

When Death



Won't Die

- Ray Brubaker

GOD'S NEWS BEHIND THE NEWS
RADIO BROADCAST



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Write to:

GOD'S NEWS ..BEHIND THE NEWS
RAY BRUBAKER - COMMENTATOR
BOX 10475 ST. PETERSBURG, FLA. 33733

IS DEATH THE END OF LIFE?



Bob Bonin, news reporter who interviewed Dr. Edith Lord on the subject of DEATH, declares: "No greater fear hath a man than the thought of having to give up his life. Fear of death is universal," he notes.

However, in an interview with Dr. Lord, who teaches the subject of DEATH at the University of Miami, he was told that life can become more precious and exciting if you have a proper view of death.

Dr. Lord suggests that death be accepted as a part of life. She notes: "You enter life by this door marked 'BIRTH' and you leave life by that door marked 'DEATH.' If you are aware of both doors, then the space between the two doors becomes infinitely more precious. You can live that life more fully," she declares.

Well, at no time are death and life more closely linked together than at the birth of a baby. The mother faces death while giving forth life.

In Ecclesiastes 7:1 we read: "A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth."

We might add--it depends upon where you are going when you die! Only for the believer in Jesus Christ can it be said, "absent from the body, present with the Lord."

There are those who have had what they claim to be an experience of death. In fact, Dr. Kubler-Ross has made a study of hundreds of cases of those who claim to have "died" but who returned to relate their experiences. One such man had proof--including a death certificate--to show that he had died but had come back to life.

She comments: "I used to say, 'I believe in life after death... Now I know.'"

Reporting on these cases of those declared "dead" and "returned," she notes: "They virtually shed their physical bodies, as a butterfly comes out of a cocoon. They describe a feeling of peace, beautiful, indescribable peace, no pain, no anxiety. And they were perfect--completely whole."

Dr. Raymond Moody, a researcher at the University of Virginia, describes the "after-death stages." They include a buzz or ring at the moment of death, followed by rapid progression through an enclosure or tunnel toward the light. There is surprise at being outside the body. Then follows a panoramic review of one's life.

No matter what a person's religious beliefs may be, a religious figure always appears in the "after-death" experience. This is true even for atheists, according to Dr. Moody.

A minister, the Rev. Boyd McClaren, relates how he used to work in a funeral home, having embalmed many a person, and wondered what happened to the soul at death. He later accepted the call to preach and, while in Oklahoma pastoring a church, he spent 13 days fasting on behalf of a little girl whose body was left deformed by polio. He was praying that the Lord would heal her body. But, as he relates: "The Lord spoke to me and told me He wasn't going to heal her...He was going to take her."

He then prayed, "Oh Lord, let me see what happens when a soul leaves the body."

Later, when the girl was carried to a hospital, he was called and was in the room at the time the child died.

He told of cold chills running up and down his spine. And though he had handled many a dead person while working in a funeral home, and had also witnessed several people die, nothing was like this occasion.

Ugly dark beings about six feet tall with wings spread suddenly appeared, and he cried out, "No, Lord," for he knew the child was a real believer.

Then, hearing the sound as of two great eagles coming in a power dive, he saw two great angels of the Lord appearing in dazzling white. These angels spread their wings in a circle and while doing so, knocked these evil-looking creatures across the room. They placed their wings under the little girl and when they lifted the "soul" from the body, she was carried away to Heaven. Although her real body lay there, twisted from polio, in flight she appeared as a perfect being, completely whole.

Is this a picture of what death is like?

In Wesley's Journal (Vol. 2, pp. 22-26) the story is related of a young woman, known to be deeply spiritual, who was dying. She had been in something like a coma for several days when suddenly she opened her eyes and said: "Mr. C. is dead."

Those attending her thought she was delirious and replied that the neighbor, Mr. C., was alive and well. "Oh, no," she replied, "he is dead; for a short time ago, as I passed the gates of hell, I saw him descend into the pit and the blue flame cover him."

Then she declared, "Mr. B. is also dead; for he arrived in heaven just as I was leaving that happy place, and I saw its beautiful gates thrown wide open to receive him, and heard the host of heaven shout, "Welcome, weary pilgrim."

Now, Mr. C. was a very wicked person in the community, and Mr. B. was a good, consistent Christian. Unknown to those in the room with her, the former had dropped dead while tying his shoes just about a half hour before, while the latter, too, had passed into the eternal world.

Later, she related how at the time when she was in a coma, and at death's door, a celestial being conducted her into the invisible world--first to Heaven. But she was told that since she belonged to time, she could not yet enter that glorious place, but only behold it.

She beheld the Saviour upon a throne of light and glory surrounded by four-and-twenty elders and a great multitude, some of whom she recognized as prophets, apostles, martyrs and missionaries, besides many others.

