

CHAPTER 3

Man's Destiny--Where Am I Going?

We have been considering some of life's most important questions. In Chapter 1 we discussed man's origin--"Where did I come from?" In Chapter 2 we thought about man's purpose--"Why am I here?" Now we are ready to answer a third key question which involves man's destiny--"Where am I going?"

These questions can also be thought of in terms of PAST, PRESENT and FUTURE:

PAST--"Where did I come from?"

PRESENT--"Why am I here right now?"

FUTURE-- "Where am I going?"

When we speak of a person's **destiny**, we are speaking of what happens to a person in the end. Where am I headed? What is going to happen to me when I finish life's journey? "Destination" is a similar word. A destination is the place to which a person is going. Suppose I am planning to take a trip to New York City. New York City is my destination--the place where I am going to end up when I have finished my trip.

Every person is on a journey through life. The question which we must think about is this: "Where am I going to end up?" "Where will life's journey bring me?"

Think of the thousands of cars which may be on the highways near your home at this moment. Each driver has a **destination** in mind (a place where he or she plans to end up). Some drivers may get lost, and a few may never reach their destination, but each driver knows where he wants to go.

It would be silly for a driver to say something like this: "I'm just driving along, and I'm not going anywhere in particular. I don't know where I'm going, and I don't know when or how I'm going to get there. I don't care where I end up." We laugh at such a driver, and yet there are many people like him. They are traveling through life, and yet they do not know where they are headed. They do not know what is at the end of life's road. They, too, are not sure about life's destination. They would have to say, "My destination is unknown!"

Imagine getting on an airplane, taking off into the air, and then hearing this announcement: "Welcome aboard. This is Flight Number 843 headed for somewhere. We hope to have a safe trip to wherever we are going. We hope that each of you will have an enjoyable and comfortable flight. We are not sure where or when we will land, but we are sure that our fuel will run out before too long. If you really want to know where we will end up, your guess is as good as ours! Have a good flight!" Again we laugh, but there are many people who fly through life in the same way. They do not really know where they will end up. They know that the day will come when life's journey will come to an end and they will die, but beyond the grave they do not know what is going to happen.

When a football player recovers a fumble (a loose ball), he knows exactly where to run. He has a destination or a goal in mind. He knows just where he needs to go in order to score a touchdown. The coach would not be very happy with a player who grabs the ball and then starts running around in circles going nowhere!

The Place To Which All Men Are Headed

There is one fact about man's destiny that is undisputed and unquestioned. ***ALL MEN ARE MARCHING TO THE GRAVE!*** Every person must agree that death is at the end of life's road. The funeral homes prove this statement. The cemeteries prove this statement. All men are headed for that final day of death.

Joshua knew where he was going. In Joshua 23:14 he said, "And, behold, this day I am _____ the _____ of _____ the earth." David knew the same thing. In 1 Kings 2:2 he said, "I _____ the _____ of _____ the earth." All the earth is headed for the same place: THE GRAVE! If you do not believe that the grave is at the end of life's journey, then try to find someone who was born more than 125 years ago and ask him!

According to Ecclesiastes 3:20, how many people end up in the grave? _____ Death is an inescapable reality for all people. People may try to deny their destination or not think about it, but no matter what they do, they cannot change the fact of it. The only thing uncertain about death is the time. We are certain we will die; we are not certain exactly when, though we know the approximate age at which most people (see Psalm 90:9-10).

What Lies Beyond the Grave?

Death is a great mystery. Men and women have always wondered what lies beyond the grave. Man is curious about his future life. Some have even gone to *spiritualists* or *mediums* (people influenced by wicked demons) hoping to communicate with those who have died so that they can learn about the afterlife.

Suppose I wanted to know what it is like to have a medical operation. There are two ways I could find out: 1) I could talk to people who have had this same operation, and ask them to tell me about their experience; 2) I could have the operation myself, and personally experience all that is involved.

How can a person learn what lies beyond the grave? I cannot learn from my own personal experience because I have never died! That is one experience I have not yet had! Also, I cannot learn from the experiences of other people because they have not yet died either, and those who have gone on to the next life do not return to tell me about it. Has anyone ever told you what it is like to die?

There are some people who have come very close to death. There are cases where a person's heart temporarily stops beating, his breathing stops, his blood pressure drops, and his pupils dilate. Then after several seconds (or in some cases minutes) the doctors are able to resuscitate the person so that they live. Some examples of people's descriptions of their experiences were recorded by Raymond A. Moody, Jr. in his book *Life After Life*:

"All pain vanished."

"I went through this dark, black vacuum at super speed."

"There was the feeling of utter peace and quiet, no fear at all."

