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DO WE HAVE AN APPOINTED TIME TO DIE?

PRAISING AND WORSHIPING IN GOD'S PRESENCE SERIES
"God Has Chosen Zion for His Habitation"

Allow me to answer that question. No. I heard no less than ten people comment concerning an appointed time to die this week. The general consensus is that we have no say in the matter and that our appointed time comes regardless. Imagine an airliner crashing and killing all three hundred people with the same appointed time on the same plane. It just doesn't add up does it? We certainly don't have all the answers concerning death, but an appointed time just isn't biblical. The Word gives a figure concerning our days in Psalm 90:10, *"The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away."* Notice that seventy years are a promise and eighty years can be obtained. I realize that many things can cause premature death, but it is not God's appointed time that causes it. When we believe in the above mentioned, it is not necessary to search for answers nor is it necessary to believe for a long life on this earth. God calls the old people who died in the Bible as being full of years. Finally, God is not the author of death. Death is referred to as an enemy to God in 1 Corinthians 15:26, *"The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."* Satan is exposed as the one who comes against the believers in John 10:10, *"The thief cometh not, but for the steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."* The next time someone says that you have an appointed time to die, just remember this article, smile and say, "I don't believe like that, and then quote John 10:10."

Pastor George Ferrington

No where in the Bible is the "glory" and "power" of the Presence of God better seen than in Psalm 91. This Psalm starts off by telling all who will read or listen, **"He who dwells in the secret place (presence) of the Most High shall remain stable and fixed under the shadow of the Almighty [Whose power no foe can withstand]."** Verse 4 continues by telling us that He (God) will cover (protect) us and that we can trust Him because of His truth and faithfulness, **"He will cover you with His pinions, and under His wings shall you trust and find refuge; His truth and His faithfulness are a shield and a buckler."** These anointed verses continue in 5-7 by reassuring us that we need not be afraid of anything, **"You shall not be afraid of the terror of the night, nor of the arrow [the evil plots and slanders of the wicked] that flies by day, V6, Nor of the pestilence that stalks in darkness nor of the destruction and sudden death that surprise and lay waste at noonday. V7, A thousand may fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand, but it shall not come near you."** These are strong words, words that are only whispered in the Church today. Why is this so? Because few believers have seen, much less experienced, such love and protection. This does not mean that God does not love them nor does it mean that He doesn't want to protect all of us from the enemy. We certainly know that His love is abounding and that His power is absolute. Because of this absence of the supernatural power in so many believer's lives, the question naturally arises, "What must take place in believers in order for them to know or experience God's abounding love and absolute power?" The answer is found in verse 9 when God reveals the mystery of why some are protected and kept from all that the enemy can throw at them, **"Because you have made the Lord your refuge, and the Most High your dwelling place."** He continues in verse 13 by assuring all those who make Him their refuge and dwelling place, that He will give unto them power to tread upon the lion and adder, the young lion and the serpent. This power is given over evil spirits that have set their minds to destroy the believer. Accordingly, God will not allow evil to befall his children who abide in fellowship with Him, and will assist those who believe in trampling these spirits under their feet, thus stopping them from their evil work. We read in verse 13 the support for the above statements: **"You shall tread upon the lion and adder, the young lion and the serpent shall you trample under foot."**

By now we certainly should understand that it is a special thing for a person to make the Lord his refuge and to dwell in the presence of God. But have we ever considered what it means to God our Father? In verses 14-16, God tells us why He will go to such great lengths to love and protect those that seek His presence, **"Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him; I will set him on high, because he knows and understands My name [has a personal knowledge of My mercy, love and kindness; trust and relies on Me, knowing I will never forsake him, no never]."** The above causes God to become very personal and attentive to the person who abides in His presence. So much so that David exhorted in Psalm 27:5-6, **"For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion; in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock. V6, And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me. Therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord."** Here David reveals the secret of abiding under the shadow of the Almighty when he says, **".....Therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord."** The praise of God (Continued on Page Three)

JESUS SAVES

HEARTLOCK

We don't have to go to the Bible to know that mankind is surrounded and enmeshed with sin. Truly, we have only to look into our own hearts. What most Christians long to do and be, is as Christ-like as possible, but we find that our biggest enemy is our own human nature. Our inner self. If true believers find this kind of difficulty, what must others find? The ancients

referred to the heart in another way than we do today. We accept the "heart" as either the muscle/organ that pumps our blood, or the center of our inner choices. But to the ancient world, the "heart" was all of this, and considerably more. Every action of the inner self was considered its realm of control. Many of the ancient world's leaders and dominant figures considered the heart as the source of their will as well as the beginning of their thoughts. Today we deal with the heart as the voice of the inner self or conscience. But that heart is not completely dependable. It will require constant watchfulness. Constant comparison with the knowledge of God's Word. We cannot let our conscience always be our guide, for it will often try to mislead us. We must daily pray that God will keep even our conscience on course.

