

speaking to God's people

# freegiftfromgod

bible studies

Subject: **Looking Back**

## Scripture

Introduction

## Commentary

There is a great challenge for people when they come to the Lord, especially when they are relatively new Christians.

Some believe that when they come to the Lord all their problems will be over and that life will become all bliss and joy. What makes it worse is that there are some churches that seem to hold out such teachings and if anything is other than this, the person is lacking in faith or some other problem.

And then they get hit between the eyes with a quick dose of reality!

Even Peter wrote "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal which comes upon you to prove you, as though something strange were happening to you." (1 Peter 4:12) It is a part of our Christian walk that we will be tested. We will go through trials and tribulations. The purpose of such trials is to strengthen us and make us stronger.

	<p>And we do have the added advantage that the Lord will guide and protect us. He will not allow us to be tempted beyond our strength, as he has promised.</p> <p>But sometimes that is cold comfort for the new Christian and they sometimes look back at their former lives, which may appear to be less stressful and less troublesome.</p> <p>Do not be fooled. It is a trick and a trap of the Devil to try and lure those who have barely escaped the evil of the world back into it, so that he can bind them worse than they were before.</p> <p>Looking back is a trap and there are many warnings about looking back in both the Old and New Testaments. So let us begin with the classic case of looking back and the judgement that came from it.</p>
Genesis Ch. 19	<p>This chapter of Genesis deals with the destruction of Sodom &amp; Gomorrah. Only the righteous man Lot with his wife &amp; two daughters were permitted to escape the wrath of God that rained down on these two cities.</p> <p>They were instructed as they fled by the angels sent to destroy the cities, “Flee for your life; do not look back or stop anywhere in the valley; flee to the hills lest you be consumed.” (Gen 19:17) They were specifically warned not to look back.</p> <p>But we saw that Lot’s wife failed to listen and she looked back contrary to the instructions of the angels. She was punished in a most unusual manner, as shown in verse 26. “But Lot’s wife behind him looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.” For her failure to keep the commandment given she was punished and turned to salt.</p> <p>This is a great warning that we should heed even today. Looking back, especially for a Christian, is highly dangerous. If we who have escaped the defilements of the world, just as Lot’s family escaped the defilements of Sodom &amp; Gomorrah, if we look back thinking it was “not as bad as all that,” then we too will suffer punishment. Lot’s wife became a pillar of salt, but if we Christians look back we stand to lose our eternal salvation because when we look back to the ways of the world, we show that we are not worthy of God’s call.</p>

<p>Luke 9:62</p>	<p>Jesus said in this verse, "Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."</p> <p>Think about this in a farming sense. If a farmer is ploughing the earth and preparing it to plant new seed, how can he plough the furrows in a straight line if he does not watch where he is going? If you are driving a car, are you able to drive safely if you only look in the rear view mirror? Of course not.</p> <p>So too as Christians, if we continually look back into the things we left behind us, the evil of this world, how will we be able to walk the straight and narrow path that leads to salvation? And if we are unable to walk the straight and narrow path that leads to salvation because we are looking at our past, then as the Lord said, we are not fit for the Kingdom of God.</p> <p>As a Christian your eyes need to be set upon Jesus. As it says, "Seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth." (Colossians 3:1-2)</p> <p>We need to be looking forward and looking upward to the Lord, not looking down and backwards to the evil of this earth. Looking back &amp; thinking that things were better "back in the day" is false and foolish as Solomon shows us.</p>
<p>Ecclesiastes 7:10</p>	<p>In this scripture Solomon wrote, "Say not, 'Why were the former days better than these?' For it is not from wisdom that you ask this."</p> <p>How many times have you said, heard or thought about, "the good old days?" You know, back in the "good old days" things were so much better than they are now.</p> <p>Well as Solomon tells us, such thinking does not come from wisdom, and if it is not wisdom it is foolishness. Back in the "good old days" things were tough just as they are now. There were problems, issues, failures, heartaches and so on, just as there is now.</p>

