

"ON THE FRONTIER"

"IS THERE A RELEASE FROM DEATH?"

by Linus A. Mathis III

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary defines death as: a permanent cessation of all vital functions: the end of life. The medical profession describes death as an irreversible state. This would make one wonder how we could say that a person "died" on the operating table and was resuscitated. Could it be that they were never really dead? Webster is accurate as are the professionals, death is irreversible, at least for the present. Dictionary and professionals aside, what does the Bible have to say? Most of us are familiar with the concept of going to heaven upon dying. But is that really what the scriptures say?

John 3:13

And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, *even* the Son of man [Jesus Christ speaking of himself] which is in heaven.

This same truth was adequately communicated throughout the entire Old Testament.

Ecclesiastes 9:10

Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do *it* with thy might; for *there is* no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.

The context of Ecclesiastes 9 also tells us that there is no consciousness in death. This would mean that there is no anxiety, fear, suffering, loneliness, or grief. These are emotions associated with the living. The dead know not anything. Nor do they "feel" anything.

What about "hell"? Biblically, the word hell (in all usages relevant to the subject of man's dying) is translated either from the Hebrew word *sheol* or the Greek word *hades*. Both words literally mean grave or pit, i.e. a hole in the ground. The "HELL FIRE" that has been preached, is not a place currently in existence. Furthermore, God is merciful and loving not cruel and vengeful. The scriptures declare in I John 1:3 that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. It is people who want to send people to "HELL", not God. Hell, as in hell fire, is reserved for the Devil, the Beast, the False Prophet and the like.

I Corinthians 15:22

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

It is in Christ that we are released from the "irreversible" grip of death. But when?

I Thessalonians 4:16,17

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Why would the dead have to be raised if they are already in heaven? That wouldn't make any sense, would it! When Jesus Christ died he was buried (went to *hades*, the grave) and was resurrected three days and three nights later. Then forty days were spent upon earth in his resurrected body before his ascending into heaven.

Even he didn't go straight to heaven! As for limbo and purgatory, these concepts are completely without any Scriptural basis, totally fictitious. The Bible speaks of two Resurrections, of Christ's Return, of heaven and hell but not of purgatory or limbo (is that a game?).

I Corinthians 15:21

For since by man [Adam] *came* death, by man [Jesus Christ] *came* also the resurrection of the dead.

Note carefully that there is to be a resurrection of the dead. Why resurrect them if they are already alive somewhere? To say that they are alive now is illogical and unscriptural. But there is a day coming when they will be made alive. It is not a question of IF only WHEN! The Bible says that no man knows the hour. So if someone says they know, they are contradicting the Bible. Read it for yourself. If we really knew when, it would change life and free choice as we know it. What a cruel joke that would be!!!

The Word of God clearly declares death to be an enemy and that it will remain so until the corruptible are made incorruptible and the mortal are made immortal (I Corinthians 15:26,54). Until then death is an enemy and not a "welcome friend" as some have asserted. If those who teach the Bible would simply teach the Bible you would have Truth. You do not have Truth with experience, opinion, tradition or denominational viewpoint. If the Truth were taught the psychics would not have a leg to stand on. The seances with their sensitives and mediums would be out of business. There is no way to speak to the dead! Not if they are dead! If God's Word were taught, all of these spiritual counterfeits would be unemployed. This subject is worthy of months of study and learning. It is relevant to how we view ourselves today and establishes our expectations for eternity. But rest assured of this one thing, the Return of Jesus Christ will cause life to once again flow in the hour glass of time!!! For then and only then will the dead be made alive. Avoid uncertainty, be a Christian, believe Romans 10:9!

"ON THE FRONTIER"

"ONE NATION UNDER GOD INDIVISIBLE AND NON-DENOMINATIONAL"

by Linus A. Mathis III

Controversy continues to rage over what the Supreme Court claims to be the intent (certainly not the wording) of the First Amendment. Their claim is "separation of church and state". To understand the logic behind the First Amendment one would need to understand the logic of it's framers. It is clear from the requirements placed upon those who vied for public office that they were expected to be not just "politicians" but "Christian politicians".

