

Death: The End Of The Beginning

Why Do We Fight Death?

Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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The Last Great Day is such a wonderful holy day, because it pictures God's grace and fairness toward *all* humanity. It looks forward to God's perfect justice—when each person has his chance for salvation under beneficial conditions. That is, without the influence of the Arch Deceiver.

God really stacks the deck in man's favor. In the end when you look at it from God's point of view, He really stacks the deck in man's favor, and we can see why. He can say with such positiveness, that He will redeem everyone, if they will have it. He says something along that line in I Timothy 2:4. That He wants all men to come to salvation. He also says in II Peter 3:9, that He wants everyone to come to repentance.

He is that positive that He can do it as long as man yields to Him. He will bring them all to salvation, but on the other hand, is the equally wonderful expectation of God destroying all evil—and all evil people—from earth for all eternity. We typically call this the second death, the Lake of Fire, or the third resurrection, when finally all evil is going to be wiped away. God Himself can then come and live with men.

We cannot really imagine life without sin. Without some sort of wrong or evil existing somewhere in the world. We have lived with it so long that we do not understand how we could live without it. That is something we have to yearn for, and that will come when the Last Great Day is fulfilled. What Utopia that will be! Not only with all of God's goodness infusing the whole world, but all evil then being wiped away.

For mankind to get to this time, to the fulfillment of The Last Great Day, a whole lot of dying has to occur. Billions of people have already died and billions more will die before they reach the second resurrection and a chance for salvation. You might not have looked at it this way, but it is true. Death is something that must occur, between now and then. We have heard 50, 60, 70 billion people will have to rise from their graves after having died.

At some point in man's history they will rise then in the general resurrection, Israelites and Gentiles, young and old, rich and poor, from all eras of history from the most prehistoric (meaning for us before the Flood) to people who die in these days. They will come from every race, from every tribe, from every language, and from every nation, which has ever existed on the face of the earth. One of their few common traits that they

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will have is that they all will have died.

Now I know death is not a very uplifting topic to speak on The Last Great Day. But I do not plan to approach it from a morbid point of view, or one that is in any way makes you feel uneasy. We do not want to approach the idea of death with any fear or grief, but from God's point of view. I hope by the end of this sermon we have a healthy positive view of death.

God is always positive, and He has allowed death to occur, and He has actually incorporated it into His plan that men die. Obviously, they die because of bad things happening, because of sin for the most part.

There is something positive about it that we can look at today. We have already seen in John Bulharowski's message, about blessings and cursings that sometimes what we consider to be cursings, end up being blessings, and vice versa. Sometimes we look at things from the wrong end, and do not consider that they may have a very positive end, in the end. So the same is true of death. We can see it as a good thing; when all is said and done.

Let us first go to Hebrews 2. I got the idea for this sermon after giving the sermon Liberty vs Independence where I talked about the fear of death, and these were scriptures that I used.

Hebrews 2:10 For it was fitting for Him [Christ] for whom are all things and by whom are all things [that is actually God the Father], in bringing many sons to glory to make the author of their salvation [Christ] perfect through suffering.

Hebrews 2:14-15 In as much then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood He Himself [Christ] likewise shared in the same, [flesh and blood] that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

All men have been subject to this fear of death, and it is something that we have to learn to overcome—strive to overcome. When we come out of the world we do not immediately shed all these wrong human perspectives, do we? We may take years trying to shed this idea of the fear of death. These things linger from days BBC, as I call them, "before conversion." Sometimes we do not root them all out, but we spend the rest of our lives ridding ourselves of them, and putting on the new man. That is the mind

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of Christ, how *He* looks at things. One of them here is the fear of death.

As I mentioned in that sermon, Liberty vs. Independence, the fear of death is one of those things that we have been freed from. If that is true, we now live in the fear of something else. We have been hearing about that all throughout this feast. We now live in the fear of God, not in the fear of death. If that is so, why do we still fear death so much? Why do we take another's death so hard? Why do we fight death with such a vengeance? These are natural human things to do, I am not saying that you are a bad person if you do those things. They are all things that we are learning to approach from God's perspective. Things like these are hard to let go of, because all of our lifetime we have been subject to this bondage of the fear of death.

