

## Going the Way of All the Earth

Joshua 23:14

### I. INTRODUCTION: I

1. **2** There is an interesting phrase in the Bible all should familiarize themselves with: “*Going the way of all the earth.*”
2. It is used by two outstanding men in the Bible who are worthy of our admiration and imitation:
  - A. **\*\* Joshua**: “*And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth...*” (Josh. 23:14).
  - B. **David**: Charged Solomon his son saying, “*I go the way of all the earth...*” (1 Kgs. 2:2).
3. **\*\*** “*Going the way of all the earth*” is an expression of physical death.
4. **3** This morning I want to bring to your attention six (6) things about my death and Y-O-U-R death for our careful consideration.

### II. DISCUSSION:

**As you consider you will “go the way of all the earth” I urge you to consider your death is...**

- I. **4 Certain**:
  - A. The words spoken by Joshua and David apply to each and every one of us. My death and Y-O-U-R death are sure! An absolute certainty!
  - B. It is recorded concerning the generations of Adam that they all, “*died...*”:
    - (1) **Adam** (Gen. 5:5, 8; 930 yrs old),
    - (2) **Seth** (Gen. 5:11; 912 yrs old),
    - (3) **Enosh** (Gen. 5:14; 905 yrs old),
    - (4) **Cainan** (Gen. 5:14; 910 yrs old),
    - (5) **Mahalaleel** (Gen. 5:17 895 yrs old),
    - (6) **Jared** (Gen. 5:20; 962 yrs old),
    - (7) **Methuselah** (Gen. 5:27; 969 yrs old),
    - (8) **Lamech** (Gen. 5:31; 777 yrs old),
    - (9) **Noah** (Gen. 9:29; 950 years old).
  - C. Only one of Adam’s descendants did not die, **Enoch**, and the only reason he did not die was that he “*walked with God*”; so “*God took him*” (Gen. 5:22-23; taken at 365 years old).
  - D. All of us are destined to die!
    - (1) Job said, “*For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living*” (Job 30:23).
    - (2) The Psalmist asked, “*What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death?*” (Psa. 89:48).
    - (3) Solomon said, “*For the living know that they shall die...*” (Eccl. 9:5).
    - (4) Paul informed the Corinthians, “*For as in Adam all die...*” (1 Cor. 15:22).
  - E. We all understand our own mortality; we all understand that someday we will (as a former friend of mine always said), “*get that shovel full of dirt thrown in our face.*”
    - (1) But, do you ever contemplate your own mortality? Do you really think about it?!
    - (2) You should! So, should I!
    - (3) Moses in the Psalms said, “*The days of our lives are seventy years; and if by reason of strength they are eighty years, yet their boast is only labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. ... I 2 So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.*” (Psa. 90:10, 12)

- F. We are wise when we contemplate the inevitability of our own death, because “...it is appointed unto men once to die and then the judgment.” (Heb. 9:27)

**As we consider “going the way of all the earth”; we need to take it to heart our death...**

2. \*\* Will come soon:

- A. Remember the song “It Won’t Be Very Long”? A line in it goes, “It won’t be very long till this short life shall end...It won’t be very long till here we cease to roam...”
- B. The Psalmist realized that great truth: “Remember how short my time is...” (Psalm 89:47).
- C. The shortness of life is expressed many different ways in the Scriptures:
- (1) A flower: **Job 14:1-2**: “Man who is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble. 2 He comes forth like a flower and fades away; he flees like a shadow and does not continue.”  
**Psa. 103:15-16**: “As for man, his days are like grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes. 16 For the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more.”
  - (2) A shadow: **Job 14:2**; **1 Chron. 29:15**: “For we are aliens and pilgrims before You, as were all our fathers; our days on earth are as a shadow, and without hope.”
  - (3) A wind: **Job 7:7**: “O remember that my life is wind: mine eye shall no more see good.” (KJV); **Psa. 78:39**: “For he remembered that they were but flesh; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again.” (KJV)
  - (4) A runner: **Job 9:25**: “Now my days are swifter than a runner; they flee away, they see no good.”
  - (5) Swift ships: **Job 9:26a**: “They pass by like swift ships...”
  - (6) An eagle: **Job 9:26b**: “...like an eagle swooping on its prey.”
  - (7) A tale that is told: **Psa. 90:9**: “For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told.” (KJV)
  - (8) A weaver’s shuttle: **Job 7:6**: “My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle, and are spent without hope.” (KJV)
  - (9) A vapor: **Jas. 4:14**: “whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.”
- D. Again, Moses in the Psalms said, “The days of our lives are seventy years; and if by reason of strength they are eighty years, yet their boast is only labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. ... 12 So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.” (Psa. 90:10, 12)
- (1) We need to gain “a heart of wisdom” as we consider the certainty of our death.
  - (2) And, we need to gain “a heart of wisdom” as we consider our death will come soon.