	<p>But when we look back we do so through rose coloured glasses. We have filters in our brains that filter out all the bad stuff which makes everything from back in the “good old days” seem a lot rosier than it really was.</p> <p>The truth of the matter is that the old days were no better or worse than today. We just have selective recall and in that there is a trap. Because our recall is selective we think it was better “back then” and long to recapture the state of mind we thought we had back then.</p>
Romans 6:20-21	<p>The apostle Paul tells us that whatever we had in the past that we seem so keen to look back at is of no avail. He said, “When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. But then what return did you get from the things of which you are now ashamed? The end of those things is death.”</p> <p>If we truly consider what we have left in our past we will be ashamed. The past held sin, lack of self-control, evil, the breaking of God’s law and all manner of wickedness. It is called “the fleeting pleasures of sin” in Hebrews 11:25. And the reward for those fleeting pleasures is...death.</p> <p>Is this worth comparing to the glory on offer from the Lord for those who will seek to do His will and to do what is right? The past holds death, but the future is life, both life in this world and in the world to come.</p> <p>But Peter vividly describes those who look back and worse, who turn back to the ways of the world.</p>
2 Peter 2:21-22	<p>Peter said of those who look back, “For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. It has happened to them according to the true proverb, The dog turns back to his own vomit, and the sow is washed only to wallow in the mire.”</p> <p>This is a powerful and graphic description of those who after coming to Christ then turn back to the world. Whether by their own decision or the trap of Satan, they are described as being utterly disgusting.</p> <p>What are they turning back to? Nothing good, that is for certain. They are turning back to the ways of sin and evil and the fleeting pleasures of those things.</p>

	<p>Christianity can be tough, but there is no going back. There is nothing there for you once you have tasted the possibility of what is on offer. The Lord has promised us everything and the life to be able to enjoy it. Free of sickness, free of evil, no-one to take it away from us, free from death and more. As Paul also wrote, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him,”</p> <p>The promises of the Lord are eternal and inconceivable in the hearts and minds of man. Compare that with the temporary, short-lived and fading pleasures of sin in this world. There is no comparison.</p> <p>But it is difficult especially today. The whole world is set up on the premise of instant gratification. People WANT IT NOW! Patience, once considered a virtue is now a sign of weakness according to the philosophies of this world today.</p> <p>And that is why it is even more important for us to beware and be cautious. The devil and the world are conspiring against Christians to try to get them to look back in the hope some may fall into the trap of the bright lights and glitz on offer. Do not take that path. You must not look back but move forward.</p>
John 12:35	<p>Jesus said, “Walk while you have the light, lest the darkness overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes.”</p> <p>This is why we must not look back and especially turn back. Satan and the darkness of the evil of this world is right behind us. It is where we came from. And when we look back we are looking into the dark places of the past.</p> <p>In Jesus we are called to move forward. We walk with Christ, which indicates a steady progression forward. If we stop in our walk, then the moving darkness will overtake us and we will enter the darkness of the world. And if you walk backwards you will fall over and trip up and then the devil says, “Your mine!”</p> <p>So where should we look if not back? Well forward of course but to what?</p>

Philippians 3:13-14	<p>Paul showed us where our aim should be. He said, “Brethren, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”</p> <p>He says here to forget what lies behind. The past is the past &amp; it is dead and gone. We need to focus our sight on the goal that lies ahead, which is the reward for serving the Lord. That is where our focus needs to be. Look forward, don’t look back.</p>
So what next?	<p>As you can see there are many warnings and issues about looking back. Our path lies ahead, not behind and our rewards in the Lord are vastly greater than anything this world has to offer. It requires patience, diligence and strength, but with the help of Jesus we will be victorious and we will gain the future that He has set before us.</p> <p>So now it’s your turn. What would you like to add to this conversation? Have you had this problem of looking back? How did you deal with it? Send me an email (link below) or engage with me on Twitter (@JohnBLemmon) and let’s have the discussion continue.</p> <p>Feel free also to send this to others so they can join the conversation, as there is so much more I could add, but then that leaves nothing for you to say. I hope this has added value to your own walk with Christ.</p>

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