

PAST REDEMPTION POINT

Revelation 22:11

INTRODUCTION

- On the bank of the Niagara River there is a sign that bears the warning: “Past Redemption Point”
- Swimmers or vessels that drift past that point cannot free themselves from the current and must plunge over the falls to their death
- One of the chief purposes of our short lives here is to prepare for the world to come
- What we do with our life, the choices we make, determine our place in eternity
- Yet how few people give any consideration to the coming judgment, and fail to prepare themselves for it!
- They carelessly drift through life and realise too late that they have drifted into eternal destruction
- The default condition and end of man without the intervention of God’s grace is “the broad way that leadeth to destruction” (Matthew 7:13)
- We are presently in a type of “probation” in this world, a time of proving and testing, and the chief test in our probation is our response to the gospel of Jesus Christ
- If we respond by repenting of our sins and putting our faith in Jesus Christ as our only Lord and Saviour, we will be granted eternal life
- If we respond by rejecting Christ’s offer of pardon and life, we will die in our sins and suffer the torments of hell for eternity

- Revelation 22:11 is a verse that could easily be misunderstood and misused
- An infidel might take this verse and use it to justify his continued life of sin – “See, God commands me to be unjust and filthy!”
- But faithful interpretation of Scripture requires us to look at the whole testimony of the Bible, and to interpret the obscure verses in the light of the clear ones
- Throughout the Bible, God’s command to the wicked is not to continue in his wickedness but to repent and turn from it (Proverbs 1:23; Isaiah 22:12; Jeremiah 25:5; Ezekiel 14:6; 33:11; Daniel 4:27; Hosea 14:2; Joel 2:12; Matthew 3:2; Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30)
- In Revelation 22:17 there is an invitation to all sinners to come unto Christ for life and salvation
- The context of Revelation 21-22 relates to the culmination of the ages and the events that will take place – Christ’s Second Coming, the Millennium, the Great White Throne Judgment, the New Heavens and New Earth and the New Jerusalem
- Bracketing v.11, in vv.7 and 12 is Christ’s solemn promise, “Behold, I come quickly”
- He is warning us all that he is soon coming in judgment – “the time is at hand” (v.10), and when that time comes, there will be no more opportunity to change, our eternal state will be fixed
- At that moment, the unjust and filthy will remain eternally unjust and filthy; while the righteous and holy will remain eternally righteous and holy
- Revelation 22:11 is a solemn warning that decision determines character, and character determines destiny

- In Ecclesiastes 11:3 we read, “if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be”
- “Death is at no great distance; thou hast but a short time to do good. Acquire a heavenly disposition while here; for there will be no change after this life. If thou die in the love of God, and in the love of man, in that state wilt thou be found in the day of judgment. If a tree about to fall lean to the north, to the north it will fall; if to the south, it will fall to that quarter. In whatever disposition or state of soul thou diest, in that thou wilt be found in the eternal world. Death refines nothing, purifies nothing, kills no sin, helps to no glory. Let thy continual bent and inclination be to God, to holiness, to charity, to mercy, and to heaven: then, fall when thou mayest, thou wilt fall well.” (Adam Clarke)
- As the old year closes and the new year begins, I am presented with an opportunity to evaluate my life, to consider the course I am taking, the preparation I am making, before I am soon called to judgment and my eternal state is fixed

I. THE PREEMINENT CONSIDERATION – OUR SPIRITUAL STATE

- A. God is perfectly holy, righteous and good, and requires moral perfection in his creatures
 1. Adam was created in a state of righteousness, having unbroken fellowship with God
 2. By his sin, Adam severed that communion with God
 3. But God established the means by which man can be forgiven his sin and restored to fellowship with God through the Redeemer, Jesus Christ (1 Peter 3:18)
- B. Understanding our sin and how we can be delivered from it should be our priority
 1. The terms used in this verse (unjust, filthy, righteous, holy) describe man’s spiritual state – either sin or righteousness

2. The things the people of the world concern themselves with – their physical state, their social state, their economic state – are of little concern with God (Matthew 6:31-33; 1 Timothy 4:8)
3. Satan has convinced the world that sin is of no consequence, that we are free to live as we please, leaving the outdated mores of ancient times (Proverbs 14:9)
4. Relativism says that truth and morality are not absolute – they exist in relation to culture, society, or historical context
5. Such a philosophy eliminates any objective standard of right or wrong, of righteousness or sin
6. Yet it is all a satanic delusion, and on the day of judgment, God will judge man's works according to the standard of his law

