

THE



“The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest” (Luke 10:2)

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“I SHALL GO TO HIM”

*Then said [David’s] servants unto him, What thing is this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child, while it was alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread. And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether GOD will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? **I shall go to him**, but he shall not return to me. (2 Sam. 12:21-23)*

David was one of God’s outstanding heroes (Acts 13:22). He serves as an example to all of us; his life is a lesson for us all

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and his dealings with death will serve as a lesson, too.

As far as I can tell, the Bible associates David personally with more deaths than any other person in Scriptures. We read a lot of times about him mourning over someone who has died. He mourned over Saul the king (2 Sam. 1), Jonathan his close friend (2 Sam. 1), Abner the captain of Saul (2 Sam. 3), Ammon his son (2 Sam. 13), and Absalom another son (2 Sam. 18). So David was well acquainted with the topic of death and about mourning and about remembering past loved ones.

And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. (2 Sam. 12:13)

Nathan the prophet had just confronted David about his sin with Bathsheba and by telling a story, caused David to see his error. Nathan helped David make the greatest confession any man can admit, "I have sinned against the Lord". It's the same confession made by Achan (Josh. 7:20), King Saul (1 Sam. 15:24), Simon Peter (Luke 5:8), and the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:21). It's the same confession all of us need to admit at one time or another if we honestly look inside ourselves. If not, we will die an eternal death, to be spiritually separated from God forever.

Under the Old Law, the punishment for David's sin was death (Lev. 20:10). However, in this case David was spared immediate physical death and also spiritual death because we are told he was forgiven by the Lord. Obviously, by admitting his mistake and repenting of it, he could be forgiven (Luke 17:3-4). We need to remember that!

There is a correlation between sin and death. In fact, the reason why we die a physical death is because of sin. When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden by disobeying God, physical death entered the world and became a certainty for all mankind (Gen. 3:19; Rom. 5:12). And when we die, our bodies return to the earth and our spirit to God (Eccl. 12:7).

Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that

is born unto thee shall surely die. (2 Sam. 12:14)

Sometimes others suffer from our mistakes. We think when we sin that it doesn't affect anybody else. But it always does. Indirectly or directly, our sins will influence others. There is no such thing as a victimless crime! A man might drink to excess and in that sinful state, might kill an innocent person in a vehicle accident. War is usually caused by greed and lust for power by certain individuals, but so many innocent citizens suffer from it. Here David had committed the sin of adultery and murder, but it is the little baby that suffered physical death for it. It doesn't seem fair or right, but that's how sin works!

David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth. (2 Sam. 12:16)

Obviously David cared much for the baby because we see he prayed and he fasted for it. Evidently, this is a loved one for whom David grieved just as we have many loved ones that we grieved over while they were sick. We beseech the Lord for speedy recovery.

And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead: for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice: how will he then vex himself, if we tell him that the child is dead? (2 Sam. 12:18)

People have expectations of how we should react to the death of a loved one. We expect feelings of sorrow, sadness, mourning, anguish, and grief. Some people become withdrawn. Some vex (or hurt/punish) themselves more.

Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the LORD, and worshipped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat. (2 Sam. 12:20)

David doesn't just go about his business, like nothing happened. He worships!

Then said his servants unto him, What thing is this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child, while it was alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread. (2 Sam. 12:21)

This shows our misunderstandings regarding death. We find it hard to look directly at death, like looking directly at the sun. We know it's there but it's hard to look at. There are some basic points about physical death that we need to remember:

All men shall die (Psa. 89:48; Eccl. 8:8). We may prolong it through modern medicine, but still, each man must die. It is a certainty.

We forget that death is a step to another life – hereafter (Heb. 9:27). There are only two destinations: either Paradise or Hell (Luke 16:22-23, 26).

We think the life we live before death is more important than the life we live after death. In other words, very few people are concerned with the eternal abode of their soul. They want to have fun now, to enjoy this life to the point of displeasing God. And then when a person passes away, we mourn because we see it as the end of their life...period! Most people of the world share this tendency.

But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me. (2 Sam. 12:23)

David teaches us how to deal properly with death. Of course, there is sadness to lose a loved one, especially for the family. And as friends, we are sad too (Gal. 6:2). It is okay to weep, like Jesus did over Lazarus (John 11:33-35). One important thing to do is pray about it (Php. 4:6). We can pray for comfort of the loved ones and understanding of God's will.

But notice something else this verse shows us. Why fast when one dies? We cannot change their state or condition, can we? Although we may desire the loved one to stay with us, when they die, we have to remember that they cannot return (Luke 16:25-31). Our best hope in these situations is (and this is the

biggest point of this whole article) that our best hope is to go and join them in the hereafter! That's the hope our Lord gives us today!

Most of us believe our loved one has gone to Paradise. So our dilemma is how to go to them? How do we get to heaven? Or another way to state this question is "What must I do to be saved?"

