

# JCI #160 10 Life and Death Realities May 2015

## 10 Life and Death Realities from Scripture

Having had the privilege of sharing the gospel of Christ at hundreds of funeral services over the decades, I have frequently considered for my own soul the importance of such occasions as they provide a confrontation with eternity for everyone present. It is my purpose today to highlight 10 Life and Death Realities from a few key passages of scripture. It is my prayer that they may bless and encourage you in your journey, as we live with leaving in view.

***Genesis 2:16-17 The LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."***

***Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.***

***Hebrews 9:27-28 ..as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.***

### THE FIRST THREE TRUTHS

#### 1) DEATH IS REAL

With all that we share regarding the believer's hope in Christ, we must never forget that death is real. It is not something to be ignored nor are we to pretend it has not happened, or will not happen to us. Death is real. It is appointed for men to die. We must accept this reality or we will not prepare for it. Even as the prophet Amos said (4:12) "Prepare to meet Thy God..."

#### 2) DEATH IS WRONG

It should not be. Death is the result of mankind's rebellion against God. In the beginning, when God created all things, there was no death for there was no sin. Man and woman lived in a perfect world, a sinless world, a deathless world. It was not until they sinned against God by disobeying His clear and simple command that death came. We are not to consider death as anything except an enemy. The bible calls death "the last enemy" that will be destroyed. (1 Cor 15:26)

#### 3) DEATH HAS A REMEDY

Oh how blessed we are to know this third reality: Death is real, death is wrong, but death has a remedy. That remedy is resurrection and that comes by Him whose name is "The Resurrection and the Life", Jesus Christ. (John 11:25) God took the sins of the world and placed them on His sinless, sin-bearing Substitute, Jesus Christ His Only Son, Who died on the cross in our place to satisfy the judgment of God against us. God then raised Jesus from the dead three days later to prove sin's full price was paid and the remedy had been provided for all who will put their faith in Him.

### ***James 4:13-15 (NIV)***

***Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that."***

#### 4) LIFE IS UNPREDICTABLE

We do not know what tomorrow will bring. The people referred to in James had specific plans, careful plans, goal oriented plans, but God-absent plans. James reminds them they should begin by acknowledging that if God wills, we will still be alive later today or tomorrow, and go to this or that city... because there is no certainty we will still be alive a hour from now. It is the unpredictability of life that should humble us and cause us to live every day with eternity in view.

## 5) LIFE IS BRIEF

There are those among us we refer to as “old folks.” My aged mother used to say: “old is at least 10 years older than me, no matter how old I am!” If you went with me to the cemetery where her body is buried, you would discover that while my Dad’s birth and death date is engraved on the headstone, there are no dates under my mother’s name. She forbid us to have that done. She said it was no body’s business how old she was! Yet, James says that our lives are brief, like a morning fog that vanishes as soon as the sun comes up. How is it that life is called brief, when some live 80, 90, even 100 years? It is brief compared to eternity! No matter how long you or I may live, it is a brief mist that quickly vanished away. That doesn’t mean it isn’t important! Your life is so important that Jesus said all the wealth in the world couldn’t compare to its value. And because life is unpredictable and brief, we must seriously and immediately take action today, to be prepared for death that may be but one heartbeat away.

## 6) LIFE IS UNDER GOD’S SOVEREIGN CONTROL

It is up to the Lord how long we shall live. “If it is the Lord’s will we shall live...” Psalm 139:16 declares... “All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.” God has numbered our days before we were conceived. He allotted the exact number He would give us for our earthly journey and it will not be one day less or more than He has chosen. How many is His business. What we do with them is our business. And only a fool fails to prepare for the inevitable. For you see, no man is ready, really ready to live, until he’s ready to die. And no man is ready to die until he has received Christ as his personal Savior.

Even as God has numbered our days according to Psalm 139:16, so Psalm 90:10 and 12 says we should number our days... “The length of our days is seventy years-- or eighty, if we have the strength; yet their span is but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away... Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.” To number our days is to recognize that our days are numbered. God has given me 22110 days so far. I do not know how many more will be allotted to me. But the reality is that they are quickly flying by and one of these days will be my last. I long to be living each day well for His glory so when that last day comes, He will be pleased and I will not be ashamed.