Consider this excerpt from the constitution of Delaware during the era of the framing of the First Amendment:

Article 22. Every person, who shall be chosen a member of either house, or appointed to any office or place of trust...shall...make and subscribe the following declaration, to wit: "I,_____, do profess faith in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, and in the Holy Ghost, one God, blessed for evermore; and I do acknowledge the holy scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be given by divine inspiration.

This type of requirement was the norm, not the exception, of the day. Here is the text in question:

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibit the free exercise thereof"

At that time the word 'religion' was used interchangeably with - religious sect, religious society or particular denomination. Bearing that in mind the understanding would be as follows:

"Congress shall make no law establishing one Christian denomination as the national denomination"

The absence of general Christian principle or ethic was not a consideration in their thinking. Consider this quote from Patrick Henry:

“It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded, not by religionists, but by Christians, not on religions but on the gospel of Jesus Christ! For this very reason peoples of other faiths have been afforded asylum, prosperity, and freedom of worship here.”

They did have a strong conviction that no one denomination should hold sway. Why? Because they understood that the view point of a particular denomination might very well be colored by that groups concerns and beliefs. But to discard the literal Truth of Scripture? NEVER!!!

The entire foundation of this great nation of ours is laid upon the Word of God. For instance, the concept of three branches of government.

Isaiah 33:22

For the LORD [is] our judge {judicial branch), the LORD [is] our lawgiver (legislative branch), the LORD [is] our king {executive branch}; he will save us.

Let's not forget the ten commandments which, along with other aspects of Mosaic law, are the very fabric of our moral, legal and ethical practices. Because of this, our government and it's constitution have weathered many

storms these two hundred plus years. The problems only arise when we outlaw God and His Word from our schools and shops. But what we do not want to direct our land is scriptural opinion shaded by denominational belief.

II Peter 1:20

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

Jesus Christ said the following concerning systems of belief:

Mark 7:7

Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching [for] doctrines the commandments of men.

Christian principles for governing life should most definitely be the foundation for government, even if it is the "90's". Honestly speaking, we have more and enjoy less today than any of our less fortunate ancestors. The reason for this is rejection of Scriptures and the God who Authored them.

For Christians to abdicate their role in government to those who have no "fear of God" is grave error. If you do not respect God whom you can not see, how will you respect your fellow man who you can see! The repercussions of ungodly "legal interpretations" will plague us for generations if left unchecked.

Perhaps what needs to be said to our nation and the people who govern it is best stated by this verse:

Jeremiah 3:22

Return, ye backsliding children, [and] I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto thee; for thou [art] the LORD our God.

"ON THE FRONTIER"

"NO HIDDEN COSTS! NO FINE PRINT! NO LEGALESE!"

By Linus A. Mathis III

Misconceptions abound when it comes to an understanding of salvation. Far too many think that salvation must be earned or paid for. Others believe that God has some *hidden* agenda. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The Bible clearly states in Ephesians 2:8-9 that salvation is the gift of God. We do not have it of ourselves and it is not of works so no one should boast of personal goodness. If it were possible for mankind to affect it's own redemption, God would have been spared the pain of offering up His Son. Yet, because of His great love, He offered him up freely (John 3:16; Romans 3:24; 5:15,16,18; 8:32). For anyone to think that they can pay for redemption is folly unsupported by scripture.

Psalms 49:6-9

They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches;

None of *them* can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him:

(For the redemption of their soul *is* precious, and it ceaseth for ever:)

That he should still live for ever, *and* not see corruption.

