

Could This Be Satan's Deadliest Lie of All?

There is a message that serves as a common foundation for almost all the other messages in Scriptures: "Repent! For the kingdom of God is at hand" (Matt. 4:17). This may be seen as a summary of all the Israelite prophets (Jer. 25:5). It preceded the coming of Yeshua (Matt. 3:2); forms the first part of the gospel (Acts 2:38, 17:30-31); and is repeated before the end-times' apocalypse (Rev. 2:5, 14:7).

The logic is that at the coming of the kingdom, each person will be judged, give a moral account for what he has done. He will be rewarded for good and punished for evil. The reward will be better than we can imagine, and the punishment will be worse than we can imagine. The hope of reward inspires a positive motivation to do right. The punishment inspires a fearful motivation to stop doing wrong.

It is that fearful motivation that forms a bottom-line, no-frills understanding of the rest of the kingdom messages. This kernel of truth is subtly difficult to grasp. I call it simply, "GPS"—not global positioning system, but "God Punishes Sin."

The first lie of the devil was to tell Adam and Eve that God does not punish sin. "You surely will not die" (Gen. 3:4). The first lie is: "You can sin and not be punished." It is the father of all other lies. There are thousands of subtle layers of deception to cover over that lie. The prophets simply told the truth, "The soul who sins shall die" (Ezek. 18:20).

There are different types of punishment for sin. The worst is eternal damnation in the lake of fire (Luke 12:5). But there are other punishments of lesser degree. Some take place in this lifetime and others in the world to come (Luke 12:46-48).

Yeshua teaches that the fear of God is based on the different types of punishment for different types of sin.

We human beings have a difficult time seeing our own sin. It is easier for us to see the wrongdoings of others. We have a horrible tendency to deceive ourselves that we can do something wrong and not be punished. The art of blame-shifting and excuse-making goes back to the Garden of Eden. The concept that God punishes sin is logically and morally obvious. However, our tendency toward self-deception makes it difficult to grasp.

Let us run to God, our Father, who loves us. Let us quickly repent of our sins; snap out of self-deception; learn the pure and beautiful fear of the Lord; receive our cleansing by Yeshua's blood; be filled with the Spirit of holiness, wisdom and revelation; and walk in the joy of our salvation. {eoa}

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