

Four Facts Of Life

No. 256

Introduction.

I. In the long ago the wise man Solomon penned these words in the 9th chapter of Ecclesiastes.

5 For the living know they will die; but the dead do not know anything, nor have they any longer a reward, for their memory is forgotten. 6 Indeed their love, their hate, and their zeal have already perished, and they will no longer have a share in all that is done under the sun.

II. In this brief text Solomon gives “Four Facts Of Life.” These facts were true 1,000 years before Christ and they are still true today.

I. **“For The Living Know They Will Die”** - The first fact is “for the living know they will die.”

A. Observation confirms this fact.

1. Though none of us have experienced death, we have seen it many times and come to accept all men must die.
2. We may be strong, we may be wealthy, we may be healthy, we must do all the right things, but we will not beat this statistic.

B. The author of the book of Hebrews confirms this first fact. (Heb. 9:27).

C. Paul also confirmed the universality of death. (1 Cor. 15:22; Rom. 5:12).

12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—

1. Paul makes it clear as to why we die physically. We die physically because of Adam’s sin.
2. Adam and Eve had been given a warning in the garden of Eden. (Gen. 2:17).
3. Later Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden tree and because they ate of the tree they were driven from the tree of life and began to die physically. If they had not eaten of the tree, they could have lived forever in the garden of Eden. (Gen. 3:22, 23).
4. Paul tells us that this “death spread to all men” “because all sinned.”
5. We did not personally sin in the garden, but Adam represented all his descendants in his sinful act. Because of his sinful act all men must die physically. We all have an appointment with the grave.
6. There have only been **2 exceptions** to this rule. (Gen. 5:24; Heb. 11:5; 2 Kgs. 2:11).
7. The only other exception will be those who are alive when Christ comes again. (1 Thess. 4:15).

D. God's word teaches we die physically because of Adam's sin, but we do not die spiritually.

1. It is false doctrine to teach that we inherit the guilt of Adam's sin.
2. **Moses wrote, "Fathers shall not be put to death for their sons, nor shall sons be put to death for their fathers; everyone shall be put to death for his own sin. (Deut. 24:16).**
3. Eight hundred years later the prophet Ezekiel restated God's law that guilt is not transferable. (Ezek. 18:20).
4. Then, 600 years after Ezekiel, Paul also emphasized that in the judgment we will only be accountable for personal sins. (Rom. 14:12).
5. Yes, all inherit the consequences, the penalty of Adam's sin, but no one inherits the guilt.

E. Despite these clear teachings, there are many in our world who teach that guilt is transferable. They teach that babies are born sinners. They teach they are sinners in the womb and after they leave the womb. Many people accept this false doctrine, but it is repulsive to those who love God and His word.

1. **Hugo McCord**, one of my Bible professors at Oklahoma Christian College, tells of speaking in a tent meeting in Carbon Hill, Alabama on July 3, 1938. In this sermon he stressed babies are not born sinners, but a denomination pastor spoke up from his seat and argued babies are born sinners and challenged brother McCord to a debate. Brother McCord replied, "You be here tomorrow night and we will divide the time." Brother McCord was only in his 20's at the time, and says he was scared. In the audience was Gus Nichols a learned and experienced gospel preacher who lived in Jasper, Alabama about 30 miles away. Brother McCord rushed to him and asked him to sit with him the next night. He said he was scheduled to start a meeting in Mississippi the next night, but he could see that brother McCord was shaking. He said he would send his son Flavil to conduct the meeting, and he would meet him the next morning at 8:00 and they would study all day for the debate. During the debate the denominational pastor kept arguing that the fact a baby cries shows he is a sinner. Brother McCord said he did not know how to reply to this argument, but brother Nichols whispered to him, "That makes Jesus a sinner, for 'Jesus wept', John 11:35." That was the only argument the preacher was standing on. The refutation of his argument so demoralized the denominational preacher that he quit the debate.

2. The Bible does not include babies when it says "all sinned."

- a. When it says "all have sinned", it is talking about responsible people knowing right from wrong.
- b. Babies are innocent and do not know right from wrong. The Bible teaches "to such belongs the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 19:14).

II. "The Dead Do Not Know Anything" - The second fact is "the dead do not know anything."

A. Solomon teaches us that the physical body in the grave knows nothing. At death our physical bodies return to the dust of the earth. The corpse has no knowledge.