She was next conducted to a place where she heard the most vile language amidst the shriek of lost spirits. As she approached a burning pit, there was a tremendous effort made to draw her into it but her guardian angel would not permit it.

She recognized many in the place of torment whom she had known on earth, and even some whom she thought to be Christians. She described hell as a place of misery, where there was weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

Cam Thompson, now gone to be with the Lord, tells how years ago he walked the streets of Tampa, Florida, when someone said to him, "Say, are you saved?" Then the person disappeared into the night. Cam thought, "Saved from what?"

He had always thought that a time will come when we die and God will weigh all the good deeds against our evil deeds, and we will be allowed into Heaven or shut out, depending on whether we had done more good than bad.

He had been living in drunkenness and debauchery and knew of no good deeds except dropping a coin into the hat of a blind man.

Later, at his home in Tallahassee, Florida, he went up on the roof to get some of the cool night air when in the distance he heard the voice of an evangelist preaching in a tent he could see pitched in the distance. He heard the evangelist read from the Scriptures which spoke of a day coming when the wrath of God would be outpoured without mixture upon the wicked, "and he shall be tormented with fire and with brimstone in the presence of the Lamb and in the presence of His holy angels and the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever, and they have no respite, no pause, no intermission, no rest, no peace - day or night." (Rev. 14:10,11 Amplified Version)

Cam testifies: "There was born in on me the awful reality of hell." And he adds: "I would now be in Hell, if I had not had by me a copy of the Word of God." For the Scriptures revealed that through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, there could be received the gift of eternal life. As John 3:36 declares: "He that believeth not the Son SHALL NOT SEE LIFE, but THE WRATH OF GOD (continually) ABIDETH ON HIM!"

Years ago I read the tract, FORTY-EIGHT HOURS IN HELL. It is the story of a coal miner who was trapped by a cave-in and

when found, was rushed to a hospital where he was pronounced dead. Later, while being moved, he was accidentally jarred, which resulted in a slight groan coming from his lips. Those around were astonished as he opened his eyes and called for a cup of water.

Relating his episode of those 48 hours, he told of the torments of hell which he had envisioned. He told of entering a chamber as though a great mountain were cut in two. All around he could hear groans and distinctly heard voices crying for water, water, water.

On every side he saw huge billows of fire rolling as human beings would rise, only to be carried down again to the lowest depth of that awful lake of fire. He related, "When borne on the crest of these awful billows, their curses against a just God would be appalling, and their pitiful cries for water would be heart-rendering."

As he witnessed this scene, and he himself was about to be thrust into and enveloped by the flames, he felt an indescribable thirst seizing him. Just then he found himself back in the hospital, calling for water. Then and there he gave his heart to the Lord.

One pastor expressed the belief that those who seemed to have been dead and then "returned" to life were not really dead--that God knew beforehand that they would have an experience some would call death--whatever the prior clinical signs of death. Perhaps their experience was to alert or inform others as to the real meaning of death.

Some have wondered about the soul of the departed. Is there soul sleep? The late Dr. M. R. DeHaan writes: "Put it down, therefore, that the body always goes into the grave, and sleeps between death and resurrection, while the soul in the Old Testament went to "Sheol"; not asleep, but conscious, in the place of the departed dead, with memory, with thought and the ability to converse and speak."

Continues DeHaan: "When Jesus died on the Cross and put away sin, He descended into Hades and proclaimed the good news of redemption to all the redeemed in Sheol, and on the day of His resurrection led them triumphantly into Heaven. Since then, all who have died in the faith never go into Sheol, but pass directly into the presence of God...so that only after the Cross can it be said, "To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord."

Indeed, what a blessed hope is ours!

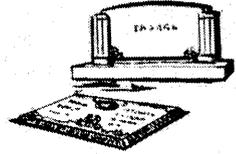
The Apostle Paul reminds us that Jesus died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

What tremendous joy to know whether we go by way of death, or by being caught up alive at the rapture, we shall be forever with our Lord.

Or, as someone has said--whether we go by the undertaker or the upper-taker--we will be present with our Saviour.

The important thing is to be found always living for Christ, serving Him faithfully, ever doing His will, so that His coming will find us ready.

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



THREATS TO LIFE

The newspaper carried the headline--MASSIVE ASSAULT ON ARTHRITIS URGED.

It is reported that more than 22 million Americans are afflicted by arthritis which has to do with the inflammation of the joints.

Research and treatment of the disease is planned to discover the cause, and effect a cure, with arthritis centers being set up throughout the country.

It is estimated that arthritis and related diseases cost the country 13 billion dollars annually in lost productivity, health benefits paid, and lost tax revenues.

Chances are that you may be afflicted so this message will be of interest to you today.

