In the last post we read about the losers, the wicked, and those who sometimes appear in mortality to be the winners in this life. This week we will look at the winners, the righteous, and those who can appear to be the losers in life. In mortality there really are losers and winners; they just aren't always who we think they are.

Again, this week I'll let the Book of Mormon do the talking. The subject of the righteous appears to be more complicated than the wicked. If you are wicked, you are trapped by Satan; the lifestyle of the wicked is often trademarked by the treasures and pursuits of this world. The wicked have most of the power, money, and influence, and therefore usually get their way. At least, they do until the judgments of the Lord catch up with them and they have to answer for what they have done. It really does appear in mortality that there are winners and losers.

Even though the wicked are allowed some degree of happiness in their ways, their happiness is fleeting and, at best, only lasts till the grave. The righteous — those who choose to obey God's commandments and follow the Savior's example — are often at the mercy of the wicked until the Lord intervenes or until death. For someone who is only looking at this life and not thinking of preparing for eternity, that can make the choice of who to follow more difficult to make.

The sorrows of the righteous

Just because we choose to follow God doesn't mean we are free from the consequences of other people's choices. One of the hallmarks of wickedness is the damage they do to others. In order for God's punishments to the wicked to be just, He has to let them hurt others. He makes it up to the righteous by extending eternal blessings to them for what they had to suffer here.

Alma 60:13

> 13 For the Lord suffereth the righteous to be slain that his justice and judgment may come upon the wicked; therefore ye need not suppose that the righteous are lost because they are slain; but behold, they do enter into the rest of the Lord their God.

2 Nephi 9:18

> 18 But, behold, the righteous, the saints of the Holy One of Israel, they who have believed in the Holy One of Israel, they who have endured the crosses of the world, and despised the shame of it, they shall inherit the kingdom of God, which was prepared for them from the foundation of the world, and their joy shall be full forever.

According to Alma, the principle of restoration will give back to each person what they dispensed in mortality. Some might call this karma.

Alma 41:14

> 14 Therefore, my son, see that you are merciful unto your brethren; deal justly, judge righteously, and do good continually; and if ye do all these things then shall ye receive your reward; yea, ye shall have mercy restored unto you again; ye shall have justice restored unto you again; ye shall have a righteous judgment restored unto you again; and ye shall have good rewarded unto you again.

The point of this verse is that if we live a Christlike life, we will have a Christlike reward given to us at the time of judgment. The Lord does not expect us to just take a beating from the wicked and not expect justice for what has been done. God is all about justice. He will make sure the righteous are well recompensed for the sorrows heaped on them by the wicked in this life.

Alma 40:12

> 12 And then shall it come to pass, that the spirits of those who are righteous are received into a state of happiness, which is called paradise, a state of rest, a state of peace, where they shall rest from all their troubles and from all care, and sorrow.

2 Nephi 9:14

> 14 Wherefore, we shall have a perfect knowledge of all our guilt, and our uncleanness, and our nakedness; and the righteous shall have a perfect knowledge of their enjoyment, and their righteousness, being clothed with purity, yea, even with the robe of righteousness.

The earth responds to righteousness and wickedness

Just as we discussed in the first part of this series how wickedness leaves destruction in its wake, so too does righteousness cause good things to happen. Even the earth responds to the goodness of those who live on her face. These verses speak specifically of the western hemisphere, but the principle of how the earth responds to righteousness holds true for any part of the planet. Peace is also a direct result of righteous living.

2 Nephi 1:7

> 7 Wherefore, this land is consecrated unto him whom he shall bring. And if it so be that they shall serve him according to the commandments which he hath given, it shall be a land of liberty unto them; wherefore, they shall never be brought down into captivity; if so, it shall be because of iniquity; for if iniquity shall abound cursed shall be the land for their sakes, but unto the righteous it shall be blessed forever.

Mosiah 29:43

> 43 And now it came to pass that Alma did walk in the ways of the Lord, and he did keep his commandments, and he did judge righteous judgments; and there was continual peace through the land.

Alma 45:15

> 15 And now it came to pass that after Alma had said these things to Helaman, he blessed him, and also his other sons; and he also blessed the earth for the righteous' sake.

The freedoms people enjoy are directly influenced by their righteousness.

Alma 46:10

> 10 Yea, we see that Amalickiah, because he was a man of cunning device and a man of many flattering words, that he led away the hearts of many people to do wickedly; yea, and to seek to destroy the church of God, and to destroy the foundation of liberty which God had granted unto them, or which blessing God had sent upon the face of the land for the righteous' sake.

Here is an example of how the behavior of the wicked effect the earth itself. Read all of this passage. We need to remember that the earth is a righteous being. We know from the scriptures that she will be celestialized, for she is to be our home for the eternities. She was baptized in the great flood, and will receive the baptism of fire when the Savior returns. This is from Moses 7.

> 54 And it came to pass that Enoch cried unto the Lord, saying: When the Son of Man cometh in the flesh, shall the earth rest? I pray thee, show me these things.
>
> 55 And the Lord said unto Enoch: Look, and he looked and beheld the Son of Man lifted up on the cross, after the manner of men;
>
> 56 And he heard a loud voice; and the heavens were veiled; and all the creations of God mourned; and the earth groaned; and the rocks were rent; and the saints arose, and were crowned at the right hand of the Son of Man, with crowns of glory;
>
> 57 And as many of the spirits as were in prison came forth, and stood on the right hand of God; and the remainder were reserved in chains of darkness until the judgment of the great day.
>
> 58 And again Enoch wept and cried unto the Lord, saying: When shall the earth rest?

I wouldn't be surprised if the loud voice Enoch heard was of the earth groaning for the evil that was taking place upon her face that day.

The righteous need not fear

Alma 9:28

> 28 Therefore, prepare ye the way of the Lord, for the time is at hand that all men shall reap a reward of their works, according to that which they have been—if they have been righteous they shall reap the salvation of their souls, according to the power and deliverance of Jesus Christ; and if they have been evil they shall reap the damnation of their souls, according to the power and captivation of the devil.

Alma 40:25

> 25 And then shall the righteous shine forth in the kingdom of God.

2 Nephi 13:10

> 10 Say unto the righteous that it is well with them; for they shall eat the fruit of their doings.

Alma 34:36

> 36 And this I know, because the Lord hath said he dwelleth not in unholy temples, but in the hearts of the righteous doth he dwell; yea, and he has also said that the righteous shall sit down in his kingdom, to go no more out; but their garments should be made white through the blood of the Lamb.

It's what we love

Satan's power is confined to this earth life. He will have no power over anyone in the eternities, as he will be locked away at the time of judgment. What we will be judged on is what we have come to love most. If we love the things of mortality — the fame, the "things," the money, the influence that promotes us above our fellows — then we will have already had our reward. We will then have to answer to our Lord for why we shunned His atoning sacrifice, and we will be made to suffer as He did.

If we have learned to love the Lord and put Him first in our lives, then He will bless us with all the blessings of His kingdom. We will be given honor and glory, power and dominion that will last forever. It really isn't a complicated choice, but one that can be devilishly tricky to make (pun intended). Satan has gotten really good at masking evil and parading it as good.

If we want to come out the victor, the winner in this contest of ideologies we are in, all we have to do is follow the living prophet, study our scriptures, try to understand how we can apply them in our lives, and pray for strength to hold on faithfully to the end.

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