

WHEN CHRISTIANS DIE

In Memory of R. J. Dawe

Quite recently I was called to the hospital where a Christian friend was dying. Although in real mental distress and physical agony he helped to plan for his funeral services. He mentioned the real gospel hymns he wanted his selected singer to sing. He wanted no eulogies of him in the sermon, but he wanted the Lord Jesus Christ to be exalted in the message and wanted the saving gospel of grace so clearly presented that any and every unsaved person in the audience might be without excuse in answering to the Great God of Salvation—He emphasized that no money be expended for flowers, but that “flower” money might be used in getting the gospel to poor lost sinners. With that money this message is printed.

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We read in the Bible (Hebrews 9:27): “It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” Then in the same Bible we read (Psalm 116:15): “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.”

As we read these two verses in the Bible, to our minds comes the question, “how could the death of a person headed for God’s after-death judgment be precious in the sight of the Lord?”

In Hebrews 4:13 we read that all things are naked and open unto the eyes of God with Whom we have to do. God’s Son, when on earth, stated that not even a sparrow falls to the ground without the observation and knowledge of God.

There have lived on this earth, perhaps, twenty billion human beings, all descendants of Adam. By Adam sin entered into the world and death by sin: and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. (Romans 5:12). “There is not a just man on earth that doeth good and sinneth not.” (Ecclesiastes 7:20).

We are told that on this earth at this present time, there are nearly two billion persons. Therefore, the estimate of the descendants of Adam, whom God has seen die, is more than eighteen billion. Little wonder Job asked the two great questions, “Man wasteth away and where is he?” And, “If a man die shall he live again?” Where are those eighteen billion dead people? Where now are your loved ones included in the list of the dead? It may seem rather selfish, but it is an indication of wisdom and intelligence for each of us to ask, “where will I be after I leave this world?” No other question is more important.

We are told in Romans 14:14 that every one of us shall give an account of himself to God. We are told in I Timothy 2:4 that God will have all men to be saved. In Romans 3:23 and Romans 6:23 we are told that all men have sinned and come short of the glory of God and that the wages of sin is death. We have already quoted the verse, “it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.”

But hear this wonderful good news: “The free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord,” Who “by the grace of God tasted death for every man.” (Romans 6:23 and

Hebrews 2:9). It was this Lord Jesus Christ who said that believers pass out of death into life and shall not come into judgment. (John 5:24). Then He added: “I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth on Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.” (John 11:25).

When the dead sinner receives the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour, he receives life. (John 6:47— John 3:36— John 3:16). This life is EVERLASTING LIFE. When the dead sinner believes unto the saving of his soul he immediately becomes a living saint.

HOW SINNERS BECOME SAINTS

“Wherefore, Jesus, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood suffered without the gate.” (Hebrews 13:12). Thus we see that the believing sinner is made a saint by the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ “By the which will we are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” (Hebrews 10:10). “By one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.” (Hebrews 10:14).

Every true believer is sanctified. This means that every such believer is a saint. Both the believers who are sanctified and Christ, Who sanctifies them, are all one. (Hebrews 2:11). “We are the children of God by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Galatians 3:26 to 28).

God chooses believers to be without blemish before Him in love, to be His children by the Lord Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 1:4 and 5). There is nothing so precious in the sight of our Heavenly Father as the Lord Jesus Christ, elect and precious. (I Peter 2:5 to 11). God’s Word is clear that believing sinners are redeemed by the precious shed blood of God’s sinless Son. (I Peter 1:18 to 20). That blood was shed on the cross of Calvary at the time Christ cried to His Father, “My God, My God, Why hast Thou forsaken Me?” When Christ went to His death He said: “Now is the judgment of this world.” (John 12:31). All the world was guilty before God. (Romans 3:19). But Christ died for the ungodly, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. (Romans 5:8 and I Peter 3:18). “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Romans 5:1).

