

May God bless you on His Sabbath day!

Jesus had a difficult task during His ministry. He lived in a world that did not understand the purpose for the existence of mankind. People were (and still are) primarily concerned with power and wealth. It took time (as well as the Holy Spirit) for even the disciples to look beyond this physical existence to an eternity as children of God. This is captured a very touching moment during Jesus' ministry:

MATTHEW 18:2-3 Then **Jesus called a little child** to Him, set him in the midst of them, 3 and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 "Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5 "Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me.

Being the greatest is not in the sense of being more important or of a higher rank. That, in fact, contradicts the whole context of being a humble child. Rather, humility is the greatest TRAIT of God's children. The young child represented how both God and Christ saw mankind—as little children—humble and contrite before Them. But the whole idea of becoming God-children was hard even for the disciples to grasp. This is apparent in the arguments between themselves as to who was greatest and their bias against the Gentiles. In the end, however, they saw the awesome potential for all mankind.

The family structure—husband and wife, parents and children—modeled what God the Father is creating. The intent and purpose of families is children. They are part of the cycle of birth, life, and death so that the family continues through the generations that follow. While every member is unique, the foundation of love in familial relationships is intended to be enduring even though there are times when there are disagreements. Parents may get angry with their children, but they do not stop loving them. Children may get angry with each other, but they do not stop loving each other. But this is not the case with many so-called brothers and sisters in the Family of God—they get angry with each other and STOP loving each other.

Hate is sustained and ingrained anger. Brethren who stop loving each other begin to hate one another. And I do mean hate. It is hate among the African tribes, the Chinese and Japanese, the Sunnis and Shias, and the Irish and the English that drove them to murder each other. That same hate is in the hearts of the begotten children of God. Think that is an exaggeration? If so, then what is the difference between hatred that leads to the murder of entire villages and hatred that leads to the spiritual murder of brethren? Just because a brother or sister in Christ does not take a machete to someone does not mean their hatred is any different. Jesus said:

MATTHEW 5:21-22 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' 22 "But I [*Jesus Christ*] say to you that **whoever is angry [or enraged] with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment**. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of [*being judged by*] the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of [*being judged and sentenced to*] hell fire.

Whoever thinks that there is any form of anger or hatred acceptable to God do not understand that "... **out of the heart** proceed evil thoughts, murders ..." (Matt. 15:19). They do not understand being a part of a FAMILY requires love. They do not understand that hatred CANNOT exist within a family. That is not an opinion either. These verses record a judgment reserved for those who are angry with their brother or sister and it was directed to the first converts of the *ekklesia*. Family is about loving, caring, and reconciling with each another. There is a dangerous judgment for simply angry and it also applies to hatred.

Some might argue that being angry is allowed if there is a CAUSE; however, this seems to be an added phrase. Many manuscripts and early Bible editions do not include this phrase. They simply say, "**whoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment.**" There are no mitigating circumstances that allow for anger in all other NT scriptures. Read Colossians 3:8, Psalm 37:8, Galatians 5:19-20, Ephesians 4:31, Proverbs 19:11, James 1:20, and Romans 12:19 if you do not believe me.

The single most common sin among the *ekklesia* is unreconciled offenses, which are always the result of anger, and they come with a very stern warning:

MATTHEW 18:6-7 "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me [*Jesus Christ*] to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea. 7 "**Woe to the world because of offenses!** For offenses must come, but **woe to that man by whom the offense comes!**

What does it mean to pronounce a woe upon someone? It is a declaration of pending judgment upon a person who knowingly commits a sin¹. Jesus proclaimed a woe upon Judas Iscariot for his betrayal and the scribes and Pharisees for their hypocrisy². Jesus Christ Himself pronounced a woe upon all those who cause OFFENSES. But simply being angry with a brother or sister in Christ is as bad, or worse, than an offense. Really? Yes, read again what Jesus said:

MATTHEW 5:22 "But I [*Jesus Christ*] say to you that **whoever is angry** with his brother **shall be in danger of the judgment.** And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' **shall be in danger of [being judged by] the council.** But whoever says, 'You fool!' **shall be in danger of [being judged and sentenced to] hell fire.**

Being angry with a brother or sister puts one in danger of judgment. Calling someone *raca* puts one in danger of judgment. Labeling them a *fool* puts one in danger of judgment. *Raca* is similar to *Belial*, an epithet (nickname) for Satan. The Greek for *fool* basically means *moron*.

Do "strain at a gnat"³ with this—whoever is ANGRY with a brother or sister with or without a cause is in danger of JUDGMENT. A *woe* is a declaration of pending judgment upon a person so the judgments in Matthew 5:22 are actually *woes*. Jesus pronounced *woes* upon anyone who is angry with a brother or sister! Not just one, like for offenses, but THREE! Where else does the Bible mention three *woes*? Revelation 8:13—the three *woes* are the 5th, 6th, and 7th Trumpet plagues coming upon the

¹ NOTE: The 'woe' mentioned in Matt. 24:19 it is used in the sense of sorrow or distress, i.e., "alas."

