

Scriptural Truths

E-Mail Meditations

The Lord Will Come . . . Perhaps Today . . . Behold, I Come Quickly . . . Rev. 22:7

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Pilate's Questions

Introduction

When the Lord stood before Pilate there was a series of questions and answers in their communication. Of those questions two were never answered.

- a) The first unanswered question by Pilate was, "What is truth?" He did not wait for the answer but went out again to the crowds (Jn. 18:38-39). Sadly, the embodiment of truth stood before him, but He rejected and turned his back on the truth. What a tragedy when an individual turns their back on the One who is the truth, the way and the life (Jn. 14:6).
- b) The second unanswered question by Pilate was, "Whence art thou?". To this the Lord did not answer (Jn. 19:9).
- c) Of all the questions answered by either the masses or the Lord, was a question each individual must respond to. It is, "What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?" (Matt. 27:22). The Hebrew epistle sets before us three responses.

The book of the Hebrews is one of the most fascinating books of the New Testament because it deals with the richness of our Lord Jesus Christ. However, at times it would be easy to get caught up with what we do not know. For instance, unlike Peter who tells us to whom he is writing, "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia" (1 Pet. 1:1), the author of Hebrews does not do that. Neither do we know where it was written from or who the penman was. Yet, there are things we do know, such as, it is set to balance the Romans epistle for the Roman epistle presents salvation by faith as the only way of salvation (Rom. 3:23-24; 4:3-8) but since Hebrews was written to Jews, it presents a far superior way of salvation, hence his constant use of the word "better" (Heb. 1:4; 7:19, 22; 8:6).

As the ancient writer considered those to whom he wrote, while he knew some were saved yet he had serious doubts about others. The subject under consideration was much too serious to be casual in its presentation for it dealt with the eternal destiny of the individuals to whom he was writing. He knew the reality of eternity, and if an individual was saved that individual would be with the Lord (Jn. 14:3). If an individual refused God's way of salvation, there was nothing ahead of them but the wrath of God.

We also know it contains some very serious warnings as in chapter two when the question is asked, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. 2:3; 4:3; 6:4-6; 10:26-32; 39; 12:25-27).

One of the reasons Hebrews can be difficult to understand is because there can be a failure to recognize from the terminology that it was written to four groups of people. These four groups could be found in virtually every church gathering for Bible ministry or gospel. The four groups are:

- a) Those who were or are definitely saved and their lives show it
- b) Those who sabotage their spiritual development
- c) Those who are nonchalant about salvation
- d) Those who have decided they want nothing to do with the message of the gospel

