

The Death We Proclaim

by Sam Dilbeck

“We live in the land of the dying. When we get to heaven we will live in the land of the living.” Years ago I heard Wendell Winkler make that statement, and it has stuck with me. We are living in the land of the dying, and are reminded of it daily.

Brussels is just another city in a growing list of places terrorists have plied their evil skills. But terrorism accounts for only a small portion of deaths daily. Every single day over 2,500 children are voluntarily killed in the womb as politicians debate its “merits.” At the other end of the age spectrum, euthanasia continues to grow in popularity and acceptance, creating an alarming culture of death. Clearly, death is a constant in life. Paul said we must use our time wisely because the days are evil (Eph. 5:16).

Surrounded by the dying, we might be tempted to give up on hope. But, there is one death that restores our hope. It is the death of Jesus Christ our Lord. His death is unlike any other in the history of the world. It is so special Christians proclaim it each week, “For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” (1 Cor. 11:26). The Lord’s Supper reminds us of his death and tells the world there is hope in death.

Celebrating and announcing death seems counterintuitive to most people, but to the Christian it is a natural response to what Jesus’ death has done. Hebrews 9 records six blessings we receive from the death of Jesus.

Redemption (Heb. 9:11-12)

Redemption, meaning to buy back, is connected to salvation in Christ. Disobedience to God’s law is sin (1 John 3:4). The penalty for sin is death (Rom. 6:23), and since all have sinned, death has passed to all (Rom. 5:12). Redemption refers to the payment of blood Jesus gave to buy us back from our merited penalty of sin. The death we proclaim secures our eternal redemption.

Purification (Heb. 9:13-14)

That death also leads to our purification. Sin not only leads to spiritual death; it stains our souls (Jude 23; Zech. 3:4). Purification scrubs our souls clean in the blood Jesus shed on the cross (Rev. 7:14). It is one of the great paradoxes of Christianity—blood that normally stains, washes us white as snow. Once washed, we stand before God innocent and separated for his service. The death we proclaim purifies our souls.

Inheritance (Heb. 9:15-18)

Inheritance is the possessions and property passed to an heir at the death of the owner. During his ministry, Jesus promised his followers they would inherit eternal life (Matt. 19:28-30). Through his “Last Will and Testament” Jesus specified who would receive his possession of life. However, it couldn’t pass from him as the owner until his death. At his death, his New Testament became effective. The death we proclaim leaves us the inheritance of life.

Forgiveness (Heb. 9:19-22)

Forgiveness pardons us from the punishment we deserve. Criminals forgiven of their crime are released from prison. Debtors forgiven of their debt do not have to repay it. Sinners forgiven of their sins are released from the guilt and punishment. At his death, Jesus carried the sentence of our sin (Isa. 53:5). The death we proclaim forgives our sins.

Mediation (Heb. 9:23-24)

Mediators act as a middle man between two conflicting parties. In this case he stands between us and the Father, and the conflict is our sin (1 Tim. 2:5). He pleads our case, accepting our chastisement for us. The death we proclaim mediates on our behalf.

Sacrifice (Heb. 9:25-28)

Knowing our hellish fate, Jesus offered himself to die so we might live. He became the Lamb of God

without blemish that was slain in man's stead (John 1:29, 36). Under the Old Testament, the Jews had to regularly offer sacrifices of bulls and goats to assuage the holy wrath of God. Those sacrifices were never enough—they were not costly enough (Heb. 10:1-4). But, the blood of God's own Son, perfect, undefiled, sinless, that's enough. Now Christians continue as living sacrifices, worshiping and serving God (Rom. 12:1-2). The death we proclaim is the sacrifice we needed.

During the spring many turn their eyes upon Jesus, looking to reestablish a neglected connection with the Creator. They remember Jesus' death and celebrate his resurrection. However, Christians proclaim and celebrate his death each Sunday—the Lord's day—because the value and blessings of his death compel us to remember.

Easter

by Garland M.
Robinson

The celebration of Easter is well-known in our society and is observed by the masses. Few however, know its origin and that it holds no authority from the Bible. Many traditions exist as to the origin of the word "Easter," but one thought appears to be present in most all ideas, Easter refers to the East and rising sun, and in many people's minds, causing it to have a connection with the resurrection.

The observance of Easter represents a convergence of three particular events:

- 1) The Hebrew Passover (celebrated during the month of Nisan which is the first month of the Hebrew Calendar. It always fell in the spring of the year).
- 2) The commemoration of the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ (which happened to take place during the feast of the Hebrew Passover).
- 3) A pagan festival of spring which fell at the vernal equinox on March 21. This pagan festival embodied the worship of the goddess of the Saxons in whose honor sacrifices were offered annually.

The merging of these three events became associated with the unauthorized festival of the resurrection which was celebrated each year at the time of the Passover.

