

# THE PLEASANT VIEW PLUMB LINE

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

## WILL WE KNOW ONE ANOTHER IN HEAVEN?

Will we know one another in paradise and in heaven? Many answers have been given by men to answer this question, yet as Christians, and knowing that the Bible is our only authority concerning such matters, it is to the Bible that we must go to find comfort and hope for only through "patience and comfort of the scriptures" will one find "hope" both in this life and in the life to come (Romans 15:4).

Concerning the question of our knowledge of and the recognition of loved ones in the life to come the Bible is quite clear. In the long ago, King David and his wife Bathsheba had a son; a son which came unfortunately from their adulterous relationship (II Samuel 11). Though David was forgiven of his sin, Nathan the prophet informed him "because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die" (II Samuel 12:14). David after the death of his child stated, "While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me" (II Samuel 12:22-23). Seen here are many facts: (1) once a person has died he cannot return to this earth and live again (from this fact, reincarnation is seen at once to be false), (2) a person who dies has a spirit that lives on in another realm (for this reason, all should desire to prepare for life in the hereafter); (3) those who die from this earth will one day be reunited with loved ones in this realm; (4) those who enter second into this realm after their loved ones will recognize their lived ones for David would have to recognize his son in order to "go to him."

Furthermore, it is clearly seen from Luke 16 that in the life here after we will both recognize and know those who have gone on before us. In the account of the rich man and Lazarus, Jesus told of a poor beggar who died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom (22). The rich man later also died and "lifted up his eyes being in torments" (23). It is especially worthy to note one very important fact, and that is that the rich man recognized Lazarus and even called him by name! Not only that but he also recognized and called by name Abraham whom he had never seen while on the earth! Just here two truths are set forth for us to consider: (1) after this life, we will recognize and know those who we knew on this earth (the rich man recognized Lazarus whom he had known on the earth), and (2) after this life, we will recognize and know by name those whom we never knew on earth (the rich man recognized Abraham whom he had never seen on the earth).

Now it is declared by some that Luke 16 is a parable and therefore cannot be accepted as an illustration of literal facts. The Lord, however, in giving the account of the beggar and the rich man as recorded in Luke 16 did not declare this to be a parable but simply stated the story as if it was an actual occurrence. Furthermore, even if the story related in Luke 16 is a parable it must be understood that a parable is based on factual events. The parables of the sower, the tares, leaven, mustard seed, hidden treasure, pearl of great price, and the net cast into the sea (Matthew 13) are all based on facts of actual occurrences. Therefore, since a parable is a story based on actual occurrences that reveal spiritual truths, if the account of the beggar and the rich man in Luke 16 is a parable it is a story based on actual occurrences which reveal spiritual truths. Whether the account is a parable or not it gives us insight to those things which take place in the realm to which (the Bible) refers as the hadean realm, or paradise.

In paradise and in heaven, what a glorious time it will be. An eternity will be spent

**HERE AM I, SEND ME**

Text: \_\_\_\_\_

I. Send Me to Preach Against \_\_\_\_\_

A. In the \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_ Speaks for Itself

II. Send Me to Preach Against \_\_\_\_\_

A. God's \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

B. A General \_\_\_\_\_ (Romans 1:26-32)

III. Send Me to Preach Against \_\_\_\_\_

A. \_\_\_\_\_ is not \_\_\_\_\_

B. The \_\_\_\_\_ of it

**THE WEEPING PROPHET**

Text: \_\_\_\_\_

I. The \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_

A. Righteousness \_\_\_\_\_

B. Righteousness \_\_\_\_\_

C. Reason for \_\_\_\_\_?

II. The \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_

A. The Sin \_\_\_\_\_

B. The Sin \_\_\_\_\_

C. The Sin \_\_\_\_\_

III. The \_\_\_\_\_ to be \_\_\_\_\_

A. Destruction \_\_\_\_\_

B. Jerusalem \_\_\_\_\_

C. \_\_\_\_\_, O Lord?

both with those whom we love and those who love God even as we also love God. Eternity for the Christian will be a time of great joy for there will be a reunion of loved ones and there will be eternity in the presence of God. Because of this we can “comfort one another with these words” (II Thessalonians 4:18). For if all were strangers in heaven, where would be the comfort?

*-Ronnie Scherffius*

**ON A HILL FAR AWAY...**

Few songs have words of such intensity as these written by George Bernard: “On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross, the emblem of suffering and shame...” As our mind’s eye catches a glimpse of Calvary we see the great cost at which our salvation came.

I want to share with you a story that brought tears to my eyes. The author is Tim Miller from Cranberry Township, Pennsylvania (related in Leadership magazine).

“My nine-year-old daughter Jennifer was looking forward to our family’s mini-vacation. But when our vacation arrived, she became ill, and a long anticipated day at Sea World was replaced by an all-night series of CAT scans, X-rays, and blood work at the hospital.

