“If I Had it to Do All Over Again”

In practically all walks of life, in people of varied professions, in the minds of divers classes, in the hearts of the married and the unmarried, the childless and the parents, this statement has often sought completion: “If I had it to do all over again…” Rarely is it finished with, “I would not change a thing.” Men and women generally find some point of dissatisfaction in their lives. Though their pasts be filled with glory and joy, still, they are likely to be haunted by some decision which, if made, could have changed their status in the present.

The past has passed and shall not be passed again except in memory. Therefore, to stew over it is to expend mental energy which could be put to much better use. A good rule of thumb is, if it can’t be changed (and the past cannot be changed, for what’s done is done), don’t worry about it, but if it can be changed, then don’t wait for someone else to change it.

Weeping and gnashing their teeth along with the rest of the residents of hell (Matthew 25:30) are certain to be some who, having heard the truth but refusing to obey it, cry out, “If I had it to do all over again, I would listen and obey!” But then it will be too late. The Catholic doctrine of purgatory is an imaginary place, real only in the minds of those who fear the possibility of a literal hell, but not real in the mind of God. The soul sleeping concept of the “Jehovah’s Witnesses” is also a fabrication whose creator pretended to know more about God’s justice than God Himself.

Hell is real. It is just as real as heaven. Amazing, isn’t it, how many will deny the existence of eternal hell but will rally around the idea of eternal heaven? But hell is as real as heaven. While heaven’s occupants will walk in endless light (Revelation 21:14), in hell, men and women shall be captives of lonely darkness (Matthew 8:12). When judgment comes and the faithful of God bid an anxious adieu to tears, death, sorrow and pain (Revelation 21:4), those who enter hell will just be meeting the flames that will enfold their spiritual bodies for eternity (Mark 9:44).

Jesus said in Matthew 25:46 that the disobedient shall go away into everlasting punishment and the righteous into life eternal. Though the “Jehovah’s Witnesses” claim that the word “everlasting” is a synonym for God (thus saying that this has reference to God’s punishment rather than a literal, eternal one), they would do well to notice the adjectival nature of the phrase. “Everlasting” is an adjective that describes the word “punishment.” Jesus was talking about a literal, eternal punishment. Besides, are we to believe that in the same verse where the same word translated “eternal” and “everlasting” is used, one means forever and the other does not?

Hell is real. It is as real as heaven and many are going there (Matthew 7:13). Will YOU be one of the multitudes there who will be groaning, “If I had it to do all over again, I would obey God and be faithful to Him”? Hopefully, your heart is touched by the Word’s affirmation of the existence of hell. Hopefully, you are NOW saying to yourself, “Today I will obey so that I have no regrets in eternity.” Today, while you have life in your body is the time to turn to God and prepare for eternity. “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” (II Corinthians 6:2).

This message applies to both non-Christian and Christian alike. The non-Christian should obey the Gospel now while there is still time. The Christian should consider his or her soul’s condition at this moment. Have you been living faithfully to the Lord? Have you been seeking His kingdom first (Matthew 6:33)? Are you prepared to meet God in judgment? Turning away from God, even as a Christian, has dire consequences in eternity, for a Christian can fall and be lost (Revelation 2:5). Even being a lukewarm Christian has dangerous eternal implications according to Jesus in Revelation 3:16.

What a horrible thought it is to even consider that we might find ourselves in eternal damnation thinking, “If I had it to do all over again, I would obey God.” Especially tragic would be knowing that it did not have to be that way, that salvation was so readily available simply by doing God’s will.

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