

“In Such an Hour as Ye think Not”

By Harvey U. Krogh, Jr.

AT ONE TIME a great king was walking with some of his servants. A man on the hillside above him began to curse him and to throw stones and dust down on him. One of the king's servants said, “Let me go over and take off his head,” but the king said, “Let him alone, let him curse.”

We might think there was something wrong with the king if he did nothing to keep from being hit by a stone or being covered with dust. Maybe you know the story.

David was the king. He had a very handsome son who gained a following and set himself up as king in Hebron. After being proclaimed king, he and his men went to Jerusalem. When David heard what was being done, he and his servants fled to the hill country, for he was unprepared for this turn of events.

No wonder a little thing as some insignificant fellow throwing dust on him did not bother him when his own son was about to kill him and take away his kingdom!

The lesson in this simple story is that some important event may oftentimes greatly overshadow a lesser event. We find this same lesson in many stories in the Bible. We also see the importance of letting the important thing really have first place in our lives.

As early as the Book of Genesis, we find the changing of the language of mankind was an important thing that changed their whole course of action. They were building the Tower of Babel. God said there was no end to what they would do if not restrained. So He confounded their language. This drastic change in their ability to readily communicate with one another was of so much more importance than this tower, that they broke off building it.

We read of Noah's day in Matthew 24:38, 39: “As in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away.” Apparently the important things to those people were their eating, drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage. Now these things are not wrong in themselves if in them we comply with God's laws. We have no doubt as to what became the most important thing to those people. Survival became the prominent thing! But when the Flood came, it was too late.

For the Egyptians many centuries later, the thing of prime importance was the keeping of Israel in bondage. When all of the first-born of the Egyptians were slain in a single night, however, the lives of their first-born became the more important, instead of keeping the Israelites. Then the Egyptians were ready to drive out their slaves.

One time Saul was pursuing David to take his life. He was about to capture him. Having compassed David and his few men, there came a messenger to Saul, saying,

“Haste thee, and come; for the Philistines have invaded the land” (1 Sam. 23:27). The repelling of the Philistines was so much more important than catching one man, who really was not doing much harm anyway, that “Saul returned from pursuing after David, and went against the Philistines.”

You probably are wondering what the application is to all of this. First is the world application. We did not read all that Jesus said about Noah’s day in Matthew 24. “As the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (v. 37). They were eating, drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, “and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (v. 39).

The coming of the Son of man will be a great event for the world. Eternal life and salvation have been of little importance to the world; however, when that day comes, it will bring great changes.

You remember God restrained the people at Babel because they had one language and were about to build a great tower. Today the world is practically a world of one language because of instantaneous communication and almost instant translation of one language into many others. It was a notable miracle on the Day of Pentecost when the apostles spoke and all of the foreigners heard in their own language.

Today when a Frenchman, an Englishman, or a Russian or anyone else speaks in the United Nations assembly, almost immediately everyone there and a good share of the world can hear, each in his own language, what is being said. Maybe you have listened to one of the United Nations sessions and have heard for yourself. Of course, this is done by translators and communications equipment, but it is making the world of one language.

With this advantage the world is not so handicapped as it was after the confounding of language. The prophecy of the second Psalm may soon be fulfilled: “The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us” (Psalm 2:2, 3).

The conflict now is over Communism and Democracy. Soon it will be over the little land of Israel, with its oil and Dead Sea minerals. Then Christ will come and then will be the day of judgment.

In that day, all of the things that are important to the world now will become as nothing. We read, “They shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth. In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats; to go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth” (Luke 21:19-21).

In that day, it will be more important to the wicked to hide themselves from the wrath of God. Yes, as it was in the days of Noah, when the trivial was so important “until the flood came,” so today the trivial will be important until judgment comes.

Now our application to the church! The church is different in that it has heard the promises of eternal life and the establishment of the Kingdom of God as the gospel. The church has acknowledged the importance of the greatest event yet to transpire. Those who are followers of Christ are looking for that blessed hope and the appearing of Christ.

Paul says that Christians should think of themselves “as those that are alive from the dead” (Rom. 6:13). What does that mean? We are to think of ourselves as having been raised in the resurrection when we come up out of the waters of baptism, having died to Adam but made alive unto God.

Paul therefore told the Colossians to set their affections on things above, not on things on the earth (Col. 3:1-3). What is the most important thing in all of the world to most people? Is it not life? The Christian is counted as alive to God and, therefore, is to set his affection on eternal life which is hid with Christ in God. Then, when that greatest of events takes place, that is, the coming of Christ, whether we are living or dead, we shall appear with Him in glory.

That which shall be the judgment for the world will be the time of reward for the faithful Christian. Even now the Christian is spared many of the disappointments and trials of the world because of the perspective he has, having seen truly important things in light of God’s Word. We must be sure that our affection is set on the eternal life that will be given us in that day.

If we are diligently looking for the return of Christ, many things so important to the world will not concern us. That is why Jesus said, “Seek ye first the kingdom God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall added unto you” (Matt. 6:33).

If we are earnestly looking for Christ’s return, that will not overtake us as it will overtake the world. Jesus said, “In such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh” (Matt. 24:44). Are you ready and watching?