

Your Appointed Time Update

Yea, the stork in heaven knoweth

her appointed times .. Jer. 8:7



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Show Us The Father

INSIDE THIS MONTH'S ISSUE:

- God the Father is a good and merciful God, but in today's society some do not accept all of His attributes as being "good."
- The U.S. has been downgraded to a AA credit rating and its debt is nearing 100% of its GDP.
- Not hearing God's leaders is operating in the spirit of error and not the spirit of truth.

Philip said to Jesus, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us" (Jn. 14:8). A proper understanding of God as Father is so vital in order for every believer to have a healthy relationship with God. Sad to say, today, there are many distorted views about God. Some would have us to believe that He is a mean and uncaring God waiting to strike us at any moment. On the other hand, some place so much emphasis on the fact that God is "good" that they attempt to explain away all the "bad" things about God with their theology. In today's article, we will examine what Jesus had to say about the Father to develop a clear picture of the Father since he was the only one who had ever seen the Him.

First off, the most important of all attributes is that as Father, He has children. Jesus made this very clear to us, but he also clarified that not all are children of God. Some, he declared in John chapter 8 were children of the devil. The central focus of Jesus' ministry was to bring us back to the Father, for he said "no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6). John said of Jesus, "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become sons of God" (Jn. 1:12).

As a good Father, He knows how to give good things to those that ask (Matt. 7:11). He even knows what we have need of even before we ask (Matt. 6:8). He makes the sun to shine on the just and the unjust, and sends the rain on the evil and the good (Matt. 5:45). Jesus assures us that if He feeds the fowl of the air, then we being more valuable should know that Father will feed us as well (Matt. 6:26). If God also clothes the grass of the field, here today gone tomorrow, shouldn't we rest assured that He will clothe us too (Matt. 6:30)? There is not even a sparrow that dies or a hair that falls out of your head that God doesn't know about (Matt. 10:29, 30). Not only does the Father provide, but He protects. Jesus said no man can pluck the sheep out of his hand, and for an extra meas-

ure of protection Jesus said neither could anyone pluck the sheep out of the Father's hand (Jn. 10:28-29).

If we are to be the children of the Highest, we are to love our enemies, do good, and lend hoping for nothing in return. Why? Because the Father is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil and we are to imitate Him (Luke 6:35). We are to be merciful just like He is merciful (Luke 6:36). We are to be perfect as He is perfect (Matt. 5:48). There are however some attributes of God that are not so popular. If you judge, He will judge you. If you condemn, He will condemn you (Luke 6:37). Some today would eliminate condemnation altogether by saying that "there is therefore now no condemnation" (Rom. 8:1). The Bible only says there is now no condemnation to them. Them who? This only applies to those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit. After judgment, condemnation is the next step which means to pronounce guilty. The Bible teaches that one day we shall "give an account to Him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead" (1 Peter 4:5). For those that do not believe on Jesus, the Bible teaches that they are condemned already (Jn. 3:18). And one day, "every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (Rom. 3:19).

God hears and answers prayers when done in secret and acknowledges our fasting when we don't do it to be seen of men (Matt. 6:6, 16). He sees what we do in secret, but He rewards openly (Matt. 6:1, 4). One of two things we must believe is that God is a "rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Heb. 11:6). Rewards are good for the righteous who sow good seeds to others, but there is, as always, a negative side. While there is a sure reward for him that sows righteousness (Prov. 11:18), we are assured that there is a reward for the wicked as well. The Bible promises that the just man will only be an observer when the wicked receives his reward

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(Ps. 91:8). Jesus shows how God negatively rewarded (or judged) a man that laid up treasures only for himself and was not rich unto God. God said to him, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee" (Luke 12:20). The good news is that if you seek first "the kingdom of God and His righteousness," God wants to and will add (reward) all these (good) things unto you (Matt. 6:33).

