

STRAIGHTWAY

And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him [Mark 1:18].

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Self-Born Versus God-Born

Dr. H. T. Spence

One of the great, enigmatic theological questions throughout Church history has been, “Why did God create Satan?” An answer to this question will help us to understand why certain apparently godly men have ultimately become men of compromise and enemies of the Truth.

In approaching this question let us carefully consider the few Scriptures concerning the beginning of this angel Lucifer. Two passages of important insight into Satan’s genesis are Isaiah 14, a proverb to the King of Babylon, and Ezekiel 28, a lamentation to the King or Prince of Tyre.

Although these contexts are addressed to kings, God is actually speaking to the power behind these kings, Satan himself.

In Ezekiel 28, God “laments” the fall of the Devil. Within this lamentation (28:11-19) God describes this pre-fallen creature’s beauty, glory, and anointing. We are told of his past “thou hast” (28:13) and “thou wast” (28:15). The past was marked by perfection, anointing, coverings, beauty, and workmanship. This glorious view continued “till iniquity was found in thee” (28:15b). He was created for beauty, for glory, for a doxology to God; he was perfect in his

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Ending Life Well

ways until iniