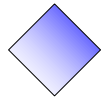


The Voice of Truth



April 21, 2013

"What is Your Life?" By Jimmy Pettigrew

"Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil. Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:13-17).

What are your dreams, plans and goals for the future? Too many people place emphasis in all the wrong places when they think about the future and what they will do with their lives. We are prone to be too earth-bound in our thinking and to leave God out of our plans. People need to take life inventory. James's question, "What is your life?", when properly viewed, will enable us to take a life inventory.

What is your life from the standpoint of duration? It is a vapor (James 4:14-15); it is here only briefly and then is gone. James is saying stop and consider! Before making plans for the future, determine what sort of life you have. Is it permanent, abiding, enduring; will it be here tomorrow, next week, or the following year? "For my days are but a breath" (Job 7:16). "Remember how short my time is" (Psalm 89:47). "There is but a step between me and death" (1 Samuel 20:3). Man's days on earth are pictured as a flower that is cut down, and therefore soon withers (Job 14:1-2; James 1:10-11). Man's days on earth are pictured as a fleeing shadow (Job. 14:2). Life passes quickly as the "eagle hasteth to the prey" (Job 9:26). Man lives but one time on earth (Hebrews 9:27). With life as uncertain as this, how foolish are we to plan the future without regard to Him Who holds the future in His hands? Boasting of a definite future on earth is evil because it denies God's power and will (James 4:15-16).

It is imperative that we recognize that God has a plan and a will for life on this earth. "Even every one that is

called by my name: for I have created him I for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him" (Isaiah 43:7). What should be man's purpose in life? "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6). We are to trust in God! If we will let Him direct us, then our lives will be immensely enriched. A study of Ecclesiastes reveals that Solomon tried basically the things that men try in their effort to find a purpose for being; the conclusion of chapter 12, verses 13, 14, is a studied conclusion: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

Your life is a gift from God and is to be used for His glory. All men need to be confronted with the question: "What is your life?" We are urged to "examine ourselves" (2 Corinthians 13:5). The following poem should focus attention on this article.

Life's Clock Author Unknown

The clock of life is wound but once,
And no man has the power
To tell just when the hands will stop,
At late or early hour.

To lose one's wealth is sad, indeed,
To lose one's health is more;
To lose one's soul is such a loss,
And no man can restore.

The present only is our own,
Live, love, toil with a will;
Place no faith in "Tomorrow",
For the clock may then be still. ♦

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“Dealing With Death”

By Jarrod Jacobs

Just as sure as you are born, you will die” someone has said. “As soon as you are born, you begin to die” is a phrase coined many years ago. A fact of life is that we will have to deal with the death of a loved one (or many loved ones) during the course of our lives before finally facing our own death. How can we come to terms with a part of our lives that so many choose to ignore? Let the Bible give us the answer! In this article, let us take the word “death,” and for every letter in that word, suggest a lesson that we might learn from death.

Decided

Death has been a fact of life almost since the beginning of man. The Bible reveals that it was because of man’s sin that death has come upon us (**Gen. 3:19, 24; I Cor. 15:22**). Since Adam and Eve chose to disobey God, death is something for which we must prepare. In fact, the Bible has many passages which speak of death being a reality. Let us read what Solomon said. “*For the living know that they shall die*” (**Ecc. 9:5**). James wrote, “*For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also*” (**Jas. 2:26**).

James’ words really sum up death. Really, all death is a separation. In this case, it is the separation of the spirit from the body. When the body is no longer fit to house the spirit, then the spirit leaves or separates from the body. The result is physical death. The body returns to the dust, while the spirit goes to God (**Ecc. 12:7**).

End

Death means an end to this earthly life. Jesus stated it best when He said, “*I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work*” (**Jn. 9:4**). This verse shows the parallel between life and day with death and night. Jesus is literally saying, “I must work the works of God while I am alive; soon I will be dead, and not able to work.” Death is also an end to the cares and worries of this world. “*For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content*” (**I Tim. 6:7-8**). We know that we will leave our material possessions behind, but did you know that you will leave all your intentions, wishes, and work behind as well? We will “carry nothing out.” Read **Job 1:21**. Death means an end to all the opportunities we have. There are no more choices to make. All the things we should have, or could have done are gone. Are you using the time you have wisely?

All

It is promised that all will die. “*For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive*” (**I Cor. 15:22**). Solomon said, “*For the living know that they shall die*” (**Ecclesiastes 9:5**). Again, it is written, “*And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment*” (**Heb. 9:27**). Death is serious business. We need to see the importance of being prepared now while there is time (**II Cor. 6:2**). When we learn of the aged, the infants, and everyone in-between dying, it is evident that there is no one who will escape physical death.

Teaches

Death teaches us many things. First, it teaches us the brevity of life. “*My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle, and are spent without hope*” (**Job 7:6**). “*Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not*” (**Job 14:1-2**). The words of Job say it better than I ever could. Death also teaches us the sure coming of the judgment. **Hebrews 9:27** says, “*And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.*” Other passages to study include: **II Corinthians 5:10** and **Acts 17:30-31**. Death’s approach teaches us to be prepared. When we see one’s body buried beneath the sod, we need to realize that our death is coming as well. Let us be prepared for eternity by obeying God’s will and being baptized before it is too late (**Acts 2:38**).

Hades

After death, the soul is sent to the hadean realm to await the judgment. Let us look at some verses that show the reality of hades. “*And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise*” (**Lk. 23:39-43**). This word “paradise” has reference to the hadean realm where there is rest and peace for the righteous. This is not a reference to Heaven, the home of God, for Christ did not go there after His death, but to the hadean realm of paradise (**Acts 2:31-32**). Notice also **Luke 16:19-31**. This account is of two people who died. One went to the paradise side of hades (rest), while

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the other went to the tartarus side of hades (torment). *"And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom" (Lk. 16:22-23).* Both were awaiting the final judgment of all mankind (**Acts 17:31; II Cor. 5:10**).

