

Words of Life

Westside church of Christ

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"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

John 6:68



People in Heaven Now?

Carl Allen

I began "full-time" preaching in the summer of 1956. Through the years, I have heard often, when someone died, "they are in heaven!" From the first time I heard this, and through the years have drawn a conclusion, about where people go when they die. Are there righteous people in heaven now?

We read of God being in heaven, "Our Father who art in heaven," Matt. 6:9. I remember reading about Jesus being at the right hand of God, "Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted," Acts 2:33; "But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God," Acts 7:55. So, one can conclude God is in heaven; Jesus is in heaven and from the statement in Rev. 4:5, "..... And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God." Most commentators acknowledge the "seven spirits" to be the Holy Spirit - I believe that to be the meaning here. This puts the Holy Spirit in the presence of God also; thus, in heaven!

Through the Old Testament, I do not read of those who have died as going straight to heaven. I read of the rich man and Lazarus, Lk. 16, this is a part of the Old Testament. When Jesus died, he went to Hades, Acts 2:27, and I consider this to be the same place as "Paradise," where the thief was to be with Jesus, Lk. 23:43. So, when one dies he goes to Hades and awaits the great Day of Judgment. Jesus is the only one that has escaped this state and otherwise folks will not be liberated till death and hades ceases to exist, Rev. 20:14. This is at the resurrection of the dead, Rev. 21:12-13: "And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne; and books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead that were in it; and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works." When death and Hades are no more, then will there be a place for the righteous and the wicked to go - heaven and hell, respectively.

When one establishes the end of hades, and the beginning of Heaven and Hell, at this point there is the resurrection of the dead. "Marvel not at this: for

Trends

Sobering statistics on bullying:

- Over 55,000 children have taken their own lives in the past 7 years due to being bullied (22 per day, almost one per hour!).
- About 160,000 children stay home from school each day to avoid being bullied.
- 60% of 4th through 8th graders report being victims of bullying.
- Bullying victims are 2 to 9 times more likely to commit suicide.

—via *Stand For the Silent*

Romans 12:17-19: "Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. 18 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. 19 Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord."

Sentence Sermons

"Courage is fire, and bullying is smoke." —Benjamin Disraeli

"I realized that bullying never has to do with you. It's the bully who's insecure." —Shay Mitchell

News & Notes

Please pray for those mentioned in the announcements after services and others listed on the bulletin board in the foyer of the church building.

Pray for all the members at Westside! Please pray for Susan Ferrell and her family as she continues to recover from a brain tumor. Please pray for her and her family.

Please pray for Alan Jones. He underwent deep brain stimulation to hopefully relieve severe facial pain. Alan held a gospel meeting for us in October 2014. He's been unable to preach for several months due to his affliction. Pray for him and his family.

Please pray for sister Virginia Brown's upcoming hip replacement surgery (2/15/17).

Pray for the all of our students. Schools are back in session and bring many temptations to our young people.

Please keep sister Wilma in your prayers! She gives all of us so much encouragement! God bless her and Virginia! Remember both of them in your prayers.

There are many needy saints! Can you help?! Let me know.

If you know of any in need of our prayers please let us know!

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Times of Service: Bible Study, Sunday 9:30 AM and Wednesday 7:00 PM; Worship, Sunday 10:30 AM and 5:00 PM

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the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment,” Jno. 5:28-29. Note: the good and the bad are raised at the same time. At this time, “... and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, even the lake of fire. And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire,” Rev. 19:13-15. This is the end of the abiding place called “Hades,” and the beginning of our abiding in Heaven or Hell, Matt. 25:46.

When this happens (resurrection of the dead) we will be “changed,” I Cor. 15:51-57. Now, we are fit subjects for a new life in heaven, with an “eternal body”! At that time, my friend, heaven will be opened for the righteous dead.

Selling Out on Morality

Greg Gwin

Ohio Senator Rob Portman recently announced that he now supports same-sex marriage. This makes Portman the first sitting Republican senator to take this position, and is especially noteworthy since he was a supporter of the ‘Defense of Marriage Act’ in 1996. That act defined marriage as between a man and a woman.

So, what could cause this dramatic change in a previously conservative politician? Well, it seems that Portman’s son has ‘come out’ as a homosexual.

We could spend time identifying the Bible proof that homosexuality is a sin. We could answer all the arguments of the many – including many ‘religious’ types – that claim otherwise. But our point of emphasis here is on the fact that this man totally changed on an important moral issue because a loved one is involved. We wonder what it would take to get Mr. Portman to ‘sell out’ his morality on other issues. Could he be swayed on abortion - Portman is currently ‘pro-life’ - if he had a daughter who was caught up in that sin? Would he ‘cave’ on pedophilia if a loved one was found guilty? What if another of his sons turns out to be a thief? a rapist? a murderer? Where does one stop once he surrenders his moral convictions?

Unfortunately this compromised senator is not alone. Too many – and not a few Christians – fail to stand up for what is right when their own families are entangled in sin. How often have we heard otherwise ‘sound’ brethren who offer excuses, failed arguments, and illogical explanations when their children or other loved ones are engaged in sinful conduct? Drinking, fornication, gambling, dancing, unscriptural divorce and remarriage . . . the list goes on . . . are all defended if it gets ‘too close to home’. Parents, grand-parents, siblings, and other relatives and friends become ‘enablers’ of such sins by their refusal to stand firmly for what is right.

Instead of this spirit of compromise, we must “earnestly contend for the faith” (Jude 3). Think!

Sense of Shame

L. A. Stauffer

In a recent interview an actress who recently did her first nude scene in a movie explained her discomfort the first time she disrobed on the set before the director, cameramen, and other members of the cast. She explained how reluctant she was, how awkward she felt — as though she at first felt a sense of shame. She then noted how much more comfortable she became and how much easier it was with each take and repeat of the scene as the director worked to get it just right.

This illustrates how in time, with continued practice, any person can become shameless and insensitive to shameful actions. It has happened in this country with fornicators, abortionists, homosexuals, lewd dancers, divorces for frivolous reasons, and nudity and filthy speech on TV and in the movies. Our sense of shame as a nation is all but lost and we, as Israel of old, no longer know how to blush (Jeremiah 6:15; 8:12).

But back to nudity. Shame has been associated with nakedness since the sin of Adam and Eve, who hid themselves in embarrassment and tried to cover their bodies with fig-leaf aprons. Jesus, in the book of Revelation, joins shame to nakedness a couple of times (Revelation 3:18; 16:15). And in the case of Adam and Eve, God replaced their inadequate aprons with coats of skin which, according to *Wilson’s Old Testament Word Studies*, were garments that generally had sleeves and came to the knees (p. 81). It is also interesting that God made undergarments for the priests that covered the thighs to hide the nakedness that could be seen under their out garments when they climbed the high steps up to the altar (Exodus 28:40-42).

All of this should be put in the context of marriage — the honorable and pure relationship in which men and women may view one another’s bodies and join themselves in a one-flesh relationship (Hebrews 13:4). Jesus made it clear that viewing the body of one to whom you are not married and lusting after it is impure and adulterous in heart and thought (Matthew 5:27,28). Men and women are, as a result, responsible to clothe themselves in a way that such illicit thinking is not provoked.

This begins with a sense of shame, a sensitivity about exposing breasts, private parts, and thighs to someone other than your mate. This, we believe, is the meaning of nakedness in the Bible. Women need a sense of shame about wearing low-cut and short clothing which expose areas of their bodies that only their spouse has a right to look upon. And so it should be with the men.

“But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?”

1 John 3:17