

**WHY DIE
BEFORE
YOUR
TIME ?**



- Ray Brubaker

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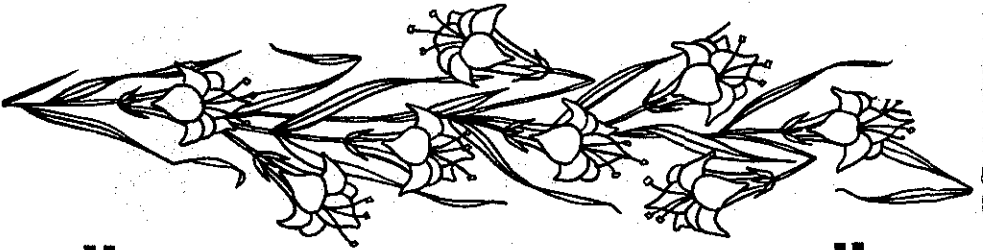
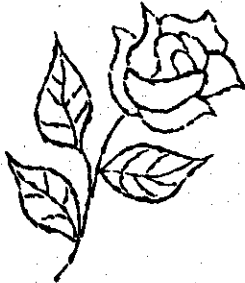


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CONTRIBUTION

GOD'S NEWS ..BEHIND THE NEWS

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Introduction

Do some people die before their time?



Henry P. Van Dusen was president of the liberal establishment known as Union Theological Seminary. Although a staunch Presbyterian, he was in favor of such anti-biblical beliefs as Euthanasia which says a person has a right to choose, under certain circumstances, the time and place to die.

Van Dusen, 77, and his wife, Elizabeth, 80, were found unconscious in their home in Princeton, New Jersey. Both, the medical examiner said, had swallowed lethal doses of sleeping pills.

Both suffered in their last days. She suffered cruelly with arthritis. He had suffered a stroke five years before which left him almost speechless.

A suicide note indicated that they had planned to die together. The note ended with this prayer: "O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, grant us Thy peace."

Wesley Pruden, Jr., writing in the NATIONAL OBSERVER, says: "Historic orthodox Presbyterian doctrine makes no exception for the prohibition against taking life...." However, he also noted that since "situation ethics" has invaded theological thinking, such decisions are often based on individual conviction.

Do some take their own life by intemperate eating, excessive sexual indulgence, or through overwork?

Billy Graham expressed his belief that there are many Christians who die before their time. So, for the sake of longer life, it may be well to take heed to some of the admonitions given in this book.

Perhaps in our introduction to this book we might point to an observation made by Dr. Johan A. Bjorksten, a Madison, Wisconsin, chemist who has been studying the aging process for many years. He has recently isolated an enzyme that he thinks could reverse the aging process. The body weakens with age, Bjorksten believes, because small cross-linked

agents attach themselves to large molecules, such as protein, in the body's cells, tying the molecules together like handcuffs. When the cells become clogged with these linked molecules, they become less mobile and impair normal cell operation. It is his belief that long life will result as these enzymes dissolve the cross-linkages.

Well, that's too technical for me to understand. Rather, in the book of Proverbs, you'll find some secrets to long life which come about as we love the Lord and keep His commandments.

Let's list a few verses that may be related to our subject... found in the book of Proverbs:

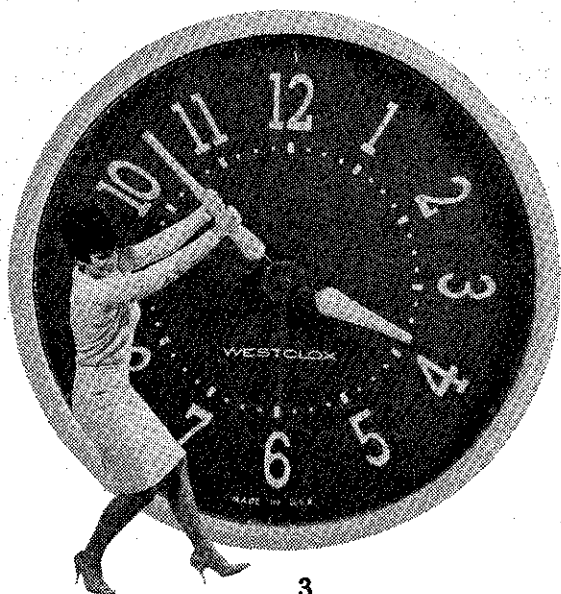
Prov. 3:1-2 "My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments; for length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee."

Prov. 4:10 "Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many."

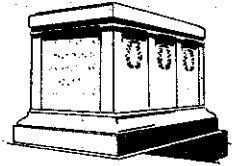
Prov. 9:10-11 "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and the knowledge of the holy is understanding. For by me thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be increased."