The Scriptures do give a formula for believers to follow when life is threatened by maladies such as sickness or disease.

James writes: "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (James 5:13-16)

When we are afflicted we are apt to consult a physician. Perhaps it would be better to look into the Word of God and we might discover both the cause and the cure of our illness.

We're reminded that "All Scripture...is profitable" (2 Tim. 3:16) so we believe the Word of God has something to say on this all-important subject.

Peter, too, reminds us that the Lord provides all that we need in this life both spiritually and physically. We read: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness..." (2 Pet. 1:3)

All we need pertaining unto this life, and all that is needed to live godly, is available through the power given through the Lord Jesus Christ. Hallelujah. Does our Lord not have all power in Heaven and in earth? Indeed, He does, and He wants us to possess that power through the quickening of the Spirit in our lives.

Paul says: "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." (Rom. 8:11)

Did you hear it?

Think of the power that brought Jesus from the tomb. If this same power that gave back life to the dead body of Jesus is in us through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, there's no telling what will happen if we have faith to believe God. We, too, have "mortal" or "dying" bodies. We, too, need the life-giving power that comes from the Spirit of God indwelling our lives.

Then why are we sick? why afflicted?

Paul speaks of those who fail to discern the Lord's body, saying: "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." (1 Cor. 11:29-30) Is this true today? Could it be that some of us are thus guilty?

In a previous passage, Paul speaks of our bodies belonging to the Lord. "Meat for the belly, and the belly for meats; but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body." (1 Cor. 6:13-14)

He tells the Corinthians how they should take care of their bodies, reminding them that their bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. Could it be that some are weak and sickly and some die because they mistreat their bodies?

In the immediate context of these verses which speak of many being sick and of some sleeping (dying), you'll find the Apostle warning of eating of the bread, and drinking of the cup--which represents the broken body of our Lord--in an unworthy manner. This can only result in self-condemnation, "not discerning the Lord's body," says Paul.

Is it not for us to realize that when Jesus died and shed His blood, it was on account of sin. If we persist in sin and yet partake of the communion, we are guilty of "not discerning the Lord's body." Rather, we should forsake sin, having repented of it, finding the victory through the Holy Spirit's control of our lives.

Again, some may be weak and sickly and some die because they do not realize the all-sufficiency of the death Christ suffered for us on the cross. Peter looks back to the crucifixion to witness to the fact that it was for us He died to procure both the benefits of righteousness and healing. Listen as he recounts for us the sufferings of Christ, saying: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by WHOSE STRIPES YE WERE HEALED." (1 Pet. 2:24)

Some don't believe that physical healing is meant here. But our Lord's life on earth was a testimony to His concern for the physical well-being as well as the spiritual. He sensed that many were sick because of Satan. For Luke, a physician, testifies how when Jesus was on earth He "went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil..." (Acts 10:38)

Certainly we can't blame the devil for all sickness, although we know he brought sin into the world and death resulted along with sickness and disease. Sometimes we bring sickness on ourselves by improper eating, over-exertion, lustful living, and our own sin. Thus, we need to get right with God if we are to experience His marvelous grace in healing us.

However, an example we might give of one oppressed by the devil is related by Luke. He tells of a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. Whether she had arthritis or some similar malady, we do not know, except we're told that Jesus came along and, seeing her in this condition, cried out: "Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity." When He placed His hands on her, immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. Later, our Lord told why she was bent over, saying: "Satan had bound her, lo, these eighteen years."

If we looked at this person, would this be our evaluation? Would we see the devil responsible for her illness?

I see where the Council on Theology and Culture of the Presbyterian Church US has concluded that the casting out of demons is not a function of ministers in the denomination. It recommended that the 1976 General Assembly instruct the ministers that if they wanted to remain in good standing in the presbytery, they were not to engage in such a practice.

This, my friends, is nothing more than detente with the devil.

What if the apostles were serving under this presbytery? They could not do what Jesus commanded them to do.

We read how our Lord was casting out devils, and healing every sickness and disease among the people. And seeing the multitudes, He was moved with compassion and said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plenteous but the labourers are few." Then He called His twelve disciples, "and gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease." (Matt. 9:34-38, Matt.16:1)

When I hear missionaries use this verse--"the harvest is plenteous and the labourers are few," I wonder if they realize the responsibility of those going into the harvest field. For Jesus commissioned His disciples saying: "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils." Is this not the work of the harvest?

Later, our Lord sent out seventy to go two by two, saying the same thing: "The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few." They returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name."

Do you think the devil wants churches and churchmen to know he is to some degree responsible for oppressing people today?

Why is it so many of our churches have a form of worship but no power? Why do some have a ritual but little righteousness? Why do some churches employ all the modern methods but have no miracles--have gold but little of God?

