

Scriptural Truths

E-Mail Meditations

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

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Trying To Run From God

Introduction

Of all the Bible stories taught to children, one of the best known is “Jonah and the Whale”.

When the Lord told Jonah to go to Nineveh it was not a suggestion, it was a command, and the apostle wrote, “God . . . now commandeth all men every where to repent” (Acts 17:30). It is irrelevant if an individual is a church going member in excellent standing, a person who regularly takes communion, holds a position in the church, or is even an agnostic or atheist; the message is the same - “**Repent**”. Often times people will put off the acceptance of Christ the Saviour and obeying the command of God because of what others will say or do to them.

- a) The automatic question by some would be, “Repent of what?” We need to understand that to repent means to turn from the decision many have been told to get to heaven, to turn from their sins as a lifestyle. While it does not say Jonah preached repentance, he did warn of the impending judgment (Jon. 1:2; 3:4). The people believed the message (Jon. 3: 5) and from the king down it is recorded, “they turned from their evil way” (Jon. 3:10).
- b) God commands us to turn away from our own devisings of how to get to heaven and how to make ourselves acceptable to God. There is only one way to God, that being, through the Lord Jesus Christ. “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus”(1 Tim. 2:5). Salvation and heaven is not gained by works no matter how good they appear to us. Salvation is the dependence on Christ as the only way, not Christ and my endeavours or background. Nicodemus was the teacher of the Jews but he needed to be born again. Saul was a zealous Pharisee desiring to keep the law but he needed a personal encounter with Christ. All the religious sincere endeavours of an individual is not the command of God or way of God for salvation. God commands man to repent.

Some of the lessons Jonah learned

Jonah learnt He could not escape God’s presence.

- a) Jonah rose to flee from the presence of the Lord. What does this mean? Such a thing was impossible for Adam and Eve had tried to hide from the presence of the Lord and the Psalmist had written (whither Jonah knew it or not is open to discussion), “Whither shall I flee from thy presence? (Psa. 139:7). It is my understanding that it does not mean a loss of the consciousness of God, for those who are banished to hell are separated from the presence of the Lord but not from the awareness of Him (2 Thess. 1:9). Adam and Eve sought to hide themselves from the immediate coming face to face with God (Gen. 3:8), but Cain went out from the sphere in which God made His way and will known (Gen. 4:16; Jon. 1:10).

- b) I can recount three occasions which I have known of people who have gone out from the presence of the Lord, that is, the sphere of God's admonitions and pleadings.
- i) Recently a very good friend of mine died, and at his memorial the individual conducting the service said, "We will now present the gospel" and immediately three people got up and went out.
 - ii) I then think of one young man, he was about mid twenties and hooked on drugs. I sat with him and not only spoke the words of the gospel but pleaded for him to accept Christ. He went out and three weeks later died from an over dose.
 - iii) I sat with a dying man in a hospital room, pleaded with him to accept the gospel of God's forgiving grace, but the last words he said to me were, "I'll think about it". At that moment he went out from the sphere of blessing and within a few days died in his sins.

All these people went out from the presence of the Lord. I have seen people deeply moved by the subject of the gospel and whither it was by the constraining attraction of God's wondrous love or the fear of eternal hell, they were concerned about meeting God. Then they made a decision, they got up and went out of the sphere where God was communicating with them.

[The somber warnings of the Lord](#)

In reading the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, the almost identical words of the Lord are repeated six times.

He said:

- a) "Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city." (Matt. 10:15, Mk. 6:11; Lk. 10:12).
- b) Then it becomes personalised for he said, "But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you/thee" (Matt. 11:22, 24; Lk. 10:14).

What exactly did the Lord mean by the statement, "It shall be more tolerable for Tyre, Gomorrha, Sidon than for you?" He was speaking to the religious rulers and people of Jerusalem, but they had deliberately rejected all the evidences, circumstantial and Biblical, of who He was, attributing His works to Satan. These were not pagans who knew nothing of the ways of God. For some 1500 years they had known His law and how to approach God. They had His temple, His oracles and sacrifices, yet refused to believe in who He was. The people of Tyre, Sodom and Gomorrha had none of these blessings, they were idolators and heathen and it would not have been righteous of God to punish them and the Jews as equals. Increased knowledge means increased responsibility which results in increased judgment.

- a) When an individual stands before the Great White Throne, three times it is recorded that they will be judged "According to their works" (Rev. 2:23; 20:12, 13). One of the matters we forget is that there are two sorts of sins, those by omission, that is failing to do what we ought to do, and sins by commission, those which we do and ought not. However, the primary work is, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (Jn. 6:29). It is the work of believing God and what he says about the sinner-ship of the individual, Christ and His work at Calvary. Then they will be judged according to the knowledge the individual had, the opportunities they had for accepting salvation, the degree of understanding they possessed. The individual who had multiple opportunities to accept Christ but rejected His salvation will suffer in a more severe Hell than the individual who did not have the same opportunities.

[The decision they were to make](#)

The Ninevites had to make a decision. Will they listen to the message of impending judgment of God on them personally or ignore it, being taken up with trying to fill life with new things, better things etc., and all the time ignoring the daily and momentary approaching judgement of God? What did the Ninevites do, what ought anyone unsaved from the executing of God's judgement do? The people of Nineveh repented in sincerity and God had mercy upon them.

Today the offer of salvation is open to all humanity. None can ever say there was no salvation provided for me. The fallacy that everyone ultimately goes to heaven is a lie of the Devil and tragically many only find that out too late. God warned them of approaching judgment. That which Jonah preached was not a threat but a promise. Judgment was only forty days away (Jon. 3:4). It is of note that the mention of "forty days" for repenting only came after Jonah's second commission (Jon. 3:1-4). Had he, by not going and preaching when first sent, would have hindered others from hearing the message and repenting? Had they not listened and obeyed the preaching of Jonah, they would have perished in their sins and forever been under the judgement and wrath of God. The question that must be asked is, "What will you do with the Lord's command and offer of salvation?" It's an acceptance of Christ as Saviour without any works of my own, or the rejection of Him and forever languish in the darkness and fire of eternal Hell. The decision is totally one of free choice for if an individual spends eternity in Heaven, it is not by works of their own, but if they end languishing in hell for all eternity, it was their own choice.

**Tonight may be thy latest breath, Thy little moment here be done;
Eternal woe - the second death, Awaits the Christ rejecting one.
Thine awful destiny foresee, Time ends, and then eternity.
Where will you spend ETERNITY?**

. . . Rowan Jennings

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