Let us take to heart the valuable lessons we learn from death. Are you prepared for your coming death? This is the time to prepare. Do not wait! *"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (II Cor. 6:2).*

"The obligation to preach the gospel rests upon all Christians. The rest of the church should be as interested in preaching the gospel as preachers are. If a church is not interested in preaching the gospel to a lost world, it can hardly be considered a church of Christ. Professing to be a church of Christ is not enough. Jesus came to seek and save the lost, and He died that men might live; and if we have not the spirit of Christ, we are none of His. No church, however small it may be, can escape this responsibility."

R.L. Whiteside, Reflections, p. 470 •

Water Now or Fire Later

By Jonathan L Perz

The Bible reveals two times that God has or will destroy the world. It is significant to note some similarities and differences between both events.

In the days of Noah, God determined *"that every intent of the thoughts of [man's] heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5).* So the Lord said, *"I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping things and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them" (Genesis 6:7).* This being so, God destroyed the sinful world beneath water, except Noah and his household, who found grace in His sight (**Genesis 6:8**). They would rise above the water in an ark which they built by faith in the commandment of God (**Hebrews 11:7**).

In like fashion, God has planned a day which He will once again destroy the world, but not by water (**Genesis 9:11-13**). *"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with a fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up . . . the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat...." (2 Peter 3:10, 12).* This destruction will accompany the final judgment of mankind (cf. **2 Thessalonians 1:6-10; Hebrews 9:27**). The believing will reside in heaven with God for the entirety of eternity (cf. **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17**) and the unbelieving and unrighteous will be cast into a lake of fire (**Revelation 20:11-15; Revelation 21:8**).

These events are similar in several ways. Both are judgments against mankind. Both involve the destruction of the wicked. Both involve the salvation of the faithful. Both demonstrate the goodness and the severity of God (cf.

Romans 11:22). Both are sudden and without warning upon those who do not believe (**Matthew 24:36-39**), though God is extremely longsuffering (**1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 3:9, 15**). Still, only a comparative few will be saved.

These events differ in one critical way. Where the first employed water for destruction, the second will employ fire. In Noah's day, those who were wicked were destroyed by water (**Genesis 9:11**). Yet, those who entered the ark of safety were *"saved through water" (1 Peter 3:21)*. In the final judgment, the earth and the wicked will be destroyed by fire (**2 Thessalonians 1:8; Revelation 20:15**) and the only means of salvation will be "in Christ" (cf. **Acts 4:12**).

This difference is manifested in an interesting way when we consider two of the baptisms spoken of in the New Testament—water baptism and the baptism of fire.

John the Baptist said that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire (**Luke 3:16**) and the content reveals beyond any doubt that John is speaking of the final judgment of mankind. He says the "wheat (righteous, jlp) will be gathered into His barn (heaven, jlp) and the chaff (sinners, jlp) will be burned with unquenchable fire (hell, jlp)" (**Luke 3:17**).

At the same time, when Peter spoke of Noah's salvation, he spoke of it as a type of baptism, in which we are "saved through water" (**1 Peter 3:21**). Jesus commanded this baptism (**Mark 16:15-16; Matthew 28:19-20**). The apostles obeyed by baptizing in water (**Acts 2:38, 40-41; Acts 8:36-38; Acts 10:47-48**, etc.). John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus by baptizing in water (**John 3:23**). We are taught that this baptism puts us "into

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Christ" (**Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:26-27**), where we ultimately find salvation (cf. **Acts 2:47**).

Indeed, "for whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" (**Romans 15:4**). To ignore the warnings found in the story of Noah regarding the impending judgment of God will result in the

same inevitable fate that met those who ignored Noah's preaching (**2 Peter 2:4 ff**).

Therefore, two options ultimately remain—the baptism of water into a faithful life in Christ NOW or the baptism of fire into eternal condemnation LATER. To reject the first is to accept the latter. To reject both is to accept the latter. Thus, the only rational choice is to heed the warning and "obey the gospel" today. *Credit: www.moodychurchofchrist.com ♦*

The church of Christ

Has:

- One Builder – Jesus Christ (**Matt. 16:18; Eph. 3:9-11**)
- One Purchaser – Jesus Christ (**Acts 20:28**)
- One Head – Jesus Christ (**Eph. 1:22-23**)
- One Savior – Jesus Christ (**Eph. 5:23**)
- One destiny – eternal salvation (**Eph. 5:23**)

IS:

- The spiritual body of Christ (**Eph. 1:22-23; 5:23**)
- The kingdom of Christ (**Matt. 16:18-19; Heb. 12:28**)
- The depository of those saved (**Acts 2:47**)
- One body, not many bodies (**Eph. 4:4; 1:22-23**)
- One way to be added to the church:
- One must believeth that Christ is the Son of God (**Jno. 8:24**)
- One must repent of sins (**Lk. 13:3**)
- One must confess that Christ is the Son of God (**Rom. 10:9-10**)
- One must be baptized into Christ (**Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; Gal. 3:26-27**) ♦

*A faith that will not take us to worship will not
Take us to heaven!*

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear and Learn - **Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3**

Believe - **Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24**

Repent - **Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30**

Confess the Lord - **Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21**

Be Baptized - **Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27**

Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - **Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17**

About the Hillcrest church of Christ

Evangelist: Jimmy Pettigrew

How to Contact Us

Telephone: (920)499-5677
E-mail: hillcrestcofc@live.com



Our Address

1621 Hillcrest Drive
Green Bay, WI 54313



Schedule of Assembly

Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am
Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am
Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm*

*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com