

Scriptural Truths

E-Mail Meditations

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

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Losing One's Soul

Introduction

I do not know about other languages but in English a word can have a series of meanings depending on the context. For instance, the word "suit" can refer to a complete set of clothing, a set of playing cards distinguished from the others by the symbols on them, an individual determining to do their own will, or a set of sails for a ship. It all depends on context. The same is true of the word "soul" in the scriptures. At times it refers to:

- a) The physical children of Jacob came into Egypt: "And all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls: for Joseph was in Egypt already." (Ex. 1:5)
- b) A principle of life which causes one to be a "living entity". We read: "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." (Gen. 2:7)
- c) One's emotions as when the Israelites in despondency said: "Our soul is dried away" (Num. 11:6), or the Psalmist when he said: "My soul thirsteth for Thee" (Psa. 63:1)
- d) One's deepest being as when the Lord said: "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful unto death" (Mk. 14:34)

There are also at least two other ways the word "soul" is used in the New Testament. It can refer to:

- a) The spiritual life of the individual. For instance, of Lot it is recorded: "That righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds" (2 Pet. 2:8)
- b) The entire person who shall live eternally: "But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul" (Heb. 10:39)
- c) It can refer to the individual's pursuits and goals in life, of which the Lord said: "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16:26). The supreme goal of life ought to be to listen to the words of the Lord: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matt. 22:37). It is with this last avenue of thought each individual must face two critical questions:
 - i) What shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?
 - ii) What am I living for?

What Shall I Do With Jesus Who Is Called Christ?

Thank God there are many who read these questions and have answered this question in the past. It may have been in a gospel meeting, through a tract given by an unknown person, or a simple statement made that was by the speaker long forgotten. Whatever the situation, the truth stands unchangeable. At a given moment, whither one can recall a time when, a place where, or a manner how is irrelevant. The individual has shown by their life that Jesus is Lord. Of their salvation there can be no doubt, they repented of their sins and accepted Jesus as Lord and Saviour. With joyful truthfulness they

can sing, “Redeemed, how I love to proclaim it”; “I am redeemed but not with silver, but with the Blood of Christ My Saviour, more precious far than gold”. Having been redeemed, justified, reconciled, cleansed, and forgiven, the question then becomes, “What am I living for?”.

What Am I Living For?

It is reported that Steve Jobs, the master mind of Mac computers, when lying in the hospital bed as life ebbed from him said:

“I reached the pinnacle of success in the business world. In other’s eyes, my life is an epitome of success, however, aside from work, I have little joy. In the end, wealth is only a fact of life that I am accustomed to. At this moment, lying on the sick bed and recalling my whole life, I realize that all the recognition and wealth that I took so much pride in, have paled and become meaningless in the face of impending death. In the darkness, I look at the green lights from the life supporting machines and hear the humming mechanical sounds. I can feel the breath of death drawing closer . . . the wealth I have won in my life I cannot bring with me.”

This to me is what the Lord was speaking about when He said: “What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matt. 16:26). The Westminster Shorter Catechism states: “Man’s chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever”. What did life consist of for the ancient Israelites in Egypt? It was the unending repetitive drudgery of work, eat, sleep, work, eat, sleep. With monotonous unending days blended into weeks, months, and years, what was there at the end? Death! True there must have been some good days and the food was flavorful, but in the final analysis, what was the purpose of life?

Today we live under a world system which with variation seeks to prevent humanity from seeing the emptiness of life without God. There is the excitement of getting the latest computer, then that becomes “ordinary”; or the enchantment of a new car, or home, or that which excites for a short time, and then it also becomes “ordinary”. Sports seasons come and go, each succeeding season beginning with excitement which dies after a while, and even if the team wins, how long does the euphoria last? We are a people who know little or nothing of satisfaction, and always like an addict, looking for another “fix”.

As a believer (for they also are unfulfilled by the tinsel toys of this world), or one who has never accepted Christ as Saviour, the questions at the beginning of 2016 are:

What am I living for?
Do I want the next year to be as empty as the present one?
Am I willing to commit myself to this purpose for the glory of God?