Peter, seeing the lame man sitting at the gate of the temple asking alms, said: "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk." (Acts 3:6)

Paul warns of those who would come in the last days, "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof," saying, "From such turn away."

If Jesus were to come to our sanctuaries which are decked with robed choirs, lit candles, and congregations half asleep, we're sure He would not be welcome either. His teachings would be considered strange doctrine in many churches. In fact, in the book of the Revelation, our Lord is pictured at the end of the church age as standing outside the door seeking an entrance. Hear Him as He says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

How many write to say that they do not feel the power of God in their churches which are cold and formal and that they would rather stay home and hear our broadcast or read our literature which stirs their hearts and challenges them to believe in a God of miracles.

How sad. We need the church and the church needs us. But most of all we need to invite the Lord Jesus Christ back into our churches, seeing lives transformed, seeing the sick healed, seeing demons cast out, and witnessing the power of the Holy Spirit at work in meeting the needs of God's people.

In Hebrews, we read, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." (Heb. 10:25)

Yes, we need to gather together more often in the name of Jesus. We need to exhort and encourage one another more. We need to believe God for His sustaining and strengthening of our lives--and much the more as we see the day of Christ's appearing hastening.

Indeed, we believe He is coming soon. And His message to one and all is "Be ye therefore ready also, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

**What To Do
When Afflicted!**



Dr. Koop and twins... "the modern Schweitzer." —TIME, Inc. photo

Dr. C. Everett Koop may be best known as the surgeon who separated a rare set of Siamese twins.

Following the rare operation, a six-column headline appeared in the CHICAGO DAILY NEWS which stated, "DOCTOR TRUSTS IN POWER OF GOD."

Only three of six known attempts to separate similarly joined Siamese twins have been successful.

"My surgical skills are a gift from God," Dr. Koop tells parents such as the peasants from the Dominican Republic whose twins were separated.

Dr. Koop aroused a great deal of controversy recently when he spoke at the third annual Philadelphia Conference on Reformed Theology held in Wheaton, Illinois.

Speaking on the subject of FAITH HEALING, he asserted that God no longer intervenes supernaturally in the healing process. He maintained that divine healing ceased with the apostolic age.

Dr. Koop, an elder at the Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, said that he would not participate in anointing the sick with oil as prescribed in the book of James. It's not that the doctor doesn't believe in miracles--"All healing comes from God," he said, "but since the apostles' time, God heals through natural laws, with drugs, and other means."

The noted surgeon also acknowledged that prayer for the sick was still appropriate for Christians. "I do it," he said, "but I don't know how it works."

The reason Dr. Koop doesn't practice the prescription for healing given in the book of James is that Christians would be immortal if that rite still applied today.

Well, in a sense believers have eternal life and therefore are immortal. Jesus, in referring to Himself as the "living bread," said: "I am that bread of life." Speaking to the Jews, He declared: "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead." Again referring to Himself, He said, "This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven," testified our Lord. "If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." (John 6:48-51)

Indeed, our Lord is not only the author of life, He is the giver of eternal life.

John declares: "In him was life; and the life was the light of men." (John 1:4)

And, not only is our Lord come that we might have life, but He tells us that He is come that we might have it "more abundantly."

Are you enjoying "abundant life"?

We can readily understand how a doctor who is trained with skillful use of surgical instruments and a knowledge of medicine can relegate divine healing to the past. But to say that the gifts

bestowed upon the church following Pentecost are no longer valid today does an injustice to the ministry of the Holy Spirit whose gifts are ours to enjoy today.

No greater authority than Dr. William R. Newall has said: "We fully believe these gifts belong to the church throughout the dispensations -- (a) because of Scripture; (b) because of the history and teaching of these things; (c) (and because of) personal experience and observation."

We would have to agree.

Dr. A. W. Tozer was also a believer that these gifts are for today. He once declared: "For a generation certain evangelical teachers told us that the gifts of the Spirit ceased at the death of the Apostles or at the completion of the New Testament. This, of course, is a doctrine without a syllable of Biblical authority back of it. Its advocates (says Tozer) must accept full responsibility for thus manipulating the Word of God."

These men were not leaders in the charismatic movement by any means. They are Bible teachers. And to believe all of the Bible is the Word of God, one must accept their verdict; otherwise, we are dishonest if we say we accept all of the Scriptures.

Peter would remind us, "No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation."

So, if you have a Scripture and you have some well-known Bible scholars to agree with the interpretation of that Scripture, you have a corroboration that is almost undeniable.

For that reason when we discuss any Biblical doctrine, we seek to also have someone of repute to comment on that Scripture.

