

# THE PLEASANT VIEW PLUMB LINE

## THE NEED FOR READINESS

“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead” (Acts 17:30-31).

There will be a day in which all men will be judged. There is no question that there will be such a day, nor is there any doubt that we all will be there, but,, the question is, “Are we ready for the judgment day?” Life is short, and death is coming (James 4:14). As surely as we have an appointment with death, we have an appointment with judgment (Hebrews 9:27). Let us seek to understand the need for readiness for that great judgment day, to the intent that better understanding will spur us on to being ever watchful.

Jesus promised He will come back (John 14:1-4), but we do not know when (Matthew 24:36). He will return, in His second coming (Hebrews 9:28), as the apostles saw Him ascend (Acts 1:11). When Christ comes, He will not set foot on earth, but all (both good and bad) in the graces will be resurrected (John 5:28-29; 1 Corinthians 15:50-58), and the saved will “meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

On that day, “the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (2 Peter 3:9), so there will be no earth upon which man could continue to live, now on which Christ could reign (as premillennialists falsely assert; cf. Daniel 7:13-14; Zechariah 6:13; Hebrews 8:1-4; 1 Corinthians 15:23-24). That day will be the last day, and eternity will begin (John 12:48).

All nations will be present on that great day (Matthew 25:32). We ALL will be there: ‘For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad’ (2 Corinthians 5:10). Christ will judge the whole world on that day (Acts 17:31), and all those who are ready will be there (Revelation 2:10), but all those who are not ready will also be present, and will be judged (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

Jesus Christ the Lord will judge (Acts 17:31; John 5:22; 2 Timothy 4:1,8), and He will separate the good from the wicked (Matthew 25:32). The righteous will be told, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 25:34), but the wicked will hear: “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41). Jesus said, “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal” (Matthew 25:46).

There will be no “second chance” on (or after) the day of judgment. Christ is not coming back to preach the Gospel, for He has already done that (Mark 1:14-15). He is not coming back to invite men to come to Him (Matthew 11:28-30), for He has already done that. All men will settle up with God in that day, the last day (John 12:48), and there will be no more opportunity to hear the Gospel (Romans 10:17), to believe in

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

**BE BAPTIZED, FOR REMISSION OF SINS**

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I. “ \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ ”

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II. “ \_\_\_\_\_ ”

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III. “ Be \_\_\_\_\_ ”

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**WHAT ARE THE CHANCES?**

There are more than three hundred prophecies from the Old Testament fulfilled in the life of Jesus of Nazareth. The prophecies were made centuries before He was born and contain startling details (e.g., the name of the city of His birth, how He would die). In the book *Science Speaks*, Peter Stoner writes of the probability that only eight of these prophecies were fulfilled accidentally in the life of Jesus. The odds here are 1 in 10 to the 17th power, or 100,000,000,000,000,000 to 1. Stoner illustrates this impossible number by suggesting that if one covers the state of Texas with that many silver dollars, the entire state would be covered in coins two feet deep. If you mark one of the coins, mix the coins thoroughly, and then blindfold a man and tell him to pick up the marked coin on the first try, that would be the same probability of just eight of the messianic prophecies coming true by coincidence.

Christ (John 8:24), to repent of sins (Acts 2:38), to confess faith in Him (Acts 8:37; Romans 10:9-10), to be baptized into Christ for the remission of sin (Galatians 3:26-27; Acts 2:38), nor to live faithfully as a child of God (1 John 1:7-10; 1 Corinthians 15:58).

If one never found a convenient season before, it will be too late then (Acts 24:25). If one were almost, but not altogether, persuaded, it will be too late on that day (Acts 26:28). If one knew better, but did not do better, it will be too late. IF one had “good intentions” of obeying God, but never did, it will be too late. For church members who warmed a pew, were lukewarm, apathetic, and in different, it will be too late. Those who failed to watch will wish forever that they had (Mark 13:34ff).

On that last day, the standard of judgment will not be any of the following: man’s opinions, ideas, wishful thinking, or the doctrines of men (Matthew 15:9). Likewise, these will not be taken into account: what the majority believes, likes, or wants; what loved ones believed or practiced; what the world approved; what appealed to the worldly, ungodly, carnal, or hypocritical; what synods, conventions, and forums of men decided; or what felt good, seemed right, or promoted union (not real unity).

