

THE PLEASANT VIEW PLUMB LINE

RESOLUTIONS

A new year has begun and many have made resolutions. Each person has another opportunity to do things he failed to do in the past year or to quit things he was doing. Each person begins with a “clean slate” so to speak regarding the new year. As Christians we have the opportunity to do things for Christ in this year that we failed to do last year. It could be that we passed up opportunities to teach others about Christ. Or it could be that we were not living the Christian life. There are any number of things that we may have done or have not done in the past year that we can do or improve upon.

Rather than just making a resolution to lose those few extra pounds, earn money, travel more or less, spend more time with family, or any number of things, why don't I make a resolution to better serve Christ? Why am I here? Why did I obey the Gospel? Or if I have not obeyed the Gospel, why not? What have I got to gain from living the life of sin and what do I have to lose by failing to obey? What are some resolutions that I should make regarding my spiritual life?

Questions are asked every day at school and in the work place regarding religious matters. What do I do when those questions come up? Peter tells us, “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear...” (I Peter 3:15). What does this verse tell me? It tells me to set God apart in my heart. When I set God apart, when I set Him above all else, I will earnestly seek to serve Him. And if I have set Him apart in my heart, I will be ready always to give an answer for those questions that are asked. And so when someone at work or at school asks me why I believe what I believe, I should be able to respond with the correct and concise answer. Well, how do I get ready? This is the big part of this resolution. II Timothy 2:15 states, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” When I study, I see that I must be a worker for the Lord and that I am not to be ashamed of God and Christ. James 2 tells us that merely attending services each time the doors are open is not enough. Faith without works is dead. We must work for Christ.

It may be that someone has not been living the Christian life as he should. John 15:1-8 warns of the danger of a branch in the vine that does not bear fruit. That branch will be taken away and burned. In the analogy, the branch, the Christian who is unfaithful, will be taken away and cast into Hell. One can be restored, however. Acts 8 reveals what occurred with Simon the sorcerer. Simon had been baptized into Christ but when he saw the miracles and wonders that were done, he desired the gift so that he could make money from it. Here is someone who has obeyed the gospel and then fallen away. He is rebuked by Peter (verse—20-23) and he immediately repents and returns to his rightful place in the service of the Lord. This account clearly teaches that one can fall from grace and that he can be restored.

“What if I am not a Christian?”, one may ask. If you are not a Christian, there are certain things that you must know and obey so that you may become one. It could be that you have never heard the gospel. Romans 10:17 states, “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” If you have not heard the gospel, then you cannot believe. Once you have heard, then the latter part of verse 17 shows that one must have faith or believe. Once you have heard, then the latter part of verse 17 shows that one must have faith or believe. Next, one must confess before witnesses with the mouth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God (Romans 10:9-10). Once you have heard the gospel, believed that Christ is the Son of God, and have confessed that faith, then you must repent of your sins (Acts 2:38). When one repents one must turn away from that way of sin. He must make a conscious decision to walk no more in that way. Along with the decision to walk no more in sin, he must make the decision to follow Christ. Once you have made that decision, you must be baptized into Christ for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16). Then and only then will God add you to

“...then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel...” (Amos 7:8)

I AM RESOLVED

Text: _____

I. I Am Resolved _____

A. Don't _____ in _____

B. Don't _____ outside _____

II. I Am Resolved _____

A. By _____

B. By _____

III. I Am Resolved _____

A. _____ by _____

B. _____ without _____

IV. I Am Resolved _____

A. Because God is its _____

B. Because Christ is its _____

C. Because the Spirit is its _____

A DUTIFUL EXISTENCE

Text: _____

I. Man's Duty to _____

Verses:

II. Man's Duty to _____

Verses:

III. Man's Duty to _____

Verses:

IV. Man's Duty to _____

Verses:

His church. And after baptism, you must live the Christian life continuously, even unto death (Revelation 2:10).

Many folks make resolutions concerning their physical lives. I urge each one of us to make resolutions concerning our spiritual lives. May we all do better and greater things for the glory of our Lord throughout this year.

-Josh Romo

DID YOU KNOW the meaning of Nazareth is *the guarded one*. Nazareth was the ordinary residence of our Savior, and is not mentioned in the Old Testament, but occurs first in Matthew 2:23. It derives its celebrity from its connection with the history of Christ, and in that respect has a hold on the imagination, and feelings of men, which it shares only with Jerusalem and Bethlehem. It is situated among the hills which constitute the south ridges of Lebanon, just before they sink down into the plain of Esdraelon.

(Mr. Merrill, in "Galilee in the Time of Christ," (1881), represents Nazareth in Christ's time as a city, (so always called in the New Testament), of 15,000 to 20,000 inhabitants, of some importance and considerable antiquity, and not so insignificant and mean as has been represented). Of the identification of the ancient site there can be no doubt. The name of the present village is *en-Nazirah* the same, therefore, as of old.

