

Call to Obedience #385  
PO Box 299 Kokomo, IN 46903 USA  
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## Facing Death

By Pastor Reimar A. C. Schultze

Paul said, "*it is appointed unto man once to die and after that the judgment*" (Heb. 9:27). This tells us that we all will die; that we all will die *once*; and that there is no place from which we can return to live and die again. How we live this one life determines both our destiny and the quality of our afterlife forever.

1. When is a right time to die?
2. What determines *our eternal destiny*?
3. What determines *the quality of our life in heaven*?

### 1. When is the right time to die?

Solomon said *there is a time to be born and there is a time to die* (Ecc. 3:2). Mordecai said to Queen Esther, *who knows but that you are born for such a time as this* (Es. 4:14).

The apostle Paul came into the world at God's appointed time. He died at God's appointed time. He lived and died on God's schedule. To the natural mind Paul died too soon. He died when his mind was still sharp; when he was still productive. He did not die of old age, weakness or sickness. He was executed. Yet he died at his appointed time. Just before he died he wrote: "*I finished my course*" (2 Tim. 4:7). Jesus died on the cross at 33 years of age. He finished his course. He was born on time. He died on time. The apostle John lived a century. He also died on time.

When God wants someone, let God have that person; no matter whether they are 5, 30 or 50 years of age. The best day of a saint is the day of his appointed death. Don't rob anyone of his best day. When you delay God's time of death by one way or another, you meddle with God. You are selfish. You are taking that person out of God's schedule. That is dangerous. Don't try to understand God in this matter. Remember that God's *ways are past finding out* (Ro. 11:33). Leave it there. When a saint dies, you grieve because you are human. Heaven does not grieve when its children come home; heaven is spiritual. Heaven will help you in your grief. There is no sorrow that heaven cannot heal. The more intimate you are with Jesus, the less will be your grief, the more easily you can say with Job *the Lord giveth, the Lord taketh away, blessed is the name of the Lord* (Job 1:21).

Further, it does not matter how a man dies but how he lived. Isaiah was sawn in half. Jesus died shamefully on a cross. John the Baptist had his head placed on a platter and handed to an adulterous woman. It is not how you die. Again, it is the condition of your heart when you die that matters.

Now, here are some ways by which we can get off God's schedule for our death. Moses, the meekest man on the earth in his time, died too young. He died off schedule. He died though *his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated* (Deu. 34:7). Moses died too young because of disobedience: one act of disobedience. Disobedience can take you out of God's schedule. Because Moses died too young he took many blessings meant for others into the grave with him. Hezekiah died too old. God wanted him at 39 years of age when he was the most successful and spiritual. But Hezekiah turned his face towards the wall and he whimpered, he wept, he made a lot of noise. I don't know what made God let him have his way, but God gave him another 15 years (Is. 38:1-5). If you make a scene, it could be that God will also let you get out of His perfect will, to grant you His permissive will. Don't do this. In his later years pride crept into Hezekiah's heart and foolish decisions followed, bringing great suffering to the next generation. My friend it is good to die in God's time. Moses died too young. Hezekiah died too old.

Another thing that can cause us to die out of God's appointed time is bad choices. If you are eating irresponsibly, if you are a glutton, if you do not treat your body respectfully as the temple of the Holy Spirit, you will die out of God's schedule. You will take blessings you carried for others into the grave with you. Unanointed risks can cause you to not finish your course.

## 2. What determines our eternal destiny?

The Scriptures tell us that *where* we go, once we die, does not depend on what we have done in the past but rather on *where we are in the present*: whether we are abiding in Christ or not. Jesus said, *If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned* ( John 15:6).

Don't live a single day without abiding in Christ. To not abide in Him daily is the most foolish and dangerous thing you can do. It will cost you everything. This is why the **day** is so emphasized in your Bible, for example: take up your cross daily...give us this day our daily bread...today if ye will hear my voice (Luke 9:23, Luke 11:3; Heb. 3:7).

All of this is affirmed by Ezekiel: *When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die* (Ez. 18:26). Five of the ten virgins lost heaven not because their lamps had never been burning. They were at one time! They

lost heaven because their lamps did not burn at the midnight cry (Mat. 25: 1-10). *Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive* (Ez. 18:27). The thief on the cross never had his lamp burning. He made it to heaven solely on the basis on where he was with Christ on the day of his death.

### **3. What determines the quality of our life in heaven?**

Now, take notice of this great forgotten fact and sober up: heaven will not be the same for everyone, because God is a rewarder. Though works do not get us saved they do determine how much we will enjoy in heaven, forever. This teaching that God is a rewarder of both good and bad runs all the way through the Bible. As there are degrees of misery in hell (some will be beaten with many stripes and some with a few stripes), so there are degrees of ecstasy in heaven. Jesus told us to lay up treasure in heaven to enrich heaven for us (Mat.6:20). It is up to us to enrich heaven for us, and not up to Him. He said, in my Father's house [heaven] are many mansions [apartments] (John 14:2). How your apartment will be furnished depends on what you send up there before you get there. If you have been consistently faithful in your works for God, in prayer, in servanthood, in giving and obedience, your rewards will cause you to enjoy Jesus, and all there is in heaven, in a deeper and richer way than what the less faithful will experience. You will have more privileges in heaven. Don't be fooled. **“What you sow, you will reap” is a law that reaches all the way into the endless stretches of the heavenly universe, forever.**

Let us look at some verses that tell us a little about how much Jesus is in the rewarding business, determining the quality of life up there: He said to the rich ruler: If you sell all you have and give to the poor you will have treasure in heaven (Luke 18:22). If you suffer for Jesus' sake you will be rewarded (Mat. 19:29). If you give a cup of cold water to a man of God, you will be rewarded (Mat. 10:42). If you seek diligently after God, you will be rewarded (Heb. 11:6). These rewards add up. Some have few, some many. Don't be fooled, credentials matter with God. Heaven will prove it. Now you ask: “Will the differences in heaven lead to jealousies?” No, no, no - there will be no jealousies, no sin in heaven. It will all be love to God and to one another as we together behold our Savior, saying, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain* (Rev. 5:12).

*I will give unto every one of you according to your works... Behold I come quickly and my reward is with me* (Rev. 2:23, 22:12). My friend, Jesus is so excited about rewarding us that even as He meets us in the sky, His reward for us is in His "back pocket". Yes, there is a payday some day for all of us!

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