**As we contemplate “going the way of all the earth”; we all need to take it to heart...**

3. \*\* What will happen when we go:

- A. In **1 Thessalonians 5:23** Paul writes, “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
- B. Thus, man is composed of “spirit and soul and body.”
- (1) Body: Our body is compared to a tent; a temporary dwelling place:

**2 Pet. 1:13-14:** “Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, I 4 knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me.”

(2) Soul: can have one of two meanings:

(a) Spark of life: breath of life; **Gen. 2:7:** “And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”; **Gen. 1:24:** “And God said, ‘Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind’: and it was so.” (KJV)

(b) Eternal soul: **Mk. 8:36-37:** “For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? 37 Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”

(3) Spirit:

(a) Mind: intellect; **Mk. 8:12:** “But He sighed deeply in His spirit, and said, ‘Why does this generation seek a sign? Assuredly, I say to you, no sign shall be given to this generation.’”

(b) Attitude: **Rom. 12:11:** “not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;”; **2 Tim. 1:7:** “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”

(c) Eternal part of man created in God’s image: **1 Cor. 5:5:** “deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”; **Jas. 2:26:** “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”

C. God said, “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (Gen. 3:19).

(1) From a physical standpoint, we are as Abraham said, “but dust and ashes” (Gen. 18:27).

(2) Man has a spirit within him formed by the LORD, which is sometimes referred to as the soul (**Zech. 12:1:** “The burden of the word of the LORD against Israel. Thus says the LORD, who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him:”).

(3) When we “go the way of all the earth” our eternal soul or spirit will depart our body.

(4) The body will go back to the dust from whence it came; the spirit to God who gave it (**Jas. 2:26:** “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”).

D. Ecclesiastes 12:7 expresses death this way: “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.”

(1) It was said of Rachel, “And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died)...” (Gen. 35:18).

(2) Thus, we read of those who “gave up the ghost” (i.e., gave up their spirit; Gen. 25:8; 35:29; 49:33; Matt. 27:50).

E. The eternal part of man (soul/spirit) survives the death of the physical body and is fully aware, conscious etc. (Lk. 16:19-31).

(1) vv. 23-24 clearly show the rich man was fully aware, conscious, able to feel pain.

(2) v. 25 clearly shows Lazarus was fully aware, conscious, able to feel comfort.

- F. Again, we should consider this in light of Psalm 90:12: “So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”

**As we ponder “going the way of all the earth”; we all need to take it to heart...**

4. **5** We can choose how we go:

- A. Did you know you can and **will** choose how you will “go the way of all the earth?”
- B. We can’t choose how we will die physically, whether by some accident or disease, but we can and **will** decide if we will die spiritually.
- C. We will either “go the way of all the earth” in our sins or in Christ.
- (1) If you die in your sins, you cannot go where Christ is; Jesus told the unbelieving Jews:  
**Jn. 8:21:** “Then Jesus said to them again, ‘I am going away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin. Where I go you cannot come.’”; **Jn. 8:24:** “I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for except ye believe that I am (he), ye shall die in your sins.” (ASV)
- (2) The only death that is called blessed is the death of those who die “in the Lord”: **Rev. 14:13:** “Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, ‘Write: ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’”
- D. To die in the Lord, one must be in the Lord:
- (1) We get in the Lord as we are “baptized into Christ” (Gal. 3:27).
- (2) We stay in the Lord by following His word; as we “abide” in Him:  
**Jn. 8:31:** “Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, ‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.’”  
**Jn. 15:4:** “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.”  
**Jn. 15:6:** “If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.”
- (3) What will be your spiritual condition when you “go the way of all the earth”?  
**Eccl. 7:1:** “A good name is better than precious ointment, and the day of death than the day of one's birth;”
- E. Again, we should consider this in light of Psalm 90:12: “So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”

**As we ruminate on “going the way of all the earth”; we all need to take it to heart...**

5. **\*\*** Once we go, there’s no return:

- A. Death will bring an end to our earthly existence.  
**Eccl. 9:5:** “For the living know that they will die; but the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten.”  
**Eccl. 9:10:** “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going.”
- B. There is no coming back to **this** life.  
**2 Sam. 14:14:** “For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again...”

**Job 14:11-12:** *“As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up: So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep”*

**Job 16:22:** *“When a few years are come, then I shall go the way whence I shall not return”*

- C. David recognized this as he said of his dead child, *“...I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me”* (2 Sam. 12:23).
- D. The rich man learned there’s no returning from the dead to this life (Luke 16:27-31).
- E. So, whatever it is that you need to do, you better get it done!
- F. Again, we should consider this in light of Psalm 90:12: *“So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”* **Death seals our eternal destiny!**

**As we contemplate “going the way of all the earth”; we all need to take it to heart...**

6. **\*\* We don’t know when we will go:**

A. When do you plan to die?

- (1) I had a good friend in Michigan who pre-paid her funeral expenses.
- (2) But she did not know the day she would need the undertaker’s services!
- (3) 6,316 people die every hour; 105/minute; someday you’ll be one of them!

B. We don’t know who will be in tomorrow’s obituaries. It may be me! It may be you!

**Ecd. 9:12:** *“For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them.”*

**Prov. 27:1:** *“Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.”*

C. Do you remember the rich farmer in Luke 12:16-21?

- (1) He had a bumper crop: **Lk. 12:16-18:** *“The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. 17 And he thought within himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?’ 18 So he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods.’”*
- (2) He thought he had all the time in the world to enjoy the fruits of his labor: **Lk. 12:19:** *“And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.’”*
- (3) But he was wrong; dead wrong! (no pun intended): **Lk. 12:20:** *“But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’”*

D. What’s the point? **Lk. 12:20:** *“So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”*

E. We need to serve God NOW! Don’t wait until tomorrow! Don’t wait till next week, next month, etc.

F. Again, we should consider this in light of Psalm 90:12: *“So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”* **We don’t know when we will go!**

- G. We need to take to heart the advice the Lord gave Hezekiah, king of Judah, “*Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live*” (2 Kgs. 20:1). ***Have you set your spiritual house in order?***

## II. CONCLUSION: 6

- I. Someday, sooner rather than later, someone will ask, “Whatever happened to Craig Thomas?”
  - A. \*\* The answer will be, “He’s gone the way of all the earth.”
  - B. \*\* Someday, again, sooner rather than later, someone will ask, “Whatever happened to \_\_\_\_\_ (i.e., Y-O-U!).
  - C. The answer will be, “\_\_\_\_\_ (i.e., Y-O-U!) has gone the way of all the earth.”
2. \*\* Have you contemplated your own death?
  - A. \*\* Sir Francis Bacon said, “Death is a friend of ours; and he that is not ready to entertain him is not at home.”
  - B. \*\* Moses, “*So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.*” (Psa. 90:2)
3. \*\* Are you “at home”? Are you gaining “*a heart of wisdom*”?

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