On the other hand, if you have someone of renown commenting on the Scriptures and their remarks do not agree with what is the clear teaching of the Word of God, their comment doesn't bear much weight.

In matters such as these, Paul would remind us, saying: "Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." (I Thes. 5:20-21)

Looking at this passage in James relating to those sick and afflicted, we read: "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord! And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sin, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another that ye may be healed."

Now, just because this is not practiced doesn't mean it is not for today. Maybe we are missing out on answers to prayer because this prescription is not followed. On the other hand, were we to follow this formulae for healing, we might discover that it works.

In fact, I happen to know that it works. With a condition diagnosed as rheumatoid arthritis, along with other maladies, I went to prayer and fasting on behalf of my need. At approximately the same time a Baptist minister invited me to go with him to anoint a man who lived in his community. He asked me to take the anointing oil and pray for this man.

I don't recall ever anointing anyone before. But I knew it was mentioned in the Scriptures, so I proceeded to pray and anoint this man. And would you believe it? I awakened in the night and in response to this act of faith by believing the Word of God, the Lord healed me. Whether the man I prayed for was healed, I do not know because I soon left the community. But I do know that the Lord healed my body miraculously and at the same time gave me this ministry that we have today on a thousand radio stations. Surely you would not consider this any personal accomplishment. To God must go all the glory.

Did you also see where James says we're to "pray one for another that ye may be healed." Have you ever thought that praying for someone who is in need of healing could find the Lord healing you as well? Because of your love and concern, and in accordance to the command to pray, could it be that God would reckon the rewards and benefits of your prayers to your own account?

It's true that we do not receive the benefits of our praying, nor do we receive the blessings of obedience to the Word of God, unless we are willing to practice what we preach.

What if Naaman, a leper who was told by the prophet Elisha to go wash in the Jordan River seven times had refused to obey the command? After all, he was captain of the host of the king of Assyria, and the Jordan was a muddy stream that no one would think of bathing in. But he followed the word of the prophet and was healed. We read: "Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean."

We repeat--are we missing a blessing by not following the clear teaching of Scripture when it comes to divine healing?

"Is any among you afflicted? let him pray," says James.

But prayer is difficult, you reply. O yes, we have time to talk over the telephone at length, and we have lots of time to watch television, but little time to pray.

You've heard some testify that the Lord put them on their back so that they could look up. Could it be that God allows afflictions to come our way so we can get to talk to Him--to commune with Him?

Scofield defines "afflictions" as the state of being afflicted--to be in pain of body or mind, as illness, losses, etc. The Bible definition might also include the suffering of hardships and trouble.

But in the context of James, chapter 5, mention is made of Job as an example of suffering affliction. (v. 10) Remember how he suffered with those boils--how his body was grievously afflicted.

We have a folder we have prepared entitled - FOR THOSE WHO SUFFER. What to do when afflicted. We've sent out many of these and will send you a free copy if you write to request it.

First, we should SEARCH...Search the Word of God to seek to discover what the Bible has to say. Then we need to search our own lives to discover any apparent reason for our affliction.

The Psalmist prayed: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." (Psa. 139:23-24)

Second, we need to PRAY. That's what James says: "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray."

We need to pray concerning our affliction. What if the doctor tells us we have an incurable illness? Shall we accept the verdict, or shall we believe that nothing is too hard for God, and that there are no incurable illnesses?

In Phil. 4:6 we're told: "In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God."

We need to pray for wisdom regarding any decisions to be made. James also reminds us: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." (Jas. 1:5)

We have the assurance that our prayers will be heard and that they will be answered if we are abiding in His will.

John writes: "If we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us; and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." (I John 5:14-15)

What a promise!

Third, we need to CONFESS our sins to the Lord and to one another. Prayer goes unheard so long as wrongs are not righted and we have an unforgiving spirit. Declares the psalmist, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." (Psa. 66:18) A simple matter of confessing our wrongs and seeking forgiveness may bring about our healing.

Fourth, if our affliction is of such a nature that we can't pray, we are to call the elders of the church and let them pray, anointing with oil in the name of the Lord. This, too, is the prescription given by James.

Fifth, COMMIT. How easy it is to worry and to fret over our condition. But now is the time to commit ourselves to the Lord as the great physician. He is not only concerned; He is all-powerful and can bring about the restoration and healing we so desire.

We read, "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass." (Psa. 37:5)

Sixth, we need to BELIEVE. "All things are possible to him that believeth." (Mk. 9:23)

What a wonderful Saviour who is today sitting at the right hand of God and praying that our faith fail not. One day He will come for us. Then He will change these physical bodies and fashion them after His glorious body. But until then He can keep us well and make us whole if we can believe Him and meet the conditions set forth in His Word.

Indeed, let's live in the excitement of His coming--waiting for the day of our deliverance--but enjoying His presence and power in our lives now.

