

Unbelievers flee *from* God and flee *to* Hell (Pt1 *Flee*)

This morning we will begin a new study on the word *flee*, in the Holy Scriptures, and no its not an insect (flea). There are 105 occurrences of the word *flee*, 3 of *fleeing* and 8 of *fleeth*. According to the on-line Oxford dictionary the word *flee* means:- “run away from a place or situation of danger.”

In this study we will cover four points, the first two will be our introduction and our last two points will cover the the unsaved. Our points include;

1. The word *flee* is used to describe:-
 - a) the action of people running away *from* a place or someone
 - b) the action of people running *to* someone or a place
- 2 The word *flee* has a sense of turning away from and it also carries a sense of urgency
3. An unsaved man would want to *flee* from the presence of God.
4. An unsaved man *flees* to hell

Let us add a little more detail to the each of our points;

- 1a) The word *flee* is used to describe the action of people running away *from* a place or someone

Gen 16:8 *And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence comest thou? and whither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai.*

See also Gen 19:20, 31:27, Lev 26:17, Num 24:11, Ex 21:13, Josh 8:5, 6, Josh 8:20, 20:3, Judg 20:32, 2Sam 4:4, 2Sam 15:14, 2Sam 17:2, 2Sam 18:3, 19:3, 2Kgs 9:3, Job 30:10, Jer 4:29, Mt 24:16 & Mk 13:14.

- i) Example - as *fleeing from* a sword

Lev 26:36 *And upon them that are left [alive] of you I will send a faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; and the sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them; and they shall flee, as fleeing from a sword; and they shall fall when none pursueth.* See also Job 20:24, Isa 31:8

- ii) Example of *fleeing from* an enemy: Num 10:35 *And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee.*

See also; Deut 4:42, Deut 19:3-11, 28:7 & 25

- iii) Example of *fleeing from* our enemy *whilst they pursue us*:- 2Sam 24:13 *So God came to David, and told him, and said unto him, Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee? or that there be three days' pestilence in thy land? now advise, and see what answer I shall return to him that sent me.*

Whereas the wicked flee when there is no one pursuing them (see Prov 28:1 *The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion*).

- 1b) The word *flee* is used to describe the action of people running *to* someone or a place.

Gen 27:43 *Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; and arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran;*

See also; Ex 14:25, Josh 20:4, 9, 1Kgs 12:18, 2Chr 10:18, Job 30:3 & Mt 2:13.

Example of *fleeing to* a place: Num 35:6-11 *And among the cities which ye shall give unto the Levites [there shall be] six cities for refuge, which ye shall appoint for the manslayer; that he may flee thither: and to them ye shall add forty and two cities.*

And so the word *flee* is use to describe the action of a person running away *from* a place or someone and *to* someone or a place.

- 2 a) There is a sense of turning from something, associated with the word *flee*

Jer 49:8 *Flee ye, turn back, dwell deep, O inhabitants of Dedan; for I will bring the calamity of Esau upon him, the time [that] I will visit him.*

See also Jer 49:24, Jn 10:5, 1Cor 6:18, 1Cor 10:14, 1Tim 6:11 & 2Tim 2:22

- 2 b) There is a sense of urgency associated with the word *flee*

Jer 49:30 *Flee, get you far off, dwell deep, O ye inhabitants of Hazor; saith the Lord; for Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon hath taken counsel against you, and hath conceived a purpose against you.*

See also Mt 2:13, 24:16, Mk 13:14 & Acts 27:30

In Scriptures there are many examples of people fleeing from danger. For this teaching we have used two to illustrate a sense of urgency when *fleeing*.

i) In Matt.24: 16 and Mark 13: 14 where there is the foretelling of the *abomination of desolation* spoken of by Daniel the prophet in Daniel 9: 27. The reason for the urgency is the day that is foretold is not a day of light but darkness and destruction.

ii) In Gen.19: 15 when the Holy Spirit hastened Lot to leave the city of Sodom before God destroyed it. Then we have our own example of the Christchurch earthquakes and on the world stage we have the big 8.9 magnitude quake that hit Japan on the 11th of March 2011. People *flee*, people ran with a sense of urgency, and a sense that their world was being destroyed.

