

## Be Prepared Joshua Riggins

*Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set on them to do evil. Though a sinner does evil a hundred times, and his days are prolonged, yet I surely know that it will be well with those who fear God, who fear before Him. But it will not be well with the wicked; nor will he prolong his days, which are as a shadow, because he does not fear before God (Ecclesiastes 8:11-13)*

If you are like me, it is a bit tempting to fall into this trap. I like to tell myself things like, “I can eat a good sized bowl of ice cream daily, and it won’t affect my waistline.” And yet, over time, doing so creates a need for new pants. In behavioral economics, this is called Normalcy Bias. What has happened in the past is more likely to happen in the future. So cataclysmic events are of less probability than they otherwise might be. As an example, a robber might begin to think himself invincible, because he’s never been caught before.

The wise preacher, Solomon, reminds us that just because a judgment isn’t executed speedily doesn’t mean it isn’t going to happen. Poor behavior is not excused by the lack of consequences. God sees. God knows. And His judgment will come.

Peter tells us that normalcy bias affects the way the world perceives impending judgment. It hasn’t happened; therefore, it can’t happen. **2 Peter 3:3-4**, “*knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, ‘where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.’*”

We live in a world whose primary goal is their own desires. They want to feel good, and so they go to the flesh’s lusts to fulfill that desire. God’s judgment is given no thought, because life as they have it is normal. It exists as it always will exist, so they think.

And if we’re not careful, we can fall into this same trap. We focus all our attention on this life and pretty soon, this life is the normal. Financial success. Travel. Family. Play. Yard work. Cleaning. You name it, and we have a thousand items to keep our minds from focusing on things above. If they become our normal, then we too fail to account for the judgment of God.

Peter continues on in **2 Peter 3:5-9** to remind us that God’s impending judgment is coming, whether now or in the unknown future.

*For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*

It is encouraging to me that God waits. He waits because he wants to allow time for obedience. Let’s not let his delay be our downfall. He doesn’t want us to forget whose word upholds this world and whose word will determine our final destination. The Lord is not slack. Let us be prepared at all times.

In **Matthew 25:1-13**, we read about a group of individuals who failed to prepare. One point to make as we begin this passage: Christ likens the kingdom of heaven to this. The body of believers is like this passage. He isn’t comparing us and the world. He’s comparing us with us. That is a frightening notion to me, because it means that I could be one of these foolish attendants if I don’t prepare here.

Ten virgins went out to meet the bridegroom. In today’s society, these would be his attendees at the ceremony. The groom came from a distance to go to the house of his bride, and he took her from her home and brought her to his home or the home of his family. Along the journey, it was announced that the bridegroom comes and attendees rushed into the procession in hopes to participate in the festivities of the evening. Though they knew not the time in which the bridegroom would come, they had to be ready.

Five of the young ladies were prepared. They had oil at the ready, in case there might be a delay. Five hadn't thought that far ahead. Their normal bias told them he would probably be here soon and they wouldn't have to spend the extra money.

As happens from time to time, there was a delay. So, the group slept. While they're sleeping, the bridegroom came. At the call, those who had prepared were ready to meet him. Those caught unprepared tried to get supplies, by which time it was too late.

Judgment is going to come, whether we are prepared or not. And when it comes, no one else is going to be able to stand in our place. We must have our own lamp filled with oil. If, however, we've allowed the world to influence us, and taken our normal from the fleshly experience, we're going to find a shortage of spirit when the Lord comes to collect his own. BUT, if we make heaven our focus, and seek the one who is above, then we are going to find one who calls us sons because our lamps are full of His spirit.

The bridegroom is coming (**2 Peter 3:10-13**). Will we be ready!?