The Fate of the Filthy
Scripture: Revelation 22
Code: BQ41411

Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong; and the one who is filthy, still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous, still practice righteousness; and the one who is holy, still keep himself holy. (Revelation 22:11)

The angel's statement seems strangely out of place in this context: **"Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong; and the one who is filthy, still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous, still practice righteousness; and the one who is holy, still keep himself holy."** Some may think its connection with the command that preceded it is not immediately apparent. But the truth it dramatically conveys is that people's response to the proclamation of the truth will fix their eternal destinies. Those who hear the truth but continue to **do wrong** and **be filthy** will by that hardened response fix their eternal destiny in hell. On the other hand, the one who continues to practice **righteousness** and **keep himself holy** gives evidence of genuine saving faith. The adverb *eti* (**still**) may have the sense of "yet more." In that case, the meaning is that those who do **wrong** and are **filthy** in this life will be even more so in eternal hell, where there will be absolutely no good influences to mitigate their evil. In contrast, those who are **righteous** and **holy** in this life will be perfectly holy in their glorified bodies in heaven.

It is sobering to realize that people's response to God's gospel truth in this life will determine their eternal destiny. When they die, or when the Lord returns, their character will be forever fixed. Those who respond to the warnings in Revelation will live forever in heaven. But those who fail to heed those warnings and repent will remain forever in their sinful state. It is also true that God's Spirit will not always call sinners to repentance, and Scripture warns sinners not to harden their hearts to the point where God judicially abandons them (Ps. 95:7–8; Heb. 3:15; 4:7). Yet, tragically, those warnings often go unheeded, and the opportunity to repent and believe the gospel is wasted (cf. Matt. 25:1–13; Luke 13:24–25). Speaking of the wayward sinners of the northern kingdom (Israel), God declared, "Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone" (Hos. 4:17). Jesus said of the equally hardened Pharisees, "Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind" (Matt. 15:14; cf. Matt. 23:16, 24; Luke 6:39). Both of those passages express God's wrath of abandonment (Rom. 1:18–32), when He turns hardened, unrepentant sinners over to the consequences of their own choices.

Preaching Revelation draws the line. Its truths will melt the hearts of the repentant and harden the hearts of the unrepentant. Those same truths thus become either an instrument of salvation, or an instrument of damnation (cf. 1 Cor. 1:18; 2 Cor. 2:15–16). They must be proclaimed so men and

women can hear them while there is still time.

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