



THE EXHORTER

"And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation." Acts 2:40

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. (prchurchofchrist.org)

May 12, 2024

Jump Start # 2241

1 Corinthians 15:51 *"Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed."*

This simple verse. One sentence. Seventeen words. This is all that is necessary to help establish the Biblical world view of things. There are several voices out there telling us how things will be. There is a cultural voice that tells us we need to tolerate, stop offending or else we won't exist. There is a political view that is pushing for cooperation of all world powers and the elimination of massive weapons of destruction lest there be a world war and we destroy each other. Then there is the environmental view. I heard this one on the radio the other day. It was about climate change. The young voice was pleading for the government to force corporations to change the way they use fossil fuels and to raise taxes to accomplish this. Fires, earthquakes, and, hurricanes were all the proof she needed to substantiate a warming climate. If we do not change immediately, she warned, we won't have a planet in ten years. TEN YEARS. That's not very long.

That's when I thought of our verse. One verse kills her theory. Is the planet getting warmer? Who knows. The tracking of weather data is not very old. All through the Bible we read of great earthquakes and storms upon the sea. Those things are nothing new, except to some of us.

The problem I find is when brethren get all excited because of some of these gloom and doom voices. The sky is falling they believe and fear directs their lives. The Biblical world view is the only true view that is accurate and that we can count upon. The voices of culture, politics and climate control are also the voices of atheism, evolution and alien superstition. There are more who believe that there may have been life on Mars, even though there is no evidence of that, than believe in the existence of God, even though we trip and stumble over his evidence every day.

What does our verse tell us? How do these seventeen words put things back in order? The Bible is full of examples like this. We need to know them, believe them and stand behind them.

The context is the resurrection of Christ. Jesus was raised. Multiple proofs are given, such as eyewitness accounts, the word of Scriptures, prophecy and common sense. Not only was Christ raised, but so will we. That thought, our resurrection, flows directly into our verse today. Not all of us will die, or sleep, as he uses that expression. The word sleep is a common expression to describe the death of the righteous. It was used of Lazarus. It was used of Jairus' twelve year-old daughter who had died.

(OVER)

It was used to describe the Christians who had died in Thessalonica. Sleep. Resting. Not connected to what is going on around here, yet, alive.

What Paul is saying is that not all Christians will die. Some will be alive when Jesus comes. Those who are alive will be changed. They will be changed quickly and instantly. They will not have to die first and then be raised. They will just be changed. I knew a Christian who openly hoped that she would be alive when Jesus comes. She wanted to see that. However, that wasn't the case for her. God called her. Now, she will come with the Lord when He returns.

Not all Christians will die. There will be Christians alive when Jesus returns. That's the flow and that's the context of our passage. Christians. They will be living righteously. They will be worshipping on Sunday. They will be doing what you and I do. They will be living for Jesus and trying to spread the message about Jesus. That's what Christians do. There will be some Christians who do not die.

That means, in ten years, the environment will not become so disastrous that no one will be alive. That's won't happen. There will be Christians alive when Jesus comes. That means, there will not be a nuclear war that destroys all living beings. That means we will not be destroyed by some massive germ, or, alien invasion, or a mighty asteroid hitting the planet. Those things make for the movies, and not very good ones at that, but it's not true to the Biblical world picture.

Atheism runs on fear. We are on our own, it believes. There is no one to help us, so they teach. No one knows which disaster will wipe us out. They point to what happened to the dinosaurs, again, a view through the lens of atheism and fear, believing similar things might happen to humans. Atheism has no hope. Mankind has shown that peace treaties do not last long and we tend to break our promises, so the future is dark, scary and unknown. And, disaster movies just add to this possible list of what could happen.

And, here we are, quietly and calmly going about the King's business, living with hope, faith and understanding. We don't have to be environmental engineers to understand that climate change will not kill us all. We have the Bible. We don't have to dive into the muddy waters of politics to wonder how we can get along with everyone else on this planet. We have the Bible. We don't have to think about Mars. We don't give any credit to aliens. We know that most likely the dinosaurs were killed in the flood or by mankind, and yes, we believe that man and dinosaurs were together at the same time. Where's the proof? Footprints in fossils? No. Cave drawings? Even though they do exist, no. The proof is in the first page of the Bible. We don't have to be biologist to understand this.

Just recently, a report came out that said all DNA of humans came from a single source. That was astonishing for scientists. Now, they quickly claimed that this did not point to creation or God, but that a single source was the original family for all humans. Our very context today told me that a long time ago. The first man, Adam. It says that several times. From Adam and Eve came all humans. Shocking? No. The Bible world picture has said that for centuries.

On his journey to Rome, Paul had a vision in which an angel told him what would happen. Paul reported those words to the rest of those on the ship. His words were, "It will turn out exactly as I have been told." And, that, is exactly the way we believe. It will turn out exactly as we have been told.

We have been told that we will not all sleep, an expression used of the death of Christians. There will be Christians alive when Jesus comes. It will turn out exactly as we have been told. Will they be in America? That we don't know. Will it be you and me? That we don't know.

We must not allow the news to shape and change what the Bible teaches. We must not allow activists to use their opinions to shape what we know the Bible says. The Bible stands true because of mountains of evidence and proof. These other world views are constantly changing and often even contradicting each other.

We shall not all sleep...great words to remember.

Roger Shouse (Used by Permission)



Join Our Mailing List

