

## *“Then Comes The End...”*

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by Wayne Goff

*“Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.” ~ 1 Corinthians 15:24.*

The end of 2019 is nearing, and the beginning of 2020 is almost here. If the Lord does not return between now and New Year’s Day (Wednesday), then the calendar will turn over another year. So let’s reflect a bit together over the past year.

The unofficial theme which I used in my preaching this past year was “Can We Do Better?” One could use this theme *every year* because the constant challenge in life is not to settle for average, not to just do ok, but to do one’s best and to take the best advantage of the time given. Someone once said that the difference between a rut and a grave is that a grave has an end! So if we allow our lives to get into a rut, then we need to climb up out of it!

The closing thought of 1 Corinthians 15 — a chapter where Paul is talking about the end of earth life, and the transition into eternity — is *“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord”* (v. 58). How many things do you know of in life that will last into eternity? Well, let’s see. Our possessions will not last. Our earthly goals will go away. Our obsession with entertainment, or work, or power, or influence will come to a crashing end. Earth life and our loved ones will cease to be here. When you add up the sum then you get a big, fat, zero!

In contrast to the fleeting things of earth life, God says that our work for the Lord is not in vain! It means something. It will last into eternity! Listen to Revelation 14:13 — *“Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, ‘Write: “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.” ‘Yes,’ says the Spirit, ‘that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.’”* Do you see the words: *“...and their works follow them”*? Your work for the Lord *endures, continues, and accompanies* you into heaven. Stop and think about the **power** of that idea!

Jesus admonished us to *“... lay up for yourselves **treasures in heaven**, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also”* Matthew 6:20. If we work tirelessly for the Lord, if we habitually lay up treasure in heaven, then that’s where we will go because that is where our heart’s desire lies.

For example, when the Philippians sent financial aid to Paul for the work of evangelism, he thanked them and said, *“Not that I seek the gift, but I seek **the fruit that abounds to your account**”* Philippians 4:17. Talk about a return on your investment!! The Philippians helped Paul because they loved God, were thankful for their own salvation, and were interested in the spiritual well-being of others — but their efforts resulted in eternal fruit in their spiritual bank account. How does your *eternal savings account* look?

Reflecting back on 2019, do you think you put the Lord and His kingdom first? Did you set your heart on things above? Did you reflect on the enduring nature of eternal things versus the fleeting nature of this world’s things? Did you try to share the Gospel with others? Did you study God’s Word so that these things would be foremost in your mind?

Life will soon be over for each one of us. Life is comparatively a *“vapor,”* (James 4:14), its length a *“handbreadth”* (Ps. 39:5), and we are soon *“cut off”* and *“fly away”* (Ps. 90:10). There is one appointment you and I will not miss — our appointment with death and eternal judgment (Hebrews 9:27). Prepare for it today.

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