



"All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field. The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the LORD blows on them. Surely the people are grass. The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever."

"Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not." Job

"For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then

The Nature of Man

When we consider the words of scripture (such as those that are quoted above), there should be no confusion as to what we are. We are creatures of the dust, and if it were not for the hope that we have through the redemptive sacrifice of Christ, we would return to the ground forever.

We are by nature like the grass of the field, like the flower that fadeth, - we are no more than a vapor that vanishes away.

We must not be deceived by the serpent's lie, who told Eve: "Thou shalt not surely die." Will we place our confidence in the words of the Greek philosophers, or in the revealed Word of God?

We will never fully appreciate the hope of salvation that we have through the gospel of Christ, until we learn to acknowledge the frailty of our natural sinful, dying bodies. The Apostle Paul expressed it well:

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Things Concerning

The Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ

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"Dust thou art, and unto dust shall

Adam and Eve were disobedient to God in the Garden of Eden. To punish them, God cursed the ground and sentenced them to **mortality**. They became dying creatures.



"Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; 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 3:17-19).



Like Father

We are all the descendents of Adam and Eve. We have inherited their mortal nature with all of the related effects, including our desire to sin.

"Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned" (Rom 5:12 NIV).

Salvation

Fortunately, God did not intend to

leave mankind without any hope for salvation.

Along with the sentence of death there was a promise of life. Gen. 3:15 is the first clear prophecy of the sacrifice of Christ. This sacrifice was necessary to atone for the sin of our first parents.

Eternal Life?

Did the sacrifice of Christ change our nature? Do we have eternal life now,?

The answer to these questions are obvious. We still sin. **We still die.** We are surrounded by disease, suffering, sorrow, sickness and pain. What happened?

The Hope of Salvation

Contrary to popular opinion, **we are not immortal yet!** Through Christ, **an opportunity was provided for us** to be saved. We are expected to:

1. **Believe and obey** the call of the gospel and be baptized into Christ.

2. **Be obedient to the commandments.**

If we do our part, our prayer is that **through the mercy of God** we will receive eternal life **when**

Hope and Comfort from the Scriptures

When we consider the mortality of man, and realize that we are born “without hope and without God in the world”; it is comforting to know that Jesus has been provided as “**the resurrection and the life**”.

Resurrection Through Jesus

The apostles who taught the gospel of salvation in the name of Christ, preached “through Jesus the resurrection of the dead”.

Death is a perpetual sleep for the natural man who dies without Christ. If, on the other hand, we die “in Christ”, we are said to be “asleep in Jesus” waiting for the resurrection of the dead.

The apostle Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, expressed it this way:

*“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 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**. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.” (1 Thess 4:14-17 NIV)*

Comfort in Hope

When we look at these words of Paul, we find that his message was intended to comfort the faithful in Thessalonica who were mourning for their dead.

They were told **not to sorrow** concerning those who had died in Christ. In the world, other



families sorrow when their loved ones die. But, those who are faithful believers in Christ will **find comfort** in knowing that there is hope for the resurrection of their loved ones at the return of Christ.

Remember how Martha was comforted in the knowledge that her brother would be resurrected. “I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day” (John 11:24).

At His Appearing

Our hope then, is in the resurrection that will occur when Jesus returns to this earth. The apostle Paul charged Timothy to preach the words of the gospel, keeping in mind the truth about the “Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom” (2 Tim 4:1).

This comfort can be ours

Death is inevitable. It touches every life as we wait for our own turn. We have the opportunity now to secure a hope for the resurrection to eternal life in God’s kingdom on the earth.

The gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation. If we believe and are baptized into the saving name of Jesus Christ, we will be able to approach our

“So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life”.

The Way to the Tree of Life

When man was sentenced to be a mortal creature, a barrier was created to prevent them from eating of the Tree of Life in their sinful state. In Genesis 3:24 we read that **a flaming sword stood in the way to guard or keep the way**.

It is not essential to understand all of the detail intended by the symbolic Cherubim and the sword. It is sufficient to recognize that Adam and Eve (the mother of all living), were placed **outside of this barrier**. They were separated from fellowship with their Creator, and unable to reach the tree that would allow them to live forever.

Atonement Required

Before any man would be able to eat of the Tree of Life, it would be necessary for a righteous descendent of the woman to make an atoning sacrifice. Christ was the one who was ordained for this task. He was the “lamb of God” to take away the sin of the world. (see Gen 3:15, John 1:29)

Jesus Outside of the Garden

Jesus was a unique individual. He was the son of God, but he was also born of a woman. Like all of us, he also was mortal. He also was born **outside of the garden**. He was therefore unable to eat of the Tree of Life and enjoy full fellowship with his Father.

Before he could enjoy these blessings, he must first lay down his own life. He was therefore the first one to benefit from his own sacrifice.

Awake O Sword

It is fitting that the prophet Zechariah spoke about the

crucifixion of Christ in words that call attention again to the sword at the East of Eden.

“Awake, O sword, against my shepherd,

against the man who is close to me!” declares the LORD Almighty. “Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered, and I will turn my hand against the little ones” (Zech 13:7 NIV).

When Jesus gave up his life in obedience to the Father’s will, he symbolically passed through the sword and opened the way back to the Tree of Life.

Eternal Life for All?

Jesus found the way back to the Tree and after his resurrection was exalted to the right hand of God, in full fellowship with his Father.

Did his victory over sin open the door for all men to live forever with him? The benefit of his sacrifice was conditional. He became “the way, the truth and the life”, but only for those who are **his at his coming**.

“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming” (1 Cor 15: 22-23).

“To him that overcometh”

The privilege of eating of the Tree of Life is **still reserved**: Long after the sacrifice of Christ had been accomplished, the way to the Tree was still described a provisional hope: “**To him that overcometh** will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God” (Rev 2:7).