I think as we begin this we need to look at the perspectives of two very righteous individuals on the subject of death. They are put there in the Word of God for our admonition, so that we can begin to put these attitudes, and approaches into our lives. Of course, we are going to look at Jesus Christ Himself, and His attitude toward death, and then we will look at the apostle Paul. I think these will help us to see the ideal, and we will get an idea of what we can shoot for.

Let us start in Matthew 16 with Christ and His approach to His own death. This was a time when He was apprising his disciples of what is going to be coming on in the next year or so.

Matthew 16:21 From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.

When I read that, I tried to look at it as objectively as possible, and it sounded a lot to me like Matthew was putting a shopping list down. Looking at it with the point of view that it was very, I do not want to say mundane, but he does not approach it with a lot of emotion. These are the things that Jesus began to tell His disciples:

Have to go to Jerusalem (check)

Suffer many things from the elders (check)

Be killed (check)

Be raised again the third day (check)

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Now this is the Savior of the world we are talking about. The things He was going to have to go through! Now watch Jesus' approach here as compared to Peter's:

Matthew 16:22 Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!"

He was angry, his language was very rough with His savior and master. He was approaching death with fear, but notice Christ's own response

Matthew 16:23 But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."

Very interesting the way He approached His own death. This was a thing of God, and to look upon it with the fear and the dread that Peter did was offensive to Him, because this was part of God's plan. That He be treated in this way, and die in this way, and then be raised in this way. It was all part of the plan; it was God's will, so we need not approach it with great fear. Obviously when He approached that time He did ask His Father to take it away from Him, because He knew what it was going to be about, and how terrible that it was going to be. But from the spiritual side of things He approached it with a great deal of calm, and a great deal of purpose. He was going to live His life out in this way in order to fulfill the will of God.

So Peter got bent out of shape about Christ's upcoming death, but Christ Himself did not. He got bent out of shape over Peter's *attitude* toward it, not toward His own death. Notice that He told Peter, "You don't have God's mind on this matter, you have man's mind on this matter, which is subject to the fear of death". He looked on it as a positive and necessary event in God's plan. Let us go to John 11 and look at how Christ our Savior, our example, approached the death of another one who would be a brother in the church. I am talking about the death of Lazarus. Notice Christ's attitude.

John 11:1-3 Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick."

Obviously there was quite a bond between Lazarus and Jesus. Close, close friends, and a brother in Christ as he would become.

John 11:4-5 When Jesus heard that, He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it." Now Jesus

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loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

It is mentioned again, to emphasize the point, maybe to draw it to our attention how much He loved this family, and Lazarus especially; interconnected with His approach to this man's death. So when He heard that he was sick He stayed two more days in the place where He was. That was calm, was it not? He stuck around where He was even though His friend was dying, maybe already dead.

John 11:11-15 These things He said, and after that He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up." Then His disciples said, "Lord, if he sleeps he will get well." [They did not understand!] However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep. Then Jesus said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him."

He got a certain gladness out of this man's death, although He obviously knew what He was going to do when He went up there, because it was going to bolster their faith. Jesus took a sure, different approach to death than we do. Now, later in this chapter, it says that, Jesus wept, and many people just blithely go over this and say, He was weeping for Lazarus. That was not the case at all. That would be almost schizophrenic from His earlier approach to Lazarus' death. He did not need to weep over Lazarus. He knew the joy that was set before Him, so to speak. He would do a great miracle here and show God's glory. Let us go over that section a little bit.

John 11:35 Jesus wept.

But verse 33 notice what it says:

John 11:33 Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, [that is Mary] and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled.

If we just look at that and said, He was just groaning in the spirit, we might think that He was sad, grieved. We would be very wrong. That word means that He snorted in indignation. He was upset, and He was trying to control His emotions, because He was so angry at their unbelief. He was struggling for self-control so that He would not just lash out at them, and He wept for their unbelief. That is how His emotions finally came out, in weeping. That here, His people whom He revealed time and time again of the resurrection of the dead, and had seen His own power there, that even Mary did not get it! This is emphasized in verse 36 and 37 when the Jews said, "see how He loved him". John stuck that in there to show that they did not get why He wept! It was not because

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He loved Lazarus, and was weeping because he was gone. The Jews were always misunderstanding His emotions and His words. They never got it.

John 11:37 And some of them said, "Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?"

They doubted His very power! Then it is mentioned again that He groaned in Himself. He was still indignant by this point, because they did not get it. He was master over death, and they still disbelieved. If you look at verse 41, listen to His prayer at the end of it.

