

Delayed Obedience

To delay obedience to the gospel of Christ, with the expectation of doing so just before death, is a very risky thing.

1. Death may come suddenly, and there will be no opportunity or time to obey Christ. Maybe there will be an accident, or heart failure. Maybe there will be a stroke, with lips too paralyzed to speak. Maybe there will be a coma from which one never recovers consciousness. Etc.

2. The closing hours of life are often attended with such severe pain that there is no chance to think of God. The thoughts are on an aching body, instead of the soul.

3. It is usually too late to change then. You can't in a moment of time change from sensuality to purity, from hate to love, from selfishness to submission. Saul began his career with a tender heart, but at the close it was a heart of stone. Solomon began his reign with humility of spirit, but ended with a life blighted by sensuality. Judas began his association with the Master with sincerity, and ended with bitterness and despondency that led him to suicide instead of repentance.

Evidently those who put off their obedience to the gospel plan of salvation do not manifest a real love for God and His Son – they are just scared and want to escape the torments of hell. It seems they have a desire to have it both ways: There is the desire to serve the Devil by living in the pleasures of sin and then at the last moment, after a life of disobedience, go through the motions of obedience expecting to live eternally in heaven. I would not want to stand before Christ at the judgment in their shoes.

The Bible warns against delay in obeying the truth. Ananias said to Saul, *“And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”* (Acts 22:16) The Philippian jailor was baptized the same hour of the night (probably around midnight). Paul wrote the Corinthians saying, *“I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”* (2 Cor 6:2)

Don't delay obedience to the gospel of Christ. There is no other means of salvation. Jesus said, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”* (John 14:6) Obedience to the gospel puts one into Christ. (Rom 6:3-4; Gal 3:27) Obedience must be preceded by a changed of heart. If those who wait have it, all is well. If they don't, they have not fooled God.

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