



March 11, 2022

Those Who Sleep Shall Awake!

Warm hellos again, friends, brethren, co-workers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God, from here on the Gulf Coast. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you all doing well, and that your week has been blessed.

We are just a little over 4 weeks away from the Passover, Night to Be Much Observed and Days of Unleavened Bread. I'm sure, like me, you are in the process of examining where you are in your relationship with God, as well as the physical aspects of de-leavening your homes...

We ended our letter last Friday evening looking at Daniel 12:2 that referred to "*many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake.*"

In trying times like we live in, encouragement is always welcome! Let's discuss in the following thoughts this very encouraging aspect of what God has in store for you and me.

This concept of the dead being in a sleep-like state is mentioned also in the Greek Scriptures. Here we see Lazarus, the friend of Jesus, had fallen sick. Jesus delayed several days going to see him. (John 11:6) Then Jesus told the disciples, "*Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up.*" (v.11) The disciples did not understand that Jesus knew that Lazarus had died. The account goes on to make clear that Lazarus had indeed died. "*However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep. Then Jesus said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead."* (vv.13-14)

Normal sleeping is a good comparison to the unconsciousness of the mind at death, as Solomon commented, "*But the dead know nothing.*" Of course in normal human sleep there is the phenomenon of "dreaming" during REM (Rapid Eye Movement) sleep. Rarely does one remember a dream. When you and I sleep, time seems to pass quickly and then we awake unaware of the hours that went by

during our sleep.

I often reflect that “that is a good thing” that we don’t know all that goes on when we are asleep. We awake with a sort of restart to another fresh day in our lives.

The apostle Paul also writes of death as a “sleep-like condition”. He writes of this in the famous 1 Thessalonians 4. *"But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first."* (vv.13, 14, 16)

Clearly Paul equates the "dead in Christ" with those who "have fallen asleep" and "sleep in Jesus." Paul also makes this comparison in the resurrection chapter. *"Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep . . . For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."* (1 Corinthians 15:51-52) What Paul is referring to is actually made clear in 1 Thessalonians 4. *". . . we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep."* It appears that Paul at this time felt he and other disciples would be alive when Christ returned to set up the kingdom. He contrasts this with those "who are asleep" or dead.

One of the reasons Christ came to earth was to announce the good news of the kingdom, of God! That kingdom he referred to is one that had been referred to in the Scriptures such as we find in the prophecies of Daniel. Daniel 7 describes the appearance of the Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven to receive a kingdom and an everlasting dominion. (vv.13-14)

We also find the part the saints will have in this kingdom. *"But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever."* (v.18) The saints will be ruling with the son of Man in this kingdom and they will be part of an eternal kingdom. The apostle Paul stated, *"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God .*

. ." (1 Corinthians 15:50) Jesus spoke to Nicodemus, (a member of the Sanhedrin). Jesus told him, "*unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*" (John 3:5-6)

Human beings are limited to the physical realm. To achieve their ultimate destiny, they must undergo a preparation (conversion experience) that takes time, not instantaneous, followed eventually by a transformation. Paul stated, "*For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*" (1 Corinthians 15:52)

Even the faithful, when they die go to the grave, return to the dust and *remain unconscious* until the return of Christ and the sounding of the seventh trumpet. Then they will be given eternal life with spirit bodies. "*It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.*" (v.44) "*And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.*" (v.49)

This friends, will be the ultimate fulfillment of Genesis 1:26 "*Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness.*" Pretty exciting as we think about it, what a destiny we look forward to!

Arms up friends! Our prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Please do pray for us as well.



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