John 11:41b And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.

He already knew what was going to happen; He knew that His Father had already answered the prayer. That He would raise Lazarus from the dead. Just further proof that He was not weeping for Lazarus. He was weeping because of His people's continued unbelief. That is the sort of thing that gets God frustrated, and fills Him with grief when those that He has trained, spoken to, worked with for millennia, do not get it.

Let us come down a level and see it from a man's point of view, one who is not also God, and that is the apostle Paul. Paul was a man just like us, he had the same emotions, he was better spiritually educated than us though, and now he can give us this example.

Philippians 1:19-21 For I know that this will turn out for my salvation through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is [terrible, no that is not what He says.] *gain* [to the apostle Paul].

He would live in Jesus Christ while he lived, but if he died, he would gain, he would profit.

Philippians 1:22-26 But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; [I can still produce] Yet what I shall choose I cannot tell [He could not choose which one he wanted to do at this point]. For I am hard pressed between the two, [a rock and a hard place, which was better?] having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you. And

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being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith, that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again.

He saw that it would fit God's plan better if he stayed alive for a little while longer, because these people needed him, but if he had the choice, he says, he would far rather die and be with Christ. This is very interesting this idiom here, 'to die is gain.' We have a similar idiom that we use. We call it, 'cashing in the chips'.

He looked upon life, in a sense, as a 'game' that he played for all he was worth. But when he must retire he would gladly cash in his chips and take home his winnings. That was the approach that the apostle Paul took to this. That he had far greater winnings that he had treasured, put away as treasure in heaven, and he was very willing to go and claim that treasure, because God had promised it to him. He had done his job. So he wanted to cash in the chips, but he thought that it might be best for the game if he played on a little bit longer. Kind of an interesting little word study.

So he was not morbid and hopeless about death just like his Savior and ours was not morbid and hopeless about death. On the contrary, he desired to depart, he really wanted to, because his next conscious act would be to rise from the grave to meet Christ in the air, and live and reign with him forever and ever.

What an attitude to have! He would give his all while he was here on the earth, but then he would give his life to be with Christ. That was his own life. Now let us look how he approached others lives, and their deaths. Back to Acts chapter 20. This is the example of Eutychus falling from the window while Paul droned on and on one day.

Acts 20:7-8 Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day spoke to them and continued his message until midnight. There were many lamps in the upper room where they were gathered together.

Now this could mean that it was well lit so everybody could stay awake, or if there were lamps putting off a lot of heat. It could mean that they were all starting to get a little drowsy, because he had been preaching for a long time, and the room was warm or whatever.

Acts 20:9 And in the window there was a certain young man named Eutychus who was sinking into a deep sleep. [I think it was the latter one.] He was overcome by sleep and as Paul continued speaking he fell down from the third story and was

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taken up dead.

Not a pretty sight, now watch Paul's reaction here, just listen to the way Luke describes Paul's actions.

Acts 20:10 But Paul went down, fell on him, and embracing him said, "Do not trouble yourselves, for his life is in him."

Very calm, very collective, it does not sound like he tripped going down the stairs because he was racing to get there so quickly, and he dove onto Eutychus body and said this prayer, and he raised him up. Calm is the watchword here. He went down, "he fell on him" really means that he stretched himself out on him. It is not the 'aaaahhhh' type of fall, it is more like he got down and he stretched himself over the young man's body and he said this prayer, embraced him, and told the others to remain calm, everything was going to be quite all right. Then after that they broke bread and ate, very very calm. He did not take Eutychus' death with wailing and weeping and gnashing of teeth. He just calmly by his own demeanor calmed everyone else, and he raised Eutychus from the dead.

This may seem almost inhuman to be able to do. We are all so full of emotion and love toward our families, basically, we get the most caught up when there is a death, but these are just a few examples of God's mind on the matter of death.

The faith of Jesus and Paul allowed them to consider death from an almost detached point of view. I am sure there were emotions there, but they approached it very calmly. It was not the end of the world. Death to them was merely (pardon this metaphor), but a doorway into a far better existence, (maybe I should say) a step over a certain line before that next existence can take place, because I do not want to make it sound like you die, and you go to heaven. That is not what I mean.