Prov. 20:27 "The fear of the Lord longeth days; but the years of the wicked shall be shortened."

There are many other verses which imply prolonged life through serving the Lord, but these few will indicate the importance of coming to know long life through heeding God's Word and being ever mindful of the leading of the Holy Spirit. God grant it. Amen.



Why do some die before their time?



First, we must agree that death is certain for everyone. Even science concedes this fact. Dr. Robert H. Williams, distinguished author, concludes: "Everyone must die; our genetic and metabolic patterns assure death."

The Scriptures declare: "...it is appointed unto man once to die..." Heb. 9:27. So we know death is a certainty unless our Lord should come first and we be caught up to meet Him in the air without dying.

We need to realize that this is a growing possibility. Each day brings us closer to the coming of Christ when He will return for His own. Those who are living at the time, who are ready to meet the Lord, will not die; but as a caterpillar turns into a butterfly, so believers will experience a sudden and quick metamorphosis.

Listen to what Paul writes in explanation of this event, "Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep (die), but we shall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and WE SHALL BE CHANGED. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." (I Cor. 15:52-53)

Did you hear it?

While it is appointed unto all to die, yet, when Christ returns, some will experience this change wherein physical bodies become glorified bodies and death will flee away.

I talked with the mother of one of our famous governors who is a devoted Christian and she said, "Brother Ray, I believe I will be alive when Jesus comes." Like Simeon, who was told he would not die until he saw the first coming of Jesus, so this dear one is convinced that the Lord told her she would be alive when He returns. And she is not a young person, so the Lord must surely come soon to fulfil this conviction that she has.

In the second place, we must come to the conclusion that there are some who die before their time.

Did you know that the Bible reveals the allotted time for man upon the earth?

Psalms 90:10 says: "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away."

It is indeed amazing that regardless of all of the scientific achievements man's life expectancy is seventy years--exactly as the Scriptures reveal. There are predictions that man may soon live to be a hundred, or 120, but this will not be the normal expectancy until Christ comes to reign upon the earth when man will live for a thousand years.

As in the early period of man's existence, following creation, man lived a full life of nearly a thousand years, so will it happen during the millennium. Adam died at the age of 930 years (Gen. 5:5), and Methuselah, the oldest man who ever lived, died at the age of 969 years (Gen. 5:27). So the life expectancy during the millennium will again be lengthened.

Isaiah explains this so vividly, saying: "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days; for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed." (Isa. 65:20)

Yes, in the day ahead when Satan is bound and righteousness prevails upon the earth, if a person dies under a hundred years, he is considered a child unless that one rejects God's salvation. In that event death may come sooner than anticipated.

You see, God doesn't force salvation on anyone--even in the time when our Lord is seen reigning in righteousness upon the earth. Man is a free moral agent who can choose to serve God or refuse to serve Him.

For instance, turn to Zechariah 14, which reminds us of families that will not serve the Lord in the day when He rules upon the earth.

Verse 16 of Zech. 14, states: "And it shall come to pass, that everyone that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles."

That is, of all the nations that fought at Armageddon, those who are left who enter the millennial age will go to Jerusalem every year. Not only must there be methods of transportation about which we know nothing today to make

this possible, but there will be accommodations unparalleled to take care of all of the visitors coming to Jerusalem every year.

If we can take a trip to the Holy Land once in our lifetime, we consider it a tremendous event, but during the millennium the people of earth will go to Jerusalem every year.

Now notice--there will be some people too busy to go worship the Lord. They put other things first just like some do today. They go to the beach when they should be in church, or they go to the mountains, or to visit their mother-in-law.

Verse 17 says: "And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain."

Some suppose all will be perfect during the millennium. It will be a millennium of peace when wars shall be unknown, and the lion lay down with the lamb. But man can prove to be disobedient and irresponsible, and should he choose not to go to Jerusalem to worship the Lord, his crops will suffer ruin for there will be no rain.

You mean to tell me our worship of the Lord can determine the climate--the amount of moisture and the success of our crops?

Indeed, it is always the law of God that if we serve Him there will be blessing but if we fail to serve Him there will come cursing.

Read Deuteronomy 28 and discover where God told the children of Israel that if they obeyed His voice and kept His commandments that innumerable blessings would come to them. "Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store." And we could go on and on reading of blessing upon those who serve God. (Verses 3-5)

On the other hand, if there is failure to obey the Lord, we read, "Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field," etc. (verse 16)

In addition, we read: "The Lord shall smite thee with a consumption, and with a fever (with diseases.)" And we read, "The Lord shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust."

Did you hear it?

Surely God knows whether or not there is a reverence for His name, a keeping of His commandments, a worship that is true and sincere.

Notice, also, a prediction of destruction if worship is not sincere. Some go through the order of worship, following a certain ritual, but do not really worship.