The Old Testament refers to the heart as deceitful. It is noted that not only is the heart a deceiver, but it is the worst of all deceiving things. On a day to day basis, we are likely to be fooled by many things. But the voice from our own heart is the one we must guard against most vigorously. That voice within is the one that will mislead us the worst. Our thoughts seem to be that if we are God's own, He will not let us be misled. The truth is that unless God protects us from ourselves, we are under no care at all. We are at risk from our greatest enemy, our own lying heart. None of our enemies are more misleading than our own heart. The problem with the heart is that it is diseased with three outcomes.

Sin has a concealing nature. Thus, the diseased heart is all the more dangerous because the sickened person does not know that he has been afflicted. The sickness gives no hint of its existence; the sick one is not conscious of the illness. Most Christians can not fathom why God would be so concerned over them. There is no problem that can be detected, if the heart has come under attack with no warning. There is no knee jerk reaction that told that an attack was imminent, and all seemed well so far as could be determined. We must keep unending watch so that we will not be guiled into the death mode by the counter feelings of our own hearts. A morally "good" person, one that attends church regularly, even tithes, can truly not be on their way to Heaven, but be deceived into hell. All the while believing themselves to be a saved, child of God. While in truth, they are going through the motions.

Sin has the power to make slaves of us. A sinful person can not change their affinity to sin. We can overcome a bad habit, by a superhuman will to succeed, but no amount of will power can relieve us from the effects of sin. There are those that have gone so far in sin that they have become used to it. A part of it if you will. There is no cognizant concept of having sinned. Just a habit. To a person enmeshed in sin, and on a daily basis, there is no will to change. Indeed, there is no note that a change is needed. That is complacency. Habitual and daily sin will so weaken the will that there is no desire to change.

Change which is only external is also not salvation. A person may will to stop a deadly habit; but having stopped, they have not stopped the situation that caused the habit to begin with. A man that is content in his sins, is hopelessly enmeshed and can never be free on his own power. Like the heart, a disease of the will is fatal. Hopelessly sinful, means mortally ill. The sickness can quickly lead to death. It would be correct then to state that all mankind has a case of heart trouble. In a spiritual sense. Cardiac disease is probably still the largest cause of disease deaths in the USA. That is the physical. It has also always had its effect on the soul. The soul that sins, will surely die. Mostly as a result of the nature of the disease. Children younger than the age of consent or knowledge have not yet formed a sinful nature. But when that child reaches an age where he or she loses a battle with temptation, that child then becomes a sinner in need of salvation. That sin will hinder and prevent any fellowship with God, until it is confessed and forgiven.

In this hopelessly sin sickened condition, is there any hope for man or mankind? What can heal the doomed heart? We can not look to our own heart for a cure because it will not tell us the truth about ourselves. We can not look to other men for a truthful solution to our own sickened heart, because they have the same kind of heart from which we suffer. There is no one except one that can peer deep into the recesses of that failing heart, and test the true desires of the source of need to be healed. Our emotional life and intent must be scrutinized. Why do we do the things that we do, think the things we think, and act the way we act? Only God can give us the answers. Answers about ourselves, that we would do well not to ignore because those things that He reveals about us to us is what we will one day be judged on. Not on what we think of ourselves. Our opinions will no longer matter.

We must listen to what God has to say. Many who profess to be Christians have locked their hearts against the love and humility taught by Jesus. Our only hope is to turn to God's only Son, Jesus, to cure our failing hearts. May God Bless Us Every One.

Bro. Vic Clayton

TRULY THERE IS NO CONDEMNATION IN CHRIST JESUS. HOWEVER, IT WOULD BE NICE TO SEE YOU SOMETIME. SOME OF OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS HAVE NOT BEEN TO CHURCH LATELY. THAT'S BETWEEN YOU AND GOD. WE MISS YOU, AND THAT'S BETWEEN US.

