

## God has no Pleasure in Counterfeit Religions (Pt.2 Pleasure)

This is our second study on the word *pleasure* in the Holy Scriptures. In our previous study we covered three points; (1) God has no pleasure in the lost, and (2) God has no pleasure in the death of the lost man, and (3) God has no pleasure in the man that does things in his own strength.

In this study we will cover three points; (1) God has no pleasure in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin, and (2) God has no pleasure in the man that draws back from Him, and (3) the Lord *has* pleasure in them that fear Him.

Let us add a little detail to our points:-

### 1. God has *no* pleasure in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin.

Heb.10: 6 *In burnt offerings and [sacrifices] for sin thou hast had no pleasure.*

See also Heb.10: 8

Our verse in Hebrews is referencing the Old Testament as identified in Heb.10: 1, "For the law having a shadow of good things to come". And although verses 6 and 8 say that God had no pleasure in Israel's sacrifices and burnt offerings for sin, we see from the Old Testament that there were times where the Lord did smell a sweet savour (see Gen.8: 21 & Lev.26: 31). Therefore we suggest that the verse infers that the smell of their sacrifices *alone* was insufficient (see Is.1: 11 & Hos.6: 6), when their burnt offerings were offered to false gods (see Amos 4: 1-5). In doing so their hearts became removed from Him, and even one thousand rams or ten thousand rivers of oil would not be acceptable before the Lord (see Mic.6: 7).

It was the same in Jesus' day with the Pharisees who would say the right words (see Lk.18: 10-12), but their hearts were far from the Lord (see verse 13 & 14).

It would be similar to a man today who offers himself as a living sacrifice to the Lord (see Rom.12: 1-3) and then goes out and worships a false god, or every Sunday goes to Mass, worships the wafer god, kisses it and then eats it, just as Israel kissed their idols to whom that they sacrificed (see Hos.13: 2). Hence, we can say today, that God has *no* pleasure in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin, He has *no* pleasure in counterfeit religions that speak words of adoration and praise then worship the devil.

Today, when a man comes to God claiming a different sacrifice to that of Christ, God does not accept his offering. From the time of Christ's one-off sacrifice on the cross God has *no* pleasure in any other sacrifice for sin. How do we know that? Let us return to Heb.10, where verse 10, says "by the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all". So not only do the Roman Catholics (RC) err not knowing this Scriptural truth when they desire to bring another sacrifice, but in the Mass they offer Jesus' body and blood again in contradiction to the words in verse 10 "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." There is no more sacrifice for sin over and above Christ's sacrifice on the cross, when He said, "It is finished" (Jn.19: 30). Any man-made religion that offers salvation, hope, or eternal happiness that involves works, is contrary to the Holy Scriptures and we should warn those that are young or weak in the faith, not to get seduced by the devil who walks about seeking whom he may devour (see 1Pet.5: 8).

Have you ever been into a church where everyone is singing and waving their hands in the air to the Lord in worship? At a first glance, the onlooker may be impressed with the sincerity of their worship, but then people begin falling down after been 'slain in the spirit'. I remember a time before I came to the knowledge of the truth of the Authorised Bible, and went to a healing meeting, and was thinking how wonderful it was that Christians would sing their praises to God for about half an hour or more. But then people in front of me were falling down, and I had someone try to encourage me to be 'slain in the spirit'. Their sacrifice of praise (see Heb.13: 15) becomes nullified, was neutralised by the leaven of their false doctrine. And according to the scriptures God has *no* pleasure in sacrifices of praise where Satan is edified.

One Saturday, I was in Browns Bay and there was a Hari Krishna handing out tracts on the main street. I recognised him as one who goes up Queen street chanting "Hare Krishna", and he was stopping people, just as the Christian evangelists do on Queen street, because he believes he has the truth. Sadly, his hope is misplaced in a false god, who cannot save, who offers no forgiveness of sin, who requires their adherents to live holy lives but their burnt offerings are not acceptable to God, because again, they are additional to the one-off sacrifice of Christ on the cross, and God has no pleasure in sacrifices other than that offered by Christ.

### 2. God has no pleasure in the man that draws back from Him.

Heb.10:38 *Now the just shall live by faith: but if [any man] draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.*

In this point we assert that God has no pleasure in any man that draws back. When we continue on to verse 39, we establish that this man is one who draws back unto perdition. What does perdition mean? According to the on-line

Oxford dictionary it means, “a state of eternal punishment and damnation”, which is also evidenced when we consider the Greek words behind our English word ‘perdition’. For example, the Greek word *apoleia* is also translated, damnable, damnation and destruction. That means that God has *no* pleasure in a man that draws back to a point where he will end up in hell. Can this verse be applicable to Christians today, to those in the church age who are saved? Could this verse have been written by the same hand that wrote Paul’s epistles, where salvation is by grace, where salvation cannot be lost once a person believes (see Eph.1: 13 & 14, 4: 30)? No! For the audience of this passage they can lose their salvation (Heb.10: 38 & 39), and hence why some scholars like Dr. P. Ruckman assert that from Heb.10: 26 to the end of Hebrews, the teaching is concerning tribulation saints, when God will have no pleasure in them that draw back, that backslide and end up in hell.

