

Where Are We Going?

Ecclesiastes 12 opens with the familiar exhortation to, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth..." The verses that follow present a variety of facets of aging. Both the reason for remembering God in youth and the reason for the aging process are found in one statement in verse 5. "Man goeth to his long home." We should begin following God in our youth because life is brief and we need to use as much of our time as possible in His service. We should begin following God in our youth because each and every one of us is dying. Of course Solomon did not mean to suggest that a person could not turn to God and obey Him later in life, but, speaking specifically to young men and women, he urged against procrastination. As Paul would later write, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." (II Corinthians 6:2).

Young or old, we are all going toward our long home. Paul wrote to Christians, "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." (Romans 13:11). For those outside of Christ, damnation is nearer now than ever before. Indeed, the day of judgment itself is closer now than it was even a moment ago.

We are marching toward eternity in cadence with each tick of the clock. Job declared that his days were swifter than a weaver's shuttle and his life was merely wind (Job 7:6,7). The Psalmist wrote that our lives are "soon cut off." (Psalm 90:10). Peter said, "For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass." (I Peter 1:24). In the words of James, "For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." (James 4:14).

In our day and age, we consider it an amazing accomplishment when a person passes the 100 year mark. Still, as long a life as a 100 year span appears to be, that life will eventually come to an end. We take note of Methuselah as the man who lived longer than any other on earth, yet we must also take note of the fact that after 969 years of walking in the flesh, Methuselah died (Genesis 5:27). The Word of God says "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." (Hebrews 9:27).

The Bible gives us a prophetic glimpse of that judgment scene. Matthew 25:31-46 portrays all of mankind standing before God's eternal throne on that day. II Corinthians 5:7 says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Romans 14:10 adds, "for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." The next two verses continue the thought: "For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." (See also Philippians 2:9-11). John wrote of that day, "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." (Revelation 20:12).

Where are we going? We are all aging. We are all inching toward death. We are all progressing toward eternity. An appropriate question now is, "When will we cross over into eternity?" As certain as is our progression toward eternity, just as uncertain is the time of our death or the return of the Lord in judgment. That God's timetable is unknown to man is evidenced by Jesus' statement prior to His ascension back to heaven. "It is not for you to know the times and the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power." (Acts 1:7). I Thessalonians 5:1-2 reads, "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." The fact of our going toward eternity is evident, even as we look at our bodies and see them wearing away. The time of our departure is not known. Therefore, in the words of Peter, "what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" (II Peter 3:11).

"We are going down the valley, one by one." "There's a great day coming... Are you ready for the judgment day?"