B. This does not mean that the dead know nothing anywhere.

1. Solomon qualifies these words with the words "under the sun."
2. Man knows nothing in the grave or "under the sun." As far as his physical body is concerned he is dead all over.

C. But thanks be to God man is more than physical.

1. Man has a “spirit” or “soul.” (Eccles. 12:7; Dan. 7:15; Matt 10:28; Lk. 23:46; Acts 7:60; Jas. 1:21).
2. The Bible teaches this “spirit” or “soul” does not die with the body, but lives in hades if the person has been wicked and lives in “paradise” if the person is in Christ.
3. In paradise or hades there is knowledge and consciousness.
 - a. **Samuel’s** spirit came back to the earth and talked to Saul. (1 Sam. 28:14).
 - b. **Moses and Elijah** came back to the earth and talked with Jesus. (Lk. 9:31).
 - c. We also learn that those **in the spirit world have knowledge** from the account of the rich man and Lazarus. (Lk. 16:19-31)

19 "Now there was a certain rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, gaily living in splendor every day. 20 "And a certain poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, 21 and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man's table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores. 22 "Now it came about that the poor man died and he was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. 23 "And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 "And he cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue; for I am in agony in this flame.' 25 "But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. 26 'And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, in order that those who wish to come over from here to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from there to us.' 27 "And he said, 'Then I beg you, Father, that you send him to my father's house— 28 for I have five brothers-- that he may warn them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' 29 "But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.' 30 "But he said, 'No, Father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!' 31 "But he said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead.'"

- d. All through this narrative we see those in the spirit world are conscious and have knowledge.
- e. The spirit of the rich man knew where Lazarus was and knew the lost condition of his 5 brothers on the earth.

f. Yes, the dead know nothing in the grave, but their spirits are alive and conscious in the spirit world.

III. **“Nor Have They Any Longer A Reward”** - The third fact is “nor have they any longer a reward.”

A. Solomon affirms that there are no more paychecks after one is buried.

1. The corpse is “in the land of gloom and deep darkness.”

2. The corpse is doom to be consumed.

JOB 10:21 Before I go-- and I shall not return-- To the land of darkness and deep shadow;

JOB 24:20 "A mother will forget him; The worm feeds sweetly till he is remembered no more. And wickedness will be broken like a tree.

ISA 14:11 'Your pomp and the music of your harps Have been brought down to Sheol; Maggots are spread out as your bed beneath you, And worms are your covering.'

B. But again, it should be stressed **these scriptures are speaking of the grave.** They are speaking of man’s fate “under the sun.” They are not speaking of those in the abode of righteous spirits.

C. Every human being can, in Jesus, be among “the spirits of the righteous made perfect.” (Heb. 12:23).

D. The righteous spirits are blessed at death in paradise (Abraham’s bosom) and after Christ comes will be blessed in heaven itself. God’s promises are made to eternal spirits that will inherit new spiritual bodies.

IV. **“Their Memory Is Forgotten”** - The fourth fact is “their memory is forgotten.”

A. The vast majority of people, either good or evil, are most often forgotten a few generations after death.

B. On April 14, 1912 the “unsinkable” Titanic struck an iceberg and sunk on her maiden voyage. We are told that 1595 people died and some of the people were very well known. Forty prominent people on the ship were from Belfast, Ireland where the ship had been built. A brass plaque with the names of these 40 people was placed as an memorial on one of the downtown streets. In 1962, exactly 50 years later, **Joe Nisbet**, the gospel preacher working with the Eastside Church of Christ in Belfast, copied the names of the 40 from the brass plaque. On Sunday at church services he read the list of names, and asked if anybody recognized any of them. No one did. Then he referred to Solomon’s fourth fact that “the memory of them is forgotten.”

Conclusion.

I. All people “under the sun” are quickly forgotten, but what makes life worth living is the fact that beyond the sun, there is One is “the heaven of heavens” whose memory of the righteous is perfect. God knows all the righteous and He remembers the righteous forever. He has them in His book of remembrance and will richly bless every person who loves and serves Him.

II. **May all of us remember the “Four Facts Of Life” presented by Solomon.** May all of us surrender to the Lord in faith and baptism and live for Him that we will have rich blessings now and at death and in heaven. Come as we stand and sing.

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