They saw death as a part, a natural part of life that was a transition to the next better life, afterlife. Death was to them a doorway and they desired to die, "desired" because they felt that the advantages of death far outweighed its pains. Jesus Christ for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, taking the pain, because that joy was there, the rewards of death far outweighed the pains. Paul said something to that effect in Romans 8 as well, that the things we are going through now are not worthy to be compared with the glories that we will have after death.

So how could they do this? How could they take death in such calm, with such seeming detachment? To answer this we have to ask ourselves, "what is death?" The knowledge

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of what death is along with faith in God's power and plan will allow us to see death more positively. A common definition of death is, (now I got this straight out of Webster's dictionary) 'a permanent secession of all bodily functions.' Now we can know that this was not written by a "believer" because they put the word "permanent" in there. It is a secession of all vital functions, but it is not a permanent one for any man. Putting permanent in the definition denies the power of God, because He says He will give life to the dead.

Let us look at what Solomon and Job wrote about death, starting in Ecclesiastics 3.

Ecclesiastes 3:18-21 I said in my heart, "Concerning the estate of the sons of men, God tests them, that they may see that they themselves are like beasts. For what happens to the sons of men also happens to beasts; one thing befalls them: as one dies, so dies the other. Surely, they all have one breath; man has no advantage over beasts, for all is vanity. [Pretty cynical way to look at things.] All go to one place: all are from the dust, and all return to dust. Who knows the spirit of the sons of men, which goes upward, and the spirit of the beasts, which goes down to the earth?"

Not a very positive view of things. Solomon concludes that God wants man to admit that in many ways we are no better than the animals. Especially without *Him*, we die like beasts, meaning we are both air-breathing, fleshly creatures just like animals. We die the same death and when we die our bodies decompose and we become dust just like their's does.

Yet Solomon raises a question from this in verse 21. It is not really translated very well here in the New King James, it does not catch the gist of what he was saying. What he is saying is, "What do we really know about the spirit verses the spirit of a beast"? Do we really know that a man's spirit goes upward and a beast's spirit goes back to the earth? What do we really know? What can we see? If we are going to use scientific methods, what do we really know?

Now in verse 11 Solomon has already said that God has put eternity in man's heart, so in a way He is showing that He gives man the edge over beasts. That at least man has this yearning to live forever. So even though his question is somewhat skeptical, he gives man chances for life after death a bit more weight than an animal has of living again.

Turn to Ecclesiastics 12. You will see that by the time he reaches the end of the book he has made up his mind about this question. Speaking about men dying:

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Ecclesiastes 12:7 Then the dust [we are made of dust, we are fleshly creatures] will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.

There is a possibility of life after death and that is his conclusion. Yes, man's spirit does return to God, and who knows how He catalogs them and stores them. We do not know, but they are there. His conclusion here—just a few verses down—is because we do have the chance to live again we better fear God and keep His commandments.

Now if anybody is gloomier than Solomon it is Job. Let us go to Job 14. Remember I do not want to be gloomy today this is the Last Day. Hopefully, by the end of this sermon we will be happy.

Job 14:1 "Man who is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble.

Now you know what side he is starting out on. He got out on the wrong side of the bed that morning, or the wrong side of the ash heap.

Now down to verse 7. This is how far I got. . . .

Job 14:7-12 "For there is hope for a tree, if it is cut down, that it will sprout again, and that its tender shoots will not cease. Though its root may grow old in the earth, and its stump may die in the ground, yet at the scent of water it will bud and bring forth branches like a plant. But man dies and is laid away; indeed he breathes his last and where is he? As water disappears from the sea, and a river becomes parched and dries up, so man lies down and does not rise. Till the heavens are no more, they will not awake nor be roused from their sleep.

He is talking about man without God; I am not sure if God had revealed to him the second resurrection. He sounds awfully doubtful about it at this point. Listen to what he thinks his chances are.

Job 14:13-17 "Oh, that You would hide me in the grave, that You would conceal me until Your wrath is past, that You would appoint me a set time, and remember me! If a man dies, shall he live again? All the days of my hard service I will wait, till my change comes. You shall call, and I will answer You; You shall desire the work of Your hands. For now You number my steps, but do not watch over my sin. My transgression is sealed up in a bag, and You cover my iniquity.