1. Start now (2 Cor. 6:2; Jas. 4:14).
2. Admit that we are sinners and need God's help (Luke 15:21).
3. Realize that help is found in the Bible (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
4. Hear about God's plan, the Gospel (Rom. 10:13-17).
5. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God (Acts 16:29-31; Heb. 11:6).
6. Repent (turn away from) our sins (Luke 24:46-47; Acts 17:30).
7. Confess our faith to others (Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 8:36-37).
8. Be baptized by immersion (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:16; Rom. 6:1-8).

When we comply with these steps, our sins are forgiven through the blood of Christ (1 John 1:7-9) and the Lord adds us to the church (Acts 2:47).

Then we must live a faithful life (Rev. 2:10). When we die in good and faithful standing with God, we will be like Paul (2 Tim. 4:8).

And when we die, we are reserved a mansion in heaven (John 14:2-3) to be with our loved ones who have gone on before.

Based on a sermon by RAY MCMANUS
(Deceased)

WRITTEN FOR OUR LEARNING

As a Christian, you are under the new covenant or new testament which has been ratified with the blood of Jesus. It is natural that you should read and study the writings of the apostles and the teachings of Jesus because they apply directly to you.

But don't neglect the Old Testament scriptures. In referring to these scriptures, the Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 15:4, *"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."*

There are many things that you can learn from the Old Testament. I will mention a few things. The Old Testament tells you about God, how He created the world and how He destroyed the world with a flood because of man's wickedness. It tells you how He dealt with the Israelites, His people; when they followed Him, He blessed them, and when they turned away from Him, He withdrew His blessings and destroyed many of them. He demonstrated His mercy and forgiveness when they repented. It describes His righteousness and His expectations for His people. It tells you how He dealt with the idolatrous nations and brought His wrath and destruction on many. The Old Testament is filled with prophecies that were given by God. When you see the fulfillment of prophecies, sometimes spoken hundreds of years before their fulfillment, it should build faith that He is the true God, for only God really knows what will happen in the future. The Old Testament gives you insight into the plan that God had for mankind; a plan developed before the creation. As much as anything, the Old Testament teaches you about God.

You also can learn much from the individuals described in the Old Testament. From Noah you can learn how God can save the righteous while destroying the wicked (Gen. 6 - 8). From Abraham you can learn how God counted him righteous because of his great faith and trust in God (Gen. 15). From Abraham and Lot you can learn that you should be hospitable

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because you might unknowingly be entertaining angels (Gen. 18 - 19; Heb. 13:2). From Lot you can learn that opportunities that look so good can be moving you toward wickedness (Gen. 13, 19). From Abraham you can learn that God may test you to prove your faith (Gen. 22). From Joseph you can learn that what men intend for evil, God can turn for good (Gen. 37 - 47). From Joseph you can also learn how God blesses those who maintain integrity and shun sin.

From Moses you can learn that even if you doubt your ability, God can use you to accomplish His will (Exo. 3 - 4). When the Israelites put the blood on their doorway in Egypt and saved their families, you can understand how the blood of Jesus can also save you (Exo. 12). From Gideon you can learn how God can accomplish much with little (Judges 6 - 8). From David you can learn how, with God's help, you can slay giants (1 Sam. 17). From David you can learn how God blesses those whose hearts are set on pleasing Him (2 Sam. 7). From David you can learn how God can forgive even big sins (2 Sam. 12). From Solomon, you can learn how an ungodly spouse can turn you away from God (1 Kings 11). From Elijah you can learn that God answers prayer (1 Kings 17; James 5:17-18). From Elijah you can learn that when it seems that you are the only one who is faithful to God, He has reserved many others who are faithful to Him (1 Kings 18 - 19). From Job you can learn the need for patient endurance (Job; James 5:10-11). From Daniel you can learn that God can shut the mouths of lions that come against you (Daniel 6).

You can learn much from the description of the Israelites when they were in the wilderness.

But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell

GOSPEL MEETINGS

DATES	PLACE	SPEAKER
January 13 - 15	Willow Oaks Russell Springs, KY	J.D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
January 27 - 29	Verona Verona, KY	J.D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN)

in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. (1 Cor. 10:5-11)

My encouragement to you is that you read and study the Old Testament because there is much that you can learn from it.

ED ANDERSON
(Sierra Vista, AZ)

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

Remember last month's questions?

1. What was the name of Joseph's master in Egypt? POTIPHAR (Genesis 37:36)
2. Whose mother was instructed to drink no wine or strong drink during her pregnancy? SAMSON'S (Judges 13:7,24)
3. When Samuel was called by the Lord as a child, who did he think was calling? ELI, THE PRIEST (1 Samuel 3:2-6)
4. Who asked Jesus to remember him when he came into his kingdom? THE CRIMINAL ON THE CROSS (Luke 23:39-42)
5. Which disciple, who was described as "full of faith and power, and doing great wonders and miracles among the people", was stoned to death? STEPHEN (Acts 6:8 & 7:59)