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# Words of Truth

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## Because Sentence Is Not Executed Speedily

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In my very sinful days of youth, I did a lot of terrible things. Many times, I think on those things and feel as Paul did (I Corinthians 15:9-11, Ephesians 3:8, and I Timothy 1:12-16). Those sinful actions are such that I have long ago repented of (Psalms 32:5, Proverbs 28:13, Ezekiel 14:6, Ezekiel 18:20-32, Matthew 3:8, and Acts 26:18-20). I am continually thankful that God is longsuffering and allows space for repentance (Revelation 2:18-29). However, I wasn't in those sinful days so willing to change or even think about God. The fact is, the more I did wrong and got away with it without consequences, the bolder I became. I thought at many points, in the days of my sinful youth, that I could do anything terrible and surely get away with it. I never considered spiritual consequences. I never thought I would reap what I had sown. I just figured nothing happened when I did such and such, so nothing will happen if I do something else that was wicked. I know I am not the only person that ever thought that way.

Solomon wrote: *“Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him: But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he feareth not before God”* (Ecclesiastes 8:11-13).

How do you think about the consequences for sin? Do you think the consequences for sin are afar off and thus not all that necessary to resolve immediately? Since the earth is still standing, do you think the Judgment Day is an unnecessary thing to think about? Do you think it is wise to delay getting your life right with our Lord? You would not be alone in allowing yourself to downplay the necessity of immediate change from wrong to right. It has almost always been a huge problem. Let's think about that for a moment.

### Not Taking The Judgment Day Seriously

To the hypocrites in the congregation of Christ in Rome, Paul wrote this: *“Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt*

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*escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds”* (Romans 2:1-6). The quoted Scriptures above nail it. People who think the delay of the second coming of Christ is reason to keep sinning are despising God’s forbearance and are in for a terrible eternity (Matthew 24:42-51 and Matthew 25:31-46).

The Psalmist said: *“For the wicked boasteth of his heart’s desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the LORD abhorreth. The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts. His ways are always grievous; thy judgments are far above out of his sight: as for all his enemies, he puffeth at them. He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved: for I shall never be in adversity”* (Psalms 10:3-6). He started that Psalm by questioning the Lord’s lack of presence in evil times. We all need to understand that the Lord’s delay is not about letting people get away with sin. The Lord has not judged the wicked to date for a very good reason.

### **The Reasoning Behind The Lord’s Delay In Judgment**

If you read what Peter wrote about the Judgment Day you will see that people have long been emboldened to do evil because the Lord didn’t immediately punish them (II Peter 3:1-15). If you read that same context you see that God is very much aware of that. However, in that same context, you see that the Lord is waiting to give the lost the opportunity to be saved by allowing them time to repent. The Lord is more concerned with people’s salvation than their damnation (I Timothy 2:4). Consider this inspired statement: *“Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel”* (Ezekiel 33:11)?

After reading why the Lord delays the end of the world, how could you not appreciate and love Him for that? How could any of us try to take advantage of His desire that we be saved? Let’s understand something about God’s longsuffering. His longsuffering does come to an end. His judgment is delayed, but it will come (John 5:28-29, Acts 17:31, Romans 14:8-12, II Corinthians 5:10, and I Timothy 4:1). If you don’t repent, you’ll perish (Luke 13:1-5).

### **Conclusion**

For those of us whom have obeyed the Gospel, let’s not get relaxed (cf. Zephaniah 1:12-18). If there is some clean-up to be done in your life, don’t wait (Psalms 119:59-60, Proverbs 27:1, and James 4:4-17). Don’t allow the fact that the sentence is not executed speedily cause you to be unprepared when that day comes (Matthew 25:1-13).