

Scriptural Truths

E-Mail Meditations

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

No. 158

April 2025

Decisions

Introduction

July 13th 2024 there were several newsworthy items in the USA. There were two notable deaths and the attempted assassination of the Republican candidate for the US Presidency. The two deaths were Dr. Ruth Westheimer, the famous sex therapist, and Richard Simmons, a fitness icon. At a rally where ex-president Trump was speaking, an attendee was killed when shots were fired. Three people began the day, possibly with no thought of death, but as the evening shades descended each had gone into eternity. Where they are for eternity I cannot tell, but several truths I do know. While their bodies lay in the morgue, their spirits are either in Heaven or Hell. They entered eternal bliss or eternal doom, everlasting joy or everlasting grief, either a painless environment or the blackness of hopelessness that will never end.

Very quickly Dr. Ruth Westheimer, Richard Simmons, the attendee and the young man who shot the ex-president were all tragic, yet two truths are very clear:

- It is very unlikely any of them thought they would be in eternity in a few minutes.
- The lesson is very clear, the continuance of life is uncertain.

The scriptures teach the uncertainty of life for it is written, "There is but a step between me and death" (1 Sam. 20:3), "We are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again" (2 Sam. 14:14). Concerning the brevity of life, it states, your life is "a vapour" (Jam. 4:14); "Thou hast made my days as an handbreadth" (Psa. 39:5).

The stark reality is, death is not the end of existence, for after death the judgment, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27). Cremation, burial at sea, blown apart in an aircraft crash are all irrelevant, for all will die and then eternity. I remember an old hymn from very long ago:

Loved ones will weep o'er my silent face,
Dear ones will clasp me in sad embrace,
Shadows and darkness will fill the place
Five minutes after I die.

Faces that sorrow, I will not see,
Voices that murmur will not reach me!
But where, oh where, will my spirit be,
Five minutes after I die.

Here I have feasted, worked and ranged,
Here I have flourished, and grown estranged,
There, and then, it will all be changed
Five minutes after I die.

Naught to repair the good I lack,
Fixed to the goal of my chosen track,
No room to repent, no turning back
Five minutes after I die.

Oh, what a fool! what a fool! but true,
Refusing the Saviour, with hell in view!
Doing a thing I can ne'er undo
Five minutes after I die.

There is nothing more solemn than the moment of death. It is the quickest one-way trip each person will take. To make matters more unnerving is no one knows when that moment will come. The stark reality is that the casket your body will lie in, could already be at the undertakers. I have seen funerals of the rich and famous but two things are evident from them all, not one has a wallet with money inside, none of them have a credit card, and I have never seen a property seal showing ownership in their hands.

What is it like when we die, pass over etc.? It all depends on our preparation beforehand. Those who have obeyed the open invitation of God and accepted His gift of salvation immediately enter Heaven (2 Cor. 5:6, 8). Those who have shrugged the warning and neglected the opportunity to be saved from the wrath to come immediately enter the caverns of the damned, in a place where there is “blackness of darkness for ever” (Jude 1:13). In Hell darkness is not just an absence of creational light. It is a spiritual darkness that enters into the very soul of the individual. It is a darkness which offers no possibility of parole or light, a darkness that is not bounded by time for it is eternal. Furthermore, the Lake of Fire is a place of unspeakable grief, of memory, of deepest sorrow (Matt. 8:12; Lk. 13:28). It is a sphere where mercy is never again to be found, where grace never shines a light, where the sound of the gospel is never again heard. No entreating gospel hymns will sound there, no prayers will ever be heard there. The second the door of life closes, the last breath expires, there is the realization that, “I have played the fool, in my folly I rejected God’s offer of salvation, and know I am forever lost”. That is reality.

The destiny for each individual is based on their response to the offer of God’s salvation. It is called “salvation” for it saves a person from being banished in Hell for all eternity (Matt. 25:46; Mk. 3:29). At Calvary, the Son of God stepped into the place of condemnation and wrath for all humanity. He bore the curse of abandonment by God, He bore the executed penalty for each individual’s sins. While there is time, wise is the individual who accepts God’s way of salvation and be sure of heaven, with all depending on the work of Christ at Calvary. The decision is the individuals. The hymn asks, “Oh what will you do with Jesus?”

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