As morning approached, the doctors told my exhausted little girl that she need to have one more test, a spinal tap. The procedure would be painful, they said. The doctor then asked me if I planned to stay in the room. I nodded my head, knowing I couldn’t leave.

The doctors gently asked Jennifer to remove all her clothing. She looked at me with childlike modesty as if to ask if that were all right. Then they had her curl into a tiny ball. I buried my face in hers and hugged her.

When the needle went in, Jennifer cried. As the searing pain increased, she sobbingly repeated, “Daddy, Daddy, Daddy,” her voice becoming more earnest with each word. It was as if she were saying, “Oh Daddy, this hurts soooo bad. Please can’t you do something.

My tears mingled with hers. My heart was broken. I felt nauseous. Because I loved her, I was allowing her to go through the most agonizing experience of her life, and I could hardly stand it. (We later learned that Jennifer’s illness was not serious).

In the middle of the spinal tap, my thoughts went to the cross of Christ. What unspeakable pain both the Son—and the Father—went through at the cross for our sakes (II Corinthians 9:15).

We owe a debt that can never be fully paid. The best we can do is give ourselves as living sacrifices.

**THE BOOK OF HEARTBREAK**

Never had a writer invoked so much emotion into a book of the Bible, but emotion is just what Jeremiah is known for. He is often referred to as “the weeping prophet” and upon reading his book it is evident why. *“Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!”* (Jeremiah 9:1). Likewise did Jeremiah emotionally write: *“But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride; and mine ye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the lord’s flock is carried away captive”* (Jeremiah 13:17). In fact Jeremiah, in addition to his autobiographical and self-named book of prophecy, wrote a book called “Lamentations” in reference to his outpouring of great emotion in that book as well. It is the reason, though, for his weeping and heartbreak upon which a serious study of this book should dwell.

Jeremiah does the reader a great service in the first three verses of his book by identifying himself, his scope of work, and the historical setting in which he prophesied: *“The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiyah, of the priests that were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin: to whom the word of the Lord came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, unto the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah king of Judah, unto the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month”* (Jeremiah 1:1-3). First, Jeremiah established his personal authorship, meaning then that the writing had to take place in his lifetime (this is a matter we may take for granted but higher criticism would date it later taking away its prophetic nature). Second, by setting his timeframe according to important dates in Judah and Jerusalem, Jeremiah then would obviously be indirectly stating his close proximity to these events placing him among these people. Then third, Jeremiah identifies his setting in Old Testament history. His work began with his divine call to the work in the thirteenth year of Josiah’s reign (which began in 640 B.C.) therefore indicating a starting period of 627-626 B.C. That work lasted then until the eleventh and final year of Zedekiah’s reign which is marked by Jerusalem’s destruction in 586 B.C. Jeremiah’s work, then, lasted around forty years and included some of the most significant events in biblical history. Jeremiah saw the ungodly rule of every king following Josiah that led Judah down the treacherous path of sin and into foreign exile and likewise did he see all three carryings away and the destruction of the city with his own eyes. Given all of this being experienced by a man of God such as was Jeremiah it becomes very evident as to why he is called “the weeping prophet.”

God’s word came unto Jeremiah at the beginning and he was told his divine mission: *“Then the Lord put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth. See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant”* (Jeremiah 1:9-10). His purpose in hindsight was not different from any other of the prophets. He was to seek out and warn the people of what their sins would do to them. However, also like the other prophets Jeremiah faced many hardship. Jehovah, though, mentions the great expectation with which He awaited Jeremiah’s ability to serve: *“Then the word of the Lord came unto me saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations”* (Jeremiah 1:4-5). It is sad though that just like everything and everyone else the Lord has counted dear, man found a way to enact persecution on God through His affection:

*“His own family (12:6) and his own townsmen (11:18-23) dealt treacherously with him. The men of Jerusalem also conspired against him (18:18) and beat him and put him in stocks (20:1-3). Released, he was assaulted and nearly lost his life (ch. 26). Because of his prophecy of the victory of the Chaldeans, the princes of Judah labeled him a traitor, put him in prison, and appealed to Zedekiah to put him to death (37:11-38:6). When Zedekiah delivered him into their hands, they put him into a slimy cistern, from which he was rescued by an Ethiopian, Ebed-melech (38:7-13)”* (Dunn).

Jeremiah though was resistant to intimidation and none of that which he suffered effected his desire to serve Almighty God. As he said in Jeremiah 20:9: *“Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak anymore in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.”*

As with the other prophets, Christ is a prominent theme through the book, Jeremiah 23:1-8 being a prime example. Here Christ is pictured as “the coming Shepherd and the righteous Branch who ‘shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; Now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS’ (23:5-6)” (Wilkinson and Boa).

Jeremiah’s prophetic work is of great value to the Christian if only he/she would learn from him and if only the world would learn from Judah’s mistake and misfortune.

-Andy Brewer