So we read where the Lord says: "Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things; therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things...." (Deut. 28:47-48a)

Did you hear it?

It's not only sufficient that you be found in God's house worshipping Him, but that you worship Him in joyfulness and gladness--in spirit and in truth.

Some regard it as a drudgery to go to church, and would sooner go to the beach or to the mountains. God takes this all into account. The nation that loses its love for the Lord, and the people who lose their joy in worshipping God, face destruction.

Let me read it to you. "The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; a nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favour to the young; and he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy land, until thou be destroyed; which also shall not leave thee either corn, wine, or oil, or the increase of kine, or flocks of thy sheep, until he have destroyed thee." (Deut. 28:49-51)

Think of it!

Today, do we worship the Lord in joyfulness and gladness? Or, are we found sitting in our homes watching some sex show or clowning comedian on our TV sets? May God help us!

As God permitted the destruction of Israel when they forgot Him and turned to idols, so He will allow our destruction if we do not repent and turn back to Him in sincere love and appreciation for all of the blessings we have enjoyed these many years. We are losing our prosperity, and we will lose our freedom and face destruction unless we repent.

As Dr. Hyman Appelman writes: "Like Israel, AMERICA is facing the Philistines who, today, are infinitely more dangerous and infinitely more able to destroy us than they of old."

Inquires Appelman, "Shall we wait 'til intercontinental missiles are raining death and smashing destruction upon our cities?"

He replies: "There is but one answer to this; that is, if God be for us, who can be against us? It is ours to make sure we have God on our side. But to have God on our side, we must make sure we are on God's side."

Says this Christian-Jewish evangelist: "The key to today's situation is to get right with God."

We agree!

America is at the crossroads. Other nations of the world that have long experienced revival have crumbled when they turned away from God. The nations visited by the Apostle Paul that turned to Christianity became pagan overnight when religion was made a part of established government ritual, and true faith was lacking.

God wants a people, today, who are sincere--who know they will be punished for their sin, and the country destroyed, unless they turn from their evil ways to serve the Lord in truth and righteousness.

And particularly in view of the coming of the Lord are we called to this kind of purity--this kind of revival. We need a revival of holy living with an abhorrence for the immorality and immodesty of our time and sinful practices we see on every hand.

In our series, we are asserting that some die before their time and that some will not be ready when Jesus comes, simply because they do not regard the warnings and admonitions of Holy Scripture.

In view of Christ's coming, we are told to "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

And do we not read concerning those looking for the coming of the Lord, "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure!" Today, if you are looking for the coming of our Lord, you will be ready.

Have you turned from sin to trust the Saviour? Are you today living for Him? Would you be ready were He to come today?

Indeed, He hath said, "Be ye therefore ready also, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."

DEATH - the most important question of our time!



"Death is the most important question of our time," says Yale's eminent psychiatrist, Dr. Robert Jay Lifton. Similarly, an article in TIME magazine notes: "In music, in films, and in much contemporary poetry and fiction, death has emerged as a dominant theme."

The question asked by many is, DO SOME PEOPLE DIE BEFORE THEIR TIME? IF SO, WHY?

Every day more than 5,000 Americans die. A favored few succumb at home, others in hospitals and rest homes, and many in accidents or on the field of battle.

Dr. Anselm L. Strauss, Ph.D., in a book related to the dying, published by the American Psychiatric Association ("Problems of Death and the Dying Patient"), notes that "...fifty percent of all deaths in the United States now occur in hospitals and an additional large proportion in nursing homes..." He also adds: "Americans tend to put a high value on having a full life."

Mankind is frightened by the mere word "death," says English essayist J. B. Priestley, "and nowhere more so than in America."

However, to the Christian, "death" has lost its fearful aspect--and although death is a foe, the Scriptures would remind us that Christ arose victor over death. Hebrews 2:14 reminds us: "...through death he (Jesus) might destroy him that had power of death, that is, the devil."

Even Marxist philosopher Ernst Bloch admits: "It was not the morality of the Sermon on the Mount which enabled Christianity to conquer Roman paganism, but the belief that Jesus had been raised from the dead."

Hallelujah! Indeed, Christ is victor over death.

A London publisher has asked: "What is happening to Americans that they're so preoccupied with dying?"

He was referring to the popularity of the study of death in our colleges and universities, the debate on euthanasia and discussions on such topics as the "right to die with dignity" being discussed by clergy and medical technology alike.

"The media is alive with death," notes one professor, declaring, "I've never seen so many newspaper and magazine articles, books and television programs on the subject."

We have established the fact of the certainty of death. As the Scriptures declare: "It is appointed unto man once to die." That is, unless Christ comes first, all must die. When the Lord returns, some will not need to die, but will experience a change from mortality to immortality.

