

Our Last Appointment

Hebrews 9:27

I. Introduction:

1. It was the evening of April 14th. The President was running late and besieged by last minute callers. He made time for an old friend, George Ashmun, who was accompanied by the Speaker of the House and Judge Daly.
2. The president served in Congress with Ashmun 20 years earlier. The president spent a few minutes with him then yielded to the appeal for him to come to the carriage so he would not miss another appointment. Hastily, the President “scribbled on a card for Ashmun and Judge Daly: ‘Allow Mr. Ashmun & friend to come in at 9 A.M. tomorrow. A. Lincoln April 14, 1865’” (Luthin, *Lincoln*, p. 633).

II. Discussion:

1. Some appointments will never be kept.

- A. The next day at 9 A.M. Lincoln was dead; the appointment would never be kept.
- B. How often do we make plans, appointments, never considering whether we might not be able to keep them?
 - (1) Consider the rich man in **Luke 12:16-21** who gave no thought that he might die.
 - (2) He declared his future which he fully expected to enjoy “*for many years.*”
 - (3) However, the Lord said, “*This night thy soul shall be required of thee,*” this night, you shall die!
 - (4) He neglected to remember the words of James: “*Come now, you who say, Today or tomorrow, we shall go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit. Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Instead, you ought to say, ‘If the Lord wills, we shall live and also do this or that’*” (Jas. 4:13-15).
- C. It’s not wrong to make plans; the Lord and the apostles did so (1 Cor. 16:5-8; 2 Cor. 1:15, 16). But, as Paul said, we must make appointments with the sure and certain knowledge they will only be kept “*if the Lord permit.*”

2. One appointment we all will keep.

- A. One day all our future appointments will be canceled, not merely postponed.
 - (1) A holiday we are looking forward to with great anticipation will be kept without us.
 - (2) A family reunion will be held where we will just be a memory. Meetings will be set, but we will not attend.
- B. Ironically, forty seven years later, at almost the same hour Lincoln was shot, the world’s greatest luxury liner, touted as “unsinkable,” sank after striking an iceberg on its maiden voyage.
- C. Let us, with all seriousness, ponder and meditate upon the profound words of the writer of Hebrews, “*it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment*” (Heb. 9:27). What a sobering thought that this is one appointment we all will keep (recall rich man in Luke 12!).

3. Then we will have to give an account.

- A. Our final “appointment” is an absolute certainty! Heb. 9:27
- B. You can’t circle the calendar, or place this appointment in your appointment book (my electronic calendar).
- C. But, the coming of this appointment for all of us is even more certain the sun’s rising tomorrow!

D. Notice once again what the Hebrew writer said about our final appointment: *“it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.”* (Heb. 9:27).

(1) Our final appointment is for two reasons: death and judgment!

(2) God will require an accounting from all of us! 2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:11-12

E. What then? How should we respond given that all of us face this common fate?

(1) Paul tells us in 2 Cor. 5:11! We need to be *“persuaded”* of something given *“the terror of the Lord.”*

(2) *“to whom much is given, from him much will be required”* (Lk. 12:48; **Heb. 10:28-31**)

F. On that day we are going to hear one of two things from the mouth of Jesus:

(1) Matt. 25:23: *“Well done, good and faithful servant...Enter into the joy of your lord.”*

OR

(2) Matt. 25:26-30: *“You wicked and lazy servant...cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*

(3) Matt. 25:34: *“Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”*

OR

(4) Matt. 25:41: *“Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”*

G. We all need to contemplate those words! When doing so what do you feel?

(1) Joy?

(2) Dread?

III. Conclusion:

1. Lincoln's appointments of April 14th were never kept.

A. All his dreams and schemes vanished as the vapor of that cold night.

B. April 15th found his soul in eternity.

2. What are your plans for tomorrow? Do you plan to obey God...someday?

3. Remember, *“...behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”* (2 Cor. 6:2).

4. *“Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people.”* How about you? Are you making preparations?

Adapted by Craig Thomas from Larry Hafley's original article.