“Is There Any Hope?”

Great change has taken place in our nation and around the globe over the last thirty years. And, over the last decade, this change has taken place in great leaps and at a mind numbing, blinding speed. Advances in medicine, science, computer technology, and electronic communications networking have changed how we shop, learn, and interact with each other. It has also changed national and international economics, politics, and even how wars are fought. The link between the self-seeking, sensuous attitudes towards living that is fueled by our high-tech life and the steep decline in public moral and ethical standards and the increase in violent crime can hardly be missed. It is a tragedy that the church has not been immune to the negative cultural changes and social norms that have taken place. The persuasive powers of the entertainment industry, the news media, and institutions of higher learning have never been stronger than they are today in shaping the worldview of the general populace of our nation. Of course, the unsaved, “those of the world,” have a natural inclination towards a cosmic humanistic spiritual view of life. This means that their worldview is easily influenced in that direction. In fact, their spiritual deadness towards God limits them to a quasi-spiritual humanistic worldview at best. On the other hand, the saved, those who are “of Christ” and not of the world (Gal. 6:14), are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, given a new nature and made alive to God. But, the saved still have their old nature, the flesh, along with their new nature to contend with while in their earthly bodies. The result is a spiritual struggle that takes place for control of their mind. It is a pitched battle between two opposite forces, the flesh and the Spirit (see Gal. 5:16-25). Unbelievers have no such struggle because they are spiritually dead and naturally walk in the ways of the flesh, seeking to fulfill them (Eph. 2:3). Believers can, and all to often do, walk in the flesh rather than the Spirit because they are not focused on Christ and submissive to the Word and will of God, but instead have been taken captive by the alluring ways of the natural man’s “philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Col. 2:8; see Col. 2:6-10). Such influence has caused many believers to think like the world, act like the world, and place their hopes in the things of the world.

As I write this, the general national election in which the next president of the United States will be elected is still two weeks away. By the time you, the reader, receive it the election will be in the past, presumably with the election results settled and a new president scheduled to take office in January. Regardless of who wins the election, many of those whose candidate lost will lose hope and will be fearful of what will change in the future. On the other hand, many whose candidate won will be full of optimism for the changes they hope will soon take place in our nation. Ultimately they all will be disappointed because they have misplaced their hope. Trusting

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“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” II Timothy 3:16
in a man, or a woman, to fix what is wrong with our nation, or any other nation for that matter, is an exercise in futility as all human beings are spiritually dead to God and His ways and totally incapable of fixing a morally depraved society.

Things will continue to deteriorate, sometimes faster and sometimes slower, but ever downward. As believers, our hope is to be in the Lord Jesus Christ who is our Hope (I Tim. 1:1). The Apostle Paul was emphatic in declaring that he was not sent to declare “the testimony of God” (the Gospel) with excellency of speech or of wisdom” but his preaching was to be focused only on “Jesus Christ and Him crucified” that the believer’s “faith should not stand on the wisdom of men, but in the power of God” (see I Cor. 2:1-5; cf. I Cor. 1:17-21).

Every believer should give some serious thought to this Bible truth and, if their hope is misplaced, re-adjust it to focus on Christ and the eternal heavenly hope they have in Him (Phil. 3:20-21; Col. 3:1-4; I Thess. 1:9-10). And, dear reader, if you are as yet unsaved, being dead in your sins you have no sure hope. But, today that can change if you will put your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ Who died for your sins, was buried, and rose from the dead the third day (I Cor. 15:3-4). Your sins have separated you from God, but Christ has paid the penalty of death for you and has risen from the dead that through His blood you can be forgiven and redeemed (Rom. 6:23; I Cor. 15:1-4; Eph. 1:7). Believe and be saved (Acts 16:31).

Because Christ Lives!

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QUESTION: Did Christ die for the sins of the whole world, or only for the “Elect”?

ANSWER: Jesus Christ, Who is both the Son of God (Ps. 2:7; John 3:16; Rom. 1:4) and the Elect Servant of God (Isa. 42:1; Mk. 10:45; John 5:30) died for the sins of all sinners; that is for the whole world (Isa. 49:5-6; John 3:16; Rom. 3:23). As the Lord Jesus is the Elect of God, all who trust in Him for the forgiveness of sins and redemption become the Elect “in Him.” Only those who have first heard and believed the Gospel (Eph. 1:13-14) and were consequently “baptized into Christ” by the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 12:13) and are sealed and indwelt by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:9,11; I Cor. 3:16; 6:19; II Cor. 1:21-22; 5:5; Eph. 4:30; II Tim. 1:14) can be said to be the Elect of God. In other words, it is those who have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:7) who are the Elect. This is made clear in Paul’s letter to the Colossians where the Apostle questions the saints in Colosse asking, “if they are ‘dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world,” why were they “living as in the world” and subjecting themselves to “ordinances...after the commandments and doctrines of men” (Col. 2:20-22)? He then reminds them that if they “be risen with Christ” they were to, just as believers are to do today, “seek those things which are above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God...for ye (believers) are dead, (to the world) and your life is hid with Christ in God (see Col. 3:1-4). Paul then instructs believers to put to death “therefore your members which are on earth” as having “put off the old man (Adam) with his deeds” and putting “on the new man (Christ)” (see Col. 3:5-11). Continuing to address the saints at Colosse, the Apostle wrote, “Put on therefore, as the Elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering: doing all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him” (see Col. 3:12-17). These instructions are given to a company of people who are identified as “the Elect of God.” Only believers, by the power of...
the indwelling Holy Spirit and the renewing of their minds through God’s Word, have the capacity to obey these instructions. Therefore, I think that we must conclude that the Elect are those who are believers. The opposite is also true. All unbelievers are non-Elect and will remain so as long as they remain in their sin. All those who have not personally trusted in Jesus Christ to be their crucified, buried, and Risen Savior are said to be “children of disobedience” and “children of wrath” who are “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1-3, 5:6). Scripture also tells us that this describes the dire state that every believer was in (Titus 3:3-4) before they were “justified by faith” (Rom. 5:1) and given “the gift of God” which is “eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:23). Salvation is “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior” (Titus 3:5-6). “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31).