In the second place, we concluded that some die before their time. Again the Scriptures would remind us that man's days allotted to him upon the earth are "threescore and ten," or 70 years. (Psa. 90:10)

In today's broadcast we would like to continue our discussion -- WHY do some die before their time?

Eternity, no doubt, will reveal the answer to this important question. On the other hand, the Scriptures remind us that there are some who do not live out their allotted time, while others live longer than the biblical "threescore and ten."

In Eph. 6:2-3, we read: "Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and THOU MAYEST LIVE LONG UPON THE EARTH."

Does this scripture not convey a promise to those who honour their father and mother? Thus, we must conclude there are verses in the Bible like these which promise long life.

On the other hand, there are other Scriptures which remind us of a shortening of days for those who fail to fulfill certain conditions; and we do well to discover some of the reasons why some die before their time.

Accidents are said to be one of the greatest causes of death; and we cannot help but wonder why!



For instance, here's a news article telling of a 19-year-old bride-to-be. She and her fiance were on their way home from a church where they were discussing last-minute plans for their wedding. Suddenly, the car went out of control on a sharp turn and in the ensuing accident, the girl was killed. Instead of a wedding there was a funeral. The girl was buried in her wedding gown with the bouquet and Bible she would have carried at her wedding.

Death conquered! Why?

Dr. Augustus B. Kinzel, founding president of the National Academy of Engineering, predicts: "We will lick the problem of aging completely so that ACCIDENTS will be essentially the only cause of death."

Our Lord describes an accident wherein the tower of Siloam fell, killing 19 people. He used this incident as an object lesson, for there were those who thought it must be on account of being a sinner that one would suffer such things. Our Lord replies, "Nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

A tragedy or accident does not necessarily mean that someone is guilty of sin if he loses his life. This is what our Lord is saying. All must repent or perish.

Accidents befall the righteous as well as the sinner and it behooves us to be ready to face death at any age for we never know when our turn will come.

When a little girl asked her mother how old one must be to die, her mother gave her a long piece of string and suggested she go out and measure the graves in the nearby cemetery, tying a knot to mark the size of the grave. When she returned, it was knotted up throughout the string, suggesting that death comes at every age.

The Proverbial writer declares: "Boast not thyself of tomorrow: for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." (Prov. 27:1)

James similarly writes: "Go to now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow 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." (James 4:13-15)

So you see that God's will enters into the picture. If death can bring glory to God, then He may allow it.

Two boys were Christians, having trusted Christ as their Saviour at an early age. One day while attending high school, the boys got permission to return home to get some athletic equipment. While driving across a busy intersection, they

did not see a large gravel truck bearing down upon them. In a matter of seconds their bodies lay crushed and broken.

At the funeral service some seven hundred were in attendance. The families of these boys believed that the Lord may have purposed that fellow students would hear of the radiant witness of these youths, and that many might be saved. Thus there was victory in the midst of tragedy.

For the Christian, we see death as an entrance to God's eternal kingdom. Absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. So death does not hold the same fear for the believer as it does for those who know not Christ.

Yet death is described as an enemy. One ancient writer states emphatically: "Of all the enemies that are going to be destroyed (and they are all going to be destroyed), DEATH will be the last one."

We would like to point out that death may be God's way of dealing with the sinner. While God is merciful, and even those who curse God may live to an old age, it is on account of His mercy that evil men are not destroyed.

On the other hand, whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth. Suffering and death may be one way for God to deal with men who otherwise would reject His love and suffer forever in a devil's hell.

But God is not willing that any should perish. He may allow tragedies, accidents, suffering, and even death to come to awaken men to their need of a Saviour.

How many today have gone down to death's door before they yielded their rebellious spirit and surrendered their all to God!

Death is sometimes used by God for the purpose of dealing with disobedient believers.

Take the Corinthian who was guilty of a gross sexual sin that apparently was tolerated by the congregation at Corinth. Paul writes of their failure to deal with this deed and goes on to commit this person unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ. Although this person did not lose his salvation on account of this sin, it is clear that destruction and death was his fate unless he repented. And the evidence in the book is that this man did repent of this sin of immorality.

How many today, no doubt, die an early death because of disease contracted from sinful pleasures. Even though one is saved, it may be possible that the body was so mistreated in the occupation of lustful pursuits that death comes at an early age instead of "threescore and ten."

Again, Paul writes of those who were baptized unto Moses but who fell in the wilderness. Paul describes these as followers of Christ for they did eat of spiritual meat and

Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ. But says Paul, "With many of them God was not well pleased; for they were overthrown in the wilderness." The Apostle notes: "These things were our examples to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand." (I Cor. 10:1-8)

Think of it!

Paul goes on to say: "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."

Are we not living in the end of time? Could it be God is giving us an example as to how He deals with His children who are caught up in the sin of lust and immorality so prominent today?

