

STORACLES OF PROPHECY

Above the Crowd?

Matthew 26:31-75

The Story . . .

Peter loved Jesus, but he also loved the approval of the crowd. During the last supper when Jesus warned the apostles that they would all forsake Him, Peter jumped to his feet and brashly vowed that even if all others would be offended, he would never forsake Him. Jesus replied, "This night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice." Verse 34.

Peter meant well, but he did not recognize the pride in his own heart. Later that night when the mob came to arrest Jesus and all were watching, Peter pulled out a sword to defend His Master. But just a few hours later at His trial, as Peter was being mocked by the enemies of Jesus, he denied three times that he even knew Him. Each time Peter became more bold, until he finally denied Him with swearing and cursing (Verse 74).

Then the rooster crowed. At that very moment, Jesus was in the judgment hall, being beaten by the guards. Peter saw Jesus turn and look at him with love and compassion, and it broke his heart. "And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly." Luke 22:61, 62.

From that day forward, Peter was a different man. He no longer lived to please the crowd, but was determined to please only God. After his conversion, when brought before the Jewish council and threatened with beating if he continued preaching about Jesus, Peter fearlessly answered, "We ought to obey God rather than men." Acts 5:29. Peter forever proved his loyalty and love for Jesus when he chose to be crucified upside down by the Roman Emperor Nero rather than to deny his Lord again.

AMAZING FACTS

The Study

Fill in the blanks after reading each Bible text.

1. How does God determine whether or not we are on His side?

Matthew 7:21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall _____ into the kingdom of heaven; but he that _____ the will of my Father which is in heaven.

Romans 6:16 Know ye not, that to whom ye _____ yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye _____; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

NOTE: It is a simple principle that our loyalties are determined by whom we listen to. If we say we are servants of God but take our instructions from the devil or the world, we are deceiving ourselves.

2. When the commands of God and men conflict, whom did Peter say we should obey?

Acts 5:29 Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey _____ rather than men.

NOTE: After Peter was converted and fell in love with Jesus, he told the Jewish council that his first allegiance was to God. We have learned that in the last days, the laws of the beast and the world will conflict with the laws of God. We must choose now to obey the laws of God—regardless of the consequences.

3. How do we best demonstrate our love for God?

John 8:31 If ye continue in _____, then are ye my disciples indeed.

John 14:15 If ye love me, _____ my commandments.

1 John 2:4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his _____, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

NOTE: The best demonstration of a person's love for Jesus is to do His will, and the law of God is the most perfect expression of His will (Psalm 40:8).

4. According to Jesus, why did the hypocrites act religious?

Matthew 6:2 That they may have _____ of men.

Matthew 6:5 That they may be _____ of men.

NOTE: The Bible tells us that "man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." 1 Samuel 16:7. A genuine Christian will be much more concerned about what God thinks of him than what the world thinks.

5. Is it generally safe to follow the crowd?

Exodus 23:2 Thou shalt _____ a multitude to do evil.

Matthew 7:13, 14 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to _____, and _____ there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

1 Peter 3:20 In the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein _____, that is, eight souls were _____ by water.

NOTE: History seems to indicate that the crowd almost always makes the wrong decisions. It was the crowd that wanted to stone Moses and go back to the slavery of Egypt (Numbers 14:4-10). It was the crowd that cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him." Luke 23:21. And it will be the majority—not the minority—who receive the mark of the beast in the last days (Revelation 13:16).

6. How does Jesus feel when we put the traditions of men before the commandments of God?

Mark 7:7, 9 Howbeit in _____ do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. . . . And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your _____ tradition.

7. Will true Christianity be popular in the last days?

Matthew 24:9 Ye shall be _____ of _____ nations for my name's sake.

2 Timothy 3:12 Yea, and all that will live _____ in Christ Jesus shall _____ persecution.

Revelation 12:17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make _____ with the _____ of her seed.

Revelation 13:15 And cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be _____.

NOTE: In the last days, Satan and his followers will wage an all-out war against God's genuine, Bible-believing children.

