

## **There are no surprises** **08-29-21**

It is interesting to consider the surprise of the Apostles and disciples when Jesus rose from the grave. What is more remarkable about their surprise is that they should not have been surprised. Jesus had said repeatedly and clearly what was going to happen in Jerusalem; He would be betrayed, tried and falsely convicted, turned over to the gentiles, executed, and then would rise three days later. But when it happened, all of Jesus' disciples are completely caught off guard.

God said through the prophet Amos "Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, Unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7). While this passage speaks primarily to the concept of the judgment of God, we might consider that God does in fact give us many different statements of what to expect in this life and in the next.

For example, we are often surprised when someone or something in the world turns against us. We ought not to be, since we are told in 1 John 3:13 that the world hates us. We are surprised when people who claim to be Christians do not act Christ-like, nor show a love of the Truth. We ought not to be, as Paul told us that the servants of Satan disguise themselves as servants of God in 2 Corinthians 11:15.

Another example of surprises that ought not be is when we are surprised that times can be hard. Yet Peter declares we should not be surprised by fiery ordeals, as they are necessary to purify our faith (1 Peter 4:12). Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:12 that all who seek Christ will see persecution.

Sometimes we are surprised by the blessings of God. Too often we look around in this world and see the darkness and presume we are without hope in this life. But Peter reminds us in 2 Peter 2:7-9 that God sees and knows our condition and delivers us from such persecutions. Jesus promised us that our needs would be met if we seek first the kingdom (Matthew 6:32-34). We should not be surprised then when God does preserve us.

On the other hand, we ought not to be surprised when we suffer from the consequences of sin. The Bible spends a great deal of time warning us of the consequences of sin, specifically and generically. It tells us of the problems that come with sexual immorality (Proverbs 6:27), with drinking (Proverbs 23:21), and with be a violent person (Matthew 26:52). Sin has consequences that the Scriptures tell us about, and we need to make sure we understand.

Christians should not be surprised by results of negligence. In Hebrews 2:2 we are warned of the dangers of neglecting our salvation; we can drift away and be lost. We are warned of the dangers of neglecting our duties as parents (Proverbs 22:6, Colossians 3:21) or in marriage (Colossians 3:18-19). Neglect has consequences that the Scriptures want us to consider.

We need to remember that "God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life (Galatians 6:7-8). Most important to consider is that we are warned often about the expectations of God and the judgment. Many will be surprised on that day when they are told that their works or deeds were not the "will of the Father"; they will be shocked to be cast out because Jesus will declare "I do not know you" (Matthew 7:21-23).