As He destroyed those who were guilty of going through the act of worship but followed with sensuous practices (referred to as idolatry), so God is not pleased with those who go through the motions of religion but in truth know not the saving grace of God.

Beloved, write it down in your little book--you can't fool God. He knows the heart of man. He knows whether we possess salvation or whether we merely profess it. And if only professing to be Christians, we had better repent, turn from sin and ask Christ to save us.

Again, in the very next chapter, I Corinthians 11, the Apostle Paul mentions those who come to the table of the Lord, partaking of the holy communion, but who are not right with God. Because of unforsaken sin, harboring ill will toward other believers, many today are sick, some are weak, and some sleep, says Paul. Or rather, "MANY DIE."

Did you hear it?

So Paul admonishes that before a person goes to the communion table, he should first examine himself lest he bring condemnation upon himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

How many there are today who need this message. Perhaps you did not know that harmful practices, partaking of evil habits, gossiping and backbiting, all might be the cause of sickness and could result in an early death.

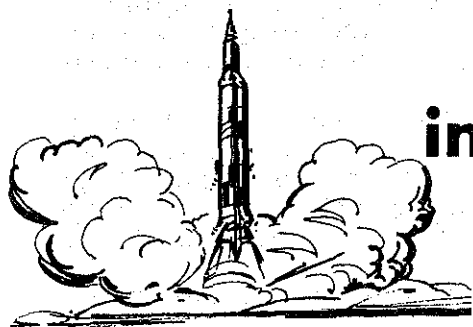
Saddest of all is the person who rejects the claims of Christ and scorns the offer of mercy. How many stories could be told of those in revival meetings who said "no" to Christ and went straight to their death--hit by a car or train on their way home from that meeting.

We read: "He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." (Prov. 29:1)

There are some to whom I am speaking today who may be having your last chance. God is talking to you about your need of Christ. Think! Where will you spend eternity? HEAVEN or HELL? Decide now. Today is a day of salvation. Harden not your heart. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.

Knowing not when our Lord shall return, we would also admonish, "Be ye therefore ready also!!!"

IDOLATRY - outstanding sin



in the endtime!

The Apollo 13 Space Program was interrupted by problems which necessitated aborting the mission. When these problems developed, and it looked as if our men might possibly be lost in space unable to return to earth, there was the call to pray for their safety. Some churches held special services. Others prayed in their homes.

However, upon their safe recovery, there was the usual wild celebration with liquor flowing freely.

THIS IS THE BEST ILLUSTRATION OF WHAT THE BIBLE CALLS IDOLATRY.

What is idolatry?

You will reply that it is idol worship. For instance, Paul, coming to Athens, saw the whole city given over to idolatry and preached that masterful sermon on Mars Hill, calling attention to the altar with the inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you."

I'm reminded of one of the religious groups today who claim to revere all of the great founders of religions. They say, "Join us and you will surely be right!"

Similarly, the Antichrist will embrace all the modern religions, including Christianity, making true faith a farce. But he will deceive the nations of the world in that they will believe he is right, and that religion is salvation.

This is idolatry.

However, idolatry takes other forms as well. We read about those in Israel who were baptized, who passed through the Red Sea, who saw the miracle wonders that had been performed, even drinking of the rock that was smitten from whence came forth cool, satisfying streams of water. Yet, many of these people displeased the Lord and they were left to die in the wilderness.

Some committed fornication and there fell, in one day, 23,000. Naturally, a large company of people traveling together created problems, and the temptation to familiarity brought immorality. This is the same danger faced by Christians of both sexes working in factories who have close contact.

Then some of the people of Israel tempted the Lord by blaming God for their difficulties. Instead of praying about their needs and going to God for relief from their hunger and thirst, they spoke against God and against Moses, saying: "Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness?"

And God sent fiery serpents among them which destroyed much people.

How many there are today who blame God for their sickness, or their poverty, or because of an automobile accident that left them painfully bruised, or on account of a fire that destroyed their property, or for the birth of a deformed child. Or, we may blame God for wars, or some pestilence, or on account of the heat or the cold, or earthquakes. We all know that insurance policies refer to tornadoes, hurricanes and such similar calamities as "acts of God," as though God is to blame for much of our difficulties. This is how the Children of Israel sinned, and how many are sinning today.

I recall a woman who was given over to fits in which she would suddenly black out. She later testified how she had lost a child who had been hit by a car. She told how she had raised her fist to God in heaven, blaming Him for this tragedy. Ever since, she has had these blackouts, becoming unconscious of her surroundings, falling into a dead faint.

