

# LIVING WATERS NEWSLETTER

HARRY BOWERS, EDITOR

7844 GRIMSBY CIRCLE, HARRISBURG, N.C. 28075

JULY 2023

## THE EFFECT OF SATAN'S ONE LIE

"Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, 'Indeed God has said, 'you shall not eat from every tree in the garden...' The serpent said to the woman, 'You surely will not die'" (Gen.3:1-4). The woman believed Satan's lie and it has become the rallying cry of millions of Christians throughout the centuries and has been defended by the most prestigious theologians and their seminary clones, and past from pulpit to the gullible pew warmer from Sunday to Sunday, leaving confusion and spiritual destruction in its wake. Centuries later Jesus warns the Jews of Satan's lies by saying he is "a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44) and the Apostle Paul warns the Corinthians he was "afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds may be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ" (II Cor. 11:3), showing that this lie had consequences outside the garden of Eden. We will be dealing with some of the effects of Satan's one lie.

One of the most overlooked results of Satan's lie: Romans 8:18-22: "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but because of Him who subjected it in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now" Not only did the lie of Satan bring a curse upon the whole human race, but the earth suffered a curse as well. Now the children of God are waiting eagerly for the redemption of their bodies (ver. 23) and the creation itself is also waiting to be redeemed (ver. 21, 22). Far from being destroyed, the world is going to be redeemed when the curse is taken away. Just as we receive a new body at resurrection (Eph. 1:14; I Cor. 15:38-44) so we will inherit a renewed earth on which to dwell in that body. Not only is man redeemed from sin and death, but the earth will also be redeemed from the curse. It is in this redeemed earth, not in a city in the sky, that we will dwell for all eternity.

One of the most significant effects of Satan's lie is it contradicted God's warning that disobedience would result in death, making man immortal and would survive physical death as a disembodied soul, thus giving birth to the doctrine of the soul surviving for eternity either in heaven or hell. In his book *Surprised by Hope* T.N. Wright, concerning the traditional belief about the destiny of the believer at death, wrote: "A remarkable example arrived in the mail not long ago: a book apparently a best seller, by Maria Shriver, the first lady of California. The book was called *What's Heaven?* and aimed at children, with lots of fluffy clouds in blue skies, making the basic message crystal clear. 'Heaven,' says Shriver, 'is something you believe in...it's a beautiful place where you can sit on soft clouds and talk to other people who are there. At night you can sit next to the stars, which are the brightest of any in the universe...if you are good

throughout your life, then you get to go to heaven...When your life is finished here on earth, God sends angels down to take you to Heaven to be with Him...Grandma is in a safe place, with the stars, with God and the angels...she is watching over us from up there.' This is more or less exactly what millions of people in the Western world have come to believe, to accept as truth, and to teach their children."

A publication of *Restoration Fellowship* entitled *Focus on The Kingdom*, concerning Shriver's book *What's Heaven?* wrote: "We may take courage and comfort from the warning words of leading New Testament scholar Bishop Tom Wright, who deplores the mindless attitude towards biblical truth so evident in churches today. Listen to Wright's searing criticism and penetrating analysis of 'the mess we are in,' marked by the evident fragmentation of Christian denominationalism: Wright comments on this amazing piece of misleading information offered by the authoress of *What's Heaven?* 'This is more or less exactly what millions of people in the Western world have come to believe, to accept as truth and to teach their children.' Bishop Wright was sent the book, he says, by a friend who said appropriately, 'I hope you find this awful book helpful in *what not to say.*'

"Wright then elaborates his point: 'Many Christians grow up assuming that whenever the New Testament speaks of Heaven it refers to the place to which the saved will go at death. In Matthew's gospel, Jesus' sayings in the other gospels about the kingdom of God are rendered as 'kingdom of heaven.' Since many read Matthew first, when they find Jesus talking about 'entering the kingdom of Heaven.' they have their assumptions confirmed, and they suppose that Jesus is indeed talking about how to go to Heaven when you die, which is certainly not what either Jesus or Matthew had in mind. Many mental pictures have grown up around this and are now assumed to be what the Bible teaches. But the language of heaven in the New Testament doesn't work that way.'"

"Wright then adds: 'God's Kingdom in the preaching of Jesus refers not to postmortem destiny, nor to our escape from this world into another one, but to God's sovereign rule coming on earth as it is in heaven.'"

On the subject of man's eternal destiny many profess to believe what the Scriptures say but proceed to give words a meaning corresponding to their perceived ideas and do not accept them for what they actually say. The Scripture states: "Who (God) alone possesses immortality" (I Tim. 6:16), and it is at resurrection that the Christian who is mortal "shall put on immortality" (I Cor. 15:53). Yet we are dogmatically taught that man has an immortal soul. When we read that "the soul that sins shall die" Ezek. 18:4, 20) and "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23), we are told Satan's lie, "death" does not really mean "death" and only the body dies and the soul is ushered immediately into heaven or hell. It is at funeral services that we are assured that "our loved one is in heaven because they are not really dead." Billy Graham in a daily newspaper column entitled *In My Opinion* states: "The Bible suggest that those who've

entered heaven before us actually may know what is happening on earth" however the scripture says, "the dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence" (Psalm 115:17) and "the dead know not anything...for there is no activity or planning or wisdom in Sheol (the grave) where you are going" (Eccl. 9:5, 10).