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

(What happens to believers who die who have been living in sin, or backslidden, and not ready for Christ's coming? Perhaps this chapter may provide an answer.)



WHEN DEATH FLEES AWAY

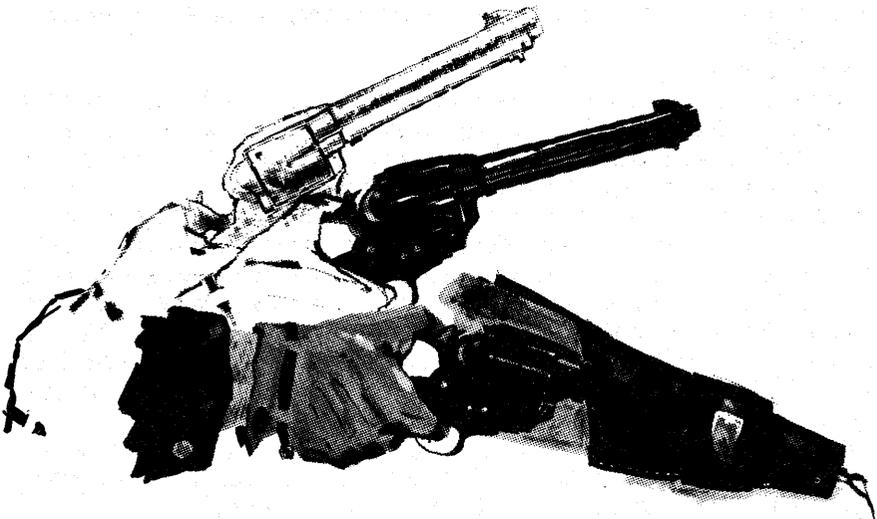
Ernest Becker, in his book, *THE DENIAL OF DEATH*, says that man "is the only creature who must pass a lifetime with the fear of death haunting even his most sun-filled days."

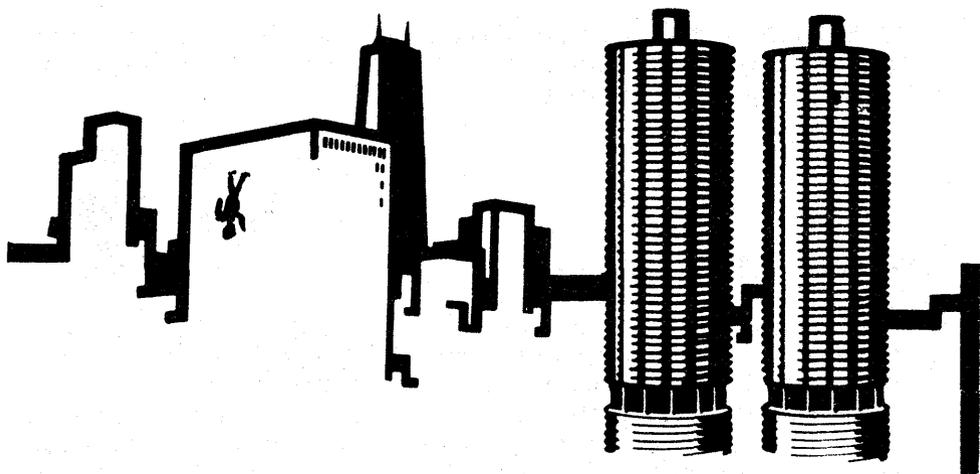
On the subject of "death" there is an unusual passage in Rev. 9:6 which reminds us of a time when men shall seek death and it will flee away. This will be during the tribulation period. The verse reads: "And in those days shall men seek death and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them."

Oliver Greene, director of "The Gospel Hour," asks: "Can you imagine being in such pain that you long to die, you beg for death to come, you try to commit suicide, only to see DEATH RUN FROM YOU?"

"Can you imagine taking a razor and pulling it across your throat in an attempt to take your life--and the razor just will not cut?"

"Can you imagine taking a gun, placing the barrel of the gun to your head and pulling the trigger--but nothing happens?"





He continues: "Men will leap from tall buildings, jump into the path of locomotives, trucks, automobiles--**BUT THEY CANNOT DIE!**"

"Oh, yes! **IT WILL HAPPEN**, whether you believe it or not," says Greene.

Dr. Walter Wilson interpreted this verse in Rev. 9:6 to indicate that a man may be successful in pulling the trigger and blowing off his head, but that life wouldn't leave the body. A person would continue to live.

However, note the context which speaks of locust-like beings with tails like unto scorpions, which did not have power to kill men, "but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man." (Rev. 9:5)

What's the explanation?

Turn to Luke 12 where reference is made to those awaiting the coming of our Lord who prepared not themselves. We read: "The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers."

