

## WHAT WILL A MAN GIVE IN EXCHANGE FOR HIS SOUL?

From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!" But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men." Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it." "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? "For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works. (Matthew 16:21-27)

From the text above we see the King; first unveiling His cross to His own disciples; secondly, the response of Peter; thirdly the response of Jesus to Peter.

The first matter of importance is that Christ began to talk of His cross, and Peter at once objected. The contrast is made plain in the words, "The things of God—the things of men." The things of God are Christ's estimate of necessity and of method. The Son of "must go to Jerusalem, and suffer...and be killed...and be raised up". The things of men are revealed in Peter's thought, Lord, not that; pity Yourself, have mercy upon Yourself. The things of men will shun the method of the cross. Paul stated it this way in his letter to the Corinthians. "but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (I Corinthians 1:23, 24). When we turn to the Acts of the Apostles and listen to Peter preaching for the first time on Pentecost, the man who shunned the Cross because he minded the things of men, said, "Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it" (Acts 2:23,24). He came at last to know that when Jesus said "must," He spoke with the authority of the eternal counsel of God. Peter had a perfect picture of the knowledge and wisdom of God to save the soul of lost mankind.

The question of great importance should be asked, how did Peter come to the point that he was willing to mind the things of God and not follow the things of men? The answer is that Peter must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Jesus. Peter would struggle in doing this very thing. He would go on to deny the Lord three times. The change in Peter would come after Jesus was raised from the dead when Jesus had breakfast with Peter and the disciples (John 21:15-19). Jesus would ask Peter three times, "do you love Me"? Then He told Peter, "Feed My sheep". The test of discipleship is do we love God? Are we willing to deny ourselves and do what He says? "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. (Matthew 7:21) Peter was willing to deny himself and follow Jesus. He was there in Acts 2 standing with the eleven preaching the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. He would suffer many things for the cause of Christ. He would

write letters to churches encouraging them to be faithful in serving the Lord. We can learn a lot from the life of Peter. His life should be an example to us that when we make mistakes to repent and seek God's forgiveness.

Christ makes His final appeal by asking two questions. "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul" (Matthew 16:26)? The judge will be the Lord and He will come in His Father's glory. If we shun His cross to whom shall we appeal? The last throne is His throne and we will stand before His throne. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10). We know that God desires all men to be saved. "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:3-4). This is God's desire but it comes down to our choices. What will I give in exchange for my soul? Am I willing to submit to the will of God and faithfully serve Him or will I mind the things of men.

We're told that around two hundred years ago, the tomb of Charlemagne (Charles the Great) was opened. The sight the workman saw was startling. There was his body in a sitting position, clothed in the most elaborate kingly garments. In one hand was his scepter. On his knee was Bible. His other hand was pointing to a passage of Scripture in the Bible on his knee. It was mark 8:36 "For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

Friends, even if you could enjoy everything this world has to offer; things such as wisdom, wealth, power, honor, and friends, what lasting good will it do you if you were not washed in the blood of Jesus? In less than 100 years from now, it will matter little how wealthy you were or how powerful you were, or even how many friends you had. In less than 100 years from now, the only thing that will matter for all of us reading this is whether you had a relationship with Christ.

Don't be short-sighted. Life is here today and gone tomorrow. Then What?

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