

# The Old Paths

Volume 10, Issue 34

October 19, 2003

## “What Do You See In A Coffin?”

Jarrod Jacobs

Almost all of our dear readers have had the occasion to comfort and console those who have grieved at the loss of their loved ones. At the same time, almost all of us have experienced the “other side” as well, i.e., enduring grief at the loss of a loved one while friends and family came to comfort us.

Generally, after one has died, there is an opportunity given at the funeral home for all to see the body of the deceased person one last time before it is buried in the earth. As the people file through, seeing the body of a loved one that last time, many thoughts flood the mind, no doubt. With this in mind, let us ask ourselves, “What do you see when you look in a coffin?” There are many things we ought to see. We see ....

### *The End Of A Sojourn On Earth.*

The body in that coffin declares that our life is brief, and it is but a sojourn (a temporary stay, Webster’s). While death is not the end of existence, it is the end of this earth-life! David declares, “For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told. 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” (Ps. 90:9-10). Notice David’s understanding of our earth-life. He said it would pass

away, be spent, be like a “*tales that is told*”, would be “*days*,” and that it is “*soon cut off*.” Do any of the descriptions suggest that we might live forever on earth? No! We have but a temporary stay upon this earth. James said, “*For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away*” (Jas. 4:14). Let us appreciate what we are seeing when we look into the coffin!

### *Scripture Fulfilled.*

We mentioned Psalm 90:9-10 and James 4:14 already which declare the temporary nature of this life. However, remember that the Holy Spirit said, “*And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment*” (Heb. 9:27). Appointed means, “*to be reserved; fig. to await:--(be) laid up*” (Strong’s). Therefore, it is a promise that all will die. It is “reserved” or “laid up” by God that this will happen. The only ones who will not experience physical death are those who are “*alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord*” (I Thess. 4:15). Then, all will be “*changed*” (I Cor. 15:51). Since we do not know when this will be, the wise choice is to prepare now for our death. Hebrews 9:27 is being fulfilled daily. Let us be wise as we look into the coffin and see the body of a loved one. Let us prepare ourselves for eternity.

### *The End Of Decision-Making.*

The corpse lying in the coffin can make no more decisions. All decisions left undone will remain

undone by that person. Think of all the things we put off until “tomorrow.” However, for some, “tomorrow” will never be realized. Whatever decisions they had to make are now forever left undone, and whatever words they wished to say to people are left unsaid.

If one has not become a Christian by the time he has died, he can no longer make the choice to turn his life over to God. In death, it is too late. The Bible teaches that “*now is the accepted time*” and “*now is the day of salvation*” (II Cor. 6:2). The Hebrew writer said, “*Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts ...*” (Heb. 3:7-8, 15). If we are going to make the decision to leave our lives of sin and live for Christ, we better make it now before it is too late! At death, our decision-making days are over!

### *The End Of Earthly Work.*

Upon looking in the coffin, we see the end of opportunities and earthly service. It is the end of teaching others the truth. It is the end of actively being a good example (We understand the concept noted in Heb. 11:4; Rev. 14:13; etc., but one who dies is no longer there to continue in the good example.) Revelation 14:13 declares that one who dies “*in the Lord*” rests from his labors. Looking into the coffin, we see one who will do nothing more upon this earth.

At the same time, if the one who has died has lived wickedly, this wicked one has stopped as well. He will no longer be actively involved in evil deeds, nor will he be saying evil things. Once our soul slips from our body (Jas. 2:26), this ends our earthly work.

### *The End Of A Family Relationship.*

Some do not realize the fact that at death, certain relationships end. One of these relationships is the marriage/family relationship. When two people marry, their marriage is to last only for this life. Both

Christ and Paul dealt with this fact. The Sadducees (who did not believe in the resurrection, Matt. 22:23) confronted Christ as to who a woman might be married to at the resurrection had she been widowed and married to a number of men (Matt. 22:24-28). Jesus answers by saying, *"In the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven"* (Matt. 22:30).

Paul taught that when a mate dies, the surviving spouse has the right to marry another (Rom. 7:1-3). He said, *"For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband"* (Rom. 7:2). Looking into the coffin, we witness the end of an earthly relationship, and witness a surviving spouse that is no longer bound in marriage to anyone. Marriage is for this earth-life only.

### *The End Of The Ability To Change Your Eternal Destiny.*

It is only while upon this earth that we have the ability to change our eternal destiny. Only in this life can we make the choice to leave Satan and live for God. After our death, we will not be able to choose to do what is right.

A prime example of this is seen in Luke 16:19-31. The rich man and Lazarus died, and after their death, the rich man was told there was no way that he could leave his place of torment to be in Paradise with Abraham and Lazarus (Lk. 16:26). It is no different with men today. After our death, all that remains is that day of judgment where *"we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad"* (II Cor. 5:10). Paul taught,

*"Every one of us shall give account of himself to God"* (Rom. 14:12).

This is why it is so important that we turn from our sins and become Christians now before it is too late! This life is the only time in which we can do what is necessary to see Heaven in eternity!

### *Ourselves In A Short Time.*

*"The living know that they shall die ..."* (Ecc. 9:5). Looking into the coffin, we see *"the end of all men"* (Ecc. 7:2). We see something we need to lay to our heart (Ecc. 7:2). We need to understand that looking into the coffin and viewing that corpse is an indicator of where we will all be one day. We should see ourselves in that place in just a little while, for our life is *"a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away"* (Jas. 4:14). How carefully are we considering our ways?

### *Conclusion*

*"Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth"* (Prov. 27:1). Our Lord told the parable of the rich fool who had provided for himself, but was not *"rich toward God"* (Lk. 12:16-21). After providing for himself, and preparing for his long life on this earth (he thought), God took him from this earth, asking, *"Who will own what you have prepared?"* (v. 20, NAS). We don't know what will

happen in a day. Nor do we know when the time will come for people to file past our coffin for the last time.

Therefore, let us get our priorities straight! David asked God to *"Teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom"* (Ps. 90:12). How badly we need to be taught this! Let us put God's kingdom and His righteousness first (Matt. 6:33). Let us live faithfully for the Lord all of our life (Rev. 2:10). Let us appreciate the brevity of this life, and make the most of every day by being the kind of person God wants us to be. Let us serve Him all the days of our life so that at the end, people will not walk by our coffin and weep, but take comfort that we sleep *"in Jesus"* (I Thess. 4:13-14).

## **"Some Good Thoughts"**

*"Many complain of their memory; few of their judgment."*

*"The best way to keep good intentions is to execute them."*

*"The man who rows the boat has no time to rock it."*

*"A man may make money, but money can never make the man."*

***"Bible Basics" and "In-Depth Studies"***

***Found At:***

***www.southside-churchofchrist.com***



***I want the truth, give me book, chapter, and verse!***

Come and meet with the church at Southside.

Our address is: 2920 New Hartford Rd. Owensboro, KY 42303.

### **MEETING TIMES:**

**Sunday Morning Bible Study ————— 9:30 am**

**Sunday Morning Worship ————— 10:20 am**

**Sunday Evening Worship ————— 6:00 pm**

**Wednesday Evening Bible Study ————— 7:00 pm**

Don't forget the call-in radio program on **WBIO, FM 94.7**, Sunday afternoon from 12:30-1:00 pm. **Call: 683-9246 (WBIO)** with your Bible question.

**Preacher/Editor:** Jarrod Jacobs

**Phone:** (270) 683-5386

**Website address:** [www.southside-churchofchrist.com](http://www.southside-churchofchrist.com) (Updated weekly!)