It is formed on a hill or mountain, Luke 4:29, it is within the limits of the province of Galilee, Mark 1:9, it is near Cana, according to the implication in John 2:1-2,11, a precipice (overhang) exists in the neighborhood. Luke 4:29. The modern Nazareth belongs to the better class of eastern villages. It has a population of 3,000 or 4,000; a few are Mohammedans, the rest Latin and Greek Christians. (Near this town, Napoleon once encamped, (1799), after the battle of Mount Tabor).

The origin of the disrepute in which Nazareth stood, John 1:47, is not certainly known. All the inhabitants of Galilee were looked upon, with contempt by the people of Judea, because they spoke a ruder dialect, were less cultivated and were more exposed, by their position, to contact with the heathen. But Nazareth labored under a special opprobrium (Reproach, mingled with contempt or disdain), for it was a Galilean, and not a southern Jew, who asked the reproachful question, whether "any good thing" could come from that source.

Above the town are several rocky ledges, over which a person could not be thrown without almost certain destruction. There is one very remarkable precipice, almost perpendicular and forty or fifty near the Maronite church, which may well be supposed to be the identical one, over which his infuriated fellow townsmen attempted to hurl Jesus.

-Smith's Bible Dictionary

THE BOOK OF DIVINE WISDOM

The “book of Proverbs” is not a name but rather a description, for that is what it holds. It is a book comprised of divinely inspired proverbs intended for men’s benefit by revealing wisdom of heavenly origin. The word “proverb” is defined by Britannica World Language Dictionary as, “A pithy saying, especially one that condenses the wisdom of experience into an adage, or maxim.” The term has been applied cross-culturally to various statements of value, for example: Chinese proverb or Turkish proverb. These proverbs, though, have no cultural distinction because they are original only with God, proven by the scriptures.

Authorship is identified by the writer. “*The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel...*” (Proverbs 12:1). Knowing then that the book in its entirety was penned by Solomon, closer attention can be given to the wisdom contained itself. It was in I Kings 3 where Solomon, then reigning king, was found righteous and pleasing unto God. His righteousness was demonstrated by going unto Gibeon where he offered a thousand burnt offerings unto Jehovah. The Lord responded to Solomon’s reverence by telling him to “*ask what I shall give thee*” (I Kings 3:5). Solomon’s already wise request was:

“And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?” (I Kings :7-9).

Thus with Solomon’s request for divine wisdom to be given by which he could justly rule over the people did such come. The Lord gave to Solomon “*a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee*” (I Kings 3:12). Keeping these events in mind, it easily is concluded then that the wisdom expressed in the book of Proverbs was that received from God, through inspiration.

Not only, though, is the authorship determined by the text, but likewise is the purpose:

“...to know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding; to receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity; to give subtlety to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion. A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels: to understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings” (Proverbs 1:2-6).

The themes may, and do, vary; but the purpose is unified: to declare and provide wisdom. A brief word on what wisdom is, though, might prove to be beneficial.

In short, wisdom is the practical application of knowledge. In the same way one could hear or read something and yet not comprehend it, so can a person be knowledgeable in some area without having wisdom in it. It is one thing to know what the scriptures say and another thing entirely to put them into practical application. An atheist may know the scriptures but without putting them to practice he remains unwise. Wisdom demands knowledge, but knowledge does not demand wisdom. Solomon knew God’s will, but he still sought the wisdom to apply it during his kingship. This is the priceless value of the book of proverbs: it teaches man to apply what he otherwise may only know.

Among the many great applications provided by the proverbs, among the greatest would be in regard to personal duties. Scattered amongst the proverb are the entirety of man’s duty in life. First is man’s duty to God. This is the first and foremost to which man’s entire being is to be dedicated (Ecclesiastes 12:13). Second is man’s duty to self. This draws off his duty to God as fulfilling duty to self is contingent upon his duty to God. Third is man’s duty to his family. Outside his responsibility to self, there is no more pressing need, spiritually, than in one’s own home. Then, fourth is man’s duty toward his neighbor. Once self and family is tended to, man must look outward to the rest of the world to call them back to God.

Christ is pictured in Proverbs as the personification of wisdom. Wilkinson and Boa summarize these thoughts: “It is divine (8:22-31), it is the source of biological and spiritual life (3:18; 8:35-36), it is righteous and moral (8:8-9), and it is available to all who will receive it (8:1-6, 32-35).” These attributes came incarnate through Christ as He became flesh for the sake of man, but first they were pictured in the proverbs.

The book of Proverbs is one of great influence regarding the manner of life even now expected among men by God. It is a timeless book that should forever be studied and applied. In it are valuable truths that shall stand throughout eternity.