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# Lakeland Hills Leader

## “God’s Nature Does Not Change – Part Two”

By Chuck Richardson

{Genesis 4:11-12 NKJV} - [11] "So now you [are] cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. [12] 'When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth.'"

God punishes men temporally for their sins. Cain may have died in his sin. We have no account of it, but it is certain he suffered temporally for his sin. Cain is used throughout the scriptures as an example of wickedness and unrighteousness and it may be that he died physically in this state, but our concern for this study is God’s temporal punishment for sin. Cain stands as an example of God’s nature and we shall see we cannot isolate God’s interaction to any man as a singular response without considering His nature, else we condemn God as arbitrary. Let us make the case for God’s nature in respect to individuals in the temporal. We shall see others besides Cain who received temporal punishment for sin.

Of course, Adam and Eve serve as examples of God’s punishment in respect to the temporal as well as the spiritual, but we start with Cain because we see man in a world wrought with diverse temptations and a number greater than two, thereby seeing more clearly God’s nature. Is Cain the only illustration of this aspect of God’s nature? The answer is a definite no; we read the story of Noah and his family and God acts in the same way to one of Noah’s sons as He did Cain. {Genesis 9:22-27 NKJV} - “[22] And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside.” {Genesis 9:25-27 NKJV} [25] Then he said: "Cursed [be] Canaan; A servant of servants He shall be to his brethren." [26] And he said: "Blessed [be] the LORD, The God of Shem, And may Canaan be his servant. [27] May God enlarge Japheth, And may he dwell in the tents of Shem; And may Canaan be his servant."

Some may make a distinction between Cain and Ham because Noah, not God, punished him, but notice that God does not correct Noah for his decree, and this stands as good as a divine punishment in the temporal for sin. Others will argue for a distinction of God’s actions against Old Testament characters in contrast to New Testament characters. Is it correct bible interpretation of God’s nature to make this distinction? Friends, if we are to be devoted children of God, we must not put limitations on God’s nature that the scriptures have not made. There is no place for assumptions based upon a few general examples (i.e., that God showed us more temporal punishments in the Old Testament than the New).

First there is a larger historical timeframe of mankind from biblical history, so naturally there are more examples. Since God changed laws from one to another, and the latter was a perfect spiritual law does not make a case for a change in God’s nature. The Old Testament served to set the examples for the divine principles of the New Testament.

We could list other Old Testament persons who received temporal punishment for their sins such as Samson, Eli, Saul, David, Hezekiah just to name a few, but I believe the evidence sufficiently supports my argument at least for the Old Testament.

To prove our premise of the unchanged nature of God, let us see what the New Testament says in comparison.

{Luke 19:45-46 NKJV} - “[45] Then He went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it, [46] saying to them, 'It is written, "My house is a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves.""

Acts 5:1-11 tells of God’s judgment against Ananias and Sapphira, and yes, they were condemned spiritually, but in the process, they were punished physically as well, demonstrating the consistent nature of God in regard to sin. A similar judgment was brought against Herod in Acts 12. {Acts 12:23 NKJV} - “[23] Then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give glory to God. And he was eaten by worms and died."

In both of these examples their punishment was temporal and spiritual, however this does not change God’s nature in respect to sin. Since God is our creator, who are we to question His specific punishment for sin? (Romans 9:20) God’s nature does not change!

{Romans 1:32 NKJV} - “[32] who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them." Whether by miracle or natural law, let us not restrict God’s power over our individual lives. *Shall we say to the potter why are you forming me? (Romans 9:20)*

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{1 Corinthians 10:5-11 NKJV} - “[5] But with most of them God was not well pleased, for [their bodies] were scattered in the wilderness. [6] Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. [7] And do not become idolaters as [were] some of them. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." [8] Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; [9] nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; [10] nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. [11] Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.” The ends of the ages have come, will we tempt God as they and not receive His wrath? And will we arrogantly say God will not punish us in the temporal?

God’s nature causes Him to chastise a son who is rebellious (*Hebrews 12:3-11*). Is censure the only chastisement God renders? If God can bless us with good things in this life, then why can’t He punish us the same?

{Luke 16:19 NKJV} - [19] "There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day." {Luke 18:18 NKJV} - [18] Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

{Luke 12:16 NKJV} - “[16] Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully."

{Matthew 6:33 NKJV} - [33] "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."

All these examples show God’s gracious material blessings bestowed, but in the rich farmer the story ends with God’s removal of those material blessings and an inevitable reckoning. We need to accept God’s authority to reward and punish us in this life and understand His nature is unchangeable, no matter His agency.