

Attitude Towards Death And Eternity

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Heb. 9:27

The right attitudes are absolutely necessary. They are necessary for unity in a local congregation.

We studied our attitudes towards God, Jesus Christ, the gospel, the church, our brethren, ourselves, and the world; now we shall study our attitudes towards death and eternity.

To reach heaven, the home of the righteous souls, one must go by way of death. There is no other way. Death is an inevitable appointment. Heb. 9:27, *“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:”*

Life on this earth is constantly filled with appointments, but many of those appointments are never filled. There is one appointment, however, that every person born into this world must fill. It’s not a matter of forgetting it; it’s not a matter of choice. *“...it is appointed unto men once to die...”*

What is our attitude toward death?

When people are faced with the prospects of death their reaction to it varies greatly, depending on whether they are a Christian, or not. A person of the world, more often than not, would choose not to think of death at all.

John Wayne, at age 71, explained that he sometimes had difficult moments watching his old movies: “It’s kind of irritating to see I was a good-looking 40-year old, and suddenly I can look over and see this 71-year old ... I’m not squawking ... I just want to be around for a long time.”

Woody Allen once said, “It’s not that I’m afraid to die. I just don’t want to be there when it happens.”

Today, some people’s fear of death is so strong and their confidence in technology so great that they are spending tens of thousands of dollars to have their bodies frozen at the time of death. Their hope is that they might be revived to live again when a cure is found for whatever caused their death.

A Christian looks upon death as but a doorway into that greater life in which God has in store for the faithful. Those Christians that remain

behind grieve not because a soul was lost, but because a dear one will be sorely missed until they meet again.

Some people at the loss of a beloved family member are overcome with grief for days, weeks, months, and even in some cases years. It is not healthy for someone to let their minds linger continually on their loss.

Paul's attitude towards death.

Phil. 1:21-24, *“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.”*

In this text Paul was faced with a dilemma — he was faced with the great alternative of life or of death. He was certainly prepared for either.

The words of this text are not the words of a newly-born Christian, but the language of a full-grown man in Christ.

Paul had three desires which he expressed in his epistle to the Philippians:

To be found in Christ.

Phil. 3:9, *“And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.”*

To magnify Christ.

Phil. 1:20, *“According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.”*

To be with Christ.

Phil. 1:23, *“For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better.”*

Moment of death is uncertain.

1 Sam. 20:3, "... but truly as the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death."

Whether one lives on this earth one day, or one hundred years, there is just one step into the death chamber.

Death may be beautiful. For the faithful child of God, death is the graduation exercise, and accomplishment of the past and the beginning of an endless eternity of joy, peace, and extreme happiness.

Universality of death.

Death is universal. Every hour of every day death is ever about us.

The evidence of death in nature sometime comes beautifully.

A beautiful rosebud may blossom into an adorable flower with radiant beauty and with a delightful fragrance that perfumes the air, yet, it too fades away into death.

One has only to take a drive into the mountains, especially in New England, in the fall to see the beauty in the color of millions of dying leaves of maple and oak trees, each displaying its own peculiar color, and collectively showing God's artistic mastery.

We shall fade as a leaf.

Normally, the whole foliage of a tree does not pass away at once. Some fade and die in the springtime while others flourish. Some die in the summertime. Others fade away and fall in the autumn.

How appropriate was the declaration of the prophet of God in Isaiah 64:6, "*... and we all do fade as a leaf; ...*"

Many infants are plucked away while they are yet lovely buds, before they have blossomed into the spring of youth. Or some young men and women fade away before their summertime of life. There are those who have lived a full life and fade and fall in the autumn of their life.

No man knows which his life will be.

Leaves fall away silently.

One by one they discolor and drop off, but no one can definitely trace the progress of their life and death from the beginning to the end.

So it is with man. No sooner has man begun to live when he begins to die.

Most of us think of death as being far off, but it isn't that way. One begins to die the moment he begins to live.

Death, as we think of it, is just one step away when one may step from this world into the ages of eternity.

When a person leaves this world, he leaves his mortal body. His immortal soul moves out of his mortal body and will someday “*put on immortality*”. 1 Cor. 15:54-55, “*So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?*”

The soul of man never dies.

In the very beginning, the Bible says that God breathed into man the breath of life and man became a “*living soul*”.

The hope of heaven would be completely obliterated if the soul of man should die. John 11:26, “*And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die...*”

This body that we have was never intended to be the soul’s permanent dwelling place. It is God’s desire that we spend an eternity with Him in heaven.

Have you ever wondered how Job was able to deal with all the suffering and misery that Satan placed upon him? Job 29:18, “*Then I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as the sand.*”

Job was able to endure all that he did because he knew this life was very short, and after this life he could live for an eternity without pain.

Brethren, do you have any idea how long an eternity is?

- The history of man on the earth is about 6,000 years.
- The Patriarchal Age started about 4000 B.C.
- God’s promise to Abraham was about 2000 B.C.
- The Day of Pentecost (when the church was established) was 30 A.D.
- And the Christian age is now 1981 years old (at 2011).
- All-in-all, the history of man is about 6,000 years.

Remember Job said after this life his days would be multiplied as the sand.

Psalms 90:10, “*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.*”

Three score and ten is 70 years; fourscore is 80 years. Some live less; few live to be 100 years.

Let's say one grain of sand represents one day of your life and you live to be 80; that's 80 grains of sand. If you were to hold 80 grains of sand in your hand you would hardly notice it wouldn't you? A tiny breath could blow it out of your hand.

For the sake of discussion, say one square inch of sand contained 6000 grains of sand, or 6000 days. One cubic foot would contain 10,368,000 grains of sand. That many grains of sand in days would be 28405 years.

When you consider all of the grains of sand on all of the beaches (plus all the sand in all of the combined deserts!) of the world, the mind cannot fathom the number of days or years that would be.

If each grain of sand represented a day, all the grains of sand the world over could not match the amount of time in eternity! Heaven or Hell.

The pleasure of sin for just a season is certainly not worth giving up an eternity for.

Job 29:18, "*Then I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as the sand.*"

That's how Job was able to endure everything Satan threw at him. The average life of man is about 70 grains of sand. That's absolutely nothing compared to eternity!

All the pleasures of this life are not worth an eternity in Hell. But, just think, brothers and sisters, about an eternity in heaven. How grand that will be!

Heaven.

Heaven is an eternal place promised by Jesus. John 14:2-3, "*In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*"

Jesus did not live in a mansion when He lived upon the earth. Matt. 8:20, "*And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.*"

But a mansion designed and built by the heavenly architect will be perfect for joy, peace, and happiness of God's people. Heaven is a place of incomparable beauty.

There is no place on this old earth that can match the beauty of heaven.

Rev. 21:1-22:6, *“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh,*

a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls: every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life. And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever. And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done."

That's going to be such a beautiful place for the faithful!

Heavenly Inspiration.

Many beautiful scenes of majestic nature, created by God, have inspired millions of fellow-travelers on this earth.

Yet, all the incomparable expressions in the words of poets, revealed by the tongues of orators, painted by artists could ever truly describe heaven.

A great multitude will be there. Rev. 7:9-10, "*After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.*"

Conclusion.

I ask you, do you want to go to heaven?

If heaven is not your destination, then hell certainly will be.

I plan to go to heaven, do you?

