

THOUGHTS

By Douglas W. Schroeder

SPEAKER ON THE WORD TODAY

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2019

Thoughts
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WHY NOT A THOUGHTS BOOK?

What do you think, how about a book compilation of selected Thoughts I have written over the past 25 years? The idea came to me as some of you have encouraged me by remarking that they are stimulating. A thought came to me, arranging them in chronological order by year, so that you can see the application to the culture of the day, as well as my development as a pastor. It could be as enlightening for me to compile as for you to read. Given how long it has taken to get Key Chapters of the Bible: Old Testament concluded, I make no promises on the time frame.

KEY CHAPTERS OF THE BIBLE: OLD TESTAMENT

Speaking of that very work, I now have the book in the hands of three proof readers. It has undergone an extensive editing process, so I think the errors will be kept to a minimum. Very soon I hope to announce its availability!

Is there something in the air lately? I'm suddenly full of books! This one I have just begun, entitled You Are Listening to THE WORD TODAY, and I envision it being a collection of verbatim responses from listeners around the world. They are arresting in their candidness and profound gratitude for the Gospel and The Word Today. It is starting out as a quasi-devotional book, with a listener response followed by my comments. I guess I have a few things to work on in 2019!

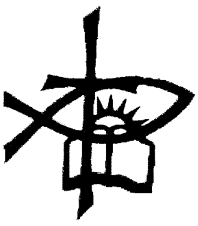
DON'T WORRY IF YOU ARE NOT ATTRACTIVE

Every time I encounter the description in the prophecy of Isaiah 53:2 discussing, "He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him," it gives me pause. The world puts *so much* emphasis on the externals, the physical appearance. We are given indication that Jesus was not attractive, despite the relentless artistry showing him to have fine features. If you do not feel attractive, no worries; it seems our Lord was not fabulous looking. His beauty came from the Image of God in humanity and his pure soul, unstained by sin.

SKEPTICISM GROWING BY LEAPS AND BOUNDS

Is it just me, or is the Western world, and perhaps all cultures connected globally, growing severely skeptical? So much exposure to the din and dung (speaking metaphorically of sinful deeds) of humanity seems to produce a jaded mindset in culture. There seems to be a free floating skepticism, or Chronic Skepticism Disorder at work in some people. The default response is often one of doubt, or an appeal to what science of today knows. It's surprising how many people won't believe anything that can't be proven! They won't even readily take personal testimony because there have been so many charlatans.

*The Bible is God's Word . . . Jesus is God's "Word" made flesh . . .
His death and resurrection, the message needed Today.*



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In the face of such rampaging doubt I remind people, "How long does it take to turn from skepticism to belief? About five seconds." At the proper time, when the conditions are correct, these doubters may have their epiphany. The ability of the human to reverse opinion is breathtakingly fast. Most people judge by their eyes, not their ears, so they will likely start from a position of skepticism toward the Gospel. Give it time. Let them hear more. One of my seminary professors stated, "The ear is the organ of faith, not the eye." Indeed, doubters keep getting an eyeful of science (Darwinian style), yet they never get their deeply satisfying answer to just *why* they should be living.

I like using my ears to hear God's voice in the Bible, and to hear the truth as it is spoken by people with integrity. It sure beats believing only what you see, and ending up a jaded malcontent who is plagued by Chronic Skepticism Disorder!

GREEDY PEOPLE

A recent Reader's Digest article, "Acts of GENEROSITY You Won't Soon Forget", extolled the virtues of single persons who upon death were discovered to be millionaires. These post mortem philanthropists donated prodigious sums to charities for the betterment of humanity and the planet. The article was premised on the belief that these were generous people. What a lie!

These were sensationally *greedy people*. They gave practically nothing away, and in the process of amassing their wealth pretended to not have much. Don't think for a moment that the love of money didn't control their life; they couldn't stand to part with it until they were dead. The *only* reason they gave any away was because they *had to*, they were dying. They remind me of the rich fool (see Luke 12:13-21).

You can tell whom the truly generous persons are not by how much they give when they are dead, but by how much they give while alive. It takes zero trust in God to give money away when dead, but it takes significant faith to give away 15-20% of your gross income, knowing that the Lord will provide for you and your family. As usual, the secular spin on generosity has it backwards, extolling the greedy with accolades for something they were forced to do. Conversely, at the resurrection those who lived their love for God, also in their giving, will hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant... (See Matthew 25:14-30).

I often say that your offering is a barometer of your love for God, an accurate measurement of your intensity, your zeal for the Lord. God is not impressed by the *amount* given, but by the *proportion* it represents of the total he has given to you. Bequests are necessary for getting Kingdom work done, but should not be at the expense of an active faith that strongly supports the Gospel while one is living.

Blessings!
Douglas W. Schroeder

THE WORD TODAY reaching the world with **GOD'S WORD**