So how can we apply this verse to us today? *Perhaps* in the church age God has no pleasure in those who are backslidden and have gone back into the world, whom Satan has drawn back to the things of their old-man (see Eph.4: 22), and especially those who seek to remain in their backslidings as Israel did (see Hos.11: 7). Those who have, during their walk with the Lord, been snared by the devil and found themselves being unable to remove the snare by themselves, whom the devil now has captive at his will (see 2Tim.2: 26). God has no joy, no pleasure, in his sons or daughters that, whether they see the snare and do nothing, or whether they talk themselves into saying that they are not snared, either way, the devil has them captive, and they need to recover themselves out of that snare by repentance, and dying to the sin that binds them.

There would *not* be many believers that are active in the battle that see either themselves, their children or other relatives, get snared. Once the devil has a person snared they often end up discouraged and unless they deal with that discouragement at the cross, will end up backslidden into the things of the world, and draw back from the Lord. At which point the Lord has no pleasure in them. Let us pray for our family, our friends and other relatives who find themselves in this position, and now either do not recognise that they are caught, or are feeling weak and just like the bird or fish that is caught in a net, they may feel unable to get out and need our prayers. They need us to stand in the gap for them and ask the Lord to help them untangle themselves out of the snare. Because the Lord has no pleasure in them that draw back from Him.

So after 3 points in our first study and two in this one on what the Lord has no pleasure in, let us conclude part two of this study on a positive, and establish what pleases the Lord.

### 3. The Lord *has* pleasure in them that fear Him.

Ps.147: 11 *The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.*

When a person fears the Lord He takes pleasure in them. And a non-believer does not fear the Lord (see Rom.3: 10-18) because they either do not believe He exists, or they reject His Son, or they believe in a false god. The bottom-line is they do not believe the Holy Scriptures. When a person believes the Scriptures, when a person hears the gospel of Christ crucified and trusts Christ for their salvation, do they automatically fear God?

It would appear that a person can be saved from hell, know they are going to spend an eternity in heaven, but, as with many other biblical doctrines, have little or no understanding of what it means to fear God in their daily walk with Him, even though their initial motivation for getting saved was because they feared God casting them into hell. But what does it mean to fear God? Well, without taking a series of studies to look at this topic, let us say that when a person fears God, they desire to obey the Scriptures of truth and:-

- i) desire to cleanse themselves, not by their good works to earn salvation, but by dying to their sin and perfecting themselves daily in holiness (see 2Cor.7: 1). The Old Testament points out that it is by the fear of the Lord that man departs from evil (see Prov.16: 6), and
- ii) a desire to obey Christ in singleness of mind and heart (see Eph.6: 5), and
- iii) has a preparedness to submit themselves one to another (see Eph.5: 21), and
- iv) serve God in reverence and godly fear (see Heb.12: 28).

So, a person who fears God departs from sin, obeys the Lord, and serves Him. But what else does it mean?

Here are two verses that will give us clues:-

Phil.2: 12 (and 1Cor.2: 3) - work out our salvation in fear and trembling.

Heb.12: 28, as we have mentioned, talks about fear and reverence.

Now let us also consider the Oxford dictionary meaning. There we establish that fear is a “distressing emotion aroused by impending danger, evil, pain, etc”. When we consider the Greek work behind the English word, we establish that *phobos* is also translated ‘be afraid’, ‘be afraid exceedingly’, and ‘terror’. And *phobeo* includes ‘afraid’, ‘afraid exceedingly’ and also ‘reverence’. Hence there is a sense that fearing God is to be afraid of Him, trembling because of His might and what we deserve for our sin, (see Rom.11: 20, 21), but because He has saved us we will not receive the recompense for our transgressions. But our behaviour is such that we act knowing what God will do to the wicked, and in doing so we walk in fear and trembling. Therefore, to fear the Lord carries with it “being

afraid” of Him and also reverence of Him. And not only is the fear of the Lord the beginning of wisdom, but God has pleasure, He has joy, in them that fear Him.

When we look at great men of God in the Scriptures, they demonstrate their fear of the Lord following their salvation, by subsequent repentance and works meet for repentance (see Acts 26: 20). And therefore their actions are an illustration of Proverbs 16: 6, where Solomon points out the truth that it is by a man fearing the Lord that he departs from evil. Two examples include David (see Ps.51) and Paul (see Acts 9: 6). Is it any wonder that in spite of David’s sin, the Lord found him to have a perfect heart (see 1Kgs.11: 4), because David’s repentance showed the Lord that he feared Him.

Having said what we have said, let us say it again. In this our second study on the word *pleasure* in the Scriptures we have covered three points:-

1. God has no pleasure in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin, and
2. God has no pleasure in the man that draws back from Him, and
3. the Lord *has* pleasure in them that fear Him.