

Scriptural Truths

E-Mail Meditations

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

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The Leading Question and Intercession

Introduction

One of the appellations which can be applied to divine Persons is that of “Questioner”. God was the first questioner when He called Adam saying, “Where art Thou?” (Gen. 3:9), then later to Cain asking him, “What hast thou done?” (Gen. 4:10). The Lord also asked questions such as, “What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?” (Mk. 10:51) or, “Wilt thou be made whole?” (Jn. 5:6). One of the most thought provoking questions ever asked by God to Israel was, “How shall I give thee up?” (Hos. 11:8). The questioning of God is never to elicit understanding, but to have the individual stop and consider their present condition whither it is spiritual, geographical, or physically.

Man also asked very thought provoking questions such as, “What must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:30). When the Lord spoke to Nicodemus about being born again, being puzzled, Nicodemus asked, “How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?” (Jn. 3:4). Among man’s questions is one which is similar to the one in Hosea 11:8 which asks, “How shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me?” (Gen. 44:34). While the passage has several avenues of exegesis, yet for this consideration the verse is being taken on the evangelical level.

The Background

Perhaps some twenty plus years before the happenings of this passage, Joseph had been sold by his brothers to a band of Midianites who were going to Egypt. In the intervening years there had been no contact between any of them. Then there came a time there was a famine over all the face of the earth (Gen. 41:56) and the only food was to be found in Egypt (Gen. 41:57). Without the brothers being aware of it, Joseph had been made, what we would call, the Minister of Health and welfare.

- a) The brothers were sent to buy corn (Gen. 42:2) and while Joseph recognized them, they did not recognize him. In his interrogation he asked about the father and other family members and made the stipulation that they would not be able to purchase any more food supplies unless they brought their younger brother with them (Gen. 42:15).
- b) In due time the food they had was used and Jacob wanted the brothers to go to Egypt again to get more corn (Gen. 43:2). With great reluctance Jacob let his only child remaining, born of Rachel, go with them (Gen. 43:3-14).
- c) In Egypt they were dined and cared for and then let go back home (Gen. 43:16-44:2). However, before they started the homeward trek there was put in the sack of the younger brother Benjamin, Joseph’s silver cup, a matter which they were totally ignorant of.
- d) Having gone a little way Joseph sent his servant after them and accused them of stealing the silver cup concerning which there was an agreement made that with whoever the cup was found, he would be Joseph’s servant. What dismay there must have been when it was discovered that the silver cup was in Benjamin’s sack (Gen. 44:4-12).

- e) It was then two things occurred:
 - i) An intercession (Gen. 44:18-34)
 - ii) The question (Gen. 44:34)

The Question

“How shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me?” (Gen. 44:34)

- a) The Lord told a parable about the prodigal son (Lk. 15:32) and it is easy to miss that which the elder son never did. One can imagine, he sat at the table every day and saw an empty seat where his brother used to sit and it meant nothing to him. He undoubtedly spoke to his father about the farm, etc., but we never read once of him going out of his way to find him, and we ask, “Where was the love?”
- b) Judah became the spokesman for the family and showed he was a changed man who loved his brother Benjamin and his father. Furthermore, he knew the love his father had for the lad and the sorrow it would bring to his heart if he never came back (Gen. 44:29, 31, 33). God has said, “I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked” (Ezek. 33:11), but is ever longing that all men would be saved. God is proclaiming through every death one is associated with, every severe illness one has, that it is time to be reconciled to God. Judah knew that the Father would wait with open arms and a heart filled with delight if the son came home. How wonderful are the words, “There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth” (Lk. 15:10). It is not that the angels are rejoicing, but it is the God in whose presence they are who is rejoicing.
- c) There are many of us who know God as Father, but that which we must ask ourselves is, “How burdened, passionate am I concerning those who are unsaved of our loved ones?” Every day we see people, hundreds of them, some old, some young, white, yellow or black, men and women cultured and uncouth, wealthy or poor, yet every individual we see in life through television, or on video, are going to eternity. Every individual we hear, through radio, tape, iTunes, etc., is going to eternity. On average, every minute approximately 107 people die, or one every 1.78 seconds, every hour 6,390 people go into eternity, every day 153,000 people breath their last on earth. If I ever had a series of Gospel meetings I would have, if possible, a banner across the platform and on it would be written, “Heaven or Hell for eternity-*where?*”. What anguish to know that I am banished from the presence of God for all eternity, no light, no hope. How then can I, who am saved, not plead with God on their behalf, saying, “How shall I go up if the lad not be with me?” (Gen. 44:34)

The Intercession

It was in the awareness of the dreadfulness of that which lay ahead Jacob began the most serious prayer he possibly ever made. As it is read one can feel the deep pathos and urgency in his words because:

- a) Of the seriousness of the situation. There is nothing superfluous here, no patronizing, no minimizing.
- b) The unity of the family is at stake and there was danger of it being broken forever.
- c) Time was of the essence for to plead the case.
- d) If he failed and no kindness was shown by the “man”, Benjamin would be a slave in a distant land as long as life lasted.

This was actual prayerful intercession for Judah felt in himself the danger Benjamin was in.

- a) The Lord wept over Jerusalem saying, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!” (Matt. 23:37). It was the unveiling of the burden of His heart, longing for their repentance. The Lord knew the dark days of death and destruction which would come in a few years under the Romans, many of those in that city that night would be slaughtered and perish in Hell eternally.
- b) When on the cross He prayed, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Lk. 23:34). Full well the Lord knew that there was such a mixture of spiritual understanding around the cross. There were some who hated Him, some were pagan, some were without feeling, yet all were going to eternity. How did He pray for them, casually or with fervency?
 - i) Judah (Gen. 44:18) was pleading for one person and for them the worst that could happen was a lifetime of slavery. Those we ought to have a burdened prayer for are not going to die and that is it. Furthermore, the duration of the individual in Hell is not the same as their duration on earth. They will not be playing golf or having a drink with their buddies. They will be in blackness of darkness, in unspeakable emotional and physical pain with memories of times they rejected the gospel. They will know there will never be any escape, there will never be heard again the gospel verse, “Come unto me and be ye saved”. All hope gone forever if they die as they are in their sins (Jn. 8:24).

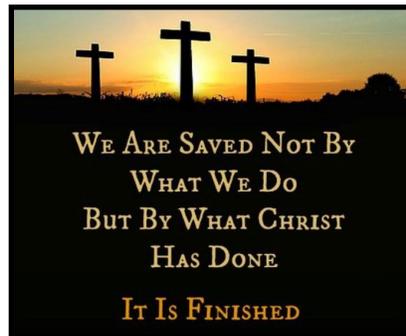
How much longer do we have to plead for the “lad?” The fact is we have no way of knowing because:

- a) We do not know when the Spirit will speak to them for the last time, for God says, “My Spirit shall not always strive with man” (Gen. 6:3).
- b) We do not know when they will die, for the scriptures say, “I know not the day of my death” (Gen. 27:2).
- c) We do not know when the Lord will come for He simply gives the pledge, “I will come again” (Jn. 14:3); “Be ye therefore ready” (Lk. 12:40).

Conclusion

While we have opportunity, if there is any love in our hearts we will ask God to burden our hearts for the unsaved whither they are the closest of relatives, friends, people where we live, or people in foreign lands. Where they will spend eternity is totally dependent on whither they accept or reject Christ as the only Saviour and do it while in this life. There is no exchanging places afterward (Lk. 16:26). Well might we repeat the words of the Lord, “O that they were wise, that they would consider their latter end!” (Deut. 32:29).

. . . *Rowan Jennings*



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