

Know for Certain!

By Mark Mayberry
3/2/2008

Introduction

Though modern man is beset by uncertainty and doubt, Holy Scripture empowers us to an accurate and exact understanding of Heaven's Will (Luke 1:1-4). Confirming his covenant promise unto Abram, God said, "**Know for certain** that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions" (Gen. 15:12-16, esp. vs. 13). Addressing his waffling magicians, Nebuchadnezzar said, "**I know for certain** that you are bargaining for time, inasmuch as you have seen that the command from me is firm, that if you do not make the dream known to me, there is only one decree for you" (Dan. 2:4-11, esp. vs. 8). Concluding his message on Pentecost, Peter said, "Therefore let all the house of Israel **know for certain** that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified" (Acts 2:29-36, esp. vs. 36). Let us consider the realities of life and death, and the promises of the resurrection and recompense, regarding which we can have sure and certain knowledge.

The Reality of Death

God created man as a creature of choice, imposing physical death as the penalty of transgression (Gen. 2:15-17). After the fall, God said to Adam, "By the sweat of your face you will eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Gen. 3:17-19). When driven from the garden of Eden (Gen. 3:22-24), Adam began the inexorable march to the grave (Gen. 5:1-5). In like manner, death spread to all men, because all have sinned (Rom. 5:12-14). Even those blessed with length of days must eventually confront the certainty of death (Ps. 90:1-12).

The Reality of the Resurrection

Jesus affirms the reality of the resurrection, both for the righteous and the wicked (John 5:25-29). This doctrinal truth is foundational to the gospel (1 Cor. 15:1-5). If there is no resurrection, faith becomes futile, and discipleship is folly (1 Cor. 15:12-19). Nevertheless, the inspired apostle affirms the certainty of the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:20-26, 50-58).

The Reality of Recompense

The reality of recompense should constrain the conduct of all, both young and old (Eccl. 11:9-12:8, 13-14). Urging a path of self-denial and service, Jesus affirmed that every man will be

repaid according to his deeds (Matt. 16:24-27). The apostolic message is likewise consistent (Acts 10:42; 17:30-31; Rom. 2:4-11; 2 Cor. 5:10-11).

Conclusion

Death is a sad but inescapable reality: It is appointed unto man once to die, and after this comes the judgment (Heb. 9:27-28). Heeding the word of the Lord as spoken through Haggai, let us consider our ways, and – if necessary – reorder our priorities (Hag. 1:1-15). Let us live so that the blessing of Balaam can rightfully and equally apply to us: “Let me die the death of the upright, and let my end be like his!” (Num. 23:7-10).