Job looks on life with a terribly jaundice eye because of what he is going through. He overstates things quite a bit, because he is trying to work all these things through, and

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you know how you are when you are trying to wrestle with a problem. You go from one ditch to another. You could go from elation to thinking you solved the problem, all the way to the other side thinking that you do not have any answers, and everything is just going down into the dumps from here on out.

Well, he sees this life at this point as so brief and full of upset and turmoil that a tree has more hope of living again than a man. Why would a man want to after living a life like this? Unlike a tree, a man does not die and shoot out new and green to live again. If you plant a man into the ground, a man does not pop out of the soil after you water it and allow it to be there under the sun. Man lies in his grave and rests until God calls. He understood that much. With God is the power to give life after death. He understands that much.

Many commentators see this as Job's wish that there were an afterlife. That he did not know that there was one, but I look at it more as a hope. It was the only thing he had to hold on to. That God would see him as a righteous man and call him after his death to live again. He knew that there would be a time when he would be changed from dust because God would desire him. Desire to see him again, desire to look at his craftsmanship and put it up where it could be admired and do its work as *He* had designed it.

Let us go to Revelation 20, because what Job had concluded was correct that there would come a time when God would call and men would answer.

Revelation 20:11-13 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.

This is the fulfillment of the Last Great Day. It immediately follows the Millennium and Satan's final rebellion as it is laid out very neatly here in chapter 20. It follows directly in line with the fulfillment of Trumpets, which is shown there in chapter 19. Atonement, which is shown in the first three verses of chapter 20, and the Feast of Tabernacles, which is shown in verses 4 through 6. I do not know any other way that God could have made it any clearer how these things are supposed to take place, how they are supposed to transpire.

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John calls the people standing before God's throne the dead, small and great. It is very general. He does not say some of the dead. He says the dead and later on that means *all* the dead. The commentaries seem to think that this is only the impenitent dead, for some reason. Those that He is going to throw into the Lake of Fire. They do not seem to catch the drift of the general resurrection, and I do not understand why, it is so clear. These people are not judged to be thrown into the Lake of Fire, they are judged to be given salvation. They take a very negative view of this. Verse 5 says, these are "the rest of the dead. . . ."

Not just some, it is all of the rest of the dead that were not raised in the first resurrection. What huge numbers of people that is going to be! Like we said 50, 60 billion people all to be clothed, fed, housed, and taught. What we see here in this judgment is that if they please God and if they live His way, He will welcome them into His family, but if not they will go into the Lake of Fire. This is their last chance but their best chance for salvation. Let us see in Ezekiel 37, the dry bones chapter (this is specifically talking about Israel), but others, Gentiles, all the dead both small and great, will be in this resurrection.

Ezekiel 37:1-6 The hand of the Lord came upon me and brought me out in the Spirit on the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it was full of bones. Then He caused me to pass by them all around, and behold, there were very many in the open valley; and indeed they were very dry. [They had been dead a long time.] And He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" So I answered, "O Lord God, You know." [They had been dead so long only You know if You can resurrect them.] Again He said to me, "Prophesy to these bones, and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! Thus says the Lord God to these bones: "Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, and cover you with skin and put breath in you: and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am the Lord." ' ' "

This resurrection is going to reveal something to them. They are going to know that their stupid ideas of the afterlife were very wrong. God will raise them up to physical life again, having flesh and sinew and breath in their lungs, and this will tell them that the real God is God.

Ezekiel 37:7-10 So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to bone. Indeed, as I looked, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but there was no breath in them. Also He said to me, "Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, "Thus says the Lord God: "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live." ' ' " So

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I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army.

Millions and millions and millions and millions of people ready to learn.

Ezekiel 37:11 Then He said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They indeed say, 'Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!'

They do not have any hope. Maybe they think that they have been raised to be judged negatively. Maybe it dawns on them how their life was. Here God has raised them up again and maybe they think that He has raised them up only to destroy them in judgment. Our hope is lost and we are cut off!

Ezekiel 37:12-14 "Therefore prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God: "Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the Lord [His mercy upon them is going to give them another revelation of God when He brings them in to their land once again and does not wipe them out with the breath of his nostrils], when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves. I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken it and performed it," says the Lord.' "

They are going to learn a lot when they are raised from their graves. They are going to learn about God's mercy. They are going to learn about God's grace. They are going to have God's Spirit available to them so they can learn and grow and use that knowledge and be put into His Family, do it right this time.