It will not be a day of escape by placing blame on others, and there will be no appeal. The judgment will be righteous (Acts 17:31), based on each man’s deeds (2 Corinthians 5:10), as compared with the books (Old and New Testaments), and the Book of Life (Revelation 10:12-15). Jesus said: “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John 12:48). For all living in the Christian age, the basis of judgment will be the Word of Christ. Teachings of Islam, Confucius, Buddhism, Hinduism, etc., will not be the basis of judgment.

Friends, God means what He says, and He will have the last word. There will be a day when Christ will judge the world (Jude 14-15). None will avoid this day when the Lord will decree eternal destinies for all. For the righteous, the lord will decree eternal destinies for all. For the righteous, there will be great reward, but for the wicked, there will be eternal punishment. Certainly, it behooves us to be ready.

Watch and pray!

-Bobby Liddell

## HAVE WE TAKEN OUR EASE?

There exists in every area of life the ever present danger of growing pacified with how things are rather than pursuing the way things could and maybe should be. Often in our careers, marriages, and friendships we find ourselves in a rut, satisfied and without desire to work to strengthen, grow, and build ourselves up to the potential that we possess. A prime example of such revealed in scripture is found in a statement of condemnation Amos presented in his prophetic book: “Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, which are named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came!” (Amos 6:1). As Homer Hailey stated, this “... second ‘woe’ is pronounced upon the revelers who felt secure in their mountain-surrounded city and in their perverted idea of God and their relation to Him. The prophet includes those ‘at ease in Zion,’ Jerusalem, as well as those ‘secure in...Samaria.’ The rulers of both cities were guilty of a false sense of ease and security. Neither realized the imminence of danger.” Knowing everything revealed in scripture about the history of Israel and the candidness with which they looked at sin and their participation in it, our minds immediately ask how could they possibly have felt satisfied in their state of depravity? But is it not true that often times we take our ease in whatever state of spirituality we find ourselves, not concerned about growth, but more satisfied with maintaining the status quo?

**Have we taken our ease in Bible knowledge?** The root of Israel’s problem was indicated by Hosea when he revealed that his brethren were destroyed for a “lack of knowledge” (Hosea 4:6). At some point in their history, generations ignored their responsibility to instruct the coming generations, resulting in the vast majority of the people through the vast majority of the nation’s history being ignorant of their Divine expectations. And as if that was not bad enough, the people lived in their ignorance so long that they became satisfied in that ignorance and did not seek to search out the truth of God’s word. As God’s people, we do not need to fall into the same dangerous trap as did God’s people of the past. Some Christians of Hebrew descent did, and were reprovved as follows: “For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat” (Hebrews 5:12). The only combative method to this problem is to do as Paul instructed Timothy: “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15). We must be careful to not take our ease in Bible knowledge, but continue to study and “grow in the grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18).

**Have we taken our ease in Bible teaching?** Too often the attitude of many with regard to teaching the Bible to others follows a straying line of thought. The young are satisfied to wait until they are older to teach and ignore the responsibilities and opportunities they have now. The older are satisfied with the efforts of their past and shift responsibility to those younger in years. The result of this is that nobody teaches anybody and the world continues to die lost in its sins. Husbands have the responsibility to instruct unbelieving wives; wives have the responsibility to teach unbelieving husbands; parents must instruct their children; Christians must instruct the lost. The church of the first century went abroad preaching and proclaiming the word of God to all those with whom they came in contact. Do we find the necessity of the same in our present era? Christ warned against taking our ease in Bible teaching when He said, “Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest” (John 4:35). Today is the appointed time to teach and reach the lost, but have we taken our ease in Bible teaching?

**Have we taken our ease in Bible obedience?** No effort of godliness put forth is ever done in vain. The perpetual plea of the apostle Paul was stated to the Corinthians: “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:58). The continual need within the lives of all is to dedicate ourselves to stedfast and strict submission to the commands and expectations of Almighty God, knowing of the good guaranteed thereby. Too many, though, are satisfied with their past or current efforts and have no foresight to better themselves in service. Such simply should not be so, because that is what it means to take ease in Bible obedience.

Woe is unto those who have taken their ease in spiritual Zion, the church. We should never be satisfied with the efforts of our past or present, but we should always look toward the future with the anticipation of greater opportunities in Bible knowledge, Bible teaching, and Bible obedience. Have we taken our ease?