

THE SOWER
ARTHUR (IL) CHURCH OF CHRIST
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Have you visited our web site lately? (www.Arthurcoc.com)

“PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD”

As Israel had become comfortable with social corruption, apostasy, and luxurious living, God called Amos to warn them of coming disaster. Among Amos’s words are those found in Amos 4:12: *“Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.”*

Two things stand out in this statement: (1) We will someday meet God; and (2) we are given an opportunity to prepare before the event.

We will all, “small and great”, meet God to answer for our lives (2 Corinthians 5:10-11; Hebrews 9:27; Revelation 20:11-14). We may ignore Him now, but it will be to our peril.

While we live, we are given the opportunity to prepare. All are guilty before God (Romans 3:19-21), but remission of sins is promised through Christ’s blood (3:24-26). The believer, in repentance and baptism, receives the promise (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:1-6). Walking in the light of Christ we continue in His grace, with the assurance that His blood continually cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:7). With only our good works to commend us when we at last stand before God, we would be woefully unprepared.. Only in Christ is salvation secure (John 14:6).

Are you prepared to meet God?

--Ron

CHANGES

Politicians promise changes. In all our lives we find constant change. We never ;know from one day to the next what to expect. Some changes may be for the good, and others for the worse. Some things, however, never change. The laws of nature, for instance, are constant. From creation, a stone dislodged from a cliff would fall at 96 feet per second. That has not changed. Water that thousands of years ago would boil at 180 degrees at sea level, will do the same today.

Some seem to think that God is changeable. Otherwise they would not think to make His word obsolete. However, the psalmist prayed, *“Thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end”* (Psa. 102:27). Moses declared, *“God is not a man that he should lie; neither the son of man that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?”* (Numbers 23:19).

It is as true today as it was true almost 2000 years ago, that Jesus is *“the way, the truth, and the life”*, *the one way to the Father* (John 14:6). It is as true today as it was then that response to the gospel by obedient faith in Christ will secure the forgiveness of sins and acceptance into the Lord’s body, the church (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38, 47).

-Ron

OVERCOMING FEAR

“Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night: nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday” (Psalms 91:5-6).

We live in a day that is increasingly threaten-ing. Some of our fears are without foundation, while others are very real. How do we face such fears?

Jesus warned His disciples that they would face false teachers, wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes and persecutions, but urged them, *“See that ye be not troubled”* (Matthew 24:4-5, 13). While such occurrences naturally disturb us, in Christ the believer has an assurance of the Lord’s presence and future hope. Troubling things have occurred and will continue to occur in our world until Jesus returns, but our faith is in Him who has overcome this world. He assured His disciples, *“These things I have spoken to you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation (trouble): but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world”* (John 16:33).

-Ron

(The following prayer-poem, from an unknown source, is in keeping with the above article.)

“EVERY DAY”

*Every day I need you, Lord,
But this day especially;
I need some extra strength
To face whatever is to be.*

*This day more than any day
I need to feel you near,
To fortify my courage
And to overcome my fear.*

*By myself, I cannot meet
The challenge of the hour.
There are times when humans help,
But we need a higher power.*

*To assist us bear what must be borne,
And so, dear Lord, I pray—
Hold on to my trembling hand
And be near to me today.*

(While on the subject of fear, I'll include the following devotional taken from the Internet, and sent to me some time ago from Paul Kent.)

“There is no fear in love: but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.” (1 John 4:18)

We are all called to fear God and keep His commandments. What does it mean to “fear God”? Is it fear of punishment or a helpful reverence for His presence in our lives?

Probably it is a combination of both. When we don't have a right relationship with God, and we know we are going to fall into His judgment, it is time to be afraid. When we are walking after the Spirit in the blood of Jesus, fearing God is a helpful reverence to continue to do His will. When we find that perfect love in Christ, our fear will be cast away, along with the punishment. If we only live with the fear of punishment, we will not be perfected by love. Let's be in Christ and walking after the Spirit every day.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

THE BIBLE AND AMERICAN EDUCATION

The Book of Proverbs tells us that “the fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge” (1:7). The American Founders certainly understood this truth, and from the beginning stressed the relationship between a sound education based upon biblical absolutes and the future of the nation.

In 1776 the future President John Adams said, “Statesmen...may plan and speculate for liberty but it is religion and morality alone which can establish the principles upon which freedom can securely stand.” That stand was widely held among the Founders who helped shape the political, education-al, and legal foundations of the new nation.... (T)he strength of the republic was dependent upon the morality of her people, and that religion must undergird it.... *-The American Patriots' Bible*

VOTE THIS TUESDAY.

The series, “QUESTIONS ABOUT HEAVEN” will continue today, with 3:14-21 as the reading.

IN OUR PRAYERS: David Ferguson, preacher at the Lakeland church in Mattoon will be donating a kidney to a member Tuesday. Pray for both.

