

King Jesus' Blazing Righteousness

'A defendant in a lawsuit involving large sums of money was talking to his lawyer. "If I lose this case, I'll be ruined". "It's in the judge's hands now", said the lawyer. "Would it help if I sent the judge a box of cigars?" "Oh no! This judge is a stickler for ethical behavior. A stunt like that would prejudice him against you. He might even hold you in contempt of court. In fact, you shouldn't even smile at the judge". Within the course of time, the judge rendered a decision in favor of the defendant. As the defendant left the courthouse, he said to his lawyer, "Thanks for the tip about the cigars. It worked!" "I'm sure we would have lost the case if you'd sent them". "But, I did send them". "What? You did?" said the lawyer, incredulously. "Yes. That's how we won the case". "I don't understand", said the lawyer. "It's easy. I sent the cigars to the judge, but signed the plaintiff's name".'

Well, the defendant pulled a fast one, and won the case. We don't know if he was guilty or not. While his was possibly a reasonable ruse in a court in a democracy, it most certainly is not in the Supreme of All Supreme Courts, namely the courtroom, the bench of which sits the Judge of All Judges, His Majesty the King of All Kings, Jesus, Yeshua the Messiah. For this King gives the very last word on everything. He is judge, jury and executioner,

so to speak. We who believe Him, trust His word, and put our faith in Him, well, we have nothing to fear from His courtroom. In fact, we'll never be hauled into His courtroom to be judged at all. But there are others who have much to fear. For them, well, if they're ever hauled into His courtroom, their fate has already been sealed. To be hauled into the King's courtroom means they never even believed in Him. Imagine having to appear before a Judge, Who is simultaneously the Defense Attorney? Who produces the recordings proving you never even believed in Him. He looks at you and says, "I'm here. I exist". You had your chance to believe in Him, and put your faith in Him, but didn't do it. You flat out rejected Him; became an accomplice crucifying Him. What's your reply? You're silent because you have nothing you can say!

How's Luke 23:39-42 as an example? The King of the Jews, actually King of the Universe, was crucified, hanging on a cross while beside Him, one on either side, were two real criminals. One joined the crucifiers and mocked the Lord. Verse 39: 'One of the criminals hanging beside him scoffed, "So You're the Messiah, are You? Prove it by saving Yourself—and us, too, while You're at it!"' Why he sounds just like the priests and scribes who condemned Him at their illegal kangaroo court trial in the middle of the previous night! Talk about unbelief. If people don't believe in Christ Jesus, well, they've truly no hope, zero, zip, zilch, nada. Their only destination is a fiery home in hell. But for those who do believe, the difference could not be more stark. The other thief,

though apparently having joined in mocking the Lord earlier, seeing the Lord up close, now has a complete change of heart. He now reprimands his fellow convict. Verses 40-42: 'But the other criminal protested, "Don't you fear God even when you have been sentenced to die? We deserve to die for our crimes, but this Man hasn't done anything wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when You come into Your Kingdom".' And how does the Lord reply? Unbelievably, verse 43 says, 'And Jesus replied, "I assure you, today you will be with Me in paradise".' So this felon became the very first human saved by Christ Jesus! Joining the Lord when He died on the cross, and flying to Paradise, escorted by the Lord Himself!! Can you imagine it? This criminal's absolute joy as he gladly watched the pain and torment of his death falling away as the Lord Himself holds his hand and brings him into Paradise! This, folks, is the absolute power of the Son of God.

But Christ's work wasn't just spiritual. No! It wasn't over yet. On the third day, He rose from the dead. His physical body was resurrected! So not only was the "good thief's spirit and soul living in Paradise, his very physical body, and the entire universe's physicality as well, would one day be resurrected, too. Just like Jesus! And just like that convict's, so will we be! Hallelujah!!

Now, let's shift gears. On that first day of Christ Jesus' crucifixion, a human man was brought into Paradise, totally forgiven, redeemed, cleansed of all sin. The first man freed by the Lord's sacrifice was a man whose name we don't even know! The very

first earth man, Adam, sinned, and the entire human race was in an instant condemned because Adam had rejected God, his loving Father and Creator. But now, this nameless thief, thus so easily represents all of us who turn and embrace God, loving Him with all our hearts, souls, minds and strength. Thus we know, without a shadow of doubt, that the very second our bodies die, we will be with King Jesus in Paradise! How glorious is that!!

But of all the people gathered to watch that spectacle on crucifixion day, how many then embraced the bleeding, disfigured, dying King? There's no exact count, but we can say for certain it was a small fraction of everyone there. As it is today as well. Most people don't have time for God. Oh, many may pray, but only when they need something. Don't we call such people "fair weather friends"? If we don't have anything they need or want anymore, are they still our friends? If not, they were never our friends to begin with. And because we like having friends, our natural tendency wants to be like the people around us, so they will like us, and we can hang out with them and do fun things to enjoy life. But since all people will believe what they want to believe, regardless of facts, we need to be extremely careful of whom we associate with. How did Paul address this very issue? In II Thessalonians 3:2, he wrote: "Pray, too, that we will be rescued from wicked and evil people, for not everyone is a believer". Later in that chapter, he brings up the problem of able-bodied beggars. These were people who were able to make a living, but

were lazy and took advantage of the love and care of the church members. They smooched off the kindness and generosity of the church, when they could be working themselves. They thus became thieves, stealing from the gifts of the church meant to help the really poor, who truly needed help. How many such people do we pass every day? Precious few soliciting donations are truly in need. What does Paul command us to do? Verse 14 says: “Stay away from them so they will be ashamed”. All so in hopes they will see the wickedness, the sinfulness, of their ways, repent and turn back to the Lord so they can be forgiven of their sins.

But then, at the other extreme, there are believers who harden their hearts and close their eyes to the cries and needs of those truly suffering. They become so judgemental they can no longer see the real needs in front of them. They end up sinning against God as badly as “professional beggars” who refuse to work and “make a living”! What does prophet Malachi say about this? In just today’s conclusion of his short book, in chapter 3:8-9 God says, “You have cheated Me of the tithes and offerings due to Me. You are under a curse, for your whole nation has been cheating Me”. Later, in verse 15, God quotes the people saying: “‘From now on we will call the arrogant blessed. For those who do evil get rich, and those who dare God to punish them suffer no harm’.” Right now, many otherwise well-meaning Christians are clamoring that America should stop sending money to Ukraine, because we’re in debt up to our eyeballs, and the money sent

there ends up being laundered by criminal enterprises to find its way back into the pockets of evil people right here at home. Well, that's partly true. But not all aid money is being diverted. In addition to the donations that we as individuals give to relief organizations, aid must be given to the government and military forces there to help them both protect their citizens, an increasing number of whom are becoming our brothers and sisters in Christ, and to liberate their people and territory from the invaders.

If in the process of helping them, so what if America appears to go bankrupt? Is not God the God Who creates out of nothing? With God, nothing, absolutely nothing is zero sum. Did He not multiply five loaves of bread and two fish into nourishing meals for some 15,000 or more people? Not once, but twice? Is anything too hard for the King? If America turns back to God, will He not restore us and take care of His people? In Malachi 3:17-18, God declares: "On the day when I act in judgment, ... you will again see the difference between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not". For when King Jesus takes His place in court, His very righteousness all by itself is so powerful that it blazes as a unquenchable flame that burns to a crisp all who appear before Him not clothed in the proper attire of His precious shed blood, that dripped from the cross of crucifixion. His love is infinitely great, and He is infinitely deserving of our complete and total devotion. For He is the One Who loves you with total abandon, the forever King of All Kings.

