

Elder Vernon Johnson Colors

Black - The Effects of the Law of Sin and Death

The color, black or dark, and sin are very closely associated in the scriptures. Many lessons are taught us about sin often when we find the color black or dark. One of the lessons taught us is the effects of the law of sin and death.

The law of sin and death was given by God to Adam in Gen. 2:16, 17: "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Death is the consequence of sin. Whenever Adam transgressed the law he brought himself and all of his posterity under the law of sin and death. There was an immediate death upon Adam followed by a later death and the condemnation of an even later death. Sin has three great consequences: these consequences are the condemnation of sin, the corruption of sin, and the bondage of sin. The condemnation of sin is an eternal condemnation. The corruption of sin is death of the natural body. The bondage of sin is the total depravity of the flesh nature of man.

Song of Solomon chapter one verses five and six speak to us of the condemnation, corruption and bondage of sin: "I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon. Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me: my mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept." When the speaker says "I am black" she is not referring to her skin color. She is referring to her sin-cursed nature and depravity due to the law of sin and death.

Also, she says that "I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me." The sun is used as a figure of the righteousness of the law. When we contrast what we are by nature as compared to the righteousness of the law, we must confess ourselves to be ruined, hell-deserving sinners and altogether corrupt. Paul describes the corruption of man in Rom. 3:9-1: "What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not

one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes."

In addition, Paul informs us that the blackness of sin in us is more than skin deep: Rom. 7:18 "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing:" My natural body is called the natural man in the scriptures and Paul writes in 1 Cor. 2:14: "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." From the above we gather that man under the law of sin and death:

1. Cannot seek after God.
2. Cannot understand spiritual things.
3. Cannot do good.
4. Is altogether unrighteous before God.
5. Has no good thing within him.
6. Performs only evil works.
7. Has no fear of God before his eyes.
8. And receives not the things of the Spirit of God.

Thankfully, the speaker in the Song of Solomon not only said that "I am black," but also said, "but comely." As can be seen, this comeliness had to come from without the person. Nothing in our flesh nature is comely or capable of producing comeliness. This comeliness had to be imparted by an outside source. Our comeliness comes from God. According to Ephesians chapter two and verses one through five we read of where our comeliness comes from: "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)"

By the grace of God and through the quickening (life-giving) power of the Holy Spirit we are made inwardly comely when we are born of the Spirit. This work is all of God

and is not a cooperative work between God and man. Man was dead in trespasses and sins and therefore not able to help in this work.