

## Preparing Ourselves To Meet Our Creator

'It is appointed for mankind to die once and after this, judgment' (Hebrews 9:27).

Every person who has been conceived will at some time leave this earth. If there has been conception there will be a death. That fact is part of being born into this fallen world. Adam and Eve were originally created to live forever but after they sinned, they brought death to all creation. 'God commanded Adam saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat but of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, you will not eat of it. The day you eat of it you will surely die"' (Genesis 2:16 & 17). 'God said, "Behold, Adam has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil. If he puts forth his hand and takes of the Tree of Life and eats and lives forever ..."' (sentence unfinished, Genesis 3:22). The thought of humanity living forever in its sinful, fallen state was so abhorrent, it was too much for God to be able to finish His sentence. Adam did not die for nine hundred and thirty years, but he certainly did die just as God told him he would (Genesis 5:5). There is no verse telling us Adam repented of his sin. If Adam had repented perhaps history would have been different but as things are now, everything alive on earth will eventually die.

Before we go to meet with our Creator, it is necessary to prepare our hearts. We will never be given another opportunity to accept Jesus as our Saviour. There is no reincarnation. There is no second chance after we die. While we are on earth, this is the one and only chance to prepare ourselves for eternity. Jesus spoke a lot about the judgement of God. If we are walking with God at the time of our death, we can be sure we will spend eternity with Him. If we are not born-again and have rejected God while on earth, we can be sure God will reject us on Judgement Day. This is what Jesus said, "I tell you, everyone who confesses Me before people, the Son of Man (Jesus) will confess them before the angels of God but those who deny Me in the presence of people will be denied in the presence of the angels of God" (Luke 12:8 & 9). There are scriptures telling us how to prepare ourselves for the day we leave this planet forever.

We need to study the Bible so we are fully aware of what we are preparing ourselves for. The Kingdom of Heaven is what we need to prepare ourselves for where God Himself will live amongst us and be our God while we will be His kings and priests. 'Behold, God's dwelling place is with people. He will dwell with them and they will be His people. God Himself will be with them as their God ... From Jesus the Messiah the Faithful Witness, the Firstborn of the dead and the Ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him Who loves us and washed us from our sins by His blood. He made us to be a Kingdom, priests to His God and Father, to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever, Amen ... He made us kings and priests to our God and we will reign on earth' (Revelation 21:3; 1:5 & 6; 5:10). It is very obvious Christians are not reigning on earth at the moment. The Bible tells us the devil known as the 'Prince of the power of the air' (Ephesians 2:2) is reigning at present. After the devil is locked away Christians will rule and reign with Jesus on this earth during the one thousand years of peace known as the millennium (Revelation 20:1 to 3).

John the Baptist prepared us for Kingdom living by telling us to repent (Mark 1:4). Jesus established it during His ministry repeating the command to repent (Matthew 4:17). The apostles with the Holy Spirit also taught us to repent (Acts 2:38). It is a Holy Kingdom where Jesus lives, where there is no sin, offence, tears, pain or anything miserable (Isaiah 25:8; Revelation 21:4). The only way to get into the Kingdom of God is to repent and live a repentant life. Jesus said, "Truthfully I tell you, unless one is born-again, they cannot see the Kingdom of God ... I tell you, unless one is born of water and spirit they cannot enter into the Kingdom of God ... Do not marvel (do not be surprised) I said to you, 'You must be born-again'" (John 3:3, 5 & 7). Seeing and entering the Kingdom of God are two vastly different things. We can see the outside of a beautiful mansion but cannot see what is behind the walls and doors. Going inside the mansion and seeing the beauty inside the building is obviously very different. This is what Jesus was trying to convey. To see the Kingdom of God on earth, that is to accept God and to be able to accept the sacrifice of Jesus we must repent, be born-again and walk with God. To enter the Kingdom of heaven after we die, we have to obey what Jesus said and be baptised by full emersion if possible. To refuse to be baptised in water is to be disobedient but sometimes baptism is impossible for some reason. Jesus also said we must be filled with the Holy Spirit. By being obedient to the instructions given to us by the Lord, that is to repent, be born-again, be baptised by full immersion in water, to be filled with the Holy Spirit and to believe the Gospel (Mark 1:15) allows us to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven after death.

