

Upcoming Events

Saturday Meeting Just 20 days away!

Meet Up Class
Thursday, February 10, at 7:00 p.m.
28561 Sunnyslope St.
Desert Hot Springs CA 92241

Preacher's Blog

Check out Jack Critchfield's article on Biblethoughts.blog
"The Hope of Heaven"

February Birthdays

8 Zoie Perales

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Which Is Better?

(Ecclesiastes 7:1)

By Mike Johnson

"A good name is better than precious ointment, and the day of death than the day of one's birth" (Ecclesiastes 7:1). The first part of this verse is what one would expect to find in the Scriptures (also note Proverbs 22:1). However, the second part might cause people to be puzzled. How can it be? How can the day of death be better than the day of a person's birth? Someone reading this might even express disagreement. Is Solomon putting down life or the joy of a person's birth into God's creation? The answer is "no." The sense in which this is true is that our death, as a righteous person, has many advantages over our birth and is actually better.

Consider some contrasts between the day of our birth and the day of our death.

1. **We face an uncertain future when we are born, but the righteous do not die with uncertainty.** James 4:14 reminds us, *"whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away."*
2. **We are born facing the burdens of living in the flesh, but on the day of our death, we gain freedom from that burden.** 2 Corinthians 5:4 assures us, *"For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life."*
3. **When the upright die, they are no longer absent from the Lord.** In 2 Corinthians 5:6, Paul says, *"So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord."*
4. **When righteous people die, they continue to teach others after death.** Able, for instance, because of his good example, continues to teach about faith and proper worship

Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.

Sunday.....10:45 a.m.

Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

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after his death (Hebrews 11:4). We learn from Revelation 14:13 that a voice from Heaven told John, “. . . Write: ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’ ‘Yes,’ says the Spirit, ‘that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.’” Works follow us in that we face the consequences of them (2 Corinthians 5:10), but also the impact of the lives of the righteous continues to have a positive influence after we are gone. We do not teach lessons in this way by simply being born.

Consider some more biblical concepts.

The Death of a Saint is Precious

Psalms 116:15 informs us, “*Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.*” People think of death in many different ways. The death of a loved one is one of the greatest agonies people typically face in their lives. We think of losing a loved one in terms of heartache, tears, sorrow, and pain. Yet this passage says the death of a saint is precious in the sight of the Lord! This verse looks at death more from God’s perspective. God delights when people become Christians — there is rejoicing in heaven. He also delights in our progress and finally sees our death as coming home to Him. To us, death is a departure; to God, a saint’s death is an arrival.

Consider a statement made by Paul in his letter to the Philippians 1:21-23. “*For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.*” At this time, Paul was in a Roman prison expecting to be released. He stated that if he lived, he would continue helping the Philippians. However, if he died, he would be able to depart and be with Christ, which, he says, would be far better than life upon the earth.

When faithful Christians die, they can look to God as welcoming them to their new home. We cannot say this of our birth, so another reason why the day of our death is better than the day of our birth is that our death involves going home to God, which is “far better” than life on earth.

Death Involves Removal from Evil to Peace

Isaiah 57:1-2 tells us, “*The righteous perishes, and no man takes it to heart; merciful men are taken away, while no one considers that the righteous is taken away from evil. Therefore, he shall enter into peace; they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness.*”

There is a contrast between the wicked and the righteous in these verses. The righteous die, and the wicked do not even note it. Others, especially evil people, do not even think about why the righteous die. Our text tells us they are taken away from evil. (The NIV says, “*to be spared from evil.*”) How many times have you heard it said of a deceased person after a particular event, “It is good they did not live to witness this”?

For some people, life is better than for others. Still, life on earth involves passing through a place of hardships (Job 14:1-2) to a state of peace. Our birth brings us into a world of trouble; our life takes us away from it.

Our Death Involves a Trip to Paradise

While on the cross, nearing death, Jesus said to one of the thieves, “. . . Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise” (Luke 23:43). On that very day, Jesus and the thief would be in Paradise, a part of Hades (Acts 2:27). From the story of the rich man and Lazarus, we see when Lazarus (the poor man) died, angels carried him to Abraham’s bosom (the paradise part of Hades); the rich man went to the torment part (Luke 16:22-23).

People use the word “paradise” very loosely today. But, if God calls a place “Paradise,” we know it is a desirable place for us to go. When faithful Christians die, they will go there and will ultimately go to Heaven — a place of joy, rest, and peace. Heaven will be far greater than anything we can imagine! Since our death starts this process, we have another reason to understand how our day of death is better than our day of birth.

To understand how the day of our death is better than the day of our birth, we must look at it from a different viewpoint, i.e., from God’s perspective. First, it is essential to understand that the writer speaks of the righteous — those who are saints (1 Corinthians 1:20). For those who do not serve God, the day of their death will not be better than their day of birth (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9, Matthew 25:46). Life on this earth is very short (Job. 14:1-2) — eternity never ends!