

# THE PLEASANT VIEW PLUMB LINE

## HEAVEN OR HELL?

If I go to hell, it will mean that I have been a failure in this which God granted me in which to prepare for eternity. The sincere Christian is truly the happiest person on earth, because he possesses *"the peace which passeth understanding"* (Philippians 4:7). He can associate with those of *"like precious faith"* (II Peter 1:1), even though *"the whole world lieth in wickedness"* (I John 5:19). But if a man fails to be a devoted follower of the Lamb of God, he will have all of this life and then hell forever with those in darkness.

No one, thinking properly, should want to be a failure. However, anyone who dies in sin automatically admits that the best of two worlds passed him by. In John 8:21 we read the scorching epitaph from Jesus: *"Ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sin: whither I go, ye cannot come"* (John 8:21).

Have you ever seriously pondered the consequences of being lost? Have any of us truly thought of how terrible it will be to go to hell? In Mark 9:43-48, Revelation 14:11, 20:10, and 21:8, we learn that there is a place *"of sorer punishment"* (Hebrews 10:29), for *"our God is a consuming fire"* (Hebrews 12:29). Anyone who believes the Bible knows that there is a place of eternal punishment (Matthew 25:46) where the wicked shall *"be cast into the lake of fire"* (Revelation 20:15).

The doctrine called "the gospel of the second chance" is not taught in the Scriptures. It is contrary to the plan and purpose of God. The purpose of this life is prepare for eternity. *"Today is the day of salvation,"* therefore we are taught to be obedient now (II Corinthians 6:2; Hebrews 3:15). When the Lord Jesus Christ returns, He will not come to *"deal with sin"* (Hebrews 9:28). The only way we can be blessed eternally is to *"die in the Lord"* (Revelation 14:13).

We are reminded, in Romans 2:16, the *"God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ."* Solomon declared that *"every secret thing"* shall be brought into judgment (Ecclesiastes 12:14). The Bible teaches that nothing escapes the notice of the Lord (Proverbs 15:3; Hebrews 4:13). The psalmist spoke on this same point, *"O Jehovah, thou hast searched me, and known me...For there is not a word in my tongue, But, lo, O Jehovah, thou knowest it altogether"* (Psalm 139:1-4). Our Savior can see beneath the outward veneer of a hypocritical devotion.

Friend, are you prepared to meet the Savior at the Judgment day? Are you a Christian? Have you been baptized into the Lord *"unto the remission of your sins"* (Acts 2:38)? Are you living daily in accordance to His word? If not, make today the very moment of your greatest decision. *"Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth"* (Proverbs 27:1). Christ is coming again one of these days. We dare not delay our preparation lest we meet Him with regret. What a joyous occasion it shall be for those who have lived in harmony with the Bible's teaching.

Look in the Bible and read Acts 8:26-40 for a clear example of how to become a Christian. And, then read II Peter 1:4-11 to discover how you can maintain this relationship.

-Johnny Ramsey

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

**DEFINING DEVOTION—OVERCOMING THE  
'WHAT'S IT GOING TO COST ME?' MENTALITY**

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

I. Realize the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

II. Realize the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

III. Realize the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

**FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE FAITH**

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

I. Jude's \_\_\_\_\_ of False Teachers

Notes:

II. Jude's \_\_\_\_\_ Against False Teachers

Notes:

III. Jude's \_\_\_\_\_ in spite of False Teachers

Notes:

**A HIGHER PRIORITY**

At the Olympic Games in Paris in 1924, the U.S. team was favored in the four-man canoe race. One member of that team was a young man by the name of Bill Havens. As the time for the Olympics neared, it became clear that Bill's wife would give birth to her first child about the time that Bill was scheduled to compete.

So Bill found himself in a dilemma. Should he go to Paris and risk not being at his wife's side when their first child was born? Or should he withdraw from the team and remain behind?

Bill's wife insisted that he go to Paris. After all, he had been working toward this goal for many years; it would be the culmination of a lifelong dream. After much soul searching, Bill decided to withdraw from the competition and remain behind with his wife so that he could be with her when their first child arrived. Bill considered being at her side a higher priority than going to Paris to try to win an Olympic Gold medal.

The United States four man canoe team won the gold medal at the Paris Olympics. But Bill had no regrets. His family was more important to him than the Olympics. Bill was present when his wife gave birth to their baby boy, whom they named Frank..

