

DEATH: SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY

(A Trio from the Scriptures for Three Readers.)

1 – To Adam the Lord God said, “By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”

2 – And the Lord God said, “The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.”

3 – So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken.

1 – Adam lived 930 years, and then he died.

2 – Methuselah lived 969 years, and then he died.

3 – Noah lived 950 years, and then he died.

1 – Abraham buried his wife Sarah in the cave in the field of Machpelah near Mamre in the land of Caanan. So the field and the cave in it were legally made over to Abraham by the Hittites as a burial site.

2 – Jacob said, “I am about to be gathered to my people. Bury me with my fathers in the cave in the field of Machpelah, near Mamre in Caanan, which Abraham bought as a burial place from Ephron the Hittite, along with the field. There Abraham and his wife Sarah were buried, there Isaac and his wife Rebekah were buried, and there I buried Leah.”

3 – When Jacob had finished giving instructions to his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed, breathed his last and was gathered to his people.

1 – David son of Jesse was king over all Israel. He died at [the age of seventy], having enjoyed long life, wealth and honor. His son Solomon succeeded him as king.

2 – The length of our days is seventy years – or eighty, if we have the strength; yet their span is but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away.

1, 2 & 3 – We will not ALL sleep, but we will all be CHANGED.

1 – Here are two examples. Enoch lived 365 years. Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.

2 – As Elijah and Elisha were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind. Elisha saw this and cried out,

3 – “My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!”

2 – And Elisha saw him no more. Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them apart.

3 – Jesus said to Martha, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

1 – When the women entered the tomb, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. Suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them and said,

2 – “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!”

3 – “Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.’ ”

1 – Then they remembered his words. “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”

2 – Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a human being.

3 – For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But in this order: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.

1, 2 & 3 – The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

1 – [We are] convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons,

2 – neither the present nor the future, nor any powers,

3 – neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation,

1, 2 & 3 – will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1 – Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed – in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.

2 – For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.

3 – When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that has been written will come true:

1, 2 & 3 – “Death has been swallowed up in victory.”

3 – “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

1, 2 & 3 – But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!

References used in this reading: Genesis 3:19,22,23; Genesis 5:5,23-24,27; Genesis 9:29; Genesis 23:19-20; Genesis 49:29-33; 2 Kings 2:11-12; Psalm 90:10; 1 Chronicles 29:26,28; John 11:25-26; Luke 24:3-8; John 14:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 51-57; Romans 8:38-39.

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