

Should Christians Rejoice When the Wicked Die?

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • April 16, In the year of our Lord, 2014

Prelude:

I. How did you react to the death of Osama bin Laden?

- A. Did you rejoice?
- B. Did you think that the rejoicing of others was wrong?
 - 1. Would you have wanted him for a next door neighbor?
 - 2. If not, why not?
 - a) If he had been your neighbor,
 - b) would you be glad that he is dead?

II. What does the Bible say?

Persuasion:

I. Proverbs 24.17–18 and Proverbs 11.10

- A. What shall we do with these two passages?
 - 1. One warns against rejoicing and
 - 2. the other indicates that rejoicing happens,
 - 17 Do not rejoice when your enemy falls,
And do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles;
 - 18 Lest the Lord see it, and it displease Him,
And He turn away His wrath from him.
(Pro 24.17–18)
 - 10 When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices;
And when the wicked perish, there is jubilation.
(Pro 11.10)
- a) When is it that we should not rejoice when our enemy falls, and
- b) when is it that we should rejoice when the wicked perish?
 - (1) Can rejoicing take different forms?

- (2) For example, can rejoicing take the form of mockery,
 - (a) so that when our enemy falls we mock his fall?
 - (b) Is that what Proverbs 24 forbids?
 - i) Rejoicing that the wicked are gone does not violate Proverbs 24.
 - ii) I believe Proverbs 24 refers to the wicked
 - (1) sinning, because
 - (2) Solomon referred to the enemy as stumbling.
 - (a) For example, if your enemy rebukes you,
 - (b) then later he commits the same sin.

3. Compare Job 31.29ff,

29 "If I have rejoiced at the destruction of him who hated me,
Or lifted myself up when evil found him..."
(Job 31.29)

B. Proverbs 11 refers to the removal of oppression, corruption, and so on.

- 1. Do not people rejoice rightly when that ends?
- 2. What if it ends by the death of the wicked?

C. Proverbs 21.15 refers to the joy of justice,

15 It is a joy for the just to do justice,
But destruction will come to the workers of iniquity.
(Pro 21.15)

- 1. Would having the wicked stopped, even by death
- 2. be part of this joy?

II. What did the Israelites do when God destroyed the Egyptians?

A. Exodus 15.1–21 is the song of Moses and of Miriam, but

- 1. consider how Moses began the song,

1 Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the Lord, and spoke, saying:

“I will sing to the Lord,
For He has triumphed gloriously!
The horse and its rider
He has thrown into the sea!”
(Exo 15.1)

2. Would you classify that as rejoicing?

B. Why did the Israelites rejoice at the destruction of the Egyptian army?

1. Not were the Israelites freed, but

2. when the Egyptians appeared,

a) Israel rightly feared

b) that the Egyptians would take them back to Egypt, or kill them.

C. This is thinking about victims past and future.

1. Let us concentrate on the victims

2. rather than contemplating the rightness or wrongness of rejoicing.

III. Our Enemies

A. The Bible says to love our enemies.

1. Does this passage violate others such as Romans 13?

2. Notice the transition from Romans 12.19–21 to Romans 13.

a) Is the government to follow Romans 12?

b) Is the individual to follow Romans 13?

(1) The Lord seeks to rid the Earth of the wicked,

(2) either by converting them or destroying them.

B. God does not take pleasure in the death of the wicked.

23 “Do I have any pleasure at all that the wicked should die?” says the Lord GOD, “and not that he should turn from his ways and live?” (Eze 18.23).

32 "For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies," says the Lord GOD. "Therefore turn and live!" (Eze 18.32).

11 "Say to them: 'As I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?" (Eze 33.11).

C. Yet, why did God appoint civil government?

1. Romans 13 shows the civil government should punish evildoers.
2. Some people will never change, and
 - a) to keep from others being hurt,
 - b) those evil people must be removed from the Earth.

IV. Other Passages to Consider

A. Deuteronomy 32.43

43 "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people;
For He will avenge the blood of His servants,
And render vengeance to His adversaries;
He will provide atonement for His land and His people."
(Deu 32.43)

B. Second Kings 11.20

20 So all the people of the land rejoiced; and the city was quiet, for they had slain Athaliah with the sword in the king's house (2Ki 11.20).

C. Esther 8.15

15 So Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, with a great crown of gold and a garment of fine linen and purple; and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad (Esth 8.15).

D. Psalm 2.4

4 He who sits in the heavens shall laugh;

The Lord shall hold them in derision.
(Psa 2.4)

E. Psalm 58.10

10 The righteous shall rejoice when he sees the vengeance;
He shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked...
(Psa 58.10)

F. Revelation 18.20

20 "Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!" (Rev 18.20).

V. Here is what we forget when the wicked perish.

- A. They can no longer persecute the innocent.
- B. Our focusing upon the wicked and their right to hear the truth,
 - 1. diverts the attention away from the victims.
 - 2. What about the innocent who perished at the hands of the wicked?
 - a) If the wicked continue,
 - b) they will destroy more lives.