8. Is it possible to serve both God and the crowd?

Matthew 6:24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will _____ the one, and _____ the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other.

Matthew 12:30 He that is not with me is _____ me.

NOTE: In this battle between Christ and Satan, there is no neutral territory. It is impossible to ride the fence as a spectator. If we are not cooperating with Jesus, we are in fact helping the devil.

9. Is it safe to love a friend or family member more than Jesus?

Matthew 10:37 He that loveth father or _____ more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter _____ than me is not worthy of me.

Luke 14:26 If any man come to me, and hate [love less dearly] not his father, and mother, and _____, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own _____ also, he cannot be my disciple.

Matthew 12:50 For whosoever shall do the _____ of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and _____.

NOTE: Jesus indicates here that the best way to help reach and save our loved ones is to put Him first in our lives. It is always a tragic mistake to put our natural affections for family or friends before our first obligation to our Saviour and Creator.

10. Is it wise to put a prosperous career or earthly treasures before Jesus?

Matthew 16:26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole _____, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his _____?

Luke 12:15 A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the _____ which he possesseth.

NOTE: The belief that happiness and security come from a good job and nice things is a deadly deception. On the contrary, Jesus said, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Mark 10:25.

11. Is it safe to continue disobeying God's will after He has shown us the truth?

Hosea 4:6 My people are _____ for lack of knowledge: because thou hast _____ knowledge, I will also reject thee. ... Seeing thou hast forgotten the _____ of thy God, I will also forget thy children.

Hebrews 10:26 For if we sin wilfully _____ that we have received the knowledge of the _____, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.

12. What will happen to those who persist in rejecting the truth?

2 Thessalonians 2:10-12 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that _____; because they received not the _____ of the _____, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should _____ a lie: That they all might be damned who believed

not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

John 3:19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men _____ darkness rather than light, because their deeds were _____.

NOTE: The Scriptures teach that Jesus is the truth (John 14:6). To accept or reject the truth in any degree is to accept or reject Jesus.

13. Will those who persecute God's people in the last days believe they are doing the right thing?

John 16:2 Yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will _____ that he doeth God _____.

14. How did Peter describe those who have learned the truth but refuse to follow it?

2 Peter 2:21, 22 For it had been better for them _____ to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to _____ the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her _____ in the mire.

15. Does following Jesus involve some struggle and self denial?

Luke 9:23 If any man will come after me, let him _____ himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

16. Is it safe to procrastinate or postpone a decision to follow Jesus?

Hebrews 4:7 To day if ye will _____ his voice, harden not your hearts.

Hebrews 2:3 How shall we escape, if we _____ so great salvation?

2 Corinthians 6:2 Behold, _____ is the accepted time; behold, now is the _____ of salvation.

NOTE: The best time to listen to God's voice is when you are hearing it, and the best time to do God's will is when He is showing you His will. Satan's favorite trap is to deceive people into thinking that they have plenty of time to make this decision. The devil knows that the convicting voice of God's Spirit will grow quiet if ignored. Untold millions will be lost who were sincerely planning to follow Jesus someday in the future, but "someday" never came.

17. What benefits come as a result of accepting and following the truth?

Psalms 119:165 Great _____ have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.

John 8:32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you _____.

1 Peter 1:22 Seeing ye have _____ your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit.

NOTE: Tremendous peace, security, and freedom come into the hearts and lives of those who receive and obey the truth.

18. What question did Jesus ask Peter three times?

John 21:17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, _____ thou me?

NOTE: This is the most important question when it comes to a full and complete surrender to the will of God. Do you love Him?

Your Response

The truth will never be popular in this sinful world, and the crowd will almost always take the easy road. But Jesus has shown His incredible love for you by giving His life to pay the price for all your sins. The Lord has a great plan for your life. This is why He has revealed His truth to you. Will you now return that love by giving Him all your heart, by choosing to accept Him as your Lord, and by following where He leads?

ANSWER: _____

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