"I was in a very dark, very deep valley. Later I thought, "Well, now I know what the Bible means by *the valley of the shadow of death* because I've been there."

There is only one problem with these reports and experiences. These people did not really die! They came very close to death, but they did not die! Their stories are like a man telling others how good frog legs taste when the frog legs are still lying on his plate and he has not even tasted them yet! If these people had really died, then they would not have been able to tell others about it! Death is irreversible, a one-way street. Near death experiences are not death experiences. Such people were close to death, but they did not die. If they had died, they would not have come back.

Men are ignorant when it comes to what lies beyond the grave. There is only one Person who is the Authority on the subject of death. God Himself knows all about death and beyond. Death is not a mystery to God. To find out what lies beyond the grave, we must . . . (circle the correct answer)

- a. Visit a medium so that we can talk to someone who has died. **Note: A "medium" is a person who claims to be able to communicate with the dead.**
- b. Read about "death" in the encyclopedia.
- c. Go to the Bible and see what God has said about death and what lies beyond the grave.
- d. Talk to people who have had "near death" experiences.

People have different ideas about what will take place beyond the grave. Here are four of the most common views (the last one is the correct and Biblical view):

1) EVOLUTION

As we have already seen in the first two chapters, evolution teaches that man is nothing more than a highly developed animal. Man is nothing more than body, brain, bones and blood. There is no such thing as a soul or a spirit that lives forever. There is no such thing as heaven or hell. When a person dies, he is no different than the animals. He dies and that's it! He is no more! He stops existing, and he ceases to be! Death is the end of everything.

There are many people today who believe that death ends all and that there is nothing beyond the grave. They believe that when a person dies, he ceases to exist.

Circle the correct answer:

True or False: According to Matthew 25:46, all men will live FOREVER somewhere!

True or False: According to Matthew 10:28, man is nothing but a body.

2) REINCARNATION

The word "incarnation" means "to come *in the flesh*" or "to take on a bodily form." This word is usually used of Christ who became flesh and took on a human body (see John 1:14 and 1 Timothy 3:16). The little prefix "re-" means "again." Thus **REINCARNATION** means "coming *again* in the flesh" or "being reborn in a new body or into another form of life."

Those who believe in reincarnation would say that a person dies and that sometime later he comes back into the world as another person or as an animal. Some would even be very careful not to kill a cow, for example, because they think their great grandmother may have come back into this life in the form of a cow and they do not want to be guilty of killing their own great grandmother!

God's Word says, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the _____" (Hebrews 9:27). People may exit this life by death, but no one may reenter this life by reincarnation. Death is a one-way street.

3) UNIVERSALISM.

Those who embrace universalism teach that all men will eventually be saved and will go to heaven. They believe that there are many roads to God. If men are sincere, it does not matter which path they travel because in the end they will all reach the same destination, which is heaven. Since God is a God of love, they think He would never punish a person forever in a place called **hell**. Thus they do not believe in hell. They think everyone will end up in heaven with God where they will enjoy complete and perfect joy.

How do the following passages of Scripture prove that universalism is not true?

Matthew 7:13-14

John 14:6

Mark 9:42-48

John 3:16

4) CHRISTIANITY

The Lord Jesus Christ taught that there is a real heaven and a real hell. Every person is either

bound for heaven or bound for hell. Every person is headed for a destination that is permanent and eternal. There are two places that will be inhabited forever. One is called "the new Jerusalem" (Revelation 21:2), and the other is called "the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:14-15; 21:8). Every person will reach one of these two places. A person either travels on the narrow road leading to _____ or on the broad road leading to _____ (see Matthew 7:13-14). How many are on the narrow road? _____ How many are on the broad road?

Where a person spends eternity is determined in this life! Once a person departs from this life his eternal destiny remains unchanged (compare Revelation 22:11). Where a person will spend eternity depends on whether that person receives Jesus Christ or rejects Him.

Please put the following verses in the correct column below: Luke 18:11-12 (compare verse 14); Luke 18:13 (compare verse 14); Luke 23:39; Luke 23:40-43; John 1:11; John 1:12; John 3:18a (the first part of the verse); John 3:18b (the second part of the verse); John 3:36a; John 3:36b; John 5:24; John 8:24; 1 Thessalonians 1:9; 2 Thessalonians 2:12; 1 John 5:12a; 1 John 5:12b; Revelation 21:7; Revelation 21:8; Revelation 22:14; Revelation 22:15.

CHRIST RECEIVED		CHRIST REJECTED
↓		↓

In which column do you belong?

_____ (or) _____

(Write your own name in the proper column)

FINDING DIRECTION

