

May 3, 2020

“This, Too, Shall Pass”

The statement, “This, Too, Shall Pass,” is quoted so many times that many believe it is found in the Bible. However, that exact statement is not found in the Bible. But similar statements occur very often. For example, the statement “*it shall come to pass*” is said to occur over 100 times in the Scriptures. Examples of such may be found in the KJV in such scriptures as Deut. 28:1; Isa.65:24; Ezek 12::25; Acts 2:27, etc. Likewise, the statement “*it came to pass*” also occurs time and again in the scriptures. Examples of such are Gen. 4:14; Ex. 12:41; I Kings 18:1, etc.

According to **Wikipedia**, the origin of this statement “has been traced to the works of Persian Sufi poets, such as Rumi, Sanai, and Attar of Nishapur...After deliberation the sages hand him a sample ring with the Persian words ‘This too shall pass’ etched on it, which has the desired effect to make him happy when he is sad.”

A little more research reveals the following: “Abraham Lincoln told the story of an Eastern monarch who commanded his wise men to create a sentence. This sentence would be cut in stone and always be in view. It must be true. It must apply to every situation and at all times. The wise men met and returned to the monarch with their sentence: ‘This, too, shall pass away.’”

“This, too, shall pass,” when quoted today, is generally applied to painful and stressful situations, especially as they apply to society at large. As a rule, it is quoted for the purpose of lending encouragement to worried, stressed-out people in times of worry, concern, and uncertainty. It is so used in this article.

COVID-19, or the Corona Virus, has become a pandemic. Though its origin has been traced apparently to a laboratory in Wuhan, China, it has become a global problem. Our own nation, our own state, our own county is no exception. Millions have been affected, hundreds of thousands have died, and no actual end is in sight, even though a gradual re-opening of businesses, schools, churches, etc., is planned, and in some instances being implemented. But many people are in panic mode, especially those with compromised health conditions, and/or who have lost loved ones due to this virus.

So what can we say? For starters, we state that “this, too, shall pass.” Other scary, and deadly times have come and gone. We think about the 1918 influenza, which reportedly cost around 50 million lives worldwide. More recently, we think about the 1968 flu epidemic which also originated in China and resulted in an estimated 1-4 million deaths. Our nation weathered World War I (July 28, 1914 to November 11, 1918). Some of us remember World War II (1939-1945).

With regards to life in the flesh, whether in good times or bad, nothing is permanent. As it relates to society at large, everything is subject to change. Prosperous times, sooner or later, are followed by times of adversity and want. The fact that you are healthy today does not negate the fact that tomorrow it could be totally different. The fact that you are living today does not negate

the fact that you could be dead tomorrow. Nothing stays the same as it relates to life on earth.

None of us remember a time exactly like that of COVID-19. But it is no worse than certain times which occurred in the lives of our ancestors. So, as we try to cope with current challenges, what should we do?

First, remember that “this, too, shall pass.” It is not a permanent situation, so we should make the best of a painful situation. Robert Schuller was so correct when he said “tough **times** never last, tough people do.” Another person made this observation: “Most of your stress comes from the way you respond, not the way life is. Adjust your attitude, and all that extra stress is gone.” Perhaps that is an over statement, but it does illustrate the point that attitude goes a long way in determining outlook.

Respond in a positive way to those who are in need. During this time period many people are doing exactly that. Think of the countless people in the medical profession who are risking their lives to treat people afflicted with this very, very contagious virus. Countless people are going the extra mile in caring for the less fortunate, and seeking to keep society up and going. Sadly, critical times brings out the worst in some people, but, fortunately, they bring out the best in others. Make sure you are in the latter category! Benjamin Franklin was so correct in his statement, “well **done** is better than well said.”

Remember that adversity in the flesh can help us grow spiritually. David said, “*it is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes,*” Psalm 119:71. The apostle Paul said “*tribulation produces perseverance, and perseverance, character, and character, hope,*” Romans 5:3-4. James wrote, saying, “*My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience,*” Jas. 1:2-3. Read I Peter 4:12-16 and you will note that all people, both evil doers and Christians, suffer in this life, but it is much better to “*suffer as a Christian,*” and in such a way that God will be glorified.

Allow the uncertainty of these times to focus our thoughts upon God, with Whom “*all things are possible,*” Matt. 19:26. Let us take to heart the words of Heb. 13:5: “*Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’*” We should **believe** these verses, not merely read them!

Finally, let us spend much time in fervent prayer! In Luke 18:1-8, Jesus spoke a parable “*that men always ought to pray and not lose heart*” (v. 1). The inspired James stated that “*the effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much,*” Jas. 5:16.

Conclusion: More, much more could be said by way of how to cope with the Corona virus, but “the bottom line” is this: “this, too, shall pass.” Who knows — the times we are now going through may well prove to be the very thing which will providentially result in the opening of many doors for evangelism, and may result in many people going to heaven who otherwise would have been lost eternally. And these times can be used to make you and me stronger and more dedicated to the Lord. It would not be the first time when much good ultimately resulted from great tragedy.

*** —B. Witherington