3. An unsaved man would want to *flee* from the presence of God.

Pss 68:1 To the chief Musician, *A Psalm [or] Song of David. Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him.*

See also Job 27:22

I remember hearing a teaching from Peter Ruckman where he explained that if it were ever possible for an unsaved man to be in the presence of God, he would not be there for long. The unsaved man would want to get out of God's presence. I can not remember him giving a verse to support the point, but I held it out there as something to one day confirm. Well, he is correct, the unsaved will want to *flee* from the presence of God.

So where the Scriptures teach that after death comes judgment (see Heb.9: 27) and therefore we know that the unbeliever will stand before God, we now know based on our verse from Job and Psalm 68 that he will want to *flee* from the presence of the Lord.

The people of Israel could not go up to the top of Mount Sinai, and if they did they would have perished (see Ex.19: 21), according to verse 24, if the people came across the boundaries that the Lord had set He would *break forth upon them*.

Why would the people perish?

Ex.24: 17 explains that *the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire*. Is it any wonder they did not want to go up to the mount, they would have been destroyed,.

And given the Bible says God will judge the world in righteousness and He is angry with the wicked every day (see Ps.7: 11) we can understand that an unsaved man, a wicked man (in the eyes of God) would want to *flee* from the presence of the Lord.

Let us also remember that the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is Holy, Righteous (see Ps.145: 17) and Just (see Deut.32: 4 & Is.45: 21) and those who are not saved by the grace of God (see Eph.2: 8), by believing the gospel of Christ crucified are still in their sins, they are evil in God's sight, they are wicked in the eyes of the Lord. And His Holiness repels those who are lost, those who reject His only begotten Son, because He has no pleasure in wickedness (Ps.5: 4) and hates the workers of iniquity (see Ps.5: 5). And so even though the unsaved man who hears the warning of hell, hears the warning of God's judgment, he often wants to run a mile (*flee*), perhaps because he knows that when he is faced with looking at God's Holiness he will see a reflection of himself that he won't like, he will see his filthy rags (see Is.64: 6), his sin. And just as the unbeliever will want to *flee* God's presence when he stands before Him in judgment, so he wants to *flee* when he hears the Scriptures being preached, because they testify of Him (see Jn5: 39). You see man's natural flesh...is at enmity with God (Jam.4: 4), so it should be no surprise to us that the unsaved natural response is to *flee* when he hears the gospel. We see the same reaction from some believers. Remember Jonah, he rose up to *flee* from the presence of the Lord (see Jon.1: 3), he thought he could hide from God in a boat, then in a great fish (verse 17), but there was no where, that Jonah could hide that would be away from the presence of God.

I am sure we all know someone who is running, is *fleeing* from God. Perhaps they know they have a calling on their life and are afraid of that or perhaps they don't want to come face to face with their sin. Whether they continue to run for the rest of their life until they take their last breath is not up to God. For He is *not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance* (see 2Pet. 3: 9), but rather the decision to call on the name of the Lord is up to the individual to receive and believe the gospel. And if the unsaved keep running, if they keep *fleeing* from God even though he puts up road blocks like he did to Jonah, then their *fleeing* from Him will not change when they die and stand before Him in judgment. The lost sinner will only want to *flee* from the presence of the Lord at judgement, which leads me to our next point...the unbeliever, in their desire to *flee from* the presence of God, will *flee*, will run away from a 'pretend' danger, into the place of eternal torment, they will *flee* to hell.

