

[Editor's Note: The following is an excerpt from Robert R. Taylor, Jr.'s book The Bible Doctrine of Final Things. In reading through this book I came across it the other day and found the material eye opening.]

NO ABSENTEEISM ON JUDGMENT DAY

Judgment time is going to be different from any day of human history. Men have gone through life blaming others for the sins they commit and their omissions from imposed obligations. There will be none of this tolerated in the day of judgment. Each will be judged according to his own deeds (2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 20:13). The father will not bear the iniquity of the son nor will the son bear the iniquity of the father. Ezekiel 18:20 makes this matter decisively definite and crystal clear by saying "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Men have gone through this life with ready made excuses for every duty they wished to avoid and every God-given commandment they have broken. Perhaps in no area have more flimsy excuses have maliciously manufactured than in the realm of religion. People have all sorts of excuses as to why they never have become Christians. Others who have obeyed the gospel have sought proficiency in excuse-making as to why they do not attend church regularly, read the Bible daily, pray frequently or win souls upon a continuing basis. There will be no absenteeism from this judgment appearance because of property pursuits, love for livestock, pleasure trips, family feelings, or any other of the one hundred and one excuses people have given for neglect of religious duties in life. All nations will be there (Matthew 25:32). All will stand at the judgment seat of Christ (Romans 14:10). On that day of days "every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12). Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:10 employs such comprehensive pronouns as *we* and *every one*. The quick (the alive) and the dead will be there, according to 2 Timothy 4:1. Which portion of past humanity is omitted from these sweeping comprehensive designations? Not that first one! John saw the small and the great in judgment (Revelation 20:12). No one will miss judgment to go on a trip. All journeys that day are destined to meet and merge at the great white throne of Christ's judgment bar (Revelation 20:11). No one will miss judgment to stay with a husband, wife, parent, or child who disliked the idea of church attendance. Every member of each family will be there. No one will miss judgment because of prior commitment. No one will miss judgment because of a job. No one will miss judgment because of the expected presence of hypocrites. No one will miss judgment to prepare a meal for anticipated company. No one will miss judgment because someone failed to speak to him the last time he was at a church service maybe some twenty or thirty years ago! No one will miss that judgment appearance because he has a sick pet at home. No one will be absent because of Sunday illness that has been a common malady in our day, and never lasts long at a time, and is always cured by Monday morning. No one will miss judgment because he had a ball game commitment or had already promised to play golf with a friend.

There will be *no* excused absences from this universal day of final reckoning. None will be immune from an appearance. Some right now may think they are going to be excused because of their greatness here and they are in for a shock and a sad surprise. They are surely in for a rude awakening! Truly this will be the great meeting that no one will miss. No absentee marks will be registered that day! *All* will be present and accounted for. All will be handed one of two decisions—commended or condemned, saved or lost, heaven-bound or hell-bound!

-Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

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)

COMMON SENSE CHRISTIANITY:
LIFE IS BETTER WITH GOD

Text: _____

I. Because of the _____ of _____

Notes:

II. Because of the _____ of _____

Notes:

III. Because of the _____ of _____

Notes:

GLIMPSES OF GLORY

Text: _____

I. It's a Place of _____

Notes:

II. It's a Place of _____

Notes:

III. It's a Place of _____

Notes:

JESUS' LIFE IN FOUR WORDS

What Jesus did for you and me was an incredible demonstration of genuine love. What Jesus did for us, we do not deserve. What He did for us was an act of grace. We could never repay the debt that we owe Him. But, we can (and should) be grateful for Him and His life-giving sacrifice! Not a day should pass without us expressing our thanks to God for what His Son has done on our behalf. "But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:57). Jesus did four amazing things for us.

He Came. He came heaven to earth. He Himself said, "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 6:38). In heaven Jesus shared in the glory of the Father "before the world was" (John 17:5), but He left heaven to come to earth. Why? "...Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15). Let us admit it without shame: if Jesus had not come, we could not be saved from our sins. Consider some of the beautiful words of the song "He Still Came:"

"Yet the king of kings left heaven to become a lowly man,
He left all heaven's glory to fulfill His Father's plan.
He still came just for me, He still came.
Knowing all He would endure, He still came.
Disregarding every cost, from the manger to the cross,
He still came just for me, He still came."

He Went. He went to the cross. When the mob came to take Him in the Garden of Gethsemane, He could have called "twelve legions of angels" (72,000) to protect Himself (Matthew 26:53), but He did not. Jesus had the power to run away from the interrogations of the Jewish council, Pilate, and Herod, but He chose not to do so. Instead, He endured mockery, physical and mental torture, and with the help of Simon carried His cross "to the place which is called Calvary; there they crucified him" (Luke 23:33). Why did our loving Lord go to the cross when He could have avoided it? The Bible's answer is plain: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24). If Jesus had not gone to the cross, we would still be hopelessly lost!

