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### Lying and Dying

PAUL'S EVALUATION

BY RICHARD JORDAN

"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Philippians 1:21

The writer has often wondered if this verse could not have been Paul's "life verse," for it clearly gives his evaluation of life and death, reducing both to their simplest forms.

#### TO DIE IS GAIN

Only the believer can say, "To die is gain," for only the believer knows for certain where he is going when he dies. Yet death is never said to be the "hope of the believer. Rather, death marks the beginning of a process which hosts much more. That this was Paul's view seems certain from his words later in this same epistle.

"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ:

"Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (Phil. 3:20,21).

One day our Lord will come--not simply to take us in death but to "change our vile (bodies) that (they) may be fashioned like unto His glorious body." What a prospect this is!

For the believer who has experienced the frail, yes, even the vileness of this present mortal body--and who among us does not know how our "mortal flesh" can at times humiliate us!--the prospect of a new glorified body is indeed a blessed one. Pastor Otis

Wasson used to say, "Then there will be no more baldness, bifocals, bridgework, bulges or bunions!" And so it shall be.

There is however, more involved in our glorified bodies than merely release from physical discomforts and limitations, as welcome as this will be. More, we say, because Scripture indicates that a "glorified" body is more than simply a physically renewed one. Members of the Body of Christ are destined to share in the glorification of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Hence Paul writes to the Roman believers:

"And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and Joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also GLORIFIED TOGETHER.

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with THE GLORY WHICH SHALL BE REVEALED IN US" (Rom. 8:17,18).

An illustration of "glorified humanity" is found in our Lord's experience on the Mount of Transfiguration. Matthew gives the account thus:

"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

"Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

"And after six days Jesus take Peter, James and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,

"And was transfigured before them: and HIS FACE DID SHINE AS THE SUN, and his raiment was white as the light" (Matt. 16:27 -17:2).

It was as the "Son of Man" that Christ was transfigured, thus demonstrating His glorified humanity. As Peter later puts it they were "eyewitness of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory" (2 Pet. 1:16,17).

But just how was His glory manifested? The answer is given in the words "as the sun" The light was not simply shining on Him like a spotlight, but rather it was coming from within Him and shining outward, as does the sun.

A glorified body is much more than new eyes, limbs and organs. Yes, it is all this. But it is more. It is a body out of which the glory of God shines!

### THE GLORY OF GOD

Something of what the glory of God is can be seen from the account of Moses' encounter with the Lord in Exodus 33 and 34. Confused by God's seeming contradiction of His promise to accompany Israel, Moses demanded an explanation of the delay and sought proof that His promised presence would be a reality.

The Lord reassured Moses by saying "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest" (Ex. 33:14). Moses was not content simply to have this promise of His presence, however, and said, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory" (33:18). In other words, for Moses the "presence" of the Lord was His manifest "glory." And what was this manifest glory of the Lord? Notice the Lord's response:

"And he said, I will make all My goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy" (Ex.33:19).

"And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed The Lord, the Lord God, MERCIFUL AND GRACIOUS, LONGSUFFERING, AND ABUNDANT IN GOODNESS AND TRUTH,

"Keep MERCY for thousands, FORGIVING INIQUITY and transgression and sin, and that will BY NO MEANS CLEAR THE GUILTY..." (EX. 34:6,7).

Mark carefully: when the lord revealed His presence and declared His name to Moses it was by passing before him the embodiment of all His attributes--goodness, mercy, graciousness, longsuffering, truth holiness, etc.--in a blazing representation of light. The glory of God was the outshining of all that He is!

With all this in mind, we can more fully understand the depth of the meaning in Paul's words to the Colossians:

"When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (Col. 3:4).

The Rapture will bring the delight of our Lord's presence, new bodies, blessed reunion and fellowship with loved ones and saints, and much more. But there will be something far more wonderful than even these marvelous things. Believers will "appear with Him in glory" and all that He is shall be manifest to the universe through us! Then Ephesians 2:7 will be a blessed reality for through us He will "show the exceeding riches of His grace" throughout the ages to come.

The "hope of glory" should hearten and strengthen us, enabling us to say with Paul that "the suffering of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Death--and all that lies beyond--is, indeed great gain for the believer.

### TO LIVE IS CHRIST

The glorious future awaiting the believer is not simply a "cop-out" from present reality. Rather it lends stability to our lives. Notice that Paul's words about death being gain are preceded by the declaration: "For to me to live is Christ."

His meaning here is clear enough for Verse 21 is but his commentary on the preceding verse, which says,

"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" (Phil. 1:20).

Christ was everything to Paul--and He should be focused on Him. The total decision-making process for the believer has but one proper focus: Christ. Whether it is our personal life, family life, business, recreational life, social life or spiritual life, every detail should be focused on His glory.

This is more, however, than simply handling the details of life so as to please Him, although it is surely this. More, because Paul exhorts us:

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

"And be not conformed to this world: but BE YE TRANSFORMED by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom. 12:1,2).

The "transformed" of this the "transfigured" of Matthew 17:2. Here 2 Corinthians 3:18 must not be forgotten:

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass (*A figure of speech used to the Word of God. See Jams 1:22-25*) the glory of the Lord, are changed (*The same Greek word as "transformed" in Rom. 12:2 and "transformed" in Matt 17:2*) into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

As we behold in the Word of God all that Christ is and has done for us it has a transforming effect on us! The Spirit of God thus changes us and the character of God is then exhibited through us as we are "filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God" (Phil. 1:11). Hence Paul can go on to say that we are:

"Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, THAT THE LIFE ALSO OF JESUS MIGHT BE MADE MANIFEST IN OUR BODY."