We read further: "And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."

We believe the Scriptures teach that a believer who is not ready to meet the Lord will be left behind. As our Lord emphasized, his portion shall be "with the unbelievers."

Regardless of our traditional teaching, how much clearer can the Scriptures be? Here is a servant who says in his heart, "My Lord delayeth His coming," so he apparently was anticipating the event we call the rapture. But he is not only appointed to share the lot of the unbelievers; he is also beaten with stripes, depending on the gravity of his unpreparedness.

One author writes: "This portion of Scripture teaches us clearly that not everyone receives the same degree of imprisonment or number of stripes, but each one receives his own reward and the full degree that he merits according to HIS LIGHT or KNOWLEDGE."

Naturally, the question arises: how or when will these beatings occur?

Some say, "At the judgment seat of Christ" is when everyone will receive his reward.

Indeed, Paul declares: "For we must ALL appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether good or bad." Paul goes on to warn: "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." (II Cor. 5:10-11)

I realize there are those who teach that this is all going to take place in heaven. As one well-known author states: "The Judgment Seat of Christ will occur in Heaven." He goes on to say: "This will occur after the Rapture and during the Tribulation Period." (WHAT IN THE WORLD WILL HAPPEN NEXT? Salem Kirban - p. 50)

However, we can't conceive of beatings taking place in heaven. Rather, we believe Rev. 11:18 proves that the time of judging the saints and giving rewards will take place at the beginning of the thousand-year reign of Christ.

For there is this announcement, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever." This is the tremendous theme of the Hallelujah Chorus.

When this happens, we read its "the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great..." (See Rev. 11:15-18)

McCrossan points out the use of the present participle in the expression, "to them fearing thy name both small and great," is to assure us that these saints never experienced death, but were taken up alive to meet their Lord."

So, we believe that the saints, small and great, living and resurrected, will be judged and rewarded at the beginning of the millennium.

But what about those beatings (floggings)?

The Greek word, DICHOTOMASEI, is used to describe the

beatings of the servant whose portion is that of unbelievers. The word could mean "to scourge severely."

The Greek word used in Rev. 9:5 to describe the torment of a scorpion when he striketh a man is PAISA, meaning to smite or strike. The same word is used to describe Peter's handling of the sword in striking Malchus in cutting off his right ear. (Jn. 18:10) It is also used to describe the sufferings of Christ when those around him did smite him with their fists. (Matt. 26:68; Luke 22:64)

Jesus bore our punishment when He went to the cross so that we should not endure any suffering for sin--that is, unless we are guilty of continuing in sin after we are saved.

In Heb. 10 we read: "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." (vs. 26-27)

Did you hear it?

Do some believers sin? Do they sin knowingly and wilfully? Then, what happens? There remaineth no more sacrifice for sin but a fearful looking for of judgment. So, does not this verse remind us that our Lord can't go back and die on the cross every time we sin? Under the Mosaic custom there was a continual offering of sacrifices for sin. But Jesus died "once" to put away sin. (See Heb. 9:25-26)



So, if a believer continues to practice that which he knows is wrong, he can't expect our Lord to continue making a sacrifice for his sin. Instead, he must pay the penalty in the form of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries.

Incidentally, ALFRED quotes Delitzhe as confirming the use of the word "knowledge" as having to do with a sincere belief in the truth. He notes: "The writer, by the use of this word... means by it not only a shallow historical knowledge, or notion about the truth, but a LIVING, BELIEVING KNOWLEDGE OF IT."

For a believer to go on sinning after coming to a knowledge of the truth makes him subject to God's dealings.

We continue to read: "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses; Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (Heb. 10:28-31)

How these verses should speak to our hearts today! It is certain that the Lord shall judge His people and that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

The question is sometimes asked: What happens to believers who die who were living in sin--living in a state of unpreparedness? What about those who were backslidden?

In view of the story given by Jesus of the servant who is looking for his Lord to return but lives carelessly, whose fate is that of being beaten with few or many stripes, depending on the degree of punishment he deserves, we can only see the great tribulation ahead for such a person. We do not believe that heaven will see any beatings. Heaven is a pure and holy place where sin shall never enter. So we see all judgment for sin confined to this earth.

Malachi asks: "Who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap." (Mal. 3:3)

Fire purifies. Soap cleans. Incidentally, a fuller is one who thoroughly cleanses soiled garments, according to Davis Bible Dictionary.

Remember, when Jesus was transfigured, we read, "His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them." (Mk. 9:3)

Concerning the coming of Christ, we read that all who look

for Him will be ready. Rev. 19:7-8 reads: "...and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

Beloved, there's coming a day when our Lord will come. Those who are ready will ascend to the marriage feast. Thus, the invitation goes out--"Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." (Rev. 19:9) It is an exciting occasion no one should ever want to miss.

