

THE CHASTENING OF THE LORD

Text: Hebrews 12:1-11

INTRO: You have probably heard relatively few sermons on the subject, but the chastening of the Lord, but it is definitely a Bible subject. It shall be our purpose in this sermon to increase our understanding, or at least remind ourselves of the great truths we already know about this matter.

The Greek word has the basic meaning of "the training of children, to educate."

I. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS TO BE USED.

A. Punish. We shall talk very little of the subject of punishment. Though chastening can involve an element of punishment, this is not its primary emphasis.

Punishment, as we will use the term, means *to impose a penalty on someone for a fault, offense or violation.*

B. Chasten. The basic meaning of chasten is *to punish for correction or improvement.* A secondary meaning is *to prune of excess, etc.* A tree is often pruned, not because it has grown in the wrong direction, but to prevent it from doing so in the future.

C. Discipline. RSV uses this word instead of chasten most of the time. In the N.T. the word for chasten is probably best understood when we use the more familiar term, discipline. Discipline, as we will use the term involves:

1. Instruction.
2. Training that corrects, molds or perfects the mental faculties and moral character.
3. Punishment for the sake of correcting.

II. THE BIBLE RECOGNIZES THREE BASIC TYPES OF DISCIPLINE OR CHASTENING: instructive, preventative, corrective.

Illustrate:

1. My mother **told** me in a stern voice, "Don't touch that stove." Instructive.

2. I reached in the direction of the stove, she slapped my hand. Preventative

3. She turned her back. I touched the stove and burned my fingers. Corrective. Now, hopefully I have **learned** my lesson. Mother acted as the agent of God in two steps of discipline. He used a natural agent, the fire itself, to finally teach me what I should have learned the easier way by listening to instruction.

Now, let's see these three forms of discipline demonstrated in Scripture.

- A. Instructive. 2 Tim. 3:16 [instruction].
Titus 2:11-12 [teaching]

Moses *was learned* in all the wisdom of the Egyptians (Acts 7:22).

[Paul was] *taught* according to the strictness of our fathers' law (A 22:3)

- B. Preventative.

The Lord plagued Pharaoh & his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. (Gen. 12:17).

God said to [Abimelech] in a dream, "Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart; for I also withheld you from sinning against Me: therefore I did not let you touch her." (Gen. 20:6).

1 Cor. 9:27; Phil. 1:12

Illustrate: An athlete gives up smoking, drinking, partying, carbonated drinks, coffee, tea, etc. Eats vegetables he doesn't particularly like. Not to punish himself for some supposed sin or crime, but to *prevent* problems, to discipline himself.

Also, the reason parents set curfews for children, and otherwise restrict them. Not to punish them for sinning, but to help keep them from sinning.

- C. Corrective. READ JEREMIAH 30:11-14.
1 Tim. 1:20, that they may learn.
Eph. 6:4.

III. THE AGENTS OR AGENCIES OF DIVINE DISCIPLINE.

- A. God's word and those who teach it.
2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Tim. 2:2, etc.

- B. Those in authority.
 - 1. Parents in the home, Eph. 6:4; Prov. 13:24.
 - 2. Rulers in society. Rom. 13:1-7.
Deut. 21:21

 - 3. Spiritual leaders in the ch, 1 Tim 1:20; 1 Cor 5:5.

- C. Enemies of the righteous.
 - 1. God used the heathen nations to chasten Israel.
Book of Judges.

 - 2. Persecutors. Joseph's brothers. Paul's persecutors,
Phil. 1:12; Js 1:2-3

 - 3. Satan himself, 2 Cor. 12:7.

- D. Natural agents and means.
 - 1. The law of sowing and reaping, Gal. 6:7.
 - 2. God's control over natural events & phenomena:
weather, animal kingdom, etc., etc.

NOTE: Scripture is abundantly clear that God continued to use His providence to humble nations well into the N.T. age. Daniel foretold the destruction of Jerusalem that occurred in 70 A.D., and that a destruction had been decreed for the power that would make Jerusalem desolate, that is, he foretold the downfall of Rome, which was not completed until 426 A.D. See Dan. 9:27. While it was prophesied that miracles would cease, 1

Cor. 13:8-12, there is no indication that God's providence in nature has ceased or will cease.

CONCLUSION: We do not say that every event that takes place is because of some direct response of God to our own words and deeds, but we do insist that God takes note of our words and deeds, and will finally judge and reward or punish us accordingly. Therefore, in keeping with His activities throughout history, we suggest that God continues to use various agents and means to discipline, teach, or train His children in this age that He might avoid having to punish them eternally in the age to come.

La Porte, TX, January 21, 1979

Bible Camp, Sabinal, TX, June 11, 1979

Preacher lunch, College Park, Deer Park, TX, May 1, 1980

La Porte, TX, May 10, 1985

Exton, PA, May 5, 1985

Exton, PA, March 24, 1991

Preacher lunch, Lancaster, PA, September 28, 1991

Shiloh, Mexia, TX, November 20, 1994

Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, October 10, 1999