

Have We Lost Our Hedge?

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Many modern day preachers warn that God is about to "Judge America," some say that He is about to, or has already begun to lift His "Hedge of Protection" from America and therefore we are soon going to experience "God's Judgment." At first glance, it seems that these statements are saying the same thing, but is that true. Is "God's Judgment" the same as God lifting His "Hedge of Protection"? The concept of God's "Hedge of Protection" comes primarily from the Book of Job, from the following verses in particular:

[Job 1:9-10 \(NKJV\)](#)

⁹ So Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for nothing? ¹⁰ Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.

Without getting into details of the conversation between God and Satan, let us suffice to say that Satan challenged God as to the reasons for Job's faithfulness. Satan argued that the main reason Job was faithful was that God had blessed him, and protected him. After all, he reasoned, it is easy to proclaim "faith" when everything is going well, and Job was in fact, "A Blessed Man" by any standard! Satan likened it to Job having a hedge of protection from God. A hedge was a common practice in "biblical times" to keep animals away from vineyards or crops, and to keep predators away from livestock. However, this protective hedge provided by God was not, and is not, unique to Job, as it is also common for people who seek after, and are faithful to the Lord, to also enjoy His protection and blessings as stated in the following passage:

Proverbs 2:1-8 (NIV)

¹ My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, ² turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, ³ and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, ⁴ and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, ⁵ then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God. ⁶ For the LORD gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. ⁷ He holds victory in store for the upright, he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless, ⁸ for he guards the course of the just and protects the way of his faithful ones.

Knowing the strength of Job's faith, God took Satan up on his arrogant challenge, "*in my opinion,*" to show us that Satan has no power over true faith, and that keeping faith in God always brings victory and increased blessings in the end. In the book of Romans, the Apostle Paul tells us that **All People**, are endowed with an inherent knowledge of God; they also have an inherent knowledge of Right and Wrong as stated in the following passage.

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Romans 1:20 (NKJV)

20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse...

What this passage says is that it takes effort to deny the existence of God; because of the complexity of the universe and life itself. It is obvious that such complexity simply could not happen by chance; nevertheless, evolutionists presume this to be the case, claiming the universe and life itself came about by some chance / random event! Creationists, on the other hand, say that the complexity of life and the complexity of the cosmos is absolute proof of "Intelligent Design." The fact is that it is so complex and orderly that many "scientists" who for years claiming to be Atheists, have found themselves up against a wall when honestly analyzing the scientific data comparing, the evolutionist **theory** with creationist's claims of intelligent design. The renowned physicist Stephan Hawking, shortly before he passed away, made a statement that shocked many of his followers, read this excerpt from the article below:

"The well-known and award-winning English theoretical physicist and cosmologist, Stephen Hawking, considered by many to be the "Einstein" of his generation, surprised the scientific community during a lecture at the University of Cambridge on August 16, 2017, when he announced that he believed that "some form of intelligence" was actually behind the creation of the Universe."

Here is the Link: [Holy WOW!! Stephen Hawking Did A Complete 180 and SHOCKED Everyone! - Dagger \(daggernews.com\)](https://daggernews.com/holy-wow!!-stephen-hawking-did-a-complete-180-and-shocked-everyone/)

I encourage you to read this article for yourself. It is very interesting as to how he came to this new view of the cosmos and the origin of man. He still claimed he that he remained an Atheist, however, I think he was just trying to save face because admitting there is an "intelligent designer" pointing of course to God, went against his entire life's work trying to prove that God did not even exist. There are other links included at the end of that article if you would like to explore it further.

So far, I have presented evidence through scripture, that God does indeed *protect* His "Children," or those who seek after Him, but the question remains... "Does God *punish or judge* His children when they revert to their sinful ways?" Most Christians, in fact, many Pastors would answer "Yes" to that question! I remember as a child, my Grandmother, a devout Catholic, would always say to both me, and my cousins, "God is going to punish you," every time we would misbehave. I have to admit, that proclamation struck terror in my heart as a child!

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However, later in life, I heard a new proclamation; I was now hearing, “Jesus died for you!” For what did Jesus die? For the forgiveness of *my* misbehavior, (or sins) and yours too! Not only are we forgiven for the sins our past, but even sins we haven’t even committed yet; they are all forgiven! This was hard to understand for a long time because of all those years living under the threat of punishment from God according to my Grandmother; after all, I knew her to be a devout and godly woman. I know that she meant well, but I also know now that she was woefully misinformed. This is exactly what causes many people to think that God is out to ruin their day and maybe their life if they screw up in keeping His commandments. Many people have a mental image of God as an angry *ogre* with a handful of lightning bolts, just waiting for an excuse to get them while crossing the parking lot because they weren’t “good enough” on a particular day! Is that what God is really like? Is that how you envision God? If you look into the Old Testament, you *will* come across the word “punish.” However, you will also find that God’s punishment is more often, directed at those who mistreat His children, not those who have put their faith in Him.

Here is something to ponder:

Does God punish His children, or are we in fact simply reaping what we have sown?

Wrath vs. Judgment or Punishment

If we backtrack just one verse from the previous one pointed out, (Romans verse 20) we see something interesting within these passages. I purposely reversed the order to illustrate the way the term “Wrath” is often misinterpreted, or taken out of context to make people believe that if they disobey God, He is going to make them suffer... or punish them.

Romans 1:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,

The word “Wrath” has multiple meanings, but not all involve punishment. For example, “*Wrath*” can mean, *fierce anger, vehement indignation, rage* (According to the *Century Dictionary*) Therefore, the question is, “Can we incur the Wrath of God without being directly chastised by God?” In order to answer that question we have to explore the definition of the word “Chastise.” One definition according to (*The American Heritage Dictionary*) is, “To Punish,” but it can also mean, to criticize severely, to reprimand or rebuke! Criticism or rebuke is not the same as punishment. For example, in my younger days, I was a Professional Wedding Photographer.

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When I first started out in photography, I was given an opportunity to apprentice at one of the best and busiest wedding photography studios in Northern New Jersey. My boss took me under his wing and I went out with him on weddings every weekend for months. I was to take the backup shots as he set up the various poses. After I proved my technical ability, it was my turn to be the primary photographer. I set up the poses, took the initial photos, and my boss took the backups. This was long before digital photography so we had “Proofs” (sample photos) printed so that the couple could choose their album photos. Before the bride and groom saw the proofs, my boss would sit down with me and “critique” my work. Believe me... I learned what the words criticism, rebuke, and wrath meant during those sessions. The more experience I gained, the harsher those sessions were! In those days, we photographers were issued ten rolls of film to shoot a wedding with twelve shots per roll. Therefore, we were expected to be able to show 120 saleable proofs to the bride and groom. When I produced a less than professional photograph, believe me, I experienced wrath and reprimand, but never punishment. Instead what I experienced was some of the other definitions of “Chastisement,” which are, *to discipline, instruct, and the correct the errors or faults of.* (*The Century Dictionary*) Because I accepted and heeded this correction, within 6 months I was considered to be, the “Chief Wedding Photographer,” second only to the owner, surpassing other photographers with years more experience than I had. Through this training and discipline, it was hard to tell my photographs and poses from those of my boss.

How does this all fit in with God and the Bible in our times? The concept of God punishing us every time we mess up is completely contrary to the character of God, especially under “The New Covenant” of *Grace!* The truth is that God is the embodiment of patience and mercy... He always has been! Think of how long God has put up with our disobedience; soon after He created us, we messed up royally, and even then, He did not punish us! Some would argue, “Well he kicked Adam and Eve out of the Garden, isn’t that punishment?” Actually even that was an act of mercy, but that is another study for another time. See if you can figure that one out for yourself in the mean time. I will give you a hint... There were two trees in the Garden!

Genesis 2:9 (NKJV)

⁹ And out of the ground the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. **The tree of life** was also in the midst of the garden, and **the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.**

For now, let us go back to the Book of Romans, picking up where we left off. Verse 20 established that God gave man all the evidence he could possibly need to prove His divine existence and handiwork, but man chose to reject the evidence in favor of submitting to Satan’s

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cunning. The more man listened to Satan the more they fell into their futile thinking, turning their hearts and minds further, and further from God. This happens to this day, which explains in part the decay of morality we see in our world today.

Romans 1:21-22 (NKJV)

²¹ because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Professing to be wise, they became fools,

God does not force anyone to obey Him, God gave us, “Freedom of Choice,” and it is up to us to sort through the evidence and make our own decisions. As man’s rebellion continued, rather than sending judgment on man, once again God let man have his way to do as they pleased. Man was on his own, guided only by his own lusts thereby left to suffer the consequences of their own actions. They made foolish choices, hence the latter part of the passage, (verse 20, “Professing to be wise, they became fools...”

So let us again ask the question... “Did God lift His hedge of protection, or did man burn it down?” We have once again drifted far from God as evidenced by what we see and hear daily. Man is condoning the very things that God abhors according to His Word! We think we are so smart, but many cannot even figure out what gender they are when all they have to do is look at the plumbing they were born with! We claim to “Follow the Science,” and in the next breath deny science! We claim to be tolerant yet we silence anyone who disagrees with us! The “Wrath of God” is in fact coming soon, but at this point, we are still only experiencing the results and consequences of our own actions. What will the wrath of God be like? These are the words of Jesus Himself when He spoke of the “End Times,” to His disciples:

Matthew 24:21-22 (NKJV)

²¹ For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. ²² And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

Those words sound pretty “Ominous” to say the least... The bottom line is that right now, ***“He holds victory in store for the upright, he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless, he guards the course of the just and protects the way of his faithful ones...”*** Unless you burn down the hedge as so many people have done, and are doing. Do that... and you’re on your own, and you ***will*** reap what you’ve sown... Then afterwards, judgment will come to all... Some will reap eternal reward, others, eternal punishment! It all comes down to a matter of choice; what will yours be... or, have you already made your choice? If you claim that you are a “Christian,” is there evidence in your life of that claim?