Without realizing it, she was surrendering to Satan by blaming God, so that the devil could torment her in this way. How serious it is to tempt the Lord, to blame God for our maladies rather than to believe that "all things work together for good to them that love God." Oftentimes, we bring on our own afflictions by failing to exercise necessary precautions or follow proper diets. God must never be blamed for our difficulties.

Then we read how some of the people murmured and were destroyed of the destroyer.

Turn back to the book of Numbers (Chapter 14:2) where we read, "And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt. Or would God we had died in this wilderness."

Do we murmur and complain--about the weather--the rain or the snow--the heat or the cold--about our food--even the high prices?

While it is true that our dollar isn't worth what it used to be, we should thank the Lord that we do have enough to buy bread, or that we have a place to live, and clothing to wear.

My friends, there is coming a day when we may be denied the countless luxuries that we are now enjoying. No doubt, it will be the poverty-stricken peoples who will be able to endure those times while the rich will bewail their fate.

James writes: "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you....Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days."

How many now lament their small Social Security allowance! Think what will happen when another depression hits this country and we are left without any kind of survival income or security benefits.

God hears our murmuring and complaining when we should be thankful for every breath we breathe, every morsel of food we have, every ounce of energy we possess. It is when we fail to appreciate our land, and our freedoms, that we lose them.

During days of the Second World War, when I was in school studying for the ministry, the main meal consisted of spare ribs with little meat on them, or pig knuckles, or some similar food item. What murmuring and complaining among kids that were used to steaks and chops! They would simply turn up their noses and pass up the food, and some would sneak out later to a restaurant where they might be able to enjoy at least a hamburger.

May God forgive us for our murmuring and complaining.

A poem by an unknown author expresses something of the prayer that should be ours. This poet writes:

"I would not ask for a rainbow, Lord, and frown upon the rain.

I would not ask for health, dear Lord, and refuse the hurt and pain.

I would not ask for a mansion, Lord, when Thou didst have no bed.

I would not ask for wealth, dear Lord; you keep me clothed and fed.

I would not ask for an easy path, when Thou didst suffer so.

But I would ask for grace to live this pilgrim life below."

We repeat--Among the various sins of which the Children of Israel were guilty was this one of IDOLATRY.

We read: "Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." (I Cor. 10:7)

Whoever would suppose that this is idolatry? Why, throughout America this is practiced every Sunday. In how many homes is there plenty to eat, followed by pleasure--bowling, going to a ball game, fishing, boating, swimming, horseback riding, or some other exciting activity?

Immediately, I can hear voices raised in protest over so narrow-minded an interpretation of Scripture.

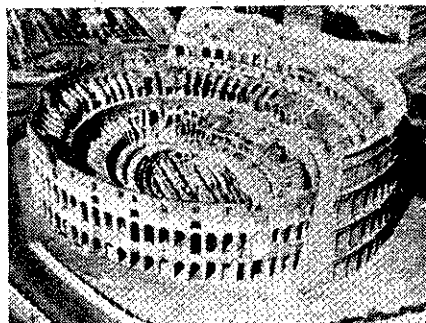
But let me repeat it, and you interpret it.

"Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play."

How do you interpret the actions of the people of Israel? And, isn't it true today that we are guilty of the same offense? Have the Scriptures not warned us of those who are "lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of God?"

For instance, which do we do the most--watch television or read our Bible? Do we spend more time eating or praying? Which? In our spare time, are we seeking to win souls for Christ or foolishly idling our time away to no account?

Beloved, the hour is growing late. There isn't much time remaining. What we do, we must do quickly. Forces of godlessness are waiting to take over our land, destroy our freedom, and rob us of our virtue.



Roman Colosseum

Like Rome, we sit fiddling, unaware that the fires of our destruction are already being ignited.

Like Sodom, we are unaware of our doom, of fire and brimstone hanging overhead.

Hear me, my friends, all I can do is to tell you what the Scripture says. Jesus reminded us, "And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.... likewise, also as it was in the days of Lot."

How was it in those days? Well, we read, "They ate and drank...."

EATING and DRINKING can be idolatry. If our lives are built around indulgences of the flesh, these become our gods and this is idolatry. If we live to eat and drink and serve other fleshly lusts and selfish desires, we are no different from these people of Noah's day and Lot's day whom God destroyed.

For instance, look at Sodom. We think of the perversity of men, the sexual wantonness of that day. But let me read to you from the prophet Ezekiel, chapter 16: "Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness...."

Did you hear it?

And as God looks down from heaven, He sees us in America, in England, France, Germany, and throughout the world exhibiting the same sins. Remember, God calls it sin. He refers to "pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness" as iniquity.

We are proud in that we live to please ourselves. What do you pride yourself in doing? What gives you the greatest pleasure? Is it in serving God or making money? Is it winning souls or accumulating possessions?

How foolish to think that life is making a fortune, or being successful in business so that we can have a lovely home with three bathrooms, color television, deepfreeze stocked with food, two cars in the garage, and a boat in which to relax on our day off.

