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What Will My Headstone Say?

Introduction

On the night of December 31st 2015 resolutions will be made as folk across the world, after musing and evaluating things in their lives, decide to change in some ways. Some resolutions are made lightheartedly but others are more serious. Yet, in the passing of time, the vast majority will be forgotten and for many, the same old resolutions will be made next year. However, some decisions will have life changing results. There are those who having heard and understood the gospel will be faced with the decision, "Will I accept the Lord Jesus as Lord and Saviour, and have all I need for salvation and assurance of Heaven," or, "Will I reject God's offer, and hope there will be another chance?" The sad reality is that for many there will not be another chance. For some the decision they make will have eternal consequences, for that decision will be the last opportunity they have to accept God's offer of salvation.

Reality

There will be thousands seeking to have a "good time", music, laughter, drinking, and wickedness will be the purpose of the evening. Auld Lang Syne will be sung as intoxicated travelers head home. Sadly, for some this will be the last evening they shall spend on earth. The laughter of drunken foolishness will, in a moment of time, give way to a hellish nightmare which shall never end. Some will be within milliseconds of death and blaspheming "God" by taking His Name blasphemously. For some they shall see approaching danger that shall take their lives, and being incapable to prevent it, they shall scream in terror. They will have had their last drink, told the last dirty joke, and ignored the reality of eternity for the last time. With the cold dew of death upon them they will never smile again. Some will live to see another day, but many of them will fail to heed the warning that eternity is only a breath away. What shall be written on their headstones?

When thinking of this I recall the day I stood beside two graves in New Zealand. One was of a young man and the other a little child. Standing alone I mused on that which was on each headstone. On the young man's there was an empty bottle of drink and a football jersey, all things of the world. The inscription indicated a young man in his early twenties who suddenly died. The little child had a stuffed toy and an inscription from sorrowing parents. It is irrelevant what is inscribed on the gravestone, for being in eternity their destiny is unchangeable. That which is often times put on a headstone may be a scriptures verse, a hoped for statement, or the letters RIP. I ponder, "What would they put on mine?"

The following are the inscriptions of some of the notables of earth:

- a) Sir Winston Churchill: "I am ready to meet my Maker. Whether my Maker is prepared for the great ordeal of meeting me is another matter."
- b) Dean Martin: "Everybody loves somebody sometime."
- c) Carl Jug: "Invoked or not invoked, the god is present"
- d) Frank Sinatra was buried with mementos from family members including cherry-flavored Life Savers, Tootsie Rolls, a bottle of Jack Daniel's, a pack of Camel cigarettes and a Zippo lighter, stuffed toys, and a dog biscuit. The inscription reads, "The best is yet to come".
- e) Mel Blanc: "That's All Folks!"

As I review so many (apart from the little child), there is a common thread connecting them all. They all lived thinking only of the present. Each one would have said, "I lived life to the full" and the scripture over so many would be, "Died as a fool dieth". It is tragic beyond explanation when an individual dies without having accepted God's offer of peace by accepting the gift of salvation procured by the finished work of Christ, which alone delivers from eternal hell and night. At the moment of death, the individual who puts the acceptance of Christ as Saviour off to another time passes into eternity, and there is a change from laughter to weeping, joy to grief, hope to hopelessness, and opportunities never to be given again. From that moment the glorious gospel will never be heard by them again, the gospels hymns will never be heard again, and the Holy Spirit will never convict again. Every vestige of mercy will be past, every iota of hope will be gone forever. For them, eternity has just begun with its darkness, damnation and doom. For many, their desire of freedom from God will be granted, but at what a cost. They who wanted nothing of God in life, will find nothing of God's grace and mercy for all eternity.

The Scriptures Injunction

The Wisdom of God inscribed on the pages of the Holy Bible reads:

- a) "Oh that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" (Deut. 32:29)

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- b) "It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart." (Ecc. 7:2)
- c) Again the scriptures record the warning of God: "Prepare to meet thy God" (Amos 4:12)

How lovely it would be to have on the headstone of a saint of God: "She hath done what she could" (Mk. 14:8); "He trusted in God" (Matt. 27:43); "Of whom the world was not worthy" (Heb. 11:38). If it were a married couple, "These all died in faith" (Heb. 11:13).

Tragically, for many we know, loved ones, children born into our families, such scriptures will never be written. Indeed, the only inscription which could honestly be inscribed on their headstone would be: "No hope (1 Thess. 4:13); "Weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 8:12); gone into "blackness of darkness for ever" (Jude 13).

I remember being with William McAllister in Dublin, Ireland who went door to door speaking to people about the Lord. A question he would ask repeatedly was, "When you take the final and quickest journey you will ever take, where will you be?" He would remind people that if standing in downtown Dublin and wanting to go to Ballymun Estate, the individual would not get on the first bus that came along, they would make sure it was going to where the individual wanted to go. Staying with his illustration, he would state, "If an individual wants to go to Heaven, they need to know the only way".

- a) Men say, "Do the best you can", but God says, "That is a satanic lie, it is not the way"
- b) Man says, "Follow the golden rule", but God says, "That is a satanic lie, it is not the way"
- c) Man says, "Keep the law", but God says, "That is a satanic lie, it is not the way"

None of these will ever make an individual acceptable to God to dwell in His Heaven. They are the wrong way! Either the Lord Jesus is a liar, or telling the truth when informing humanity of the way to peace with God and assurance of Heaven. He said:

- a) "I am the way" (Jn. 14:6).
- b) Peter said when preaching: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).
- c) Paul wrote: "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. 2:5, 6).

The message is clear, if an individual wants to prepare to meet God they must come on His terms, and that is wholly depending on the finished work of Christ on the cross of Calvary.

Concluding Thoughts

If before 2016 rolls round to December 31st 2016, and this year I celebrate my last birthday, have my last vacation, see loved ones for the last time, what truthful words could be written on my headstone?

I take the words of Moses, the servant of God: "Oh that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" (Deut. 32:29). For those who are saved, let us not live as if this is all there is, and eternity as a theory which we intellectually believe, but do not live by.

What will be written on your headstones?

**Where will
you spend
ETERNITY?**

. . . . Rowan Jennings