

The BEACON

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They Lingered Too Long — By Jimmy Tuten

Over the holidays I was in the home of a dear friend who is in the publishing business. He showed me a beautiful volume on Pompeii that his firm was responsible for bringing into being. I marveled at its magnificent color photographs depicting the city's ruins and fantasized over what the city must have been before that dreadful day in the summer of A.D. 79. What was once a showplace of culture was buried beneath tons of hot, wet ashes and cinders that were sprayed over it by the eruption of Vesuvius. For almost seventeen hundred years it was forgotten and its actual existence was questioned by many. Having been discovered, its testimonies to grandeur are ours to behold. The most important thing about Pompeii's ruins is what they tell us about the people of that day. It is a fact that numerous individuals lost their lives in the destruction who needed not to have lost their lives.

Archeologists found that most who lost their lives at Pompeii did so because they lingered too long, trying to prolong enjoyment of what they were doing or trying to salvage their valuables. One publication tells us, "The excavator's shovels revealed all manner of family tragedies, scenes of mothers, fathers

and children caught in absolute extremity. Mothers were found still holding their children in their arms, protecting them with the last bit of veil as they both suffocated. Men and women were dug up who had gathered their valuables together, got as far as the city gate and there collapsed under the stony hail, still clinging to their gold and precious things. At the threshold of one house two young women were found who had hesitated until it was too late, intending to go back into the house and salvage some of their treasures. Body after body was found at the Gate of Hercules, bodies all heaped together and still encumbered with the household gear that had grown too heavy to drag any further" (Gods, Graves, And Scholars). What a lesson to learn!

God's Word reveals a far greater destruction to come than that experienced by Pompeii, a destruction involving those who obey not the gospel (2 Thess. 1:7-9). The certainty of this destruction cannot be denied, yet rather than flee to the arms of safety, people linger in sin. The same things that caused many to perish in Pompeii, devotion to loved ones and earthly possessions, are causing people today to linger in disobedience to God's

Commands. They will die in the destruction of the world because they are outside of Christ (2 Pet. 3; Rom. 6:1-6, 17). Nothing should keep us from obeying the gospel (Matt. 10:37-38; 6:19-20; 16:24-26).

Learn a lesson from the destruction of the beautiful, proud city of Pompeii. Flee from a life of sin that you might escape the wrath of God upon the disobedient. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation?" (Heb. 2:3). "Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come" (Matt. 24:42).

"Careless soul, why will you linger, wandering from the fold of God? Why so thoughtless are you standing, while the fleeting years go by?"

When Thinking of Jesus....

by Tom Edwards

By our knowledge of God's word, meditating on Jesus can evoke many important and beautiful truths about Him -- all of which are greatly praise-worthy. For instance, when thinking of Jesus, these following thoughts might arise in our minds:

The World's Only Savior

Jesus is not merely one of many ways to heaven. He is the only way, the only Savior. When the religious authorities were trying to put an end to the apostles' preaching, Peter boldly declared that Jesus "...is the stone which was rejected by you, the builders, but which became the chief corner stone" (Acts 4:11). He then went on to say, "And there is

salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved" (v. 12). Perhaps this reminds you, too, of the Lord's own words that He is "...the way, and the truth, and the life" and then concludes by saying, "no one comes to the Father, but through Me" (Jn. 14:6).

The World's Only Sacrifice for Sin

The thousands of animal sacrifices that had been offered from the beginning of time -- and all combined -- could not blot out even one sin in a person's life. The Hebrew writer states that "...it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins" (Heb. 10:4); and even though "every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices," they could still not atone for transgression (v.11). He then states, "but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God" (v. 12). What a contrast: the many sacrifices that could not atone for even one sin, with the one sacrifice that could atone for all of the many.

One Who Was Continually Doing Good

Never did Jesus fail in living a righteous life in complete obedience to His Father. As the Lord states in John 8:29, "And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him." The Lord's attitude toward this faithfulness is seen in John 4:34, "...My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work." The Lord gave eyesight to the blind, made the lame to walk,

cleansed the lepers, enabled the deaf to hear, raised the dead, and preached the gospel to the poor, which, in itself, would be a confirmation to John the Baptist that Jesus truly is the Messiah who was to come (Luke 7:18-23).

One Who Was Without Sin

Not only did Jesus always do what was right (by carrying out His duties), but He also (by abstaining from all iniquity) never did that which was wrong. So neither sins of omission, nor sins of commission had the Lord ever been guilty of -- not even one. When Peter cites Jesus as our ultimate example who suffered for us, the apostle also points out that the Lord "committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in his mouth" (1 Pet. 2:21,22). Even when Jesus was reviled, "He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously" (v. 23). Throughout the entire history of mankind, Jesus Christ is the only human being who, having reached an age of accountability, lived a perfectly sinless life (cf. Rom. 3:10,23); and let it be pointed out that this was accomplished even though Jesus was "tempted in all things as we are...." For as the Hebrew writer concludes that verse, he shows that the Lord endured those temptations "...yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15) -- having, therefore, never yielded to any of them.

One Who Was God in Human Form

While Jesus walked the face of the earth, He was not merely 100% man, but also 100%

God, simultaneously. John refers to Jesus as having been the "Word," who was with God in the beginning and who was God (Jn. 1:1), but who also took upon Himself flesh that He could dwell among us, full of grace and truth (v. 14). Paul states that "...in Him [Jesus] all the fulness of Deity dwells in bodily form" (Col. 2:9). Though Jesus is a separate personality of the Godhead -- just as the Holy Spirit also is -- still He is just as much God as God the Father is God (Jn. 10:30). Jesus, therefore, by His own life, revealed to the world what God is like; for Christ is "...the radiance of His [God the Father's] glory and the exact representation of His [God the Father's] nature..." (Heb. 1:3). Because of this, Jesus was able to say to Thomas in John 14:5 that "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also...."

One Who Is the Creator of the Universe

Regardless of how perfect a man could be, he could not create the universe. Jesus, however, was more than perfect -- He was (and is) also God; and, therefore, the Creator.

When John points out the Deity of Christ in John 1, the apostle also mentions that "All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being" (v. 3). What mere man could do that? Paul states in Colossians 1:16, "For by Him [Jesus] all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible...all things have been created by Him and for Him." Compare also Hebrews 1:2: "in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the

world."

Last night I had an incredible dream. I was needing a spoon so I merely stretched forth my arm, willed the spoon to be, and it appeared in my hand. I then did the same to conjure up a fork -- right before I was transformed into light and darted across the universe -- but it was all a dream. Jesus, however, did a similar thing to make a reality. As we learn in the creation account, God merely spoke the word, and physical elements came into existence. For example, "Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light" (Gen. 1:3). And "Then God said, 'Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit after their kind, with seed in them, on the earth'; and it was so" (v. 11). In his song of praise to the Lord, David writes, "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host. ...For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast" (Psa. 33:6,9).

Some Things We All Can and Should Know

1. Christ is the foundation on which the church is built (1 Cor. 3:11), Not Peter as some teaches.
2. It is not proper to call oneself after men, even good men, as Apollos, Cephas or any other (Cor. 1:12-13)
3. The church was established on the first Pentecost after Christ was resurrected from the dead (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; Mk. 9:1;

Acts 2:1-47)

It is amazing, when one really considers what the New Testament says about the church, to see how little many people are concerned about that which Christ died to purchase. His love for it is expressed, and He is the head of it. Beloved, can one actually THINK that when Christ purchased it with His own blood, that it is unimportant?

The church was in God's eternal plan (Eph. 3:10-11). Friend, please don't show disrespect for the church! Don't say you love Christ and are indifferent to His church!

Interesting thoughts.

1. To handle yourself use your head; to handle others use your heart.
2. Anger is only one letter short of danger.
3. Great minds discuss ideas; average minds discuss events; small minds discuss people.
4. God gives every bird it's food but he does not throw it into it's nest.
5. Learn from the mistakes of others. You can't live long enough to make them all yourself.
6. The tongue weighs practically nothing but so few people can hold it.
7. There are four stages to man. When he believes in Santa Claus when he does not believe in Santa Claus when he is Santa Claus when he looks like Santa Claus
8. Beautiful babies are accidents of nature; but beautiful old people are works of art.