

# THE MESSENGER



“... How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!” Romans 10:15

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## The Ten Commandments

by Hal Hammons

Israel wasn't prepared for this. After centuries in the polytheistic Egyptian culture, the idea of serving only one God was foreign to them. But immediately upon introducing Himself to the people, the true God of heaven let His people know how He stood on the idea of "shared time".

The same edict goes out to His people today. We may look at this commandment as archaic in our time when we don't have idol worship. But that's only because we don't call them idols anymore.

We worship the god of money. We don't even have to spend it; we just want to have it. The more, the better. All else must fall in our headlong pursuit of it. Including God and the things of God.

We worship the god of play. Every waking hour must be spent in a pleasantly diverting way – to the point that our "diversions" become our life instead of ornamentation. Everything that is not sufficiently entertaining must be cast off. Including God and the things of God.

But all of these are only masks on the god of self. We want what we want – every bit of it, no exceptions, no waiting. If we are not willing to crucify this god (Galatians 2:20), we will never serve the true God as He requires. He is not interested in second place in our hearts. Only first place will do.

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## When is it Too Late to be Saved?

by Tom Wacaster

I have often spoken of the "point of no return." That such a point exists, spiritually speaking, is evident from Peter's statement in II Peter 2:14. There Peter tells of the false teachers who, "*having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin.*" It is not that they CANNOT be saved, for God stands ready and willing to forgive us of all transgressions if we would but repent. The fact that they "cannot cease from sin" is due to their

unwillingness to repent and obey. But Peter's point is that they had progressed so far into sin that they had passed this "point of no return." No doubt, you have heard the appeal, "Obey Christ before it is too late." Is it ever "too late" to obey? Indeed, there is a line beyond which no man can hope to be saved. As one poet put it:

*There is a line by us unseen, by which each path is crossed;  
Beyond which God Himself hath sworn, that he who goes is lost."*

Let me suggest at least three occasions in which it is "too late" to receive salvation.

First, **it is too late after death.** The Hebrew writer tells us that it is appointed unto man once to die and after that comes the judgment (Heb. 9:27). There will be no second chance after death. We will be judged based on what we have done in THIS life (II Cor. 5:10). There is nothing in God's Word that hints at some "second chance" for salvation. Once we pass into eternity, our eternal destiny is sealed.

Second, **it is obviously too late after Jesus has returned to gather His sheep to eternal glory.** The second coming of Jesus is referred to more than 300 times in the New Testament. Just as sure as the sun rose this morning, so there will come a day when our Lord will come again. But when He comes, it will not be to SAVE mankind, but rather to JUDGE all men. The door inviting men to respond to His gracious invitation will have been closed (Matt. 11:28-29), and the door ushering us before the judgment seat of Christ will have opened.

Third, practically speaking, the opportunity to be saved will be forever gone **when a man reaches the point of which Peter spoke in our passage.** It is not that God is not willing to save (II Peter 3:9); it is because men eventually reach the point where they have a heart that is so hardened by sin that they CANNOT cease from sinning. They are past feeling, deluding themselves into thinking that there will be yet another opportunity to turn from sin and make things right. Perhaps you have heard the following story that illustrates our point well.

It was early spring and the crowds had gathered to watch the gigantic spectacle of the breaking of ice on the Niagara River. Large cakes of ice would break away and float down the river toward the Falls. An eagle soaring above spotted a frozen carcass of a rabbit on one of the chunks of ice, and alighted to feed on the newly found food. But, as he fed on the rabbit, his claws became embedded in the frozen carcass. At the last minute, the eagle attempted to spread his wings and fly to safety. But he had waited too long; his claws now firmly fixed in the carcass upon which he was feeding. Those who watched testified that a mighty eagle was carried to destruction at the bottom of Niagara Falls because he waited until too late to let go.

Beloved, *"now is the acceptable time; behold now is the day of salvation"* (II Cor. 6:2). Do not delay, for tomorrow may very well be too late.

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## NOTES & NEWS:

Remember to check the prayer list for those with ongoing spiritual weaknesses and physical illnesses.

*"...Pray for one another...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James 5:16*