

# HOW SHALL WE ESCAPE?

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One of the clear lessons that we learn from studying the Old Testament is that God hates wickedness and punishes those who disobey Him. This is demonstrated from the very beginning with the first man and woman God placed on this earth. There are numerous other examples throughout the time of the Patriarchs and also under the Law of Moses. But how will God judge disobedience to Christ and his New Testament? Jesus spoke nothing of himself, but only what the Father commanded him to speak (John 12:49-50). Those who hear Christ are of God, while those who do not hear Christ are not of God (John 8:47). The consequences of refusing to hear and obey God's Son will be even more severe than what we read in the Old Testament.

## **God's wrath under the Patriarchs and towards the Gentiles**

God commanded Adam and Eve not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen 2:17). They ate of that tree and died spiritually that very day, separated from God because of their sin (Rom 5:12). God also brought curses upon them (Gen 3:8-19), and removed them from the Garden of Eden permanently (Gen 3:22-24). Cain was cursed for killing his brother Abel (Gen 4:8-12). When "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" (Gen 6:5), He destroyed the whole world in the Flood, except for Noah and his family (Gen 6-7). Sodom and Gomorrah were utterly destroyed with fire and brimstone, with Lot and his two daughters the only survivors (Gen 18-19). God judged Pharaoh and Egypt for their wickedness when he freed the Israelites from their bondage under Moses (Exod 1-14). Even after God gave His Law to Israel through Moses, the Gentiles repeatedly faced punishment by God for their wickedness. When the iniquity of the Amorites became full (Gen 15:12-16), they were utterly destroyed without mercy (Deut 7:2; Josh 11:14). Later, entire Gentile nations were destroyed and put out of existence when God made them drink of the cup of His fury (Jer 25:11-38).

## **God's wrath under the Law of Moses**

The Israelites themselves also partook of the Lord's fierce wrath for their disobedience. The generation that came out of Egypt did not enter Canaan because of their unbelief. More importantly, they lost their souls. In Psalm 95:10-11, the Holy Spirit said, "Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways: unto whom I swore in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest." Israel turned to wickedness under king Jeroboam,

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and never repented. "Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only" (2 Kgs 17:18). "For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them; until the Lord removed Israel out of his sight, as he had said by all his servants the prophets. So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day" (2 Kgs 17:22-23). Then Judah turned away from the Lord and was utterly destroyed aside from a remnant that was preserved in captivity in Babylon. "Also Judah kept not the commandments of the Lord their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made. And the Lord rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until he had cast them out of his sight" (2 Kgs 17:19-20).

## **Under Christ, the most important of all**

After Christ came, the Father spoke from a cloud and said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; *hear ye him*" (Matt 17:5). Hebrews 1:1-2 says, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." Hebrews 2:1-4 then makes a strong point, and asks a vital question: "Therefore *we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard*, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; *how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation*; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?" The answer to this question is given in Hebrews 12:25: "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, *much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven.*" In John 12:47-50, Christ says, "And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." As the Father Himself said concerning His Son Jesus Christ, "*Hear ye him!*"