Let us see what kind of life they are going to live. Isaiah 65 (my Dad mentioned this morning how much Isaiah has been used here is another little bit)

Isaiah 65:17-20 "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem as a rejoicing, and her people a joy. I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people; the voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, nor the voice of crying. No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; for the child shall die one hundred years old, but the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed.

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This is where we have gotten our idea that the White Throne Judgment period may be one hundred years long. They will have one hundred years to prove to God one way or the other whether they want salvation or whether they are going to go into the Lake of Fire.

Isaiah 65:21-22a They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat.

That is what happens in this day and age (the day and age that they lived the first time), and when they struggled throughout their lives to produce a living, and oftentimes war came through just at the time of harvest, and others came and ate what they had sown, or what they had built others came and lived in.

Isaiah 65:22b-25 For as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of My people, and My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth children for trouble; for they shall be the descendants of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them. It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain," Says the Lord.

These people are going to come up in this general resurrection and be able to enjoy the conditions of the Millennium with God and His first fruits there living among them and able to answer them before they even call for help, and when they do call being right there while they are still speaking. That happened one time in God's Word, with Eliezer, the servant of Abraham. While he was still speaking Rebecca came to the well and drew water for his animals in answer to his prayer. That is going to happen all the time in this time, and these people are going to see the Eternal working in their behalf, helping bringing them to salvation.

So in the very best of conditions they will live full and abundant lives apart from Satan and his influence, and they will live with His Spirit in them. Is this not the way we should look at things? We have relatives that do not know the truth, and they die without knowledge of the truth. Maybe all they had was your example, but we do not need to grieve for them bitterly. We can still grieve, we are going to miss them in the time being, but we do not need to be bitter about their chances, because God has put something in His plan to take care of that sort of problem because He is not willing that any should

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perish ultimately.

He wants all to come to repentance ultimately, so He has made provisions in His plan for just such a thing. We do not need to worry like the Protestant's do, that the millions across Africa and Asia who have never heard the name of Christ are lost. That should not even worry you. God has them in the palm of His hand and when the time comes that is best for them they will all be called, and if we know our God they all will be saved, because what He has begun He will finish.

There are far, far, more people who have lived on the earth and have not heard the name of Christ than who have. Billions of people, and God put His plan into effect to take care of them, because they are all potentially His children.

Psalm 68:20 Our God is the God of salvation; and to God the Lord [that is the Eternal] belong escapes from death.

We can take that as He will deliver us if we were in an accident. That certainly covers that, but that word 'escapes' means 'deliverances.' Looking at it in the context of this verse it is talking more about salvation and deliverance in terms of salvation, not in terms of saving us from a physical hurt.

To God the Eternal One our Master belongs deliverance from death. Why do more people not believe this? He is the God of salvation, that is one of His titles. God of salvation—that is what He does! He saves! He saves men from eternal death, and He is doing that by helping them in forming and shaping His character in them.

Death, brought upon man because of sin, is no barrier to this God of salvation. He uses it as part of the way He works. He says we rest in the grave, we sleep, we need that rest after this kind of life. We will not have any feeling of it, but when we are raised it will be like waking up totally refreshed after a long night's sleep, (especially for us), and we rise in the air to meet Christ.

We heard about the power that is going to be surging through us. One speaker mentioned the angels coming down to hold us down so we will not wreck anything with this burst of power. But for those people who come up in the second resurrection they are going to be coming up with totally new bodies of God's manufacture. Without spot or disease, full of vigor. Those who have been lame will not be lame anymore. They will have rested in their graves and woken up to a new life, something God uses as part of the path to salvation.

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Let us close in Hosea chapter 13. Death is something that we do not need to fear. Even back in the days of Hosea that word was there for people to understand.

Hosea 13:14 "I will ransom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them [I will buy them back] from death. O Death, I will be your plagues! [God throws a challenge down at death, I will be your plagues, I am your nemesis death, quite a play on words, is it not?] O Grave, I will be your destruction! Pity is hidden from My eyes."

God does not have any pity on death, He is going to destroy it with the power of His might. By raising from the dead all who have died, as Paul says in I Corinthians 15:54-55. Death is swallowed up in victory. "O death where is your sting, O Hades where is your victory?" Absolutely demolished. So death is a fact of life, but God is far far stronger than death and He and we will stand in victory.