QUESTION: I believe that man is composed of body, soul, and spirit and at death the body will be in the grave awaiting resurrection. During this time the unsaved person’s soul will be in Hell (Sheol/Hades) and the saved person’s soul will be in Heaven. I have two questions:

(1) Does the spirit of the unsaved person go to Heaven while his soul is in Hell?

(2) Do both the soul and spirit of the saved person go to Heaven?

ANSWER: As you said, man does consist of three distinct parts; spirit, soul, and body (I Thess. 5:23). At the time of physical death, the spirit and soul leave the body and continue to exist as a person in a conscious state of being while the body goes into a lifeless state of fleshly decay and corruption. While the spirit and soul of man are not the same, they are linked together in that they make up the personhood and nature of man. Only the Word of God is sharp and powerful enough to discern between what are the “soulish” and the “spiritual” thoughts and intents of the human heart (Heb. 4:12-13). Both the spirit and soul of the unsaved go into Sheol/Hades (Hell) when they die, while the spirit and soul of the saved go to Heaven when they die. For the unbeliever, “to be absent from the body” is “to be present with the Lord” (see II Cor. 5:6-7). Both will be raised from the dead sometime in the future. For the unsaved it will be a resurrection of shame, everlasting contempt and damnation (see Dan. 12:2; John 5:29; Rev. 20:11-20). For the saved it will be a resurrection into the blessedness of eternal life (I Cor. 15:50-57; Phil. 3:20-21; Col. 3:1-4; I Thess. 4:17-18; Titus 2:13).

QUESTION: I heard a TV preacher say that those that are born again have a spirit. But, what about those who are not born again, don’t they also have a spirit? I believe that everyone has a spirit. What do you think?

ANSWER: Without more information I cannot say exactly what this man meant by his remarks, but you are correct, every person has a spirit, saved (those who are born again) and unsaved (those who are not born again). Everyone has a body, soul, and spirit (I Thess. 5:23). However, unbelievers are said to be “dead in trespasses and sins.” This does not mean that their spirit has ceased to exist, but that they are spiritually dead to God and the things of God. In their spiritual deadness towards God, they walk according to the “spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.” When a person is saved through faith in Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit indwells them and makes them spiritually alive to God (see Eph. 2:1-5).
COMMON SAYINGS FROM THE BIBLE

“The Staff of Life”

This saying can be applied to food in general but it is mostly used in reference to bread because bread is such a basic food staple. If bread is not available, all other foods are usually difficult to obtain as well. This saying may have come from the book of Isaiah where we read: “For, behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts, doth take away from Jerusalem, and from Judah, the stay and the staff, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water” (Isa. 3:1). This verse is announcing a time of judgment that would come upon the Southern Kingdom of Judah and its capital city, Jerusalem, because of the disobedience of His chosen people in general, and especially the political and religious leaders. A judgment that would include severe famine and bring much hurt to the nation. More than once famine came upon both the Northern Kingdom of Israel and Judah in the South because of their persistent disobedience and idolatry. With bread symbolizing the common food of humanity, it is common in our culture to speak of one who works to support their family as being the “bread-winner.”

More important than sustaining our physical bodies with bread is the sustaining of the soul and spirit. The Lord Jesus Christ revealed that He was the true “Bread of Life” (John 6:35, 48). He explained that the “manna” that the Lord provided as the food that Israel would survive on for forty years in the wilderness symbolized Him and the salvation He would make possible for those who would partake of Him through faith (John 6:51). Have you been made spiritually alive and promised eternal life by partaking of the ‘Bread of Life’? “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31, Eph. 1:13-14; Col. 1:20-22).

INTERESTING BIBLE FACTS

“The Age of the Earth”

James Ussher (1581-1656) was the chief bishop of Ireland and was an extremely intelligent and highly educated man. He calculated that the creation of the world took place in 4004 B.C (Gen. 1:1). To arrive at this date he simply worked backward from the New Testament and used the recorded life spans of men in the Old Testament. In other words, he rested on the infallible Word of God alone as the source of his information. And well he should have. After all, the Bible is our authority for faith (what we are to believe) and practice (how we are to live). “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (II Tim. 3:16).

QUESTION FOR THE READER:

Paul left Titus in Crete in order to ordain whom?

Answer to the September “Who Said It” question: Cain. (“Am I my brother’s keeper?”) The phrase “my brother’s keeper” occurs in the story of Cain and Abel in Genesis 4. After Adam and Eve were put out from the Garden of Eden for their disobedience, Cain killed his brother Abel because of jealousy that God had found Abel’s sacrifice acceptable, but He had rejected Cain’s. After this, the Lord, knowing what had happened, asked Cain where Abel was. Cain’s response was “...Am I my brother’s keeper?”