



## The Burning Bush - Online article archive

### THE FIRES IN AUSTRALIA AND ITS LAWS ON SAME-SEX MARRIAGE AND ABORTION - IS THERE A LINK?



The Bible throughout its divinely inspired pages states most clearly that there is an indissoluble link between sin and God's judgment!

An Australian footballer, Israel Folau, was the subject of much abuse for stating that there was a link between the bush fires which have devastated large areas of Australia and caused the deaths of an increasing number of people, and the nation's adoption of same-sex marriage laws and the legalising of abortion.

He was absolutely correct in this matter! The Bible states and history shows that sin is ALWAYS followed by God's judgment!

Please consider:

**1. God's judgment follows immediately upon the guilty on their committing of sin.** I emphasize the word 'immediately'! Men do not realise that the instance that sin is committed, a judgment falls. Perhaps one of the clearest instances of this is seen in Joshua. "But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against the children of Israel. . . . Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you," verses 7:1, 12.

The immediate impact of sin upon Israel, though unrecognised by its people, was the withdrawal of God's presence and power from their midst. The phrase, "neither will I be with you any more" may well be translated as "neither will I be joined to you any more"!

The loss of God's protecting and providing providence and presence is a judgment that cannot be calculated. Without His mercy, Christians, indeed all men, cannot do anything at all for themselves! Like Peter, we immediately begin to sink when we take our eyes off the Lord, "But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me," Matthew 14:30.

Calvary illustrates this terrible truth. "And with him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left. And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors. And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, Save thyself, and come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; himself he cannot save. Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reviled him. And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour," Mark 15:27-33.

At the hour of Israel's rejection of their 'Messiah', the Lord Jesus Christ, a darkness descended upon the nation! That darkness is still enshrouding the hearts and minds of that people, with the exception of "a remnant according to the election of grace," Romans 11:5.

**2. In most, if not all cases, the evidence of God's judgment is seen in a measure.** I have referred to the sin of Achan, Joshua 7. There were quite a few days delay before the evidence of God's judgment was seen. It had been enacted immediately but only evidenced some time later on the battlefield at Ai. "So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men: and they fled before the men of Ai. And the



## The Burning Bush - Online article archive

men of Ai smote them about thirty and six men: for they chased them from before the gate even unto Shebarim, and smote them in the going down: wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water," verses 4-5.

The delay was also seen in the case of the sin and deceit and greed of Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the prophet. "But he went in, and stood before his master. And Elisha said unto him, Whence comest thou, Gehazi? And he said, Thy servant went no whither. And he said unto him, Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants? The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow," 2 Kings 5:25-27. The delay may have been shorter than in the case of Achan's sin in the days of Joshua, but there was a delay before the anger of God against Gehazi was manifested.

**3. There is a day coming when the full measure of God's wrath against sin will be displayed.** The fact that we are in the 21st century and the nations of men loudly proclaim their rejection of such Biblical doctrines as sin and divine judgment, has not altered anything. Rejection of Christ and His truth will impact upon a nation's affairs. We here in Ulster, but a few years ago, frequently had upon our lips in prayer the wonderful truth of Proverbs 14:34. "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people." How right we were then to believe and delight in that truth. I wonder do we still believe it? There are those who do not or they would not follow and support the politics of a party which endorses the sodomite lifestyle!

The sin of the world in Noah's day brought down God's terrible wrath. "And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them," Genesis 6:5-7.

It will be so again. God has suffered the wickedness of the world for a long time. He has done that in order to redeem His elect from amongst the ranks of mankind. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward (His elect), not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which (this is the final event in the 'Day of the Lord') the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up," 2 Peter 3:9-10.

So, when He has accomplished His purpose amongst the Gentiles, then judgment shall fall upon this evil world. "And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities," Revelation 18:1-5.

God has neither forgotten the wickedness of this world nor given a free hand to those who despise and hate Him! No, the time, in the will of God, to deal with this world's rebellion will come round and then it will be SEEN that God's wrath does indeed follow sin!

"Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people: let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it. For the indignation of the LORD is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter. Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcasses, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a



## The Burning Bush - Online article archive

scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree," Isaiah 34:1-4. That the prophet is here speaking of the judgment of the Lord Jesus upon this world at His Second Coming may be seen in that He uses Isaiah's words when speaking of that great judgment in the revelation given to John. "And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" Revelation 6:12-17.