FAITH BY EXAMPLE

This is a true story of something that happened just a few years ago at USC. There was a professor of philosophy there who was a deeply committed atheist. His primary goal for one required class was to spend the entire semester attempting to prove that God couldn't exist. His

students were always afraid to argue with him because of his impeccable logic. For twenty years, he had taught this class and no one had ever had the courage to go against him. Sure, some had argued in class at times, but no one had ever really gone against him because of his reputation. At the end of every semester on the last day, he would say to his class of 300 students, "If there is anyone here who still believes in Jesus, stand up!" In twenty years, no one had ever stood up. They knew what he was going to do next. He would say, "Because anyone who believes in God is a fool. If God existed, he could stop this piece of chalk from hitting the floor and breaking. Such a simple task to prove that He is God, and yet He can't do it." And every year, he would drop the chalk onto the floor of the classroom and it would shatter into a hundred pieces. All of the students would do nothing but stop and stare. Many of the students thought that God couldn't exist. Certainly, a number of Christians had slipped through, but for 20 years, they had been too afraid to stand.

Well, a few years ago there was a freshman who happened to enroll. He was a Christian, and had heard the stories about this professor. He was required to take the class for his major, and he was afraid. But for three months that semester, he prayed every morning that he would have the courage to stand up no matter what the professor said, or what the class thought. Nothing they said could ever shatter his faith. . . he hoped.

Finally, the day came. The professor said, "If there is anyone here who still believes in God, stand up!" The professor and the class of 300 students looked at him, shocked, as he stood up at the back of the classroom. The professor shouted, "You FOOL!!! If God existed, he would keep this piece of chalk from breaking when it hits the floor!" He proceeded to drop the chalk, but as he did, it slipped out of his fingers, off his shirt cuff, onto the pleat of his pants, down his leg, and off his shoe. As it hit the floor, it simply rolled away unbroken. The professor's jaw dropped as he stared at the chalk. He looked up at the young man, and then ran out of the lecture hall. The young man who had stood, proceeded to walk to the front of the room and shared his faith in Jesus for the next half hour. 300 students stayed and listened as he told of God's love for them and of His power through Jesus.

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from the heart with of our might is the key that causes us to enter into His presence. In Psalm 91:15-16, God continues His exhortation of the believer who abides in His presence by saying, "**He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. V16, With long life will I satisfy him, and show him My salvation.**"

As we have seen, dwelling in "Spiritual Zion" (in God's presence) allows the believer to experience God in love and power, but that is not the only advantage. The believer also gains the "Prophetic Burden" as he praises God with musical instruments, song and dance. The "Prophetic Burden" is so very special because it gives us insight where there was only darkness before. As the believer enters into God's presence through the mode of praise, the Spirit of the Lord comes upon the believer and causes him to prophesy. This is strongly supported in the Old Testament as Elisha prophesied to Jehoshaphat only after he had called for a minstrel, and heard him play. This story is found in 2 Kings 3:15, "**But now bring me a minstrel. And while the minstrel played, the hand and power of the Lord came upon [Elisha]. V16, And he said, Thus says the Lord,**". As the minstrel played the song unto the Lord, the hand of the Lord came upon the prophet and he prophesied on the instruments. This idea is again supported in Scripture in 1 Chronicles 25:1, which states, "**Also David and the chiefs of the host [of the Lord] separated to the [temple] service some of the sons of, who should prophesy—being inspired—with lyres, harps and cymbals....**". It makes me sad that there are many churches that are labeled "spirit-filled," but do not have a flow of the prophetic voice of the Spirit of God. Why is this? I personally believe that it is because of self imposed restrictions and inhibitions that will not allow the body to praise and worship God, thus releasing that "body" into the spiritual presence of God and the prophetic Word. This key of praise was considered to be so important that according to Josephus, the Jewish historian, every man in the School of the Prophets had to be able to play a musical instrument. This statement is supported in scripture in 1 Samuel 10:5-6: "**After that you will come to the hill of God, where the garrison of the Philistines is; and when you come to the city, you will meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with harp, tambourine, flute, and lyre, before them, prophesying. V6, then the Spirit of the Lord will come upon you mightily and you will show yourself a prophet with them; and you will be turned into another man.**" *Please consider what I am about to say.* If you want to have God's anointing in your life, and you want to hear the voice of the Spirit in prophecy, you must learn to take the "Key of David" (key of praise), and use it continually in your life in order to come into God's presence. As we enter into the praise of our God, and begin to worship Him in "Spiritual Zion", we will see the "key" open the gate or door into the court of the Lord, thus allowing us to experience God and His prophetic Word. We also will see the blessing that God has promised us in His Word being fulfilled before our eyes. These blessings are meant for "Spiritual Zion" (the Church) and are available for all who will come into "His Presence."

In next month's article, we will look into Abraham's blessing being manifested in Zion. May God richly bless each of you at the Fellowship, and may His love be found in our Church Body as we praise and worship our God in truth.

Gene R. Brown, Associate Pastor



"I thought you invited me to be a Premises Keeper!"

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