Again, we err if we only speak of the goodness of God, for the Bible says "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God" (Rom. 11:22). A good example of this improper balance today from the "bless me club" is with promotion. While it is true that promotion comes from God, the thought is incomplete without the next verse: "God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another" (Ps. 75:6-7). Did you ever think that while God gave the Israelites the Promised Land, He took it from another or caused that nation to dispossess it because of their sins? The Bible also shows that while God "reveals unto babes," He also "hides from wise and prudent" (Matt. 11:25). The point being is that we must be balanced in our presentation of God.

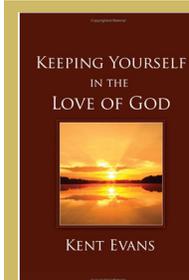
Perhaps one of the most distorted things today about God's loving nature is when people make excuses for a persistent unfruitful and unproductive life. One may say in their defense, "God understands." While it is true that God knows why you or I are messing up, He does not accept our excuses. As a matter of fact, He expects fruit. John the Baptist, one highly regarded by Jesus, taught, "Now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire" (Matt. 3:10). Furthermore, if the tree is not planted by the Father, it will be uprooted (Matt. 15:13). From the Vine analogy, Jesus teaches that he is the Vine and his Father is the Vinedresser, and every "branch that beareth not fruit he taketh away" (Jn. 15:2). The branches that do not abide in the Vine wither and are "cast forth into the fire and are burned" (Jn. 15:6). Jesus expected the fig tree to bear fruit, but when he determined it to be wasting God's rain and sunshine, he cursed it (Mark 11:14). Although this sounds harsh, the key that Jesus taught us from the Vine analogy was that all we had to do was to abide in him (and his Words in us), and let him and the Vinedresser (Father) do the rest.

The good news is that Father God does forgive sins, but we must forgive others their sins. If we do not, God will hold our sins against us. The choice is ours; we can either experience the wonderful gift of God's forgiveness, or we can be held prisoner by unforgiveness. Jesus shows again, a side of God that most overlook or simply don't want to hear about. In the parable where the man begged the king for mercy and forgiveness of his debt, after receiving it, he got into big trouble when he did not forgive a man that requested the same of him (only much smaller). His lord, the Bible says, was "wroth, and delivered him to the tor-

mentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him" (Matt. 18:34). Jesus, making no apologies for the Father's wrath, boldly declares, "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not everyone his brother their trespasses" (Matt. 18:35). Some would have us believe that Father is passive in punishment, simply "lifting His hand of protection and allowing the devil to attack." In the above account, Jesus taught that just as the angry lord "delivered him unto the tormentor," so the Father would do unto us if we chose not to forgive. Concerning His children, the Bible says, "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth" (Heb. 12:6). I don't know about your daddy, but mine never out-sourced discipline to a third party; he was actively involved. Now if I went into forbidden territory, against his instruction, and got smacked that was a different story. God is a merciful and loving God, but forgiveness is not only something we are to receive, it is an attribute of the Father that we are to demonstrate to the others.

This brings us to the final point, entrance into heaven. This too is God's call, for one day the Son of God shall come back to earth at a set time which only the Father knows (Matt. 24:36). In the lesson of the ten virgins, only five were wise and made it in while five were unprepared and found the door shut when they returned from a last-minute trip for oil (Matt. 25:10). Jesus calls our attention to the days of Noah and the open door that God sets before man. Jesus cautions that the days leading up to his return will be like the days of Noah. The Bible records that "before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark" (Matt. 24:38). After Noah, his family, and the animals entered the ark, the Bible says, "the LORD shut him in" (Gen. 7:16). When God shuts a door no man can open it, but my friend when God opens a door no man can shut it. Today the door is open. Please harden not your heart to the voice of God saying "be ye reconciled." The door to the ark of salvation is open, but there is no guarantee that the offer will stand tomorrow. Please open the door of your heart to the Lord Jesus Christ today while he is still knocking. Jesus made us this promise, "if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him" (Rev. 3:20). Invite Jesus into your heart today while there is still time!

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Is Greece Style Austerity in America's Future?

