

Expect These Horrible Consequences if You Ignore God's Jealousy

I heard about a gallery owner who called one of his featured artists and said, "I have some good news and some bad news."

The artist said, "Well, what's the good news?"

"The good news is that a man came in here the other day and was looking at your paintings. He asked whether the value of the paintings would go up if the artist were to die. I told him they would, of course. So, he bought every one of your paintings."

"That's fantastic," the artist said. "So, what's the bad news?"

"The bad news is the man was your doctor."

I think we can all use some good news in a bad world. But even as bad as things are now, they were even darker in Israel in the prophet Elisha's day. It was, in fact, one of the darkest moments in Israel's history. Everything had gone wrong. The king had basically become powerless.

A famine had swept the land, and things were so bad that they were actually eating dove dung, or to put it in modern vernacular, pigeon poop. The Scriptures also tell us that a delicacy at the time was the head of a donkey. Even worse, the people actually were turning to cannibalism.

Why had this happened to Israel?

It was a result of their disobedience to God and their repeated worship of false idols. This reminds us of a very important biblical principle: God will not share his glory

with another.

You see, God put us on this earth to glorify him. Jesus said, "My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples" (John 15:8). We were put here for that purpose. God wants us to fulfill that purpose.

And He certainly does not want to share His glory with any other gods. Two of the Ten Commandments deal with the topic of placing other gods before him.

Maybe you're thinking, "Well, isn't that a little paranoid on God's part?"

It is not paranoia at all.

If you're married, how would you feel if your spouse went out with a different person every night? That would be ridiculous. You wouldn't put up with something like that.

But is it any more ridiculous when we turn from the true and living God to false gods? Is it any more ridiculous when we bow down to the idol of success or the idol of money? Is it any more ridiculous when we bow down before the idol of fame or the idol of pleasure?

God is saying, "You belong to me. I am not sharing you with another."

He basically told Israel, "I am your Lord. I am your God. I brought you out of Egypt. Worship Me. That is all I ask."

But they kept turning to false gods. So the Lord allowed them to reap the consequences of their actions. And when the king heard about the people's cannibalism, he ripped his royal robes. And underneath those robes was sackcloth.

At that time sackcloth usually was associated with mourning and repentance. We would assume that the king perhaps was truly repentant before God. Hardly. Because right after that,

he decided he wanted to kill Elisha, the representative of God.

The king was saying, in effect, "Listen, I tried the whole wait-on-God thing. I have tried the whole faith deal. It isn't working. I don't want to wait on God one day longer. I am ticked off. And it's Elisha's fault."

Elisha had done nothing wrong. He simply was the Lord's representative. What the king and Israel were experiencing was a direct result of their own disobedience.

But whoever said that sin makes sense? When people are sinking deeper into sin and reaping the consequences of it, they strike out at God (and sometimes even his representatives) instead of repenting and coming to their senses.

Maybe you've been minding your own business, loving God and living the Christian life, and a nonbeliever has been hassling you. You're saying, "What on earth is this all about? What have I done wrong?"

Maybe you're doing something right, because the Bible says, "All who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution (2 Tim. 3:12b).

We don't necessarily want to be persecuted, but as Christians we will be. And we're seeing it more and more in our culture today.

You'd better not say anything critical against any particular race. You'd better not say anything critical against a gender. You'd better not say anything critical about any particular group. But you can say whatever you want about followers of Jesus Christ, and that is acceptable in our culture.

Writing in the early 20th century, G.K. Chesterton said, "You are free in our time to say that God does not exist; you are free to say that He exists and is evil. ...You may talk of God

as metaphor or mystification. ... But if you speak of God as a fact, as a thing like a tiger, as a reason for changing one's conduct, then the modern world will stop you somehow if it can. ... It is now thought irreverent to be a believer."

If that was true back then, how much more true is it today?

I've heard it said that Christians are so heavenly minded they are no earthly good. That is ridiculous. Because the fact of the matter is, those who think the most of the next world will do the most for this one.

For the original article, visit .

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