4. Unbelievers flee to hell

Prov 28:17 *A man that doeth violence to the blood of [any] person shall flee to the pit; let no man stay him.*

The wicked shall be turned into hell (see Ps.9: 17), yes God will cast the wicked into hell (see Lk.12: 5 & 2Pet.2: 4), but it appears from our verse in Proverbs that the unbeliever will *flee* to the pit, to that place called hell. So perhaps they will be begging God to send them out of His presence and in doing so they will *flee* into hell, without knowing what awaits them. Well, for those who have heard the gospel, for those who have been warned whilst they had breath in their lungs and reject the gospel, it may dawn on them what waits them, but their desire to *flee* to hell indicates that at that particular moment hell is more appealing than being in the presence of God Almighty for eternity! Talk about going from the frying pan into the fire. That is sad! But such is the blindness that has been inflicted on them by the devil!

Have you ever asked someone the question, “where are going to when you die?” And had someone reply... “I am going to hell.” Those who offer this reply are often young people today who have no concept of hell other than pizza or those who desire to hold onto their riches. Either way the devil has blinded their eyes such that they desire to *flee* to hell for their eternal resting place.

That is sad that a human life, desires to be tormented in the flames of hell for eternity, MORE than to worship in the presence of the One, True, Living, Just and Loving God.

One example I witnessed of a man choosing hell over heaven was when I was branch manager at Corys. I had just spent half an hour preaching the gospel to this man who was one of my customers so he had just heard the warning about hell and knew the remedy he needed to take to avoid hell. But instead of *fleeing* the place of torment he opted for *fleeing* away from God *to* hell. As we left the lunch room, I said, Will you accept, will you believe the Lord Jesus Christ and call on His name and so spend an eternity in heaven or will you chose hell. With all sincerity, he said, I do not want to give up all the riches I enjoy of this world, woman, beer and rugby, I chose hell. I thanked him for his honesty, but was bewildered by his decision.

As time has travelled on since that day I have learnt that the god of this world blinds the minds of man so that they will not believe the gospel. Once the significance of this truth dawns on us it helps us to understand the power that Satan has over the mind of human. Think about the millions who smoke cigarettes. They see the warning that smoking may kill you, but they spend money, and suck on the cigarette, because they want to, because that is their chose. That is blindness! It is illogical for a human being to smoke, to pump tar into their body then go to the doctor and say I am sick. Just as it is illogical for a person to sniff glue, but they have been blinded by the god of this world (see 2Cor.4: 4 and Eph.4: 17, 18).

Warning! Don't think you are immuned because you are saved. We are all flesh and blood, if we stop for a moment from abiding in the Lord (see Jn.15) and yeilding our members servants to righteousness unto holiness (see Rom.6: 19) then the devil will lure us away from that which is God into something that is not of Him. And we believers have the Helper, the Comforter, the Holy Spirit to help us keep pure. So let us have compassion on the unsaved as they do not have the Holy Spirit but only their own strength to keep pure (according to the Buddist) and hence they get drawn away by the lusts of this world, enticed to a point where they desire to *flee* to hell when they die more than they do to receive the riches of Christ as free gift!

I have heard some preachers say that after death the lost will have another chance to call on the Lord Jesus Christ. But, a) the support for this doctrine is very weak and b) it contradicts the need to preach the gospel on earth, and the clear consequences that the scriptures teach about those who reject the gospel and c) when you take into account the two points of this teaching, that the unbeliever *flee*s from God and he *flee*s to hell, and we know that what we believe on earth does not change in the after life (see Rev.22: 11). The sinner is still clothed in his own filthy rags and so God won't bare him in His presence any longer than to pass judgment, after which God will pronounce the lost man guilty, just as a just judge does in his court room. God must judge sin, the debt for our iniquity has to be paid for and an unbeliever who *flee*s God on the earth will desire to *flee* from God at the judgment and then he will want to *flee* to hell. He will want to *flee* to hell, rather than stand in front of a Holy Righteous God that will reveal his sin.

In this study we have looked at the word flee in the Scriptures and covered 4 points. Two of those points were a brief introduction to the word and the other two related to the unsaved. Our cover points included;

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