

Salvation: By Grace or By Works

We are going to discover that chastisement is an integral part of training children. It has several contexts which do not include the infliction of physical pain.

However, we are going to demonstrate that one pertinent application of chastisement does involve this procedure. We will further delineate that this procedure is designed to correct rebellion, or the willing defiance of imperative moods.

First of all, let's take a look at the words involved and their definitions:

a) Chastisement: *mûsar* (Hebrew):

Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, p. 877, s.v. "mûsar":

Correction which results in instruction.

It is interesting that the first use of this word is found in Leviticus 26 where the Lord warns Israel about what occurs to a client nation when it fails to keep His imperative moods.

Leviticus 26:18 - If ... you do not obey Me [**willing defiance of imperative moods**], then I will punish you [**mûsar - chastise**] seven times [**complete or perfectly**] more for your sins [**violation of imperative moods**].

This comment is repeated in Leviticus 26:28. Within this same context, we find the following in:

Leviticus 26:24 - I will strike you seven times for your sins.

The word for "strike" is *nakâ* which can be translated, "smite, strike, hit, beat, slay, or kill." In essence, the Lord is saying that if you persist in kicking against My goads you will wind up getting struck with one of them.

"Kicking" is the attitude of continued, willful defiance of divine commandments in the face of corrective actions taken by God, referred to metaphorically as "goads" in Acts 26:14.

The Lord says in:

Leviticus 26:18 - If you do not obey Me then I will punish you ... for your sins.

We have been defining sin in a general sense as the violation of the imperative moods of Scripture. This is borne out by:

Lewis Sperry Chafer. "Personal Sin." In Angelology, Anthropology, Hamartiology. Vol. 2 of Systematic Theology. Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1947, p. 262:

The most common definition of sin is 'anomia---a violation of law, or lawlessness. But not all sin is a violation of some written code. Since the written law so nearly represents the whole of the divine requirement, great stress should be put on the searching truth that to transgress a law is the most specific and compares with that disobedience by which angels and men have fallen.

In the context of Leviticus 26:24, we see divine discipline to Israel described metaphorically in terms of a physical whipping administered to its citizens because of their failure to honor imperative moods.

As is always the case with the plan of God, His intent in discipline is corrective for the purpose of blessing. Pressure and suffering are oftentimes necessary in order for the human soul to orient to the divine plan. Suffering imposed by the goads of God is designed as a motivation for us to adjust to God's better way. The Lord makes this clear in:

Deuteronomy 8:1 - All the commandments [**imperative moods**] that I am commanding you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the Lord swore to give to your forefathers.

Deuteronomy 8:2 - And you shall remember all the way which the Lord your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart [**stream of consciousness**], whether you would keep His commandments or not.

Note: We are reminded here of the Latin axiom: *crescit sub pondere virtus*, “virtue increases beneath oppression.”

Deuteronomy 8:5 - Thus you are to know in your heart that the Lord your God was disciplining you [**mûsar - chastise**] just as a man disciplines [**mûsar - chastise**] his son.

Note the foregone conclusion that fathers discipline their sons. Why compare divine discipline with parental discipline? Because just as there are no perfect believers there are no perfect children. Therefore, every child needs training so that he can grow up with the capacity to function in adult society.

Believers need training so that they can acquire the capacity to function in the heavenly community. Children, by the same rationale, need training in order to become vessels of honor.

All sin was punished in Christ on the cross and is no longer an issue as far as the believer’s eternal future is concerned. God's efforts to correct the sinning believer through discipline, including chastisement, are designed to develop a vessel of honor with a capacity for escrow blessings.

Christ is said to have been chastened on the cross in our place according to:

Isaiah 53:4 - He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities. The chastening [**mûsar**] for our reconciliation fell upon Him and by His scourging we are healed.

Chastening comes to the believer as a part of God's instructive process. God loves His children and seeks to lead them lovingly into a lifestyle of right action. This is the subject of:

Proverbs 3:11 - My son, do not reject the discipline [**mûsar**] of the Lord or loathe His reproof.

Proverbs 3:12 - For whom the Lord loves He reproofs, even as a father, the son in whom he delights.

As a result of what Christ did on the cross we can never be judged for our sins, but we may be chastised for them.