

"Tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?"-1King 22:16

"There's A Great Day Coming..."



The New Year is finally here, and many have been preparing for this event. The New Year, for some, is a time to start afresh. Calendars are being filled out in advance for this year; preparations for certain events are being scheduled. Special days like birthdays, Valentine's Day, Easter, and anniversaries are being marked on our calendars. At times a great deal of effort is put into these days to make them very special. But how many of us are prepared to ***"meet thy God"*** (Amos 4:14)? How many of us are ready for that great day? On this day every knee will bow before our Master and King (Rom. 14:11). The day that I am referring to is the Day of Judgment. On this day ***"...each of us shall give account of himself to God"*** (Rom. 14:12).

In Matthew 24:42, Jesus tells his disciples to ***"Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming"***. To the brethren in Thessalonians Paul said, ***"Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober"*** (1Thess. 5:6). And in Revelation 22:12 we read, ***"...behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work"***.

As we contemplate these verses as well as many others, there is a constant reminder of a day when we will meet God in judgment. Have you been preparing for this great day? It seems that the vast majority of humanity is failing to prepare for that day. Many believe that they have a lifetime to prepare, but James reminds us of the uncertainty

of life when he said, ***"whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away"*** (James 4:14). My friends, life is uncertain and today may be the day that we meet God. If we hope to have an eternal home with God we must begin our preparation now!

We cannot make the appropriate preparation to meet God in judgment until we have developed the proper attitude. Our attitude determines what we will do or say, what we believe and how we're going to respond. In the book of Proverbs the writer states, ***"For as he thinks in his heart, so is he..."*** (Prov. 23:7). He also tells a man to ***"Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life"*** (Prov. 4:23). Jesus states, ***"For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks"*** (Matt. 12:34).

In order to please God, we must ***"prepare"*** our ***"heart to seek the Law of the LORD, and to do it"*** (Ezra 7:10). Our attitude should be ***"Speak"*** Lord, ***"for Your servant hears"*** (1 Sam. 3:10). If we develop within ourselves the desire to serve God Almighty, then our actions will reflect this desire, and we will make the necessary preparation to learn what the will of the Lord is.

Our attitude will be like that of David's. We will meditate on God's law day and night (Psa.1:2). David understood that God's word was the only guide which could prepare him to meet his Creator. The noble Bereans, in Acts 17:11, understood the importance of knowing and doing the will of God, and so they searched the Scriptures daily to make sure that what they were taught was in fact the will of God. Paul instructed Timothy to ***"... give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine."*** (1 Tim. 4:13). Are you preparing yourself like these men? When that great day comes we will finally meet God face to face, and our attitude in this life will greatly influence the outcome. Many souls will be lost because their hearts. Souls will be left outside the marriage feast crying "Lord, Lord, open to us" (Matt. 25:1ff)! Outside they will stand along with, ***"the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood"*** (Rev. 22:15). Why, because they thought they had a little more time to prepare for the

HAVE YOU STUDIED YOUR BIBLE TODAY?

coming of the Lord. "There's a great day coming" are you prepared? -Fred Singleton

A People of Refuge

by Larry Rouse



The identifying characteristic

of God's people is their love for and their involvement with one another. These identifying marks of the church of Christ are not merely outward beliefs or outward practices found only in our assemblies, but they are, in fact, shown by our willingness to lift up and care for others whenever their time of need arises. "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (**John 13:34-35**). It is no surprise that Jesus described the separation of the saved from the lost at the judgment day as being determined by service rendered or in service that was ignored to others in their time of need (**Mt. 25:44-46**). Make no mistake that every child of God must be determined to do "all things" the Lord has commanded (**Mt. 28:20**). Still it is the human side of God's commands, the willingness to sacrifice our time, our effort and our money to be intimately involved with others of vastly different backgrounds, that provides the greatest evidence of our faith in God. In order for us to help another, we must first empty ourselves just as our Lord did when He came to earth (**Phil. 2:1-8**).

Everyone who comes to God understands their need of refuge. Our God provides a refuge, not one in a physical place, but in a spiritual place, a place that He describes as His church. When one is baptized in water he is then added by God to a spiritual family described as the body of Christ (**1 Cor. 12:13**). Our primary care comes directly from God

through His written revelation, His daily provisions and through the lives of those who were also washed in the blood of Christ. We come to God broken in our sin, rejected by the world and completely empty of any good that would obligate God to us (**Matt. 5:1-8**). It is at this point where God begins rebuilding our lives, and a major tool that He uses in that process is the local church.

The Reality of the World

In this world we will find rejection, exploitation and slander. King David once cried out to God for refuge in a world that wanted to see him destroyed. "Have mercy on me, O LORD, for I am in trouble; My eye wastes away with grief, Yes, my soul and my body! For my life is spent with grief, And my years with sighing; My strength fails because of my iniquity, And my bones waste away. I am a reproach among all my enemies, But especially among my neighbors, And am repulsive to my acquaintances; Those who see me outside flee from me. {12} I am forgotten like a dead man, out of mind; I am like a broken vessel. For I hear the slander of many; Fear is on every side; While they take counsel together against me, They scheme to take away my life. (**Psalms 31:9-13**)"

God responded to David's call for help by providing such a refuge with Himself and with His people. "Oh, how great is Your goodness, Which You have laid up for those who fear You, Which You have prepared for those who trust in You In the presence of the sons of men! You shall hide them in the secret place of Your presence From the plots of man; You shall keep them secretly in a pavilion From the strife of tongues. Blessed be the LORD, For He has shown me His marvelous kindness in a strong city! For I said in my haste, "I am cut off from before Your eyes"; Nevertheless You heard the voice of my supplications When I cried out to You. Oh, love the LORD, all you His saints! For the LORD preserves the faithful, And fully repays the proud person. Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart, All you who hope in the LORD. (**Psalms 31:19-24**)"

In the New Testament God describes how His people both receive help and give help to those who are weak and wounded. "Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be *dislocated*, but rather be healed. (**Hebrews 12:12-13**)" What a comfort to find others willing to selflessly extend their hands to assist in my time of need! (If it be the Lord's will, more next week FS.).

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“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing” (James 1:2-4).

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