Why does the Lord demand we do these things? Repentance is the sign we have turned our backs on our old sinful life. True repentance is not merely saying, "Oops, sorry God." Genuine repentance is a complete turn around and is something we cannot do in our own strength. Yes, it is true we must choose to repent but before we get to that point, the Holy Spirit has done a lot of unseen 'groundwork' without our knowing it. The astonished disciples asked Jesus, "Then who can be saved?" Jesus, looking at them (in the certain way He often did), "With men it is impossible but all things are possible with God" (Mark 10:26 & 27). 'When the kindness of God our Saviour and His love toward mankind appeared (in the form of Jesus), not by (our

works of righteousness but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit' (Titus 3:4 & 5). After repenting we must be born-again and show the spiritual fruit of repentance (Matthew 3:8). There are a lot of people who attend church or claim to be Christians but have never been truly born-again; never genuinely and whole heartedly given over their lives to God. Those people may be able to fool other people but they cannot fool God Who sees and knows everything. False or pseudo Christians and those who are 'lukewarm' will be vomited out of God's mouth (Revelation 3:16).

We must be baptised as a sign of the 'death' to our old life and the resurrection to our new life with God. We do this as an act of obedience. 'Do you realise, all we who were baptised into Jesus were baptised into His death? We were buried with Him through baptism to death so just like Jesus was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life. If we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, we will also be part of His resurrection' (Romans 6:3 to 5). When people refuse to be baptised, it is disobedience and they are minimising the utter, complete and absolute sacrifice Jesus made for us. After we have obeyed God in these things, we need to be sealed with the Holy Spirit. 'You have heard the Word of the Truth, the Gospel of your salvation, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise' (Ephesians 1:13). It is impossible for us mere mortals to please God in our own strength. We need the Holy Spirit so ... 'you may walk worthily of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God' (Colossians 1:10). We must have the Holy Spirit to lead and guide us into all truth and also so we can serve Him in our called ministry (John 16:13). After we have obeyed the Lord in these things, we are scripturally holy (1 Corinthians 3:17) and righteous (Romans 3:22). We are made holy and righteous by the blood of Jesus. We cannot do anything good of ourselves. 'Jesus Who knew no sin was made to be sin on our behalf so in Him we might become the righteousness of God' (2 Corinthians 5:21).

As born-again believers and because of the blood of Jesus we can boldly and confidently approach the Lord to fellowship with Him (Ephesians 3:12). However, we must at all times realise He is our awe-inspiring Creator God filled with fire and power. God is not our 'buddy'. We need to stand in awe and not sin (Psalm 4:4). It is a privilege to be invited to approach Him and we need to behave accordingly. We must never flatter Him nor be hypocritical (Psalm 78:35 to 37). We must worship Him with our hearts not just our mouths (Isaiah 29:13). We need to realise, when we go to be with the Lord in heaven we will be guests in His house, which sits within the entire massive Kingdom of God, heavens upon layers of more heavens (Psalm 68:33) and He sits above all the heavens (Psalm 8:1) while they praise Him (Psalm 148:4 & 5). The heavens were created by His Word and the millions of holy angels were created by the breath of His mouth (Psalm 33:6). The expanse of the heavens reveal His handiwork (Psalm 19:1). The Lord has established His throne in the heavens and He rules over everything (Psalm 103:19). God has stretched out the heavens like a curtain (Psalm 104:2).

The voice of God is truly majestic and all powerful (Psalm 29:4). We are being progressively renewed in spiritual knowledge and have been created in the image of our Creator (Colossians 3:10). He is called Wonderful, our Counsellor, our Mighty God, our Everlasting Father, our Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6). He is everything to us (Genesis 1:31) yet He humbled Himself, came to earth as a Man to save us to the point where He bled to death on the cross (Philippians 2:8). In reverence, awe, highest regard and humility we say, "Lord our God, what is mankind that you care for us? Or the children of mankind that you think of us? (Psalm 144:3). The Lord is mighty, massive, everywhere all of the time yet He comes to earth to listen to us. For this we all declare, 'Rejoice in the Lord you righteous! Praise is fitting for the upright. Give thanks to the Lord with the lyre. Sing praises to Him with the harp of ten strings. Sing to Him a new song. Play skilfully with a shout of joy! The Word of the Lord is right. All His work is done in faithfulness. He loves righteousness and justice. The earth is full of the loving kindness of the Lord. By God's Word the heavens were made and all their holy army (of angels) by the breath of His mouth. He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap. He lays up the deeps in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord. Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him for He spoke and it was done. He commanded and it stood firm ... The Lord looks down from heaven. He sees all the sons of men. From the place of His habitation He looks out on all the inhabitants of the earth. He Who fashions all of their hearts and He considers all of their works ... Behold, His eye is on those who fear Him, on those who hope in His loving kindness to deliver their soul from death and to keep them alive during famine' (Psalm 33:1 to 9, 13 to 15, 18 & 19).

With our brothers and sisters, the Jewish people we say, "Rejoice you Gentiles with His people. Praise the Lord all you Gentiles! Let all the peoples praise Him" (Romans 15:10 & 11).

Amen and God bless you.

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