Twenty-eight years later, in 1952, Bill received a cablegram from Frank. It was sent from Helsinki, Finland, where the 1952 Olympics were being held. The cablegram read:

*Dear Dad,  
Thanks for waiting around for me to be born  
in 1924. I'm coming home with the gold  
medal you should have won.  
Your loving son,  
Frank*

Frank Havens was bringing home the Olympic gold medal for the 10,000 meter canoeing event. Not he wanted to share his medal with the one who set aside his own personal dreams for a higher priority: his son.

Establishing proper priorities ultimately brings the greatest rewards—like no regrets and deeper joys.

What are those "higher priorities" that need to be established in our lives? Jesus said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matthew 22:37-39).

Loving God supremely and loving others unselfishly—beginning with your family. These are the top priorities! And living by these priorities brings the great blessings.

*-David Sargent*

**THE BOOK OF THE COMMON DEFENSE**

I cannot help but think that Jude's epistle must be one that is incredibly ignored by the denominational world, because it not only touches, but is dedicated to one topic about which they will not talk—the existence of religious error. In fact, when you think about it, to acknowledge the existence of the error would be to condemn the very foundation upon which denominationalism is built, an absolute departure from the New Testament pattern. Jude, though, not only acknowledged the existence of religious error but blatantly condemned it for what it is, a slap to the very face of God. As he approaches the topic of false teaching and false teachers, Jude does not tread lightly, but rather shouts from the rooftops that it and they are abominations that must be stopped. It is with that fact in mind that our attention is turned to the key verse of the book: *“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints”* (Jude 3). That was his purpose and his plea—to earnestly contend for the faith; and thus it should be ours'. But by what means can we overcome such a formidable foe and the vast error that is being imposed upon this lost and dying world?

First, it helps to understand the nature of false teachers and their false teachings. Jude summed it up in possibly the best way by stating that these false teachers, *“speak evil of those things which they know not...”* (vs. 10). False teaching is the promotion of ignorance. Thus, by realizing that truth, the means by which we can remedy the problem becomes evident. Ignorance can only be overcome by an education of the truth, and false teachers can be brought out of their ignorance by teaching them what is right. Also, Jude referred to the false teachers as *“filthy dreamers”* (vs. 8). How are they filthy dreamers? The error they espouse is nothing more than figments of their imaginations. They are not reality, and thus cannot promise any realistic results. Hopeless dreamers must be given a healthy dose of reality, and for these “filthy dreamers” the reality they must be given is the truth of God's word. By doing so not only can their error be overcome but their eyes can be opened to the hope available in Christ. On through the epistle, Jude gives a number of other illustrations to describe false teachings and those who promote them:

*“These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea foaming out their own shame; wandering stars...”* (vs. 12-13a).

Ultimately, in whatever way they are described, Jude says the end shall be the same—*“to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever”* (vs. 13b). Knowing their end, we must understand their nature so that we can rehabilitate them in the ways of righteousness.

Second, it would do us well to remember the truth. It is of no benefit to identify error if we cannot defeat it; but still we live in a world that likes to point out what is wrong without knowing how to promote what is right. To his readers Jude said, *“But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ...”* (vs. 17). They had warned of the apostasy that would come and had desperately tried to open the eyes of their brethren so that they would be prepared. And all the while, the brethren were told to *“build up yourselves on your most holy faith”* (vs. 20). It does no good to tell someone they are wrong if you cannot tell them what is right. And thus, we must remember the truth for it will be the only means by which error will be defeated and righteousness will overcome.

Then, third, keep in mind Who is still in control of all things, and Who will still gain the victory in the end regardless of how many are fighting against Him. Jude concluded with that truth: *“Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen”* (vs. 24-25). The entire world may turn to evil, but one day the trumpets will still sound, the dead shall still arise, and God will still win. Upon whose side, then, will we desire to be? As said Jude, *“keep yourselves in the love of God...”* (vs. 21a).

The truth is worth fighting for. Christianity is not illustrated in the scriptures as a warfare for nothing. We are in a constant battle against evil and error in order to win souls and to build up the kingdom of God. Knowing our enemies, their tactics and their weapons, let us look to our Supreme Commander with trust and courage and, *“earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints”* (vs. 3b) -Andy Brewer