The redemption of a soul is costly and forever UNATTAINABLE! That is, for mortal man. But not for God!!! This is why He provided a Saviour for mankind. That Saviour is the Lord Jesus Christ as testified to by Romans 10:9,10. Mankind can not be redeemed with monetary means, as is clearly set forth in I Peter 1:18,19. You can not purchase salvation via corruptible means. Thankfully, we do not have to, it has already been purchased with the precious blood of Jesus Christ. THIS IS GOD'S FREE GIFT TO MANKIND!

Perhaps the misunderstanding is in regards to money. People say that money is evil. The Bible has often been misquoted to support that very concept. The Bible says quite plainly that it is the LOVE of money that is the root of ALL evil (I Timothy 6:10), not the money itself. To put ANYTHING before God is idolatry and that would include money. A simple definition of love; when you can't get enough of something. We have all seen what that leads to, when money is the object of adoration, haven't we! Money itself is neither good nor bad. Money is a medium of exchange, nothing more. Moreover, contrary to popular belief, God expects us to be prosperous (III John 2; Philippians 4:19; Psalm 37:25; Proverbs 22:4; etc.) and healthy.

Maybe the communication begins to break down with our understanding of the word gift? Do you remember this phrase from the holiday song "...he's making a list of who's naughty and nice..."? Of course, if you are not good you will not get any gifts. But isn't being good a behavior? Would that not mean that anything given for good behavior was earned? We are told from a very early age that if we are not good we will not get our gifts. If we are bad, our gifts will be confiscated. GIFTS??? Do you get a gift from your employer at the end of the week, or do you get a wage? Big difference, one is earned through toil, one is freely given. The gifts of God are not reneged upon either. His gifts are fired by the passion of an eternal love. His gift of salvation is freely available to anyone desiring liberation from the evil of this present world. If you haven't already done so, do it NOW, confess Romans 10:9 and receive the gift of salvation. It doesn't cost us anything because it cost God everything, the life of Jesus Christ.

"ON THE FRONTIER"

"The Power And Poetry Of Christianity"

by Linus A. Mathis III

The best preachers are the ones who live their preaching. Good in action is what we need to see, not just hear about. The lecture might well be true but most lessons are learned observing the lecturer. I could easily misunderstand words but there's no mistaking life and action. I gleaned this thought from a poem I read years ago. How true this still is! Our actions can speak much more loudly than our words.

When it comes to keeping young people interested in spiritual things there needs to be action to corroborate our teachings. This truth is conveyed most authoritatively in the Scriptures.

I Thessalonians 1:5

For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

There needs to be teaching! You can't expect young people to be interested in spiritual matters if you don't teach them. Consider Psalms 34:11. Secondly, the teacher (if possible, the parent) lives the teaching. Consider the record in II Timothy 3:10-ff. Timothy was taught the Word of God by people who lived the Word of God. Consequently, he practiced the Word of God. Too often the teaching is, "do as I say, not as I do". This can't continue if we are to see character and moral fiber in our youth. The answer to strong young people is given in Psalms 119:9 and I John 2:14. How can a young person take heed unto something they are ignorant of?

In the lands and times of the Bible a daily teaching was given to children. That teaching is found in Proverbs 1:7-16. Please read it sometime. The following sums up the teaching:

Proverbs 1:17

Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird.

If a bird sees a snare it will avoid it. When a young person who loves God recognizes sin, they avoid it. If our young people are taught the Truth of God's Word they will respond to it. David was only seventeen when he slew Goliath! Joseph and Mary were responsible to raise the Christ while yet in their teens! Timothy was charged to allow no man to despise his youth. While only a teen he was prepared to assume the Apostle Paul's responsibilities! We need to show our children that our words and actions agree. They will respond!!! Young people are attracted to authority and respect integrity.

Psalms 71:17,18

O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.

Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto *this* generation, and thy power to every one *that* is to come.

"ON THE FRONTIER"

"Render Unto God The Things That Are God's"

by Linus A. Mathis III

It is clear from Scripture that it not God's Will for any genuine (must be based on Biblical Truth, not just any religion) godly service to pay tribute to any government.