This analogy is further stated in an article entitled: *About the Matter of Death and Sleep*, in the June 2001 issue of *The Banner of Truth*, a monthly periodical published and edited by Christian Church Minister, Fred O. Blakely. He began the article by quoting only 4 passages out of 41 from the Old Testament and 8 out of 11 passages from the New Testament that speak of death as sleep. He then states: "These representations of Scripture, taken in exclusion from the other portrayals of death of the saint, **(he lists four of these scriptures, we will note)** have given rise to a grievously false view of the subject." He then gives a fairly accurate view of what he calls "a grievously view of the subject" in these words: "Because the experience is set forth as sleep, it has been concluded by many **(including Solomon, HB)** that death is an unconscious state. To die is thus regarded as the passing of the individual into a condition of non-existence, in so far as personal awareness is concerned. The coming resurrection, it is conceded, will restore life and alertness, but meanwhile those who have 'fallen asleep' rest in absolute obliviousness. They are reckoned to be asleep in every sense of the word, and so have passed from the realm of knowing and the sensitive." **(This is a fair description of what the Bible teaches, which he calls "a false view of the subject," but then he conspicuously adds):** "This concept of death has come to be known as *soul-sleeping*, and is widespread among people who believe God's Word, and rests all their hopes in Christ Jesus the Lord." **They call it "soul-sleeping," but then declare it is only the body that sleeps, and the soul lives on in a disembodied state. There is no Scripture that says the soul leaves the body and exists in a disembodied state. The spirit returns to God and the body to dust (Eccl. 12:7, Psalm 146:4). The whole person sleeps until the resurrection.** He continues: "The great mistake is those who are taken up with *this error* is their steadfast refusal to consider the numerous other scriptures that clearly depict a different view of death." He then lists five passages to prove this point:

II Corinthians 5:6-8: "To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord." **I Cor. 15:54: "But when this perishable will have put on imperishable, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written "Death is swallowed up in victory'."** II Cor. 5:2, 4: "For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, longing to be *clothed* with our dwelling from heaven...for indeed while we are in this tent we groan being burdened not because we do not want to be *unclothed* but to be *clothed*, in order that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life." The word *put on* in I Corinthians 15 is the same word as *clothed* in II Corinthians 5. Further: **I Cor. 15:54: "then will come about the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory'."** II Cor. 5:4: "We do not want to be *unclothed* but *clothed* in order that what is mortal may be *swallowed up in life*." I Corinthians 15 shows that being "absent from the body and present with the Lord" takes place at the resurrection and not at death.

Philippians 1:21, 23: "But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ." **The key to understanding this passage is the phrase: "depart and be with Christ."** **The way we should interpret Scripture is to compare Scripture with Scripture. The Scriptures are their own best interpreters. Paul will not write one thing to one church and contradict it by writing something else to another church. I Thess. 4:17 states that when the Lord descends from heaven "then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always *be with the Lord*."** This shows we will be with the Lord through resurrection at his coming. Paul's "desire to depart and be with Christ" (Phil. 1:23) would be realized in resurrection. When a person "departs" the next thing he knows is the judgment (Heb. 9:27), and the judgment is on the last day (Acts 17:31).

II Peter 3:18-20: "Jesus himself was proclaimed by Peter as having been busily engaged in 'preaching to the spirits in prison' *during the interim between his death and resurrection*." **The Bible does not say it was "during the interim between his death and resurrection" he did this. He was not alive until God raised him from the dead. He was on the earth 40 days before he ascended. He had the time to do that before he ascended. We are not told when Jesus did this.**

Luke 23:43: "Truly I say unto you, today you will be with me in paradise." **This is an error in translation. In the Greek text there is no comma after "you" and before "today."** The text should read: "truly I say unto you today, you will be with me in Paradise."

Luke 16:19-31: "The rich man and Lazarus: "It is undeniable from this scripture that death ushers ones spirit into an acuter responsiveness to its new environment." **The spirit "returns to God, not to "an acuter responsiveness to its new environment."** Blakely and ultra-conservatives are not going to believe our answer, but to be brief here it is: **This story is a parable. Matt. 13:34: these things spoke Jesus unto the multitudes in parables; and without a parable he spoke he to them."** Mark 4:34: **But without a parable spoke he not to them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to is disciples."** Nothing in the context remotely suggests the final state of the dead. The context is the wrong thinking of the Jews.

The article continues: "As the natural body 'sleeps' in death, the released spirit exults in the Lord's presence and partakes of joys beyond our present ability to conceive. There is no discrepancy whatever in characterizing the believer who has died as both asleep and as consciously present with the Lord." **Scripture??** "In death, the saint's spirit goes to the intermediate state of Paradise (**not to the God who gave it??**) where it has a disembodied relationship with Christ and the spirits of the of the saved. Although this is far superior to anything known here by the spirits of the brethren, it is still not the ultimate of joy which God provided for His children. **Scripture??** Man disembodied is only part man: it takes the entire threefold nature, spirit, soul, and body to make a completes personality. Hence, the perfection of the saints awaits the Lord's return to earth, when He shall raise their glorified bodies uniting them with his spirt." **Shades of Roman Catholicism! Protestantism invented a convenient unscriptural Paradise and substituted it for Purgatory!**

Selah