Back in March, I ran across this alarming headline on NewsMax.Com, *Greece's Economic Crisis Could reflect U.S.'s Future*. (Please keep in mind that this was before the embarrassing events over the summer when Congress and the President fought it out to the last minute to raise the debt ceiling from 14.3 trillion to 16.4 trillion dollars to avoid defaulting on our debts, so we were told. Then to find out only days later, that the S & P gave the U.S. a downgrade from an AAA credit score to an AA.) The article argues that Greece's debt reached 100 percent of their Gross Domestic Product or GDP, and the U.S. was not far behind such a milestone. At the time of the article, the U.S.'s debt was 12.5 trillion. The CIA World Fact Book lists the U.S. GDP estimates for 2010 to be 14.66 trillion total.

Another glaring point in the article on Greece's debt was how the government "has taken stiff austerity steps" in order to secure a bailout from the E.U. At the time of this March article, the writer reports that these measures were "sparking strikes and violent demonstrations." For those of you like me, this word maybe unfamiliar to you. I recently began to hear this term as drastic debt reduction measures began to unfold in Europe. Ironically, around the same time, I began to hear of another term used in Europe, VAT or Value Added Tax, that was being kicked around by leading U.S. Democrats which amounts to a national sales tax. Be on the lookout for this tax or some other form to be unveiled in the U.S. real soon.

Jesus used the word austere in the parable of the talents or pounds in Luke 19. The man given the one talent used his knowledge of the lord as an austere man as an excuse to bury his talent in the ground. The lord judged the servant with his own words and said since you know that I am an austere man "taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow," you should have put my money in the bank and given it back with interest (Luke 19:21-23). We have always used the parable to challenge people to use their talents (abilities or gifts) for God. The use of talent in this parable is actually measurement equaling 100 pounds of silver (45 kg). I do not think that Jesus was telling us that God was a hard task master, but you have to draw from this teaching that God does look at the ROI (Return on His Investment). If you look at it from the point of God-given abilities, then you and I will give an account of what we did with them. If you look at the parable as a lesson on stewardship, then you and I better be ready to give an account of what we did with God's money on that day. Austerity, whether in the news or in the Bible, is not a very consoling term to think of should a foreign nation have to bail us out of our financial mess.

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As the unforgettable summer unfolded, the protest turned to riots as Greece's parliament met to vote on these austere measures according to a MoneyNews.Com report entitled *Greek Austerity Protests Turn Violent Before Vote*. If you happened to see this on the news monitors during this time, it was most unsettling to say the least. Now it was unsettling to see any country for that matter with riots breaking out in the street, but that was not really what bothered me. I began to think of

how we are living in a largely entitlement society where people think that the government owes them something. People with an entitlement attitude aren't grateful for what they get because they think they are entitled. The problem starts when you take the entitlements away. I do not presume to know what Greece offered their people, but it was obviously more than the government could afford, and this is the case with America as well. In 2009, CNN Money reported that 47% of households pay no taxes and that their ranks were growing. Reuters reports that

this year nearly 40 million Americans are on food-stamps. The U.S. Bureau of Labor reports that in September of this year that 14 million Americans are unemployed.

A very recent example of how our government's tab is growing is with Solyndra. The government loaned Solyndra \$535 million in low-cost loans to create 1000 new "green jobs." As of Sept. 6, the company is now bankrupt. The S & A Digest reports that the 1000 employees that lost their jobs are applying for the government's Trade Adjustment Assistance program. After being retrained, the department estimates the aid will cost \$13,000 for each of the 1000 former employees over the next year. Don't get me wrong here, with 14 million Americans now unemployed, I can't blame anyone for applying for assistance, but what happens when the government is forced to say no as was Greece? Don't kid yourself; Americas will react no different the day the government pulls the plug on countless government entitlement programs.