However, according to one of the parables, Jesus tells there will be those so occupied with pleasure that they will turn down the invitation. Or some will be more interested in real estate than their heavenly state, or more vitally concerned with the power of machinery than the power of the Spirit. Hear their excuses: "I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it." Or, "I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them." Another says, "I have married a wife and therefore I cannot come."

Think of it! It is flimsy excuses like these that will keep people from attending the marriage feast, according to what Jesus said.

As one writer observes, the servant who says in his heart, "My Lord delayeth his coming," represents those who begin to live like the world, seeking to gratify their fleshly desires in the world's ways, and in this time of worldliness the Lord comes.

Hear me! The hour is late. The coming of our Lord draweth nigh. Let us throw off the robes of worldliness, let us forsake the cares of this life that would ensnare us, and let us prepare for the coming of Jesus.

In Rev. 7:9 there is this great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues. These are clothed with white robes and have palms in their hands.

When one of the elders asks: "Who are these? whence came they?" the answer is heard, "Sir, thou knowest. These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

We would offer the following explanation as to what will happen when our Lord comes. We are not dogmatic, but putting all of these Scriptures together, we come up with this possible conclusion. Note that we say "possible" conclusion.

Can you envision our Lord's return happening when the earth is rent asunder and bodies spring forth from their graves? Some are instantly caught up to meet the Lord in the air and go immediately to heaven, for they were living lives that were judged worthy of being included at that marriage supper. On the

other hand, there were those who rise only six feet. As at the time when Jesus died, we read of the graves being opened; and "many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves...and appeared unto many." (Mt. 27:52-53)

Could this happen again? And could it be that there will be believers from all generations who have glorified bodies who come forth but who are not included in the rapture? Only such a crowd could account for the "multitude which no man could number" which John describes as going through the great tribulation.

Think of a man who died in the 1800's suddenly coming up from his grave. Seeing cars speeding past him, witnessing airplanes overhead, and viewing radio and television, he will discover a world he never dreamed possible. Then, too, seeing the sin--violence, rape, murder, and witnessing the near-nudity on our streets, he would surely want to crawl back in his grave.

But remember, too, this is the time of the antichrist. It is a time when Satan himself will be cast down upon the earth and will persecute the saints. The bottomless pit will also be opened, and coming forth will be strange creatures like scorpions with the power to sting men with their tails. They could not kill but could only torment for five months, and their torment was like that of a scorpion when he striketh a man. And we read, "In those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them."

Could it be possible that life will stay in the body of those inflicted with this sting who wish they could die and can't?

Or could it be that these are already possessed with a body that can no longer be subject to death, "for it is appointed unto man once to die." (Heb. 9:27)

At least, it is something to think about. And it is the only explanation we can find for those who are not ready for the rapture, who may have died during past centuries, who are resurrected but not raptured. They will go through the tribulation--made white and purified.

While it is true that in the midst of the great tribulation there are those who wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb, isn't the call of God to come clean now, to forsake sin now, to repent of worldliness now, so as to be worthy at Christ's coming?

Notice, we are saved by grace. Christ's salvation provided atonement for all of our sins. But if walking in sin, living in conformity to this world, the Lord has no choice but to allow persecution or suffering to chasten our lives. As Peter writes: "For he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin." (I Peter 4:1)

That this age will end in a lukewarm, Laodicean state is sure, and God is left with no choice but to sift the wheat from the tares. It will be a time of trial of faith, which is more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, with the ultimate purpose of bringing praise and honour and glory to the Lord Jesus Christ at His coming. (I Pet. 1:7)

However, the Philadelphia church is assured they will not have to go through this time of testing. "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." (Rev. 3:10)

Do you see it?

We are not only to hear and believe the Word but to keep it. Obedience is the standard that determines readiness for rapture. (Paul reminds us, "in flaming fire" our Lord will come. And He will take "vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." We can expect the wicked to suffer his wrath, but also those who "obey not" the gospel will be punished.)

The hour of temptation is for the purpose of "trying" them that dwell upon the earth. Hermas wrote: "Those, therefore, who continue steadfast, and are put through the fire, (of the great tribulation that is to come) will be purified by means of it..."

Will all believers go through this hour of trial as some teach? Or, could it be that the Lord will give grace to those who do go through it?

It is our conviction that those who have disciplined their lives by holy living will escape this coming tribulation--else, why all the admonitions to be ready for our Lord's unannounced appearing?

If looking for Christ to come, will we not be wanting to be ready by living pure and holy lives? John says: "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." (I John 3:3)

So, let us live for Christ. And let us look for His coming. And may we be ready. For He hath said, "Be ye therefore ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."