So, is there a connection between the fires in Australia and the abandoning of God's Law by the government and most of the people in that nation? Yes there is!

**4. But let it be said that even in such tragic events there is to be seen a display of the mercy of God!** What a mercy it is to learn that we have displeased the Lord and His wrath abideth on us (John 3:36)!

King Josiah certainly was pleased to learn of the sin of his nation before God (2 Chronicles 34:18-28) as is every truly converted sinner. How exceedingly glad was Saul of Tarsus, later Paul the apostle, to learn of his sin. Acts 9:1-5. He later said that he was ignorant of his wickedness and the wrath that was upon him for his sin. "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief," 1 Timothy 1:12-15.

The Lord could have allowed Paul to continue in his sin and darkness and to have reaped the consequences, but in mercy He revealed to him his need of salvation, showing him his sin of which he was ignorant.

The fires in Australia, and we could add the many other indications of God's displayed anger against the nations, not least of all, the confusion, the political and moral chaos in our own nation, all of which clearly testify of heaven's displeasure at the course that nation has adopted in preference to God's truth and His merciful warnings of where we are heading! The fires in Australia have continued almost unabated despite the best efforts of the various agencies fighting them. Areas have had to be abandoned to the fires and firefighters withdrawn for their own safety. Towns have been turned to ashes and, saddest of all, many lives have been lost!

Remember the word of the Lord Jesus, just before Israel made that dreadful decision to reject Him. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord," Matthew 23:37-39.

The warnings of the fires and the troubles that beset nations are but the Lord in mercy, like a hen seeking to gather her chicks to the safety of her wings, seeking to turn men from their sins to an embracing of the gospel message of salvation.

**5. Perhaps some might say that judgment does not always follow sin since the sins of Christians are not judged!** Well, to say that would be a very grave error indeed!

The Psalmist said: "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other," Psalm 85:10. Herein is the glorious mystery of the gospel.



## The Burning Bush - Online article archive

There is in the message of Christ a revealing of how the mercy of God and His truth regarding His judgment of sin are reconciled. The sins of of all believers have been judged BUT not in them but rather in the person of the Lord Jesus.

In the great Covenant of Grace, the Lord Jesus became the substitute for His people and died in their place.

A quotation from the Shorter Catechism would be appropriate here.

*Question 25: How doth Christ execute the office of a priest?*

*Answer: Christ executeth the office of a priest, in his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God; and in making continual intercession for us.*

*"Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many," Hebrews 9:28. "In all things it behoved him to be made like unto [his] brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things [pertaining] to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people," Hebrews 2:17. "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them," Hebrews 7:25.*

As is here stated, Christ was punished in the room of all those who believe in Him. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God," 1 Peter 3:18. "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all," Isaiah 53:4-6.

The atonement that He accomplished at the cross is appropriated by sinners through faith. Let me refer to the Shorter Catechism again.

*Question 29: How are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ?*

*Answer: We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, by the effectual application of it to us, by his Holy Spirit.*

*"As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, [even] to them that believe on his name," John 1:12.*

*"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour," Titus 3:5-6.*

*Question 30: How doth the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?*

*Answer: The Spirit applieth to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling.*

*"By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God," Ephesians 2:8.*

*"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, Ephesians 3:17.*

*"God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord," 1 Corinthians 1:9.*

Thus it is demonstrated from God's Word that sin is ALWAYS followed by God's judgment!

In the case of the Christian, they have had One Who took their place and died for them under the wrath that they were due. Thus their sin was judged.



## The Burning Bush - Online article archive

Let me conclude by quoting one of my favourite hymns:

Man of Sorrows! what a name  
For the Son of God, who came  
Ruined sinners to reclaim.  
Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

Bearing shame and scoffing rude,  
In my place condemned He stood;  
Sealed my pardon with His blood.  
Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

Guilty, vile, and helpless we;  
Spotless Lamb of God was He;  
"Full atonement!" can it be?  
Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

Lifted up was He to die;  
"It is finished!" was His cry;  
Now in Heav'n exalted high.  
Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

When He comes, our glorious king,  
All His ransomed home to bring,  
Then anew His song we'll sing:  
Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

- Philip P Bliss (1836 - 1876)

Rev Ivan Foster (Retired)

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