The financial giant, UBS, made a statement on Sept. 7th that the Euro can't survive in its current state and that "with its demise authoritarianism and possibly civil war could consume parts of Europe." The UBS further states, "It is also worth observing that almost no modern fiat currency monetary unions have broken up without some form of authoritarian or military government, or civil war." Although they say there is no evidence of such a "doomsday scenario on the horizon," they did emphasize the seriousness of the monetary policies. To me there is a message screaming to us from the shores of Europe: America, get your financial house in order or else brace for the same or worse austere measures. Please don't forget the other warning that comes with the austere measures, the "military government" stepping in to squash the riots or civil wars.

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The birds and the turtles know what God commanded people that seem to have the problem! The Bible tells but they can never pass the boundaries I set," but in pushing the limits! Jesus, referring to the time before His return prophesied, "because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold" (Matt. 24:12).

In Jer. 5:1, God challenged someone to search throughout the streets of Jerusalem and see "if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it." God was willing to spare that holy city if He could just find a single man with judgment and that sought the truth. Sadly enough, God did not find that person. They refused God's warning and suffered greatly under God's hand of judgment.

It is my prayer that we would be the people that God was looking for and know the judgment of God. Not in the way that the people of God in Jeremiah's time came to know it, but that we would know God's judgments as taught in His Word and correct ourselves accordingly, so "that we should not be condemned with the world" (1 Cor. 11:31-32). *By Pastor Kent Evans*

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Austerity in America's Future? (Cont.)

Is the U.S. dollar really in any better shape than the Euro with our increasing debt and the latest \$447 billion jobs bill on the table? NYC's Mayor Bloomberg recently warned that riots may break out in U.S. streets if we did not do something about unemployment. We are the largest debtor nation in the world, and we can no longer ignore God's financial warning which says "the borrower is servant to the lender" (Prov. 22:7).

We as Americans must adopt a different mindset if we are to survive the austerity measures that will surely come one day. The more we sit around and wait for a government handout or for the government to solve our problems, the worse our problems will become. I recently heard a quote (source unknown) that "A government big enough to give you everything you need, is a government big enough to take away everything that you have." It is time for America to turn back to God and look to Him to rescue us and meet our needs instead of the government. Although there are those who would try and remove it, the answer is not the money, but it is the phrase on the back of the money: "In God we Trust."

How Do We Know it is the Last Days?

Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time ... They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error. 1 John 2:18; 4:5-6

We have been looking at a group in 1 John that left the church and how this is a still a major problem in the church today. John said that this group left because "they were not of us." This group, we said,

had a belonging problem. Next, we saw that this group did not meet Jesus' requirements for being a true disciple: "If you continue in my word, then are you my disciples indeed" (Jn. 8:31). This group was lacking a key ingredient, commitment. Not only did they lack commitment, but they were missing another ingredient that is almost foreign to this generation, loyalty. This group will never prosper in the things of God unless they allow themselves to be planted in the house of God (Ps. 92:13).

I John goes on to describe a third major problem that is prevalent in the Church today, a listening problem. They were of the world, they spoke of the world, and the world heard them (1 Jn. 4:5). In other words they spoke "world-ese." The world understood them fine, but the only problem was they were not of God, and therefore did not hear what God was saying through the Church. John said that "he that knoweth God heareth us" (1 Jn. 4:6). Have you ever met some who are so spiritual that God shows up in their living room and they no longer have to come to church? They no longer fellowship with a church, and to hear them tell it, they have church at home. Although that sounds real spiritual, that's not possible unless you are leading or hosting a church in your house. Jesus set the quorum for church when He said "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20). John says, "if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another" (1 Jn. 1:7). Out of fellowship is a dangerous place to be since the rest of the verse says "and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin." If you are out of fellowship with your God assigned church then the blood of Jesus is not working for you!

John identifies the problem with this group as a hearing problem; they did not hear the leaders of the Church. If you are so proud that you can't acknowledge that God speaks through someone besides you then you are in trouble. The sooner you realize that God uses people and that your protection (Matt. 16:18) and your increase (Col. 2:19) is in the Church, the better off you will be. When you find a person like this that won't listen, then John tells us that you can be sure that they are not operating in the spirit of truth but in the spirit of error (1 Jn. 4:6).

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