He Stayed. He stayed on the cross. After He was crucified, He hung on the cross for six hours (Mark 15:25, 34-37). While He was still hanging there, some mockingly spoke these words of blasphemy: "Save thyself, and come down from the cross...He saved others; himself he cannot save" (Mark 15:30,31). Did Jesus have the power to come down from the cross? Of course! But He stayed right there until the end. Why? Because of His great love for us and because He knew that in God's plan, His death was a necessity.

He Returned. He returned to heaven, where He sat down at the right hand of the Father (Mark 16:19). He went "into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Hebrews 9:24). Upon His return to heaven, He was given "dominion, and glory, and a kingdom" (Daniel 7:13,14). There He "ever liveth to make intercession for us" (Hebrews 7:25).

May we ever thrill at the story of Jesus!

-Roger D. Campbell

THE EVIDENCE OF THE END

Practically since the beginning of time, man has in some form or fashion been involved in trying to predict the end of time. Some have acted out of ego. Others have acted out of want for financial gain. A few have likely acted out of heartfelt sincerity. But regardless of the intention on all hands the act has been found fruitless because the simple fact remains that man cannot know in advance when the end will be. Jesus declared that “of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only” (Matthew 24:36). Still, though, practically every year someone steps forward claiming the ability to know when the end shall be based on evidentiary signs. And so they write their books and film their movies, attracting both fame and fortune; but all the while misleading gullible souls who know no better. Such arrogance and deceit should be condemned by all who accept the statements of the Bible at face-value.

In addition, though, to those who have tried to predict the end are those who have misunderstood past events and mistaken them for having been the end. And while such sounds ridiculous considering our continued presence and the obvious absence of any concept of reward or torment as of yet, such thoughts have a strong footing in the minds of many. The Bible, though, does give some evidence of the end, allowing us to identify that day with a surety.

At the end there will be a reappearance. Shortly before His death, to the apostles who were quaking in prospect of living and working without their beloved Master, Jesus made the promise, “I will come again” (John 14:3). What Jesus does not promise is His coming will be in like fashion to His first. In fact, expounding that point, the Hebrews writer stated that “we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Hebrews 10:10). The reason for that statement is two-fold. (1) Jesus’ death was sufficient for all people for all time, and (2) Jesus will not be coming a second time in the flesh to offer another sacrifice. In fact, the Bible does not even state that Jesus will set foot on earth again. What is stated is that Christ will, on that last day, appear in the clouds with his holy angels (Colossians 3:4; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1; Hebrews 9:28). And at the time of His appearing He will not come to gather mankind unto Him, but He will call for them to meet Him in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:17). For a surety there will be a reappearance of Jesus Christ, providing for us the evidence that indeed the end is here.

At the end there will be a resurrection. Multiple groups of people in the early days of Christianity had serious issues with this. The New Testament indicates that both the churches at Corinth and at Thessalonica had their respective questions as to whether or not it would occur and what it would entail. But on all accounts, the Bible clearly reveals the reality of the bodily resurrection of every single human being when that last day comes. In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul defended the coming resurrection by making the factual claim that because Christ came out of the grave, so shall we (1 Corinthians 15:12ff). To the Thessalonians, Paul wrote to comfort them in the fact that all of the dead shall rise when Christ returns and provides an abundance of evidence as to the evidence that will accompany that day:

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

The last day will be very evident to us because on that day there will be a resurrection, proving to us its reality.

At the end there will be a reckoning. Accountability is one of the most politically incorrect subjects that could be addressed in any forum. However, it is a fundamental principle of Christianity throughout life and especially as it pertains to death and the last day. The warning is constantly provided in scripture that we will be judged and that our lives will be revealed with intense scrutiny as to the direction we allowed them to be directed (Acts 17:30-31; Romans 14:10-12; 2 Thessalonians 2:12; 2 Timothy 4:1; Hebrews 9:27; 13:4; 1 Peter 4:17). In fact, the judgment will be so complete that Solomon, 3,000 years ago, warned that “God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:14). Yes, there will be a reckoning to which we will be subject, prepared or not. And truly, by that reckoning will we know it is indeed the end.

Does the Bible provide evidentiary signs to identify the last day? It does not provide prophetic signs to allow us to foreknow exactly what day it will be, but it does evidence of the events that will transpire. The only problem that remains is that by then, for the vast majority of the world, it will be too late for many will be unprepared. The only option that remains is to prepare every day as though it were the last day, “looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13).

-Andy Brewer