

We can only honor God by serving "the saints that are in the earth."

Sunday, July 23, 2006

HEADLINES:

Wichita Eagle: U.S. Senate passes resolution condemning Phelps.
100+ big papers and national TV news: Phelps, WBC and ACLU sue in federal court to challenge Missouri ban on funeral picketing.

"O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord; my goodness extendeth not to thee; But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight." Psa. 16:2-3.

Psalm 16 is called Michtam of David. Michtam means Golden Mystery.

Doctrine: Matthew Henry: "(He who has taken the Lord to be his Lord) devotes himself to the honor of God in the service of the saints." Or, We can only honor God by serving "the saints that are in the earth."

"My goodness extendeth not to thee..." Matthew Henry: Whatever good there is in us, or is done by us, we must humbly acknowledge that it extends not to God; so that we cannot pretend to merit anything by it. God has no need of our services; he is not benefited by them, nor can they add any thing to his infinite perfection and blessedness. God is infinitely above us, and happy without us, and whatever good we do it is all from him; so that we are indebted to him, not he to us."

Luke 17:6-10. "And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith. And the Lord said...Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do."

"My goodness extendeth not to thee, But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight." Matthew Henry: If God be ours, we must, for his sake, extend our goodness to those that are his, to the saints yet alive on the earth; for what is done to them he is pleased to take as done to himself, having constituted them his receivers. The saints in the earth are the only truly excellent ones, great, mighty, magnificent ones. They alone are precious in God's sight and honorable; they are his jewels, his peculiar treasure. Their God is their glory, and a diadem of beauty to them. They bear his image and he loves them and delights in them continuously. As there is occasion, our goodness must extend to them, show kindness to them and distribute to their necessities

and abound in the labor of love to them.

Heb. 10:24–25. And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works; Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more as ye see the day approaching.

2 Tim. 2:10. Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

1 Pet. 4:7–8: But the end of all things is at hand; be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things (interesting force and power in the wording) have fervent charity among yourselves; for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Eph. 4:1–3: With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love. Phil. 2:1, et seq.: In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves...Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.

Heb. 6:10. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have showed toward his name, IN THAT ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. (Again, note the force and power of the unique wording).

Remember, this is the Golden Mystery – the Michtam of David. The basis for the adjudication of all men on the Great Day of Judgment is how they treated God's elect – i.e., “the saints that are in the earth...the excellent, in whom is all my delight.” Mat. 25:31–46: The inquiry will be, What did you do when you saw my elect hungry, thirsty, naked, a stranger, sick, or imprisoned (these 6 conditions repeated four times by Christ)? What did you do when you were alive on earth to help God's elect – IN THEIR DIRE NEED – and, BECAUSE THEY WERE GOD'S ELECT? Read Mat. 25:31–46. Read the words. Just the words.

I would show or demonstrate the importance of this doctrine by pointing to its context in Psalm 16 – the Golden Mystery Psalm of David. Peter's great and historic sermon on the day of Pentecost after that the Holy Ghost had empowered the church: Acts 2:25–28. Reprobation, election, perseverance of the saints, the joyful providential pathway to heaven, and the fullness of joy IN heaven. Psalm 16:5–11. Read the words.

This is truly golden, and truly mysterious. The mystery unfolded appears to be this: The only way to honor God is to serve His saints that are alive in the earth. Christ in them the hope of glory, laboring and striving mightily, God working in them to will and to do of his good pleasure, whereby they are suffering affliction for the cause of God and truth – and whereby they are more or less desperately in need of help. Forget grand cathedrals, elegant stained glass windows, Handel's Messiah, and all such.