

# Scriptural Truths

## E-Mail Meditations

The Lord Will Come . . . Perhaps Today . . . Behold, I Come Quickly . . . Rev. 22:7

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### To Be or Not To Be, That Is The Question

#### Introduction

In William Shakespeare's play, "Hamlet Act 3 Scene 1", Hamlet is contemplating a major decision as he considers dying by suicide or living with the suffering and unfairness of life. As he speaks Ophelia is waiting for Hamlet to see her. In hiding are Claudius and Polonius listening to every word Hamlet speaks. Then in His contemplation, Hamlet says:

To be, or not to be - that is the question;  
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune  
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles  
And by opposing end them; to die: to sleep  
No more, and by a sleep to say we end  
The heartache and the thousand natural shocks  
That Flesh is heir to: 'tis a consummation  
Devoutly to be wished - To die: to sleep.

#### Contrasting ways of considering the question

For a person contemplating suicide:

- a) When Hamlet spoke those words it weighed heavily on his heart and mind, "To be", that is to stay in this world and suffer the unfairness of life or "not to be", that is to die. It is a question that perhaps many individuals have asked:
  - i) Shall I live in this weary world of hardship and suffering or shall I die by suicide?
  - ii) Shall I live in this pain-wrecked body with cancer metastasized throughout it and no hope of recovery or shall I die with doctor's assistance?

For every individual on the face of the earth, the question is:

- a) "To be" in Heaven with its peace and glories, praising the Lamb and God, or "Not to be" in Heaven, but "to be" under the fierceness of divine wrath for all eternity? Since the question Hamlet asked was of little consequence because it was only a play, but for an individual whose outlook is black and hopeless with nothing that can give satisfaction, it is a great deal more serious. They have tried to have perfect satisfaction but found none. Then, many experiences the darkness of the words, "Can't get no satisfaction". I try and I try and I try. The dark tragedy is that many have never heard, nor are interested in the One who offers true satisfaction, who offers living

water that results in one never thirsting again. That One is God and He informs us, “At His right hand there are pleasures forevermore” (Psa. 16:11).

- ii) “As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness” (Psa. 17:15).
- iii) “The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD that seeks him: your heart shall live forever” (Psa. 22:26).
- iv) “They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house, and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures” (Psa. 36:8).

Sadly, it is possible for a saint also to lose hope and the future seems nothing but dark, or in writhing pain, and sadly some have asked the same question and then committed suicide. The first thing to be emphasized is, nothing they can ever do can result in the loss of salvation. Salvation is not by works, either for salvation or to keep salvation. The salvation God graciously gives is an “eternal salvation” (Heb. 5:9) that “cleanseth us from all sin” (1 Jn. 1:7), “and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53:6). The penalty for all the sins of all humanity has been endured by the Lord Jesus. That includes all the sins committed before salvation and after salvation. At times the mind, even of a believer, can get so depressed, they just give up. Recently I sat with a brother who was dying and he said, “I never knew dying was so hard”. There is a world of difference between idealism and realism and in an ideal situation a saint of God would never contemplate suicide, but the scripture says, “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor. 10:12). We have no idea in what state our minds could be in as life begins its closing days.

### [Applying the question to the Lord](#)

I am thinking of the prayer of the Lord in Gethsemane, and while He never said the words, the question was there. “To be” the sacrifice for sin, “or not to be” the sacrifice for sin. In eternity past there was a point in time, if it can be called time when the decision was made for the Son of God to take the guilty sinner’s place and suffer for their sins. It was decided that He would come to earth “to seek and to save the lost” (Lk. 19:10) so that “whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jn. 3:16). In Gethsemane the crucial execution of that plan of grace was only hours away, and, if the Lord had thought of the question how would He have answered?

- a) “To be” is the sacrifice for sins to reconcile man to God and bring peace and the assurance of salvation to the whosoever.
- b) Or, “not to be” the sacrifice for sin. Like a mighty victor He moved onward to Calvary, and in the three hours of darkness bore the full penalty for the sins of the individual. Glorious are the words paraphrased, “He was wounded for MY transgressions, He was bruised for MY iniquities: the chastisement for MY peace was laid on Him; and by His stripes, I can be healed”.

### [The question applied to the individual](#)

What shall my answer be:

- a) “To be” reconciled to God and accept the gift of salvation, know God as my Father and Heaven as my ultimate destiny for eternity.
- b) Or, “Not to be” in fellowship with God but be assured that irrespective of that which others say, I will not be in Heaven but in Hell. I will not have peace with God but retain being an enemy of God (Rom. 5:10) by doing my own will. I will not depend on Christ alone for salvation but depend on my works.

No one can answer the question for each individual, it is a decision between God and the individual alone. As Hamlet said, “To be or not to be, that is the question” and only the individual can answer it before God and for eternity. Wise is the individual who accepts the sacrifice of the Son of God and is saved for all eternity.

... Rowan Jennings



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