Easter, and its associated festivities, is considered by the masses to be the greatest event in the Christian religion. Some will "go to church" on that Sunday when they do not go any other Sunday of the year. Does the Bible claim Easter Sunday is of greater

significance than any other Sunday of the year? You will search in vain to find it! It's not there.

The facts bear testimony that Easter and its seasonal observance stand without any Bible authority whatsoever. There is no command, example or implication anywhere in scripture that would authorize the observance of this day with any religious significance. New Testament Christians observe and commemorate the death of Christ each and every Lord's day, the first day of the week (Sunday), in the observance of the Lord's supper (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:23-26).

Since the celebration of Easter came about after the time of the apostles and New Testament revelation, it has no place in worship guided by the Word of God. In fact, there are no special occasions, seasons, dates, or day(s) that have any religious significance for the Lord's church and Christians. The New Testament authorizes Christians to assemble and worship on every first day of the week. Since every week has a first day, the whole church assembles for worship. Authorized worship includes: singing (Eph. 5:19), praying (Acts 2:42), Lord's supper (Acts 20:7), giving (1 Cor. 16:1-2), and preaching (Acts 20:7). Every Sunday is the same as the Sunday which comes before it and the Sunday which comes after it. Any "first day" is no more special than any other. It is man, not God, who makes some days or times more important and special than others; and man does so to his own peril. *Seek the Old Paths – January, 2011*

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Mission Works

Westhill Works

Benevolence Program

Local Works

Cherokee Children's Home - www.chc4kids.org
House to House, Heart to Heart
In Search of the Lord's Way
Preaching Students - Southwest School of Bible Studies
The Truth in Love - www.ttil.tv
WVBS Online School - school.wvbs.org

Prison Works

La Poynor Prison Ministry - Steve & Carrie Handley

Foreign Works

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Prayer List

Jimmy Bess is struggling with vision problems. He will need to have a procedure done. Please pray for him and Dolores as they decide which procedure would be best.

Bud Moore has returned home. Pray for him as he continues to recover.

Patty Williams had surgery and returned home last Sunday evening. Pray for her continued recovery.

Our Love & Sympathy are extended to the family of Gay Wright at her passing last week. Her service was held Friday.

Our Love & Sympathy also go out to David Shastid's friend, John Morgan and his family at the tragic death of his father. Please, keep the Morgan family in your prayers as they mourn this sudden loss.

Continue to Remember: Don Bowen, Melba Bower, Gwen Culwell, Buster Hayes, Marjorie King, Neta Marshall, Velma McDougald, Henry & Eula Parrish, Paula Spillyards, Meagan Gould, Jayme Schafer, Keith Weaver

Service Men: Clay Bayes, Jason Book, Alston Compton, Robert Johnson, Ryan Payne, Douglas Ramsey, Ryan Stewart, Morgan Weaver, and Payton Weaver

Announcements

"Glory to God our Father and His Son, Jesus! Thank you for the great love shown to me and Carrie during my time of testing. Thank you for the prayers, words of encouragement, cards, and phone calls. We love you more than words can say." Love, Danny & Carrie Gibson

"Thank you so much to all the volunteers who helped with the Navarro Elementary book fair. The school truly appreciated the help." The Benevolence Crew

Prom Alternative Meeting TONIGHT after services in the Family Room. All parents of Juniors & Seniors are invited to participate in planning this event.

Open Door Thursday resumes this week. Jr. High & High School students are invited to hang out in the Outreach Center Thursday from 3:30-6:30 PM.

Spring Seminar hosted by the Young at Heart Group on Friday, April 8 at 6:30 PM. Jay Lockhart will address the theme "Press On." Everyone invited!

Birthdays This Week

- March 27 - Brian Beamon
- March 28 - Wade Hall
- March 29 - Thomas Saunders
- March 30 - Claire Haden, Miranda Weaver
- March 31 - Jim Howard, Neta Marshall

Next Week's Adult Class

Jesus Feeds 5,000
(Mt. 14:13-21; Mk. 6:33-44; Lk. 9:10-17; Jn. 6:1-14)

Records for March 20, 2016

Bible Class	170
AM Worship.....	245
PM Worship.....	162
Wednesday	158
Contribution	\$7,987.75

Privileged to Serve

Song Leader	Zach Drain
Opening Prayer	Paul Ross
Communion Leader	Don Ivy
Communion Servers	
Don Corley	David Dilbeck
Brian Hand	James Horn
Clay Jackson	Buck Murphy
Greg Olsen	Phil Pillans
George Schmidt	Dalton Shastid
Kyle Slaughter	Gene Steinkraus
Justin Williams	
Closing Prayer	Darwin Thomas
Nursery	Ashley Jones & Faith Beamon
Security	Terry Barrett, Mark Blaylock, Buck Murphy
PM Song Leader	Justin Mahoney
PM Opening Prayer	Bryan Bearden
PM Closing Prayer	Hank Jett
Wed. Song Leader	Brody Owens
Wed. Devotional	Brent Stewart
March Contact Elder	Paul Slaughter - 903.872.1228