² Matt. 26:24; Matt. 23.

³ Matt. 23:24.

world for its abominations. Why does Jesus give such a stern warning against anger? Because anger destroys Family. God the FATHER and Elder Brother⁴ Jesus sacrificed everything to create a Family. No one will be a part of that Family if they are angry with the other children. Paul said that anger and hatred are traits of UNCONVERTED people:

TITUS 3:3 For **we ourselves were also once** foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, **living in malice** and envy, **hateful and hating one another.**

In simple terms, anyone who has unresolved anger or hate toward a brother or sister in Christ should stop pretending they are converted. There is NO agape love where there is anger or hatred. Evil works of unconverted flesh in all its forms—hatred, contentions, jealousies, wrath, dissensions, envyings, and murders⁵—must be destroyed:

COLOSSIANS 3:5-7 Therefore **put to death** your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these things **the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, 7 in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.**

Who are the “sons of disobedience?” Do you think they are only unconverted people without the Holy Spirit? If so, you are deluded. ALL evil, as a good friend said, comes from a reprobate mind:

2 CORINTHIANS 13:5-7 **Examine yourselves** as to whether you are in the faith. **Test yourselves.** Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—**unless indeed you are [reprobates] [rejected].** 6 But I trust that you will know that we are not [reprobates]. 7 Now I pray to God that **you do no evil,** not that we should appear approved, but that you should do what is honorable, though we may seem [reprobates].

Who is a reprobate? Everyone who intentionally does EVIL. Reprobate means *rejected*. This is why it is vital to “examine yourselves.” This should bring to mind the Passover admonition—eating and drinking the Passover in an unworthily manner that brings The Judgment of God⁶. Examining ourselves for all traces of evil (which includes anger and hatred) is a requirement for the Passover AND eternal life.

This past week both my parents died. It may sound romantic that their death was days apart after 68 years of marriage; however, as they fell ‘asleep’ I thought, “I wonder how many of God’s people will die with unresolved anger in their hearts?” My parents will have another life but those with the Holy Spirit whose hearts are angry with a brother or sister in Christ may not. I grieve for my parents but more so for brethren who carry around anger because they are in “danger of the judgment.”

The sad part is that the most common cause of anger is disagreements over so-called doctrines. One person gets *angry* with someone who does not agree on a biblical topic. How absurd! Instead of anger, where is the love that “turns a sinner from the error of his way?”⁷ Anger accomplishes nothing except the loss of a brother or sister. It

⁴ Rom. 8:29.

⁵ Gal. 5:19-21.

⁶ 1 Cor. 11:27-29.

⁷ Jas. 5:19-20.

comes from pride whereby someone believes they have “greater” understanding, which is arrogant and hateful. Anger is also a sign of those who cannot love enough to DESIRE someone else to be in the Family of GOD regardless of circumstances. Being angry just proves they have no love. As Paul said in 1 Corinthians 13, you can be the most gifted, talented, wisest, faithful, and giving person in the entire world but you are absolutely NOTHING without agape love. Now imagine what God thinks of those who are angry with their brothers and sisters.

Becoming like God and Jesus Christ by growing in agape love is hard. Putting aside anger is hard. Loving an enemy is hard. But loving brothers and sisters in the *ekklesia* should NOT be hard. If brethren cannot love one another, how can they even love God or their enemies?

1 JOHN 3:10 **In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest [publicly exposed]:** Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is **he who does not love his brother.**

Who is the father of angry people? SATAN! But those who think they are converted and are angry are also liars because they stand by their own ‘righteousness’. It is a lie to claim to love God and be angry with a brother or sister. All liars are, again, children of Satan, the father of all lies⁸:

1 JOHN 4:20 If someone says, “I love God,” and **hates his brother, he is a liar;** for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?

The death of my parents reminded me that physical lives are short and that what follows is an eternal judgment for all who are gifted with the Holy Spirit:

1 PETER 4:17-18 For **the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God;** and if *it begins* with us first, **what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?** 18 Now **“If the righteous one is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?”**

Anger “[tramples] the Son of God underfoot”⁹ whose blood was shed for ALL, even those who might be a cause of anger. But Jesus said (figuratively) “Woe, woe, woe” to those who are angry at a brother or sister with OR without a cause. PLEASE, dear brethren, I beg you—put aside anger and be about **“exhorting one another,** and so much the more as you see the Day [*of your physical death*] approaching.”¹⁰

May God’s grace and peace be upon you!

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⁸ John 8:44.

⁹ Heb. 10:29.

¹⁰ Heb. 10:25.