### *Psalm 23 (NKJV)*

*The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.*

*He makes me to lie down in green pastures;*

*He leads me beside the still waters.*

*He restores my soul;*

*He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.*

*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil;*

*for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.*

*You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;*

*You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over.*

*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and*

*I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.*

## 7) LIFE IS A JOURNEY Psalm 23

Psalm 23 is one of the best loved chapters in the Bible. It is the boast of a sheep about its Shepherd. For there is only one reason domestic sheep are not extinct today...shepherds! With such evident weaknesses, the entire life of the sheep is a life of dependency. If you’ve got the right Shepherd, you’ve got it made! Who is your Shepherd? Jesus said, “I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.” John 10:11

This beloved Psalm pictures a sheep following the shepherd through the long journey of life, through death, and on into eternity. Life is a journey. And like a journey, life has a beginning, a direction, and a destination. The Bible uses the imagery of life as a pilgrimage... this is not home, I am on my way home, I will not be at home until I am home!

1 Peter 1:1; 1 Peter 2:11; Hebrews 11:13.

## 8) LIFE HAS A BEGINNING Psalm 23

Physical life begins at conception and is revealed at birth. So too, Spiritual life begins with the Spirit’s work of regeneration by means of the gospel (1 Peter 1:23) and is revealed when we believe in Christ as Savior. This is the

moment when we enter the Good Shepherd's flock and know the joy of following Him. This is the confession of the new born sheep... 'The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall lack for nothing!'

### 9) LIFE HAS A DIRECTION Psalm 23

Like a journey, life has a direction. We may not always see the road ahead clearly, but the direction is definite and determined by the Shepherd who leads us. He leads in right paths. He leads in paths of provision... food, water, rest. He leads for the sake of the honor of His own Name. Never shall our Shepherd be spoken of as careless, having wandered, having lost a sheep, having failed to provide or protect his flock. NO! His name is at stake in the care of His sheep. What a joy for us to follow, even when the path leads through the dark and fearful valley of the shadow of death. In it all, He is with us! And as we look back over the years, we see the footprints of His goodness and mercy every step along the journey.

### 10) LIFE HAS A DESTINATION Psalm 23:6

Life is a journey, with a beginning, a direction and a destination. The destination is described in fascinating terms. "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life....AND!" The last day of my life is not my last day! My last day is an endless day after all the days of my life!  
I would like my tombstone to read... July 10, 1954 - ?.... AND! Ps 23:6  
All the days of my life...AND...FOREVER... In the house of the Lord. Our destination is the Father's House - John 14:1-6  
And this forever in His house is an endless day. Revelation 21-22 describes it in amazing terms - no night...no sorrow...no grief...no tears...no temple...no shut gates...no enemies...no sun...no sea...no end! This is the endless end of the journey.  
"Even so come, Lord Jesus!"

### Self Check

- 1) Are you following hard after the Shepherd in the journey?
- 2) What are the most comforting passages of scripture to your soul when the journey is hard?
- 3) What are the most comforting passages of scripture to your soul as you think of the end of the earthly journey?

### For Further Study

Survey Hebrews 11 for the life and death realities we have surveyed above. Which verses encourage you the most at this point in your journey?

*"Lord, You are the Resurrection, I rest in You. You are the Way, I follow You. You are the Truth, I believe You. You are the Life, I live in You. You are the Shepherd, I know You and how much the greater, You know me! Lead me home with every step a step of obedience in following You. Help me grasp these life and death realities and to embrace them and share them that others may know the joy that comes from You alone. In Your glorious, saving, keeping, sanctifying Name I Pray, AMEN."*

**Remember, you are very special to us and we pray for you.**

**Living with leaving in view.... John 9:4**

**Ron & Val**

Seeing The Invisible, embracing The Unapproachable, declaring The Unexplainable,  
changed by The Immutable, running after The Irresistible  
with inexhaustible joy in our inexpressible sorrows,  
spending our time on eternity,  
owning nothing yet possessing everything  
that matters and lasts.  
We are Pilgrims in Paradox.  
Welcome to THE JOURNEY

