

Scriptural Truths

E-Mail Meditations

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

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The Distinction Between Intellectualism and Reality

In my lifetime I have taken approximately 200 flights and before each of those a steward stood at the front, middle and towards the back of the aircraft giving instructions on safety. On my first flight I listened carefully to what was said. Consider the following. If most of the people are like me on an aircraft, hearing but not really listening, and then after some time an announcement is made, "Ladies and gentlemen, we have lost both engines, please listen to the safety instructions". Would myself and others then sit up and listen intently to the instructions or continue reading? Suddenly instructional data becomes very relevant and realism sets in.

There is the probability that there are thousands of individuals across the world who mentally believe in Heaven and Hell. They believe there is God and there is an individual called Satan. The fact is, speaking spiritually, the world has three avenues of people, those who are saved and their lives manifest it, those who are not saved and their lives show it, and those who know all the right answers concerning salvation, or who have made a profession of salvation when young but show no evidence of the new life. I have sat with parents whose child has died and when asked about their salvation I have been told, "They made a profession when they were young." That means nothing. The scriptures are clear, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17).

- a) I can understand loved ones hoping the profession was real and the individual went the wrong pathway. None of us knows what lies ahead for our children and grandchildren. Thank God He is merciful to them all and this still be the day of opportunity.

The eternal tragedy is, there are untold millions of persons who have never been to a gospel meeting, have never sung a gospel chorus or know a line of a gospel hymn. Perhaps a greater tragedy with eternal consequences is those who have known the gospel and pushed it to one side or rejected its way to eternal life. For as long as an individual does not consider eternity, or consciously seeks to gain God's approval by their works, they will never be reconciled to God. An individual could be a commoner in the church, in a choir, a pastor, a bishop, an archbishop, a cardinal or pope; if there is the slightest endeavour to gain God's favour by religious rituals or good works, salvation will never be theirs.

Today we hear folk saying "go to hell" or a place is "God forsaken". In reality, they have no idea what they are saying. There was only one man on earth who was God forsaken (Matt. 27:46), and only one man on earth who endured the horrors of Hell. That place was at Calvary and the man is our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Consider

It was March 1970 when the wife of Jeremy Thorpe was killed due to an accident in the car she was driving. I recall that evening very vividly because as I walked alone across the fields on the outskirts of Belfast, I thought of how swiftly things can change. I am not saying the following about Mrs. Thorpe, God only knows where she is, for I never knew the lady and her relationship with God, therefore it would be very presumptuous of me to say where she is. Musing on the suddenness with which life can end and so many who have no time for God's salvation, I wrote in my Bible, "when an unsaved person dies they go from theory to reality, hope to hopelessness, life to eternal death, joy to deep wailing, and that for all eternity". Despite what is said, they are not up there playing golf, they are not up there at the bar having a drink with their buddies, they are not relaxing in magnificent mansions, yachts or cars and wealth. Spiritually they are bankrupt and there is the realization, "I am under the unrelenting wrath of God as long as God lives". Since God will never die and I can do nothing to be released from this place of torment, I am God forsaken and have nothing of earth to enjoy or give life meaning. This is Hell!

The Reality

It is a comforting blessing to be brought back into fellowship with God, to have one's sins forgiven, to be assured that death opens the door to eternal rest and pleasure, for at God's right hand there are pleasures for evermore (Psa. 16:11). To know that blessedness (Rom. 4:6) the individual must face several realities:

- a) I am a guilty sinner, I may have gone to church, been a minister, sung in the choir, a better neighbour than most, and sought to be the best parent and spouse I can be, but good as these things are, they do not assist to get reconciled to God. It is error to think that God will put one's good works and sins on a set of scales and if the good works exceed the bad, then the individual will enter Heaven. The scales are already giving the answer, "There is none righteous, no, not one . . . there is none that seeketh after God . . . there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10-12).
- b) God has provided the exclusive way to be reconciled and that is through the sufferings of His Son at Calvary. The Lord cried, "It is finished" (Jn. 19:30), and there is now offered to every individual a full and free salvation, full reconciliation to God. Salvation and eternal security is dependence on the work of Christ alone and nothing of my own doing.
- c) The decision is the individual's choice, and it is a decision for eternity.

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