

Orlando Bible Students Newsletter

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Will Man Live Forever?

Man wants to live forever. While he lives longer today than in the 1800s, typically people only live into their 70s or 80s. This was prophesied in Psa. 90:10 (*BBE*): “The measure of our life is seventy years; and if through strength, it may be eighty years, its pride is only trouble and sorrow, for it comes to an end and we are quickly gone.”

While doctors have been studying why people become ill and die from a medical perspective, the Bible is quite clear on the reason for sickness and death. It was the penalty God levied on Adam, Eve and their descendants because of their disobedience in the garden of Eden. “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat from it’; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life. ... By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return” (Gen. 3:17,19 *NASB*).

After Adam sinned, men lived a long time before they died but they still died within the 1,000 year “day” that God decreed. The longest recorded life was that of Methuselah, 969 years (Gen. 5:27). Since the flood, man’s life-span was drastically shortened only to rebound a little in our day. However, the Bible is clear that today’s advances are limited and only God can lift the curse “you will surely die” from off mankind’s back (Gen. 2:17 *NASB*).

Will God lift that curse? That is the promise of the Scriptures. “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death ... that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man” (Heb. 2:9). Jesus was “made flesh” and by his obedience to the Law, proved his perfection (John 1:14; Heb. 5:9). As a result, the man Christ Jesus became a ransom for Father Adam (1 Tim. 2:5,6). When Jesus laid down that human life in death, he provided the redemption price needed to release Adam and his descendants from the penalty of death.

Raising the human family from death is exactly what our risen Lord plans to do. Jesus said, “Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment” (John 5:28,29 *NASB*).

Those who have done good deeds, the followers of Jesus, are promised a spiritual life in heaven. The rest of mankind will be brought to life in Christ’s earthly kingdom to learn righteousness and by their obedience gain everlasting life. In that kingdom, “The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who hears say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost” (Rev. 22:17 *NASB*).

**See our offer for the free booklet “When a Man Dies” on the back of this newsletter.*

Hunger for Righteousness

In Matt. 5:6, Jesus said, “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.” “Hunger” and “Thirst” suggest a human craving for food and drink. However, in this scripture, Jesus is not referring to food and drink, but a hunger and thirst for righteousness, which is “the character or quality of being right or just.” Righteousness is an attribute of God that signifies his justice, holiness, and to be free from sin. Those who have this strong desire to know God, will be led to an understanding of his great Justice and loving Plan of Salvation, as Jesus said in Matt. 7:7,8, “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.”

When Adam sinned against God, he became unrighteous, as the Apostle Paul tells us in Rom. 3:10, “As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one.” There is only one way to approach God, as Jesus said in John 14:6, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” In John 6:32,33,35, Jesus said, “My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. ... I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.”

Water is a symbol of truth and Jesus speaks of “living water” as a gift of God in John 4:10-14: “But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

To hunger and thirst after righteousness is to hunger after the righteousness provided through faith in Jesus, and apply the water of truth to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ■

Ancient Worthies

The Apostle Paul in Hebrews 11 tells of many faithful individuals who lived during Old Testament times. He cites such ones as Abel, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and others, who not only displayed much faith in God, but also demonstrated their faith by good works. God particularly took note of these heroes of faith because, as Paul says, they were “persuaded” by God’s promises, and looked forward to a “better country.” They “died in faith” believing that one day these promises, including the eventual blessing of all families of the earth, would come to fruition (Heb. 11:13-16; Gen. 28:14).

Because these faithful ones of old lived prior to Jesus’ first advent and the ensuing

Christian Age, they were not offered the hope of a reward in heaven. Indeed, such a hope could not be made available to anyone until the ransom price had been “paid.” This price, the merit of Jesus’ sacrificed perfect human life, was represented symbolically by his shed blood. This was the only means by which one could become justified to sonship with God and have a heavenly hope. (Rom. 4:25; 5:9; 1 John 1:7) Thus, Paul says that although faithful, these worthy ones of old “received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us” (Heb. 11:39,40). The Apostle James spoke of faithful Abraham as a “Friend of God,” but not as a “son” (James 2:23). Jesus, when speaking of *(Continued on next page)*

The Judgment of the Nations

“Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger; for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy. For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent.” – Zeph. 3:8,9

Throughout the Scriptures, earth, when used symbolically, represents society. Fire represents the destruction of whatever is burned-ares, dross, earth (social organizations) as in our key verse from Zeph. 3:8: “I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, ... for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy.” The trouble described here is so great that the world is said to be burned up with the Lord’s anger. The fire of God’s zeal is a forcible symbol representing the intensity of the trouble and the destruction which will envelop the whole earth (Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21,22).

With this in mind, if we turn to Peter’s symbolic prophecy of the Day of Wrath (2 Peter 3), we will find it in full agreement with the word of the prophets. “The world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.” It should be pointed out that the literal earth and heavens did not cease there, but the arrangement of things that existing before the flood passed away. “But the heavens and earth, which are now [the present arrangement], by the same word [of divine authority] are kept in store, reserved unto fire.” The fact that the water was real or literal has led some to believe that the fire must also be literal, but this is not the case. Peter goes on to tell us, “The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night [unobserved]; in the which the heavens [present powers of the air, of which Satan is the chief or prince] shall pass away with a great noise, ... the earth also and the works that are therein [pride, injustice, greed, etc.] shall be burned up. ... Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens [Christ’s kingdom] and a new earth” [earth’s society organized on a new basis of love and justice, instead of might and oppression] (2 Peter 3:6,7,10,13).

We see from verse 9 of Zephaniah 3, that after the destruction of the present social order, God will provide mankind with the pure word of truth. “For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent.” ■

Ancient Worthies *(continued from previous page)*

John the Baptist, who likewise died prior to Jesus providing of the blood of the ransom, said that the “least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he” (Matt. 11:11).

These Ancient Worthies, though not part of the heavenly phase of Christ’s kingdom, will be used as teachers and instructors of mankind in the earthly phase of that kingdom. The psalmist speaks prophetically of them as “princes in all the earth” (Psa. 45:16). The prophet Isaiah says they will be “judges” and “counsellors” of mankind (Isa. 1:26). Speaking of the kingdom, he continues: “Out of Zion [the heavenly phase, Christ and his church] shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem [the earthly phase, administered by the Ancient Worthies]” (Isa. 2:3). ■

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Calendar of Events

Orlando Bible Students Convention

October 27-28, 2012

South Seminole Masonic Lodge

122 Triplett Lake Drive

Casselberry, FL 32707

[Free admission, no collection]

For further information contact:

Orlando Bible Students

PO Box 180216, Casselberry, FL 32718-0216

Or contact us at our website:

www.orlandobible.org

The Orlando Bible Students is a non-denominational group that meets for Bible studies and devotions on Sunday mornings at the South Seminole Masonic Lodge, Casselberry, FL and in area homes during the week.

For further information call: (407) 831-2098

Special Offer

We would like to send you a complimentary copy of the booklet,

“When a Man Dies”

This booklet describes the Bible’s hope for all who have ever lived. For your FREE copy, call (407) 831-2098 and request a copy, or fill in your address below and mail

this coupon to:

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