

The Old Paths

Volume 16, Issue 18

June 28, 2009

“Two ‘Famous’ Deaths”

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On Thursday, 6/25, we were made aware of the news that two “famous” persons, Farrah Fawcett (62) and Michael Jackson (50) had lost their lives. They left this world with many admirers, surviving families, and loved ones mourning their deaths. Each person touched the lives of many people all over this globe during their short sojourns. For those of my generation, we saw Michael Jackson’s rise to fame in his “solo” career of the early 1980’s. His songs impacted a generation of young people, even though his later years found him acting in ways which defy common sense. Farrah Fawcett impacted young people of her generation with her beauty and fashion on television. Yet, these two have left this world. They have gone on to await the Lord’s judgment (Heb. 9:27; Ecc. 12:7; Lk. 16:19-31). In the meantime, for those of us left behind, what lessons do we learn from these deaths?

We Have No Promise Of Tomorrow

Following the announcement of her death, someone made the comment that Farrah seemed to never age. Yet, she did. She reached the age of 62 and was not eternal! After contracting her cancer, she was not long for this world. Neither she nor Michael Jackson was promised “x” number of years to live upon this

earth. Nor are we! The book of James records the well-known words, “*Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away*” (Jas. 4:14). Job also comments about the brevity of life, reminding us that, “*My life is wind*” and, “*Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble*” (Job 7:7, 14:1).

These two “famous” people were no exceptions to God’s rule. They had no promise of seeing another day; neither do we have that promise!

Death Is The Great Equalizer

For all the money and fame possessed by Michael and Farrah, they could not stop death from coming. Since Genesis 3, death has been with man, and it will be this way until the end of time (I Cor. 15:26). Death is not just something experienced by the “poor” and “unknowns” of this world. Death will come to all, regardless of our station in life. Job recognized this great truth when he wrote of the “*kings and counselors of the earth ... princes ... the wicked ... the weary ... the prisoners ... the small and great ... and the servant*” who have died (Job 3:14-19). Too, death will come to us regardless of our age. The ages of 50 and 62 do not seem as “old” as they used to, do they? Yet, there are those who die much younger than this. Regardless of gender, race, or anything else, as Solomon noted,

“*the living know that they shall die*” (Ecc. 9:5).

Death Ends All Earthly Our Plans And Intentions

It is rumored that Michael Jackson was getting ready for a worldwide tour later this year. He will not be going. Whatever Farrah Fawcett had planned for the future, she will never do. Once the spirit separates from the body and produces physical death (Jas. 2:26), whatever plans or intentions a person has for the future, he will never do.

Seeing that this fact is true, it places great emphasis upon each one of us to make sure we are right with God and ready for our deaths. When we read the Bible, we see God places emphasis upon preparing “now” for eternity. We see this in the words of the apostle Paul to the Corinthians when he said, “*Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation*” (II Cor. 6:2). Again, the words of the Holy Spirit ring true when we read, “*Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts*” (Heb. 3:7-8, 15). We see there is emphasis placed upon the “now” and “today” because death will bring an end to our work. This is why Jesus said, “*I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work*” (Jn. 9:4). Let us learn the lesson!

Our Earth-life Is Fragile

People today act as if they are going to live forever. Yet, we know this is not the case. Sometimes, it takes the death of a “famous” person, or the death of someone we have known and loved for years, to drive this truth home. Our earth-life is fragile, that is for certain!

Solomon said, “*Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth*” (Prov. 27:1). Truer

words were never said! Our lives can change in an instant. It may not necessarily mean a death, but our lives can be changed in drastic ways over the course of just one day! James wrote, "Go to now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that" (Jas. 4:13-15). When we appreciate the truth revealed here, the questions becomes, not how much money is in our bank account, or how big our house is, or how many people like us, but, in what condition are our souls, and are we on the Lord's side?

This life is so fragile and things are constantly changing. Since this is the case, we need to be trusting in the One who is not changing (Mal. 3:6; Heb. 13:8).

Conclusion

The wise man wrote, "It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart" (Ecc. 7:2). Therefore, let us lay the things we have learned "to heart". The deaths of Farrah Fawcett and Michael Jackson are object lessons to us, showing us in vivid detail the truth that God revealed long ago about the fragile nature of life and the need to prepare for eternity.

Now, let us learn. Let us lay these truths to heart and prepare for eternity. What do you need to do to prepare? Do you need to have your sins forgiven and become a Christian (Mk. 16:16)? Do so before it is too late. Don't wait for another day. You may not get one!

So You "Disagree?"

Robert Turner (deceased)

For 30 years I have preached and written my convictions regarding the Bible, the church, etc.; and for 30 years people have "disagreed." Catholics, Mormons, Protestants, and occasionally my brethren "disagree." That doesn't bother me — much. At least not enough to cause me to squelch my honest convictions and "sell out" to majority opinions.

Sometimes one disagrees, and proceeds to teach me more perfectly the way of truth. I find I have been wrong. Now I dislike being wrong, but not as much as I dislike teaching error. Changing to truth is a pleasure, and I am grateful to my teacher.

Thirty years of disagreement has taught me something else. Some people say they "disagree" when in reality they know so little about the subject they can't explain their own position and know even less about mine. Perhaps they were born in the objective mood and kickative case; or more likely, I have pointed out the error of their ways, and they want to keep on going the way they are going, re-

gardless of truth or consequences.

Honest disagreement, based upon convictions established through careful study of God's word, is honorable. I can respect such disagreement even when I am reasonably sure my opponent is in error. Two such persons can study together to profit—and will be anxious to do so.

But there is no honor, and I have little respect for the person who seeks to discredit my work with prejudicial name-calling or the glib use of weight-swinging "I disagree."

You "disagree" with what? Is there a fallacy in my reasoning? Have I misused the Scriptures? Have I overlooked some Bible truth that would alter my conclusion? Give me a specific point of disagreement and I will be happy to consider it.

A fellow once wrote that all I had said was true (he flattered me) but he feared it would lead to error. Hm! Truth never leads to anything but truth. To fear the consequences of truth is cowardice of the first order, and our disagreement is with God. Let such a one rather fear Hell.

The Gospel Guardian, 1965, Vol. 17, p. 205

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