

## SOMETHING TO CHEW ON

A little boy was counting the number of times the malfunctioning clock chimed and much to his amazement, the clock struck thirteen times. He quickly ran to his mother exclaiming, "Mother, its later than it has ever been before!"

Although the clock may be incorrect, the little boy's statement is truer than he realizes. It is later than it has ever been before. Paul put it plainly when he said, "now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."

As we come to the end of each year, we realize that we are nearer to the return of our Lord than we have ever been before. We've heard some complain when they hear talk like this and they almost parrot the words that Peter attributes to the scoffers which say, "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."

Now of course, no true believer would say this, yet if we become impatient when we hear of the coming of the Lord and say, "we have heard this since we were a child and he still has not come," we might not be looking for him with the eager anticipation that Paul and Peter wanted us to have.

Actually the return of Christ is only a heart beat away for any of us. For those who have died, (fallen asleep in the Lord) Christ has come, for their next conscious moment will be in the presence of their Lord. We which are alive and remain, need to feel the urgency of the times and realize that there is a day "when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ." That day is nearer than it has ever been before and we are well advised to prepare for it as if it were tomorrow.

As we count down the few remaining days of each year, we should be thinking: "what have we done in the 360 plus days behind us that really mattered eternally?" We have lost count how many times we may have brushed our teeth or the number of hours we slept away, but what did we do for Jesus? When we face him at his judgment seat he will expect us to be able to answer that question. Can we answer it now? If we have trouble answering the question now, it can serve as a warning, so that we will be able to have a better answer for the days that may be ahead of us in the New Year to come.

Many firms find that goals are more easily accomplished if quotas are set. They have production quotas, sales quotas, etc., and perhaps if we set a few quotas of our own we would accomplish more.

Visit a needy soul, read at least one good book every month, do our Bible readings every day. We can all think of many more to add to our list.

Now, of course, we can do these things without the aid of a formal quota but perhaps we would be more efficient in the use of our time if we rationed it out.

When it comes right down to it, we are each going to be accepted or rejected by Christ according to the way we used our time. We each have been created equal in this one respect for we all have 24 hours each day, but some place a higher value upon it than others. Our future is going to be determined by the way we spend our time.

As we see the years draw to an end, can we be accused of having filled them with eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting and building? None of these things are a sin in themselves but they are all things that take up our time, our energies and our thoughts. If this is all we did in the year we had better plan to put God first in our lives in the days

that are ahead or we will be no better than the citizens of Sodom who were accused by Jesus of doing these things and having no time for God.

"See then that you walk circumspectly," says Paul, "not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil." "Knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."

As each New Year approaches, we wonder what will happen during the New Year. It could very well be that it will be the year of the start of circumstances in Israel that will shortly lead to the return of our Lord. We are living in a great age whether or not we are of a great age. Let us each live each year as if it were our last, whether we are 16, 60 or 101.

How can we do that? By realizing that there is really only one purpose for our individual existence. When Jesus comes to call us to his judgment seat, that moment is the end of our mortal life as we know it. At that point we will either become immortal and live forever, which will make 101 seem like a tiny speck of time, or we will be destroyed; and that will mean that our entire life of however many years will have been a total waste.

We are now determining which verdict will be ours. It is the Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom, so we know He wants us in it.

What does the future hold in store for us that is more important than the kingdom? A new job, money, a sport, a new home? These things will seem unimportant when we face the Lord Jesus Christ and he asks us, "What have you done for me?"

How wise we are to decide to make the start of the year our year for the Lord. It will be a great year if we do. It will be a disaster if we don't, no matter what else we may achieve. If we completely surrender ourselves to God in the new year, He will cause all things to "work together for our good" for "the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry."

Some of the things that would have upset us and many of the trials that would have caused us concern will no longer bother us, for we will have learned in whatsoever state we are in, therewith to be content.

Yes, the year ahead can be the best year of our life if we live it as if it were our last. Even if it isn't, it will be better because we lived it wholly and totally for the Lord. Let us decide right now that we will do our ultimate best to surrender our lives to God. We join Paul in exclaiming, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

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