"For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, THAT THE LIFE ALSO OF JESUS MIGHT BE MADE MANIFEST IN OUR MORTAL FLESH" (2 Cor. 4:10,11).

His life, His attitudes, His actions are thus "manifest in the flesh" as we walk by the Spirit's direction through His Word to us. Then "to live is Christ" is more than a wish or a cliché--it is a blessed reality!

Before we conclude this article we would remind the reader that Philippians 1:21 is a statement of Paul's own personal evaluation of life and death. Notice how he says, "For to me to live...."

We cannot but ask you, dear reader: What is life to you? Is it money, entertainment, friends, school, a house, family, work, sex, sports--just what is your life focused on? One thing is certain, your life will never be all that God intends it to be until it is focused on Christ!

And we must also ask: To you, what is death? Gain? Or will it be loss? If you have not yet trusted the One Who died to be your Saviour, do today. Then for you, too, both death and life will be gain in the truest sense of the word.

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### YOU DO NEED HIM

A Person is our Savior and our salvation. A Person is our life-giver and our life. A Person is our Redeemer and our redemption. A Person is our righteousness and holiness. A Person is our peace and our hope. That Person is the lord Jesus Christ, "the Man Christ Jesus," the "one mediator between God and men." By His blood we have been brought nigh to God.

You need nothing more than Christ; nothing less will suffice or avail. To add any religion whatsoever to Christ Himself is to displease God. In Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. In Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. The believer is in Christ. The believer is accepted in Christ, complete in Christ, without condemnation in Christ, the righteousness of God in Christ. The believer is blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ. Christ is the superlative need of the world. He is all that you need, but you do need Him. You must have Him--or be lost forever.

-Pastor J. C. O'Hair

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### YOU MUST TRUST HIM

The great preacher of a past generation, George Whitefield, illustrated salvation thusly:

A man is hanging by the rope from a precipice of a huge cliff; a rainstorm is washing the dirt and gravel off the cliff in torrents. The man is swinging wildly over a five hundred foot abyss, clinging to a wet, slippery rope about thirty feet long. As each lightning flash illuminates his terrible predicament, he slips one or two inches nearer the end of the rope, swinging now toward the cliff and then away from it, in a effort to get a toe-hold on the slippery rocks. With only inches left on the rope, the Angel of the Lord suddenly appears in darkness, standing calmly in midair. He speaks to the doomed wretch:

"Dost thou believe that I am able to save thee?"

"Yes, yes. My God Yes!" screams the terrified man.

"All right," says the Angel, let go!"

Well you either trust Him or you don't. And since 95% of educators, doctors, scientists, psychiatrists, lawyers and politicians don't, they will go on swinging and slipping on their wet ropes of infidelity till they lose their grip and dash their souls on the rocks of God's judgements laying beneath them.

You are a fool to trust yourself or any man or any institution or any system or ideology when you could put your trust in the Creator of the universe Who loved you enough to take your place as a sinner.

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).

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## "THE GREATEST FIGHT IN THE WORLD"

The following words were delivered by the great English preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon to his ministerial students only a few months before he went to be with the Lord" The date was April 1891--ten years after the Revised Version was published in 1881--it clearly reveals his attitude about the Bible he used, the King James Bible.

"It is sadly common among ministers to add a word or subtract a word from the passage or in some way debase the language of sacred writ....Our reverence for the Great Author of Scripture should forbid all mauling of His words.

"No alteration of Scripture can by any possibility be an improvement ...Today it is still the self--same mighty Word of God that it was in the hands of our Lord Jesus.

"If this Book be not infallible, where shall we find infallibility? We have given up the Pope, for he has blundered often and terribly; but shall we set up instead of him a horde of little pope lings, fresh from college?"

"Are these correctors of Scripture infallible? Is it certain that our Bibles are not right, but that the critics must be so? But where shall infallibility be found? The depth said, It is not in me' yet those who have no depth at all would have us imagine that it is in them; or else by perpetual change they hope to hit upon it!

"All possibility of certainty is transferred from the spiritual man to a class of persons whose scholarship is pretentious, but who do not even pretend to spirituality. We shall gradually be so be doubted and be criticized that only a few of the most profound will know what is Bible and what is not, and they will dictate to all the rest of us. I have no more faith in their mercy than their accuracy.

"They will rob us of all that we hold most dear, and glory in the cruel deed. This same "reign of terror" we will not endure, for we still believe that God reveals Himself rather to babes than to the wise and prudent and we are fully assured that our old English version of the Scripture is sufficient for plain men for all purposes of life, salvation and goodness....We do not despise learning but we will never say of culture or criticism, "These be thy gods, O Israel."

"Do you see why they would lower the degree in inspiration in Holy Writ, and would fain reduce it to an infinitesimal quantity? It is because the truth of God is to be supplanted. Whenever a man begins to lower your view of inspiration it is because he has a trick to play, which is not easily performed in the light....To those who belittle inspiration and inerrancy we will give place by subjection, no, not for an hour!"

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"No greater mischief can happen to a Christian people, than to have God's Word taken from them or falsified, so that they no longer have it pure and clear. God grant we and our descendants be not witnesses of such a calamity."

-Martin Luther

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## OUR CIRCLE

"Some sincere believers may not consider us as one with them, but believing as we do that we all, "being many, are one body in Christ" we do consider them one with us and love them sincerely as fellow-members in the one true Bible Church. Though for the present some of them may shun us as heretics, we say with another:

He called me heretic; a thing to flout.  
He drew a circle, and he put me out.  
But love and I had the wit to win;  
We drew a circle, and we took him in!"

"There is ONE BODY, and ONE SPIRIT, even as ye are called in ONE HOPE of your calling;

"ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM,

"ONE GOD AND FATHER of all, who is above all, and through all, and In you all" (Eph. 4:4-6).

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