

How Much Time Is Left?

A man's house was burning. At the first sign of smoke he had rushed out to buy a fire extinguisher. Before he returned, the roof and walls had collapsed, destroying all his furnishings.

A man's doctor warned him of a bad heart condition. From the doctor's office he went immediately to the insurance salesman, but he was refused in his attempts to provide financial protection for his wife and children.

A man was endowed by God with a strong, healthy body. Because his appetite was stronger than his moral convictions, he squandered his powers until dissipation brought him to weakness. Then disease struck and without a normal reserve of strength, he could not be cured by the surgeon of what would ordinarily have been a minor ailment.

A man had a Bible, knew the church was interested in him, had friends who regularly encouraged him to live more with God. With consistency, he made reasons not to, while his conscience grew fainter, and the black wrong and white right faded into medium gray. When the critical temptation came, he was only faintly aware of it, and certainly he had no moral reserve to resist it.

David said it this way: "For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You in a time when You may be found; surely in a flood of great waters they shall not come near him" (Psalm 124:6). Jesus said the same thing in describing the five foolish virgins (Matt. 25:1-1f).

When the operation begins, it is too late to take vitamin pills. When the battle begins, it's too late to train the troops. When the flood waters rise, it's too late to find a rock foundation. When Satan attacks, they can only resist who have put on their armor.

Memorize that verse now; when you need it, you won't have time. Worship God this Lord's Day; when you need that strength, you won't have time. Repent of that sin now; when Christ comes, you won't have time. Renew your broken connection with the Lord now; at your funeral, you won't have time. Become a Christian now; in the judgment day you won't have time. Don't be almost persuaded, but lost -- obey the Lord and be saved!

- by James Cooper

Is Silence License?

"For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood" (Heb 7:14). Jesus could not have been a priest when He lived on the earth - He would have been in violation of God's Law - He would have been acting on the silence of the Scripture. The silence of the Scripture does not give us permission to act; it confines the actions by which we may serve God.

Many believe that if the Scriptures do not forbid something then it is allowable with God's blessings. Can you imagine the "Pandora's box" that principle opens? That kind of thinking will influence us to direct of our own lives, which God said we are not capable of doing (Jer 10:23)!

The apostles once wrote these words to Christians outside Judea. *"We have heard that some of our number to whom we gave no instruction have disturbed you with their words, unsettling your souls"* (Acts 15:24). The apostles said that anyone who speaks without their authority disturbs the unity of the church and unsettles the followers of Christ. That is why Peter commanded, *"If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God"* (1 Pet 4:11).

We should all take a good hard look at the organization, work and worship of our churches. Do we align with New Testament instruction, or do we act on the silence of the Scripture? This principle applies to our personal lives as well.

- by Boyd Jennings

Fools

Fools and foolishness are given ample coverage in the book of Proverbs. Combining descriptions found there with other biblical references, we can roughly define these people as:

- obstinate,

- not able to fathom themselves as wrong,
- stupidly stubborn,
- rushing headlong and without reason into life,
- close-minded to the havoc they cause themselves and others,
- senseless,
- and lacking discernment and understanding.

In their final, naked form, fools and foolishness describe those who have chosen to disregard God, those who have lived their lives as if God and His law did not exist.

- by Jim King

A Great King

Hezekiah is remembered as one of the great kings in Judah. The nation prospered under his rule and his royal record draws high marks (2 Kings 18:5-6). What was it that made him a great king? And, what might we learn that will help us be effective servants of God?

First, it should be observed that his greatness did not come based upon his family relationships. His father, Ahaz, was a horrible ruler – even offering some of his own children as sacrifice to pagan gods (2 Kings 16:2-4). But Hezekiah overcame the terrible heritage passed down from his father. We, too, can overcome the unfortunate ‘baggage’ of our kinship (Ezekiel 18:20).

Furthermore, Hezekiah was not great because he was ‘older and wiser’ when he came to office. He was only 25 years old when he assumed the throne (2 Kings 18:1-2), yet he was diligent and faithful from day one (2 Chron. 29:1-3). Young folks today need to realize that they have great potential in God’s service – even in their youth.

The defining statement about Hezekiah is in 2 Kings 18:3: *“He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord.”* Notice that it was not what was right in the sight of men, but of the Lord. Men would have likely wanted to continue in the sinful ways of Hezekiah’s father, but this new king was determined to do what God desired. And this was no mere lip service to God, but real action. *“He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves.”* He even *“brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses made”* because the people had turned it into an idol (vs. 4). There was no compromising spirit in Hezekiah. *“He clave to the Lord, and departed not from following him, but kept his commandments”* (vs. 6)

Hezekiah’s example of obedience to God and loyal service stands as a worthy example for us.

- by Greg Gwin