Ezra 7:24

Also we certify you, that touching any of the priests and Levites, singers, porters, Nethinims (temple servants), or ministers of this house of God, it shall not be lawful to impose toll, tribute, or custom, upon them.

Therefore, if tax is imposed upon any genuine service of or for God, the taxing body is at fault. However, the taxed party would be responsible to respond to the tax levied in accordance with the "laws of the land" (I Peter 2:13-ff). As long as the laws which govern us do not prevent us from keeping the law of God, we are to obey them. From God's point of view, life is too short to spend in entanglements of any kind (II Timothy 2:4).

Matthew 22:17-21

Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, [ye] hypocrites? Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. And he saith unto them, Whose *is* this image and superscription? They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

This record is not referring to propriety or impropriety in taxation of religion. It is clear that Jesus perceived their "**wickedness**" and the fact that they were asking this question to tempt him. In the lands and times of the Bible, a figure such as Caesar would put his likeness on the currency. He considered himself a "god" and as such, desired subjection and worship. To worship his currency would be, in affect, to worship him. The Lord simply said to give him back what was his anyway, i.e. the money. But give to God what is His. God is due reverence, obedience, honor, love, worship, dedication and trust. If one trusts God, money is never important. Today people cling to money as though it were life support. Really, they should cleave unto God. He is the Author of life and He alone can deliver man. He alone deserves worship!!!

Biblically speaking, every individual is accountable for their own words and deeds. What is done by one party in no way exonerates any other party (though innocent or victimized) from their own responsible action and thought. You and I are responsible to respond in a Christian fashion to the things in life that are presented to us. Even if ungodly pressures are imposed upon us, our God demands that we behave as His children. Since He is Holy, He expects us to be holy.

Romans 12:19-21

Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

"ON THE FRONTIER"

"To Be Free Or Not To Be Free - That Is The Question"

by Linus A. Mathis III

There is a religious "bias" in our nation today. What is good for the goose is not lawful for the gander. How ironic that the system of beliefs responsible for the free exercise of all is the one penalized. Our nation was conceived in Christian hearts and the documents which govern her sprang forth from the guidance of Almighty God. Indeed (though some with short memories and tall tales might dispute) ours had it's inception as a Christian nation and every intent on the part of it's founders was that she remain that way.

"The birthday of the nation is indissolubly linked with the birthday of the Saviour [and] forms a leading event in the progress of the gospel dispensation...The Declaration of Independence first organized the social compact on the foundation of the Redeemer's mission upon earth [and] laid the corner stone of human government upon the first precepts of Christianity" *John Quincy Adams*

The Bible was a basic reference for the founding fathers.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

God given rights! When God gives something He never takes it back. This is quite different from "human rights". Humans are all too willing to renege, aren't they! Yet, it is "human rights" which have center stage. Humans, in their struggle for rights, rarely consider what God thinks. And should He disagree with them, they are swift to reject Him.

Romans 11:29

For the gifts and calling of God *are* without repentance.

You see, God gave man free-will. Man must make up his own mind. Man has the God given right to believe what he chooses. Our founding fathers realized this.

Romans 10:9

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

Note the word IF, this is a word of condition, honoring your right to choose. A Bible believing Christian will always honor the free-will of another. Love honors the right to choose. Nothing outside of TRUE Christianity can make this claim. If you are now pondering the Crusades or the Spanish Inquisition, etc., let me assure you that they were generated by denominations, not by God centered Christians. Christians would not outlaw prayer in our schools and condone the celebration of Halloween. They would not expose us to an endless parade of psychics, sensitives, mediums, witches, warlocks and other ungodly practices. Yet, when they try to get the Lord Jesus Christ and the Gospel of Deliverance into the public arena, every effort to discredit and blackball them is made. Yes, religious freedoms do abound in our country, particularly if you are NOT a Bible believing Christian. Remember, having the right to choose does not guarantee that the choice is correct. At one time they chose to believe that the world was flat! Look up Galatians 6:7 before you make your next choice.

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