The Four Groups

- 1) **The first group** are those who were or are definitely saved and their lives showed or show it.
 - a) First a warning:
 - i) We must look at the long projection of the life of an individual and not assume that years ago they made a profession of salvation but never developed. The Lord said, “A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them” (Matt. 7:18-29). For these folk there is virtually no distinction between them and the ungodly in language, clothing attitude or reverence.
 - b) By contrast, there was a considerable number of these folks of whom there could be no doubt of their salvation. When things got hard they endured it, such as:
 - i) Persecution, almost to the point of death (Heb. 12:4) and the looting of their pieces of furniture etc. (Heb. 10:34).
 - ii) Being a christian was not easy and hands did at times hang down and knees got feeble (Heb. 12:12). Because of the harassment and trials, they needed not just empty cliches but genuine words of encouragement. To them there was written those who also lived the life of faith and those who suffered for believing God (Heb. 11:4-31; 33-38; 12:25-26), and those who took the lead in delivering God’s people out of bondage (Heb. 11:32-33).
- 2) **The second group** were those who were saved but were sabotaging their own spiritual development.
 - a) Two matters are brought to their attention:
 - i) They were still babes when after the time since they were saved they ought to be able to teach others. In other words, they had been casual about their own spiritual development.
 - ii) The second reason is they appear to be staying with those who had made up their minds to reject Christ and when there was any discussion, it was just a repeating of the early principles. These saints needed to grow up spiritually and take stronger food. The author reminded them of the former days when their zeal was hot and they took the loss of earthly things knowing they had in Heaven a better and enduring substance” (Heb. 10:34). They were reminded of God’s desires for them, to “go on” (Heb. 6:1); to aim for “perfection” (Heb. 13:21) that is, spiritual maturity.
- 3) **The third group** were those who were nonchalant about the message of the gospel. They had not made a final decision to accept Christ as Messiah, “just not yet”. It was the sin of procrastination. They had been aware of the Holy Spirit convicting them of their sin, being often reprovved, but at the moment the decision was “Another time”.
 - a) Felix was such an individual. As Paul preached, Felix trembled as he heard of the righteousness of God and judgment to come, but suppressing it at the present time he said, “Go thy way for this time” Those three words, “for this time,” said everything. It was not suitable at this time, then he continued, “when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee” (Acts 24:25). Possibly the pressure of sitting there with Festus on the bema, the acceptance of the gospel would have been too much of an embarrassment. What would Festus and the regal persons with him think of him?
 - b) Agrippa was the same for he answering Paul said, “Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian” (Acts 26:28), but not yet. The Greek word “neglect” is translated “made light of” in the parable spoken by the Lord. In that parable the certain man had made a great feast and invited those suitable to be at His table, but they made delight of it. It was not a priority to them to respond to the invitation (Lk. 14:16-24).
- 4) **The fourth group** were those who have made the final decision. I had an aunt and the last time she was spoken to about Christ the Saviour her answer was (I put it as accurately as I can not being there when she spoke), “I will never accept Jesus Christ”. Sadly, she died three weeks later. I visited a man several years ago in a hospital and pleaded with him to accept the offer of salvation and his final answer was, “Another time”. Within hours of saying that, he went into a coma and never regained consciousness. The scriptures inform us, “Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth” (Prov. 27:1). Words can never describe the folly of rejecting a divine commandment.
 - a) Pharaoh was commanded by God, “Let my people go” (Ex. 5:1). It was not a suggestion, it was not a request. When the most High God speaks it is a command. Pharaoh’s words ring through the centuries, “Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice?” (Ex. 5:2). To his detriment and many of his best men, he found out

how foolish it was to provoke the living God. Pharaoh died under the judgment of God (Ex. 14:28). What a fatal mistake Pharaoh made in treating God's command as of no importance.

- b) Without apology the Spirit of God reveals what an individual is doing when they reject God's salvation. There is posed a question, "Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy?" (Heb. 10:29). Worthy of unreserved judgment because they have "trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" (Heb. 10:29). They were despising the mercy and grace of God, dismissing the pledge of God of judgment, and living in the denial of the consequences for disobedience. The consequences for rejecting God's way of salvation are plainly stated. They are the assurance of:
- i) "A certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries" (Heb. 10:27).
 - ii) "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31).
 - iii) "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins" (Heb. 10:26).
 - iv) Then said the king to the servants, "Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 22:13).

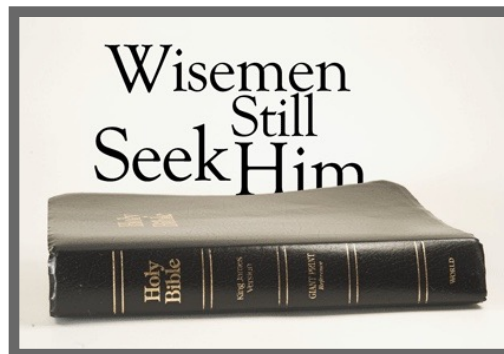
Conclusion

God says:

- a) "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" (Deut. 32:29).
- b) "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. 1:18).
- c) "For He (God) saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2).

Wise is the individual who in all earnestness as an individual drowning, or in a fire engulfed building, calls for help outside of themselves and calls on the mercy of God to rescue them through the precious substitutionary place Christ took for them at Calvary.

... Rowan Jennings



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