

## **What Would They Say?**

Suppose that what others think and say about us would be the determining factor as to where we spend eternity? What would others say about you?

1) What would your children say? Parents have grave responsibilities in bringing their children up in the admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4). Would your children put in a good word for you at the judgment if it were needed? Would they say you spent time with them in “training them in the way they should go”? (Prov. 22:6). Do your children think you set a good example for them (Matt. 5:13-16)? Would you go to heaven or hell if what your own children say about you decided it?

2) What would your spouse say? Husbands and wives must have the proper love and respect for each other (Eph. 5:22-31). How husbands and wives treat each other may well determine their eternal destiny! If what your spouse thinks and says of you in judgment is considered, how would it go? Husbands and wives need to live as to be “heirs together of the grace of life...” (I Pet. 3:7).

3) What would your employer say? We are commanded to work (Eph. 4:28; I Thess. 4:11-12). We need to put in a honest day’s work for an honest day’s pay! Many employees sleep on the job, steal from the company, and work as little as possible to get by. If your employer’s check sheet determined your eternal destiny—where would it be?

4) What would your parents say? Young people must accept responsibility for themselves. The young need to be taught to honor, respect and obey their parents (Eph. 6:1-3). What do your parents really think of you? Have you brought shame and disgrace on them? If, in judgment, the word of your parents decided your fate, what would it be?

5) What would your neighbors say? The Lord used the relationship of a neighbor to teach a lesson (Lk. 10:36). Do you treat your neighbors as you wish to be treated? Have you tried to teach them the gospel? What would they say of you in judgment?

6) What would God say? The most important thing will be, what will God say? We will be judged by the word of God (Jn. 12:48; Rom. 2:16).

**- by Johnie Edwards**

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## **Salvation by Experience?**

Several years ago I had a conversation with a man who, when he learned I was a preacher, wanted to relate his “salvation experience.” He said he looked out his bedroom window one bright, moonlit night and saw in his garden a cross with blood on the center of it. The next morning, he investigated further and saw that it was a cabbage head with a ripe tomato right in the center. Since he could not explain how it got there, he took it as a miraculous “witness” to his salvation. Many have told a similar “experience” and based their hope of salvation on it.

Isn’t it amazing that people can come up with such opinions, in spite of the fact that the New Testament contains no such cases of conversion? No, not one convert in the New Testament ever based his hope of salvation on an “experience” of this nature. While miraculous events did accompany a few of them, they were not for the purpose of convincing the sinner that he had been converted and was now accepted by God.

A miracle occurred on the day of Pentecost, but not upon the audience. The miracle occurred upon the apostles and enabled them to “speak as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:4). Those converted heard the apostles’ preaching, believed and were commanded to “repent and be baptized” for the remission of their sins (Acts 2:38).

Philip “preached Christ” to the Samaritans (Acts 8:5) and his message was “confirmed” (Mark 16:20) by “the signs which he did” (Acts 8:6). But the Samaritans received no ‘experience of salvation.’ The Bible says, “when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women” (Acts 8:12).

Miracles accompanied the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch, but the eunuch never knew anything about them. An angel told Philip to go to the Jerusalem-Gaza road, and when he arrived, the Spirit told him to “join the chariot” in which the eunuch was riding. But Philip “preached Jesus” to the man (Acts 8:35), and when they came to a certain water the eunuch

wanted to be baptized (Acts 8:36). He was baptized upon a confession of his faith, not upon the relation of his experience.

In the Bible, men heard the gospel, believed in Christ, repented of sins and were baptized. Now, as then, this is what one must do to be saved.

- by **James E. Cooper**

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### ***You Finish This Story . . .***

There was once a congregation in which every member was just like you. Each one cooperated and supported every phase of the work just like you. Everyone worked as hard and attended the same services and gospel meetings that you did. The elders, deacons, and preachers were all as interested in the church as you are. They put the same emphasis on recreation, business, and other material affairs that you do. Each member contributed monetarily just like you do. **Within a year or so, this congregation . . .**

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### ***Rest from What?***

Someone has observed: "One disadvantage of having nothing to do is that you can't stop and rest." Well said! There are many lazy people in our society who need to learn that lesson.

There are some folks in the Lord's church that need to learn that this principle also applies spiritually. The Scriptures give us this promise: "I heard a voice from heaven saying Unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them" (Rev 14:13).

Rest from our labors is what we've been promised. But some Christians need to ask, "What labors have I been engaged in?"

- Have I been faithful in attendance? Have I shown my love for God and encouraged my brethren by attending every service, including Sunday and Wednesday night?

- Have I tried to teach lost souls what they need to do to be saved? Have I been involved in the various personal work efforts of the local congregation?

- Can I be counted on to teach classes when needed? Or do I shirk this responsibility, leaving it for others?

- Do I pitch in and help with the chores of cleaning the building, doing repair work, preparing the communion, etc. Or do I simply expect others to get these jobs done?

- Do I gladly serve others, giving rides, visiting the sick, helping the needy, and admonishing the weak?

Remember that the Lord has promised rest from our labors. But if we're not working now, we don't have anything to be looking forward to. No work - no rest. Think!

- by **Greg Gwin**