

Another Weekly Coincidence

As you all know I am presently out of town visiting my brothers and sister in Pennsylvania. I was not certain I would be sending out anything other than the essay tonight. However, The Lord in His infinite patience and kindness with me let me find some notes from a 2017 essay I started that fits the theme. Go figure.

Tonight, we gathered for a surprise birthday dinner for my brother Ben who is celebrating his 65th birthday this month. After a good meal and the usual cutting up and joking around, we sat around reminiscing about some of the childhood memories of our parents and relatives who have all passed on.

My siblings have all come from the same faith background I did and have the same love for God and approach to listening to scripture when someone reads it to them. It did not take too much for the door to open to share a few lines and plant a few seeds. My brother Jim mentioned something about death and heaven and that opened a door for some discussion and what the Bible really says on the subject.

It is so much easier to witness to someone when you can show them the line and verse and let them read it for themselves and ask them what do they think

that means? Scripture is self-explanatory when you let them know it is not your opinion.

2 Peter 1:20-21- “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture originated as anyone’s own *private* interpretation; Because prophecy was not brought at any time by human will, but the holy men of God spoke as they were moved by *the* Holy Spirit.”

2 Timothy 3:16- “All Scripture *is* God-breathed and *is* profitable for doctrine, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness;”

As we have discussed many times, numerous churches today preach a watered down warm and fuzzy theocracy conflicting to the Word of God. They want to worship God their way, discounting His Commandment and Holy Days, substituting them with their traditional holidays or whatever works to fill the pews.

We go to church on Sundays, hear a line or two from the Bible coupled with a feel-good sermon, put a dollar in the collection plate and that is it, truth does not matter. We have been through the whole “sinner’s prayer” concept know there us so much more to salvation that mumbling a few words and you are

saved! Hallelujah! Heaven here we come! But is this the truth? We know it is not.

I listened more than I spoke. If I shared anything, I shared scripture. I let them read it. I did not beat them up too bad or tell them they were wrong, shepherds direct. God's Word is our Staff.

The topic of death must have been on the front burner, as when we came home back to my sister's house, I read this week's essay from CGG. Another coincidence. The topic did not thrill me for discussion for fellowship and I was not sure on sending it out. Notice "I" was not sure...well The Lord is so awesome in reminding me that this IS HIS FELLOWSHIP and He chooses the subject matter, I get to hit the send button!

So, I went back out on the back deck to sit with my sister and the topic came up again (I guess when we all get older death becomes more of a thought). She was asking a few questions so I gave her an overview of the notes I later found from 2017.

Do I go to heaven when I die?

This question probably comes to mind more frequently the older we get and the finish line gets a little closer each year. When we are younger, death and

dying seldom enters our minds at all. Most of us were pretty reckless at some point in our lives, at least I know I was. By God's Grace, I am here now.

I explained that we were taught by our parents that if we were good, we would go to heaven when we die. It was not that they were bad or that they were intentionally lying to us, they did not know any better. That is what they, like every one else, was taught by their parents, and their parents before them and so on. So few people are actually blessed to be called and enlightened to God's actual truth and way of life.

I explained that hell and Gehenna are other names for the grave. She knew John 3:16 like most people who go to Sunday churches but had never heard of John 3:13.

It is so much easier to preach that when a person dies, that person's spirit floats off to heaven as an eternal spirit being to walk the streets of heaven for all eternity. Just how one gets there is a variation on the different religious theocracies and doctrines.

We talked about funerals and what people say about their departed loved ones. "I'll bet they're looking down on all of us right now wishing we were with them..." Well, it makes everyone present feel better and all warm and

fuzzy but what in fact does God's word say about death and what happens to us when we die? Funerals are for the living.

In discussing questions on death and going to heaven, I wanted to fill in the blanks on the origin of our life. So, let us go back to Genesis.

Genesis 2:7- "Then the LORD God formed man *of the* dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being."

God made us from the dust of the Earth. Fairly plain and simple. He breathed His breath of life into us and made us a living soul. Again, not complicated.

We know that woman was taken from man in reading Genesis 2:21-23. We were without sin until Satan deceived Eve and both she and Adam fell from grace and sin and death entered the world. Having now an end to life, where does one go upon the end of life at death? God clearly states in Genesis 3:19-

"In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you *are*, and to dust you shall return."

Many ask, "Well what about the spirit (the breath of life)?" Well, that belonged to God in the first place, it was not ours. Even if we were a baptized saint and had received His Holy Spirit, it would return unto Him, our mortal

body would still be returned to the ground from which it came. His Spirit returns to Him.

Ecclesiastes 12:7 – “And the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.”

Ecclesiastes 9:5-6- “For the living know that they shall die; but the dead do not know anything, nor do they have any more a reward; for their memory is forgotten. Also, their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is long ago perished; nor do they any longer have a portion forever in all that is done under the sun.”

Again, we see that when we die, our thoughts, our memories, all that we were, dies with us. We know nothing. All too often, there are so many that know nothing while they are living!

So, who does go to heaven? Jesus Himself answers this question in John 3:13- “And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, *even* the Son of man which is in heaven.” (KJV)

By the very words of Jesus Himself, NO person has ever ascended up to the third heaven where God the Father is seated. This deception is a lie from

Satan and has been perpetuated through the ages and the many divisions among Christianity.

It is very clear in the Word of God, that we do not go to Heaven when we die.

I did not give my sister scriptural overload but did briefly explain the 2 resurrections in God's Plan for mankind and their difference. The choice of a thousand-year nap is up to her but I did not want her to have an aneurism. I told her if she is being drawn, it is God Who is calling (John 6:44).

I realize this is a rerun and we have covered this topic several times. But with a reunion of "old friends" on Sunday, for me a refresher of these scriptures may come handy should any questions arise. Remember, we are always to be prepared with that "ready answer." (1 Peter 3:15). Have a great Sabbath!

Amen!

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