The Secret Of Contentment

The ancient Psalmist knew the blessedness of contentment and a fulfilling purpose in life and recorded it for all to know. It is threefold:

- 1) The blessedness of knowing ones iniquities forgiven.
 - a) “Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.” (Rom. 4:6, 7)
 - b) The blessedness of which David speaks in this verse carries the following truths:
 - i) The assurance that the individual will never know the pains and grief of Hell.
 - ii) The individual knows their salvation and assurance of eternal life forever has been secured by Christ and nothing they do can make it more secure or decrease its security.
 - iii) The striving for inward peace by doing religious ordinances is gone, true peace is all dependent on the Lord and His work.
 - iv) Their sins have been judged by God and they are “forgiven”.
- 2) The blessedness of knowing, “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want” (Psa. 23:1)
 - a) The Lord is my Shepherd.
 - i) What a breath of comfort this Psalm has been and is to untold millions, to have a Shepherd who is all I need for life in death and eternity. Note that all I need is in a person, it is not in things, position, prestige, or wealth. At the moment of death these are all past. My dad was a clever man. He invented things, written academically, and had a number of degrees after his name, yet in a moment

of time, sitting in his car, it all ended! Death laid its grasp upon him and all he was and had was history.

- ii) Breaking the statement into individual truths it becomes:
 - 1. The **Lord** is my Shepherd, I shall not want - Jehovah
 - 2. The Lord **is** my Shepherd, I shall not want - A work that is unchanging
 - 3. The Lord is **my** Shepherd, I shall not want - A precious possession
 - 4. The Lord is **my Shepherd**, I shall not want - A loving, caring individual
 - 5. The Lord is my Shepherd, **I** shall not want - Individually
 - 6. The Lord is my Shepherd, **I shall not want** - Sufficient and perfect provision
- 3) The blessedness of knowing, “At Thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore.” (Psa. 16:11)
 - a) Man lives for the pursuit of pleasure which never lives up to its apparent promise, but thank God, as the hymn writer wrote:

There's no disappointment in Jesus,
He's more than my tongue can tell;
His love is so sure and so steadfast,
His friendship divine will not fail.

There's no disappointment in Jesus,
He's all that He promised to be;
His love and His care comfort me everywhere;
He is no disappointment to me.

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As I start the new Year, and in the mercies of God, totally unaware of the days which lie ahead I can rest in the assurance that I have a Shepherd who is superlative beyond all other shepherds, for no shepherd ever:

- a) Cared for his flock so tenderly, for: “He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters” (Psa. 23:2)
- b) Tends the individual so carefully. Isaiah wrote:
 - i) “He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young” (Isa. 40:11)
 - ii) “And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.” (Isa. 46:4)
- c) Accompanies so unceasingly, for when I walk through the valley of death, “Thou art with me.” (Psa. 23:4)
- d) Procured so preciously for this Shepherd gave His life for me and what a laying down of His life it was. He laid it down:
 - i) Voluntarily, for He said: “I lay it down of myself” (Jn. 10:18), that is, there was no coercing.
 - ii) Volitionally, for He said: “I have power to lay it down” (Jn. 10:18), glorious truth, he determined within Himself to accomplish the great work of redemption.
 - iii) Vicariously, for He said: “For the unjust,” precious reality. Peter penned it so beautifully (1 Pet. 3:18)
 - 1. “Christ once suffered for sins” - that’s propitiation
 - 2. “The just for the unjust” - that’s substitution
 - 3. “To bring us to God” - that’s reconciliation
 - 4. “Being put to death on the cross” - that’s crucifixion
 - iv) Victoriously, that I might take it again, and with the last words of 1 Pet 3:18, “Quickened by the spirit”, that’s resurrection. What a victory:
 - 1. Death is defeated (1 Cor. 15:26, 55)
 - 2. Satan is defeated (Heb. 2:14)
 - 3. His political foes will be defeated (Rev. 19:20)
 - 4. The militaries of the world shall be defeated (Rev. 19:17-19, 21); and to Him, “Every knee shall bow” (Isa. 45:23; Rom. 14:11; Phil. 2:10-11)

If I want to live so that I do not lose my own soul, then the decision must be made to live for the glory of God and the magnification of Christ. That is successful living.

. . . . Rowan Jennings

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