and allowed Israel to be defeated in battle. Either way, the penalty was directed by God. Believers in the Acts Period expected lawbreakers to reap what they sowed, and their expectation was right in line with how God worked during that unique administration.

UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT

Contrast God’s hands-on style of governing in the Acts Period with how He operates today. Today, God has His hands behind His back. He is leaving us to govern ourselves, to do as we please (Acts 14:16, Isa. 26:10). Today God is withholding punishment for all sin. Instead, He is acting solely in His present purpose of grace (Eph. 3:8, 10-11), dispensing love and favor and mercy to all of us undeserving sinners.

Undiluted grace and favor sound great, but be warned that there is a downside: absent God’s punitive consequences, with only the feeble attempts of mankind to restrain sin, the wicked are having a heyday. This fits Isaiah 26:10 which tells us, **Let grace be shown to the wicked, Yet he will not learn righteousness.** Cut the wicked some slack, and they laugh in your face and keep right on sinning.

We can cry out to God for justice, but in the same way I cannot expect a pair of Petite jeans to fit me, our expecting the wicked to be punished by the hand of God does not fit His purpose for today and how He operates.

For doctrine made-to-measure for us in the Dispensation of Grace—doctrine that fits us—we need to “shop” in our own department in Scripture. We find our department in the books of Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus and Philemon. Notably, nowhere in these epistles of Paul do we catch God performing acts of vengeance against sinners; only acts of love and mercy to all, and these are done in secret (Eph. 3:8, 2:7).

TIME AND CHANCE

We are left hanging with the question: If God today is not intervening to punish sinners, what do we make of cases like the

paralyzed co-ed whose tragedy appears to have been avenged directly by God?

Solomon has an answer. **All things come alike to all: One event happens to the righteous and the wicked; This is an evil in all that is done under the sun: that one thing happens to all... Time and chance happen to them all** (Ecc. 9:2-3, 11).

Time and chance. Being at the right place at the right time—or the wrong place at the wrong time. No one is exempt. Time and chance happen to all. To everyone in this sin-cursed world with its sin-cursed inhabitants.

While we could swear the subsequent paralysis of the co-ed’s boyfriend was retribution straight from God, this case for the most part is nothing more than one of a young man who happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. God had nothing to do with it. God pulled no strings. God manipulated no circumstances to cause the paralysis. The boyfriend was a victim of time and chance.

NATURAL CONSEQUENCES

Not to say the boyfriend was free from all responsibility. Along with the element of time and chance an additional factor was at play, one we call the universal Law of Natural Consequences.

Simply stated: actions have consequences. Cause and effect. Forget your sunscreen, you get burned. Drive on fumes, you run out of gas. Comeuppance comes based on our own decisions, not from the hand of God. (Don’t forget, God’s hands are behind His back right now.) The boyfriend, a hothead by reputation, had consumed alcohol that night to the point of under-the-table intoxication, and he suffered a terrible consequence when he provoked another drunken patron who happened to be armed with a gun.

KARMA WILL GET YOU

This study would be incomplete without a mention of Karma, as in “I believe in Karma.” Though similar to reaping and sowing—each a matter of cause and effect—Karma is a belief held by the Eastern religions of Hinduism and Buddhism. It has to do with earning a better life in what they believe to be rebirth into their next life. Secular society has adopted the idea of Karma and morphed it into a kind of supernatural Boogie Man at work in the universe passing out rewards and punishments based on merit. Just to be clear, we believers in the Lord Jesus Christ do not believe in Karma, nor do we speak in terms of Karma. Never will we be heard saying, “Karma will get you.”