

SEED FROM THE SOWER SOBERING MESSAGE TO ALL WHO IGNORES CHRIST

If a person were to die today and stood at the gate of eternity, then the most crucial question in his or her life would not be: “how well did I do?”, “what did I achieve?” or “what kind of reputation will I have?”. Instead, it would be this one question: “where do I stand before God?” And of course, the next question would be: “will I spend eternity in communion with Him, or will I be forever separated from Him?”

Many people in our day and age do not want to think about such questions, but they are the questions to which Scripture points us all, and with good reason. These are no hypothetical questions. They are questions of life, death, and eternity, whereas if we ignore them now because they feel uncomfortable, we will face the reality of them later. Personally, I would rather a person warn me in advance of a violent gang-ambush, rather than not telling me at all because the message is too uncomfortable for me. Where there is an awareness of the danger, there exists the time to prepare and avoid it.

Jesus Himself made clear the urgency of this by commanding His disciples to go into the highways and hedges of the world and make disciples of all nations (gentiles). In other words, He gave a command to all of His followers: “go.” Luke 24:47–48. *Go proclaim* “repentance and remission of sins in My name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem,” *because I made you all* “witnesses of these things.”

Peter on the day of Pentecost gave the message, again, quite simply: repent, be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins and receive the Holy Spirit. What Peter said is what we all should say; there is nothing added and nothing taken away because this is the right response to the saving work of Christ. But have we done it, have we received it, acted upon it, and live it? The issue for many today is that faith in Christ should not be silent but an examined life is always better than one not worth examining at all.

For many, these things do not seem to matter. The many live life as if they rather not be bothered by such messages because they seem irrelevant, unhelpful, a waste of time, or they impose upon their free will and way of life. In this life, the many would rather live for the things of this world and enjoy this life now and let God take care of the rest. But if that is the case, Scripture is clear in that when a person's life is cut off, this is where all the not now's come to a point of decision.

When a person dies, they die, and there is no more opportunity for repentance after this life. The graves are full of "what if's" and "I wish I would have's" but there is no "I'm going back and will do that now" about it. That is why in this life we must seek, receive and live out Christ's truth spiritually, and because of that, that is why the teaching of the Bible should be preached plainly and compassionately to everyone who has an ear to hear.

By the teachings of Scripture, physical death is the separation of the soul from the human body but it is not the end of a person's existence. Every human being is taken by the soul into a place of waiting. For those who have rejected Christ's salvation, they remain under God's until the judgment of the great day. For apart from Christ there is no other means by which to receive forgiveness of sins and the Father's love. They forever exist in hell to await their final judgement at the Great White Throne which we see in Revelation chapter twenty.

We can understand hell then as a temporary place of waiting for one's final sentence as the metaphor of being in jail, waiting to come to trial before the judge for final sentencing to prison. At this judgement, the dead (spiritually dead) are judged according to what is found written in the book of their life on earth. In Scripture, the books being opened are the revealing of one's entire life on earth (from birth to death), weighed against all sixty-six books of the Bible. And that culminates in that one question: "is your name written in the Lamb's Book of Life?" And if your name is not written there, your fate is final and eternal separation from God's presence in the Lake of fire.

Additionally, discussions on this subject of death and the afterlife have to be seen in light of the fact of Scripture that affirms that it is not God's will or

desire for anyone to perish. Instead, it is His will for all to come to Him in repentance (2 Pet 3:9). For this, God suffers long on our behalf, longing and desiring for people to come to Christ by faith and repentance, patiently withholding judgment so that none might perish but that all might have the opportunity to turn toward Him and receive life.

God did not create people to see them spend eternity in hell and a lake of fire that he never prepared for them. Divine judgment is the result of human rebellion, not the failure of God's grace. God's holiness is no respecter of sin, and if it were not for the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ, then we would remain in sin which wages are the reward of death without end. It is for this reason that Jesus died for all of our sins to assure us of eternal life after we leave this world in physical death.

At Revelation 20: 14, the end-time truth is that death and Hades (hell) will be thrown into the lake of fire to fulfill that which was spoken by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:26, when he writes, "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (KJV). The lake of fire is spoken of as the "second death," and the second death here is not annihilation but rather permanent torment and separation from the life-giving presence of God. Physical death is not eternal. All die, and all will rise again, but this second death is the end of unrepentant rebellion.

Revelation 20:15 then quite starkly restates that: "whoever's name is not found written in the Lamb's Book of Life will be thrown alive into the lake of fire for all eternity. These things are not told in Scripture for our terror, but for warning of things to come, for our repentance, and for our hope. For this, God suffers long on our behalf, longing and desiring for people to come to Christ by faith and repentance. His patience is not indifference or delay, but a merciful restraint, giving humanity time and opportunity to turn from sin and receive the life that is found only in Him (cf. 2 Pet 3:9).

The Gospel – εὐαγγέλιον (*eu-an-gelion*) – means good news! It is good news to the human race that the man Christ Jesus has taken our place in judgment. He has taken the punishment we deserve so that all who come to Him in faith might be forgiven, might receive restoration with the Father and

have the gift of eternal life. The question is not if there is an eternity, but how we enter it. But Scripture stands open and inviting every person to make their decision while there is still time, and to trust in Him who alone has conquered sin and death and judgment.

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