This is what the Bible warns against, saying, "Love not the world"--which consists of the lust of the flesh (what this body craves in fulfilling its appetite, whether food, drink, sex, or what have you); the lust of the eye (that which appeals to the visual sense. For that reason we should be careful what we watch on our television sets, for programs are geared to the "lust of the eye"); and the pride of life.

What is it you pride yourself in doing? What do you prize most highly--making a reputation as a scientist or doctor--building a beautiful home like we just described?

Remember, this was the sin of Sodom--pride, fulness of bread and abundance of idleness. And this is what the Scripture calls IDOLATRY--when these things become our gods, and without realizing it, we let them become the object of our affections and so we worship them.

"Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play."

Even in our churches we think we must be entertained with sensual music patterned after the Beatles, with entertainers dressed in miniskirts or beards and long hair, or through the use of self-exalting means instead of lifting up Christ.

We do not mean to imply that God doesn't use the testimony of those who have been saved from the stage or screen, or who are professional sports figures, or that God doesn't use films to win souls. But we would imply that parroting pious phrases about Jesus, and playing songs about the "good life" is not enough. We must be born again; we must turn from all known sin to follow the Saviour. We must depart from iniquity if we would find satisfaction of soul and real peace. Then we must live the life that pleases God--walking after the spirit instead of after the flesh; following righteous desires instead of carnal attitudes; loving Christ instead of lusting after evil things; looking for the coming of the Lord instead of gazing so intently upon our TV sets.

When Moses came down from the Mount with the Ten Commandments which he had just received from God, he went into the Camp of Israel. To his dismay, he found them singing and swaying, with some of the people beginning to remove their clothes. We read how his anger grew hot and he brake the tables of stone and called for the sons of Levi to stand at the gate with their swords and smite all such offenders.

I realize there are those who would tell the minister that he must stick to preaching the Gospel and be positive with his message. But it seems we are living in a time of danger when we have become blind to the trend of the times, with worldliness creeping into the church so fast that we find ourselves condoning instead of condemning. Again, I do not mean that we should be super critical and cause an uproar by setting ourselves up as judges to determine who are the sinners and who are the saints, for this kind of pharisaism is just as dangerous as is this exhibition of worldliness.

Yet, on the other hand, we need to preach messages like the one I am bringing today. The sin of idolatry is a grave sin. Paul, writing to the Christians at Corinth, urges them to "Flee from idolatry!"

Again we are reminded: "Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters....shall inherit the kingdom of God." (I Cor. 6:9)

How serious is this sin of idolatry which many are ignorantly committing!

The Apostle Paul, who reviews the idolatry practiced by Israel, reminds us how the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play--calling this IDOLATRY. He goes on to say: "Now these things were our examples to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted."

Did you hear it?

God is using this episode in the life of the Children of Israel to warn us not to follow their example, to lust after evil things, and thus become idolaters.

Again we read: "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."

In other words, as we approach the coming of the Lord, at the end of the age we would see this same situation prevailing that we have seen back in Moses' time, and in Lot's day, and during the age of Noah.

We would see attempts to bring Rock-N-Roll into the church with mini-skirted singers which disgrace the cause of Christ.

Paul, in writing to the Philippians, weeps over those he calls enemies of the cross of Christ, "Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things." (Phil. 3:19)

What are we living for? Satisfaction of the physical? Feeding our lustful appetites? Are we glorying in our shame--our nakedness?

A pastor's wife wrote for copies of our booklet, THE TIME IS SHORT, and handed them out to adults in her Sunday School class. She notes: "The ladies who had habitually come to Sunday School and Church services in slacks and pant suits, since reading the booklets have worn either dresses or skirts and blouses, and I didn't say a word, except to comment how nice they looked in their dresses."

Are we minding earthly things?

Abraham, though wealthy, chose to live in a tent in order that he might keep his heart in tune with heaven, looking for that city which hath foundation, whose builder and maker is God. If our earthly homes are so well furnished that we have no hunger for heaven, no longing for Jesus to come, we had better sell our mansions and buy us a tent.

Again, hear the words of our text--"Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry."

And, be ye ready also, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh!

THE SECRET OF LONG LIFE ?

How to live longer!



Doctors are studying the case of a 12-year-old boy who died of old-age ailments after suffering two heart attacks. Only last year he had been playing in Little League and was in apparent good health, leading a relatively normal life until his unexpected death. An autopsy disclosed that the boy had extensive hardening of the arteries, typical of a man in his sixties.

Dr. Paul Dudley White, noted Boston heart specialist, says that old age alone is seldom the cause of death. In fact, he said that he has never seen a case where old age alone was considered the cause of death.

