

A Different Worldview

By Elder David Pyles

But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us. – 2Cor 1:9-10

Paul here spoke of past circumstances so precarious that he became resigned to death in them, but he then praised God for delivering him, and expressed confidence that God would continue to do so. The sad truth is that very few people would consider themselves as having been delivered had they endured the same experiences as this apostle. In the 11th chapter of the same book, he recounted some of his many trials. As of the time of that writing, he had been imprisoned multiple times, flogged five times, beaten with rods thrice and once stoned. In addition to these and other abuses at the hands of wicked men, he had also endured many other hardships, including three shipwrecks. Few people would see any deliverance in this, particularly if all such trials had been endured while serving God. Indeed, many would be angry with God, thinking He had deserted them at a time when He was obliged to bless them.

The reason for this difference in attitude is rooted in a very different view of the world. Most people tend to think of peace, prosperity and good as being the normal products of nature, and they think of conflict, poverty and evil as being anomalous cases. Infidels nearly always view the world this way. They commonly adduce the evil of the world as proof there is no God; thus, their thinking is that the good of the world is something that automatically falls out of the natural course of events. The Bible takes a diametrically opposite view. It sees evil, destruction and death as being the normal products of nature, and it sees the good of the world as deriving from the overruling intervention of God.

Which view is correct? To any thinking mind, the Biblical view is obviously true. The entire Universe is a hell of sorts. Its stars are raging infernos. Its planets either bake in unimaginable heat or freeze in unimaginable cold. At any location in it we know about, we would be almost instantly dead were we to be placed there. Now in all this see where nature truly leads. The default state of

things in the Universe is destruction and death, and all that is good on our planet is an anomaly produced by the hand of God.

James warned Christians not to get caught up in the errant worldview held by unbelievers:

Do not err, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. – James 1:16-17

Not only does he say that all good is of God, he says further that it is a *gift* from God, meaning that we did nothing good to deserve it, and even if we had, this too would have come from God. Viewing the world this way, we can see why Paul considered himself to have been delivered, and if such were true of him, then how much more of ourselves?