If precious to our Heavenly Father is the death of His saints, how precious in the sight of God was the death of His only begotten and well beloved Son, when, crowned with thorns, He yielded up the ghost on the cross. At Calvary we learn something of the meaning of John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should NOT PERISH but have EVERLASTING LIFE.” What a contrast “PERISH”—“EVERLASTING LIFE!” “Perish” does not mean annihilation or cessation of consciousness, or oblivion. Neither does “Everlasting Life” mean that at death the soul of the saint goes to sleep or that spirit-consciousness ceases until some far-off resurrection day.

CHRIST IS THE BELIEVER’S LIFE AND HOPE

Christ is the believer’s life and resurrection and the believer shall not come into or unto judgment. (John 14:6—Colossians 3:3 and 4—John 11:25 and 26—John 5:24). The believer has been made alive and is raised up and seated in the heavenlies in Christ. (Ephesians 2:5 and 6). The believer’s citizenship is in heaven and he is looking for, and waiting for, the Lord Jesus Christ to come out of heaven to change his corruptible body of humiliation into the image of Christ’s incorruptible, glorified body. (Philippians 3:20 and 21). “When Christ Who is our life shall appear then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.” (Colossians 3:3 and 4). “Looking for that blessed hope.” (Titus 2:13).

In Luke 15:1 to 10 we learn that there is joy in heaven when a dead sinner, by faith in Christ, becomes a living saint. So we see that every saint is ever precious in God's sight, not only at the time of death but every moment during life. Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for the Church that He might present the Church unto Himself. (Ephesians 5:26 to 28). Note Titus 2:13 and 14: "Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God our Saviour Jesus Christ: Who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

In the Bible Christ is called the believer's Hope, his Hope laid up in heaven. (I Timothy 1:1—Colossians 1:5—I Peter 1:3 to 6—I Thessalonians 4:13 to 18). The unbeliever has no hope. He is without hope. (Ephesians 2:12). Satan is accused of the crime of deceiving the whole world. (Revelation 12:7 to 10). As the god of this age, how cleverly and easily Satan deceives and confuses moral, religious people, causing them to believe high moral ideals and fair dealings with others is as good a guarantee for heaven and eternal happiness as faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. But they have either failed to read Galatians 2:21—II Timothy 1:9 and Ephesians 2:8 and 9 or else they reject these important statements of Divine truth.

Note carefully these verses: "I do not frustrate the grace of God; for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." "God, Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." "For by grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

BE NOT DECEIVED—BEWARE OF SATAN

Carefully read what Satan does to and with the unbelievers in II Corinthians 4:3 and 4 and how he works as an angel of light with nice, respectable, religious sinners. (II Corinthians 11:13 to 15).

How important it is that in the matter of our eternal destiny we prayerfully and seriously consider the question of Romans 4:3, "what saith the Scripture?" rather than what does my mind, heart or conscience dictate or suggest. After death it will be too late to rectify any blunder. No person can afford to be mistaken in this very serious matter of eternal glory or eternal redemption. The human heart is desperately wicked and deceitful. (Jeremiah 17:9). Believe God's own infallible Word.

In Hebrews 2:14 and 15 we are told why the Lord Jesus Christ left heaven, where He was in the form of God, to come to the earth in the form of man. This we read also in Philippians 2:5 to 10 and John 1:14. Note Hebrews 2:14 and 15: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He (Christ) also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

Then note the saint's song of victory in I Corinthians 15:54 to 56: "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O hell, where is thy victory?"

COMFORT ONE ANOTHER

God is “the God of all grace” and “the God of all comfort.” (I Peter 5:10—II Corinthians 1:3).

In I Thessalonians 4:18 saints are told to “comfort one another with these words.” What words? Read them:

“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

“For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

“Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

“Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

Thus we see something of the meaning of the words, “PRECIOUS IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD IS THE DEATH OF HIS SAINTS.” Also we should see how precious is the Lord Jesus Christ to the dying saint. He should be precious every moment of the believer’s life.

Yes, in the hour of death Christ is more precious than all of the wealth, wisdom and fame of the world.

“Without Christ” means “without hope,” He is the Saviour of the world. Will you let Him be your Saviour and Lord?