II. THE PRESENT INVITATION – REPENT AND BE SAVED

- A. Today is the day of grace when sinners may be saved
 1. The message today is, “he that is unjust, let him be justified; he that is filthy, let him be cleansed” (Isaiah 1:18)
 2. God is calling all sinners to repentance (Acts 17:30), is giving sinners space to repent (Revelation 2:21), and is giving sinners grace to repent (Acts 5:31)
 3. Repentance a complete change in our hearts, turning from sin unto God, and is manifest in a righteous life
 4. Today, sinners may be transformed from death to life, from darkness to light, from Satan's bondage to God's kingdom
- B. There is great danger in resisting God's call, or delaying repentance

1. Though God extends his gracious invitation in this life, he does not promise to extend it indefinitely
2. His spirit shall not always strive with man (Genesis 6:3)
3. Each time a sinner hears the gospel and refuses it, he becomes gradually hardened against the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 24:24-25)
4. “He, that being often reprov’d hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy” (Proverbs 29:1)
5. There is a point even in this life, where an unbeliever, having continually rejected the gospel, “sins away the day of grace” and God “gives him up” to a reprobate mind (Romans 1:24,26,28)
6. Proverbs 1:20-33 describes this process
 - a. God calls sinners to repent (Proverbs 1:20-23)
 - b. Man refuses (Proverbs 1:24-25)
 - c. God judges (Proverbs 1:26-33)
7. We should not presume to pronounce certain individuals as having forfeited eternal life while they remain in this world – only God knows this – our responsibility is to plead with sinners until the day they depart this world
8. The Bible records one instance of “last moment salvation” – the penitent thief (Luke 23:42-43)
9. God graciously gives us this account of a sinner’s conversion just moments before his death that we would not despair; yet God gives only this case that we would not presume

III. THE PERMANENT DESTINATION – HEAVEN OR HELL

- A. At death, man's eternal state is fixed
1. Whether taken from this world by death, or whether alive when the Lord comes in glory, there comes time when the door of opportunity is forever closed
 2. When the bridegroom comes, those who are ready will go in with him, but upon those who are not ready, "the door was shut" (Matthew 25:10)
 3. Death is the "tree" of our lives falling to the earth and "in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be" (Ecclesiastes 11:3)
 4. Those who bent their tree of their lives towards Christ will fall on heaven's side; while those who bent their tree towards sin will fall on hell's side
 5. Between hell and paradise "there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence" (Luke 16:26)
 6. There are false religions that teach there will be a "second chance" after death
 - a. Romanism invented "purgatory" where sins can be purged by fire
 - b. JW's teach that unbelievers will be resurrected and given another opportunity to believe the gospel
 7. But the Bible says, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27)
- B. The eternal state is essentially the continuation of what a person set their lives upon

1. In hell, sinners will be “unjust still” and “filthy still”
2. The damned will retain their appetite for sin in hell, but there will be no opportunity to satisfy it
3. Hell is not like an earthly prison where there is rehabilitation, encouragement to reform, gospel preaching and conversion
4. Rather their love of sin is increased, as is their hatred of Jesus Christ, all while they suffer unspeakable torment
5. But for the believer in heaven, the righteousness and holiness he loved and thirsted for in this world will be perfected (Matthew 5:6)
6. In this world we struggle and strive against sin; we are being sanctified, yet are continually beset by the remaining sin of our carnal flesh (Romans 8:23)
7. But in glory, with incorruptible bodies in the presence of Christ, our righteousness and holiness will be perfect, untainted by the least spot of sin
8. “But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” (Proverbs 4:18)

CONCLUSION

1. What a blessed gift God has given us in creating us and giving us souls that will continue forever!
2. What grace has God extended to us in making a way for us to live forever in heaven with him!
3. Are you living your life, day by day, moment by moment, with eternity in view, preparing yourself for the day when you must stand before Jesus Christ as your Judge?

4. Or are you living like most others, concerned only with the present, and with the material, laying up treasures on earth where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal?
5. “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (Mark 8:36)
6. Perhaps you have been drifting along with the world, following the same course that leads only to hell
7. It is not too late to turn against the current of destruction, to seek the Lord and his salvation
8. But one day soon it will be too late, therefore, “To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts” (Hebrews 3:15)
9. “Among these [warnings], none is more solemn than that verse which asserts the permanence and perpetuation of moral character—that as men live, so do men die; that present principles, habits, tastes, are shaping, moulding, consolidating, our eternal destinies.” (John MacDuff)
10. What will you resolve for the coming year to ensure your eternity is one of joy and blessedness in the New Jerusalem?