



BIBLE REFLECTIONS

Wann Fanwar, PhD

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This Newsletter

The purpose of this Newsletter is to provide you with answers to certain biblical facts which have been misconstrued or misunderstood.

Q: Who are our readers?

A: Anyone interested in matters of faith.

Q: What will our readers want to know?

A: Timely, helpful, problem-solving information regarding the Bible.

Christian 'fake news' comes from inaccurate propositions we refer to as 'doctrines', in the form of songs and hymns which become integral to believers' subconscious minds and also in tropes which become 'tradition'.

Fake News: 'God hates the sin but loves the sinner.' This is a very popular Christian trope which I have heard all my life. At this stage of life and having taught the Bible over 40 years, I am convinced about two things. First, this proved to be a very successful trope, convincing generations of believers that it is somehow true. Second, this trope has enabled sin to continue to exist in the church as a justification for not aspiring to higher standards of holiness.

Fact Check: A simple concordance or Google search reveals that it is difficult to validate such an idea. First, sin is committed by persons, and it is impossible to sever the two. The trope suggests that sin somehow exists independent of host, a kind of 'karmic' thinking. Second, an examination of judgement acts in the Bible demonstrates that it is persons whom God punishes, whether within his Realm or outside of it. The antediluvian peoples, the citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah and the Canaanite purging by Israel show that people were judged for their sin. Similarly, incidents within the covenant community, Miriam, the priestly sons of Aaron and Eli, Korah and company, King Asa, King Uzziah and Ananias and Saphira are biblical samples of God's people punished for sin. Third, the preaching of prophets such as Isaiah, Jonah and Amos illustrates God's repulsion with his people for sin which resided in their minds (a reading of Isaiah 1 is most instructive). Fourth, the lake of fire in Revelation 20, the ultimate judgement of God, targets sinners not some abstract 'sin'. The mystery of all this is that people are judged only after spurning every call to 'shuv' (U-turn). That is God's *modus operandi*, grace functions up to some established red line, after which judgement takes over. The cross is not so much about removing sin as covering people who accept the Saviour but still struggle with sin. It also guarantees that such persons will ultimately be holy as God is (see Zec 3). It is people who sin, and it is people who will become sinless!

I am drawn to the following assertion of Paul, 'What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with my understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with my understanding.' (1 Cor 14.15 HCSB). I suggest this maxim should be our *modus operandi* when we contemplate theological and biblical truths. In a world filled with 'fake news', the Church should be the bearer of real good news not more 'fake news'.