An associate clinical professor at the University of California says that with a perfect environment and new medical and surgical techniques, most persons could live to be 250 or 300 years old!

Well, the Scriptures tell of a time when man did live to be nearly a thousand years of age as in the case of Enoch and Methuselah. And during the coming reign of Christ on this earth, longevity will again be the rule, and should a man die at a hundred, he will still be a child. We read this in Isaiah 65:20, where it says: "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days; for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed."

Some time ago, a writer for the INDIANAPOLIS NEWS figured out that Adam and Methuselah must have lived at a time when months were reckoned as years and measured by the appearance of the moon. If this were true, then Adam, instead of living to the ripe old age of 930 years, lived until only 71. And Methuselah, instead of dying at the ripe old age of 969 years, like the Bible says, died at 74. What is left unexplained is that according to this sort of figuring, Adam would have been only ten years old when he begat his third son; and Enoch, the father of Methuselah, would have been only five years old when Methuselah was born. Well, we believe the biblical record, and believe our times are in God's hands.

This might be illustrated by the news report of a man whose home was in the Austrian Alps. Some warned that he might be smashed some day by an avalanche of rock, so he moved to a distant city. The next spring an unusual warm spell melted ice and snow and weakened the mooring of the

boulder over the abandoned cabin. Down came the big rock burying the cabin so that not even a splinter could be found. A former neighbor went to the home for the aged where this man had been staying to congratulate him on his good fortune at having escaped death. To his surprise, he found that the man had died of a heart attack at the very same moment when the boulder had buried his former home.

May we suggest the following simple rules that may lead to a prolonged life.

First, live for Christ.

The most miserable people are those who live only for themselves and who make gold their god. Jay Gould, who became a multi-millionaire, once said: "I am the most miserable man on this earth." Neither is pleasure the answer to long life. Stephen Foster, who wrote "Swanee River" and a host of other plantation songs, died a drunkard's death at the age of 38.

Robert Burns wrote: "Pleasures are as poppies spread; you seize the flower, the bloom is shed."

E. V. Cooke called life "a hollow bubble."

Robert Browning described life as "an empty dream."

Bernard Shaw said life was like a "flame that is always burning itself out."

John Masefield called life "a long headache in a noisy street."

Roy Campbell decided that life was "a dusty corridor, shut at both ends."

And the great Shakespeare said life was "a walking shadow."

No wonder there are thousands in the United States that come to the conclusion that life isn't worth living. Some take poison, others jump from buildings or bridges, or hang or shoot themselves.

The Apostle Paul had the answer. He wrote: "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." There is joy, in this life and in the life to come, in turning your life over to Jesus Christ and allowing Him to live out His life in you.

Jerry McAuley, "the river thief," became so thrilled with his new life in Christ that he established rescue missions to tell others about his newly-found joy.

I just read where in Germany more than a million persons are said to be suffering from depression, with the number of attempted suicides at more than 60,000 a year. In fact, so great is this lack of appreciation for life that they are considering legislation making it obligatory to give professional service to these people.

Beloved, what the world needs is "the peace that passeth understanding," that keeps our minds and hearts in Christ Jesus.

Secondly, we need to trust the Lord for daily strength.

The average American rises in the morning with just enough sleep to take the tension out of life, gulps a cup of coffee and rushes off to work.

What is wrong? Failure to trust the Lord for the day. Upon rising in the morning, we should have that quiet time with the Lord. Life should begin in every household each morning with the open Bible and with prayer.

The Bible says: "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."

Thirdly, trust the Lord for your protection.

Traveling dangerous highways or walking dimly-lighted streets, we need the Lord's hand of protection upon us. In our nation's capital some time ago, women members of the Grace Baptist Church were attacked twice in two weeks.

David Lawrence has commented by saying: "When people are afraid to go to church because of the possibility of being assaulted, a dangerous situation arises in America."

On the highways, with the prevalence of drunken drivers and fast-moving traffic, we need the protection the Lord gives. Before going out on the street or getting into your car, breathe a prayer heavenward, seeking the Lord's protection.

Finally, for lack of time we would mention just one more. Give up harmful habits or sinful practices that weaken the body.

Coffee for breakfast, coke for lunch and cigarettes in between is the diet for many Americans. Then they wonder why they don't feel well half the time.

Common sense tells us that to get the best efficiency from an automobile engine, we must burn the best fuel. So our bodies need proper care. Good habits can make the difference in whether or not one has good health.

The Scripture would remind us: "Know ye not that your bodies are the temples of God....He that defiles the temple, him will God destroy."

By taking proper care of our bodies, wearing proper clothing to suit weather conditions, getting enough sleep and the right kind of food, we can prolong our lives on this earth.

Remember, follow the simple suggestions offered here and you should live longer. Trust Christ, and live forever!