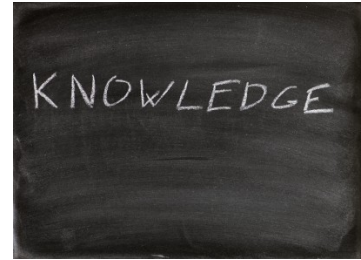


If I Knew Then...

John Buttrey II

We have heard it many times. Chances are good we have said, or thought it ourselves. I am referring to the familiar expression, "If I knew then, what I know now."

Looking back on the "then" of our life, from a position of greater knowledge and experience in the "now," we know we could have done better. *Now* we would have excelled in school back *then*. *Now*, we would have acted better *then*. *Now* we would have made better choices *then*.



Often this familiar expression is spoken in the now with a feeling of regret at not being able to undo the then of our life. Knowing what we know now, we realize, such knowledge at an earlier point in our life (the then), would have helped us gain a better place in life today (the now).

I would like to use this familiar expression to challenge us "now," to be better prepared "then." The "then" I am referencing is the future day of judgment. The Bible is clear "now" about what is going to take place "then."

We know now that God will bring every act to judgment whether it is good or evil. (Ecc. 12:14). We know now that some will be rewarded and some will be punished. Jesus described it well,

28 *"Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice,*

29 *and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.*

John 5:28-29

21 *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter.*

22 *"Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?'*

23 *"And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'*

Matthew 7:21-23

We know now that we will meet the Lord in the air:

16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

*17 **Then** we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.*

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 Emp. mine

We know now that some will be saying on that day, "If I knew then, what I know now..." However, there is no reason for us to be unprepared. We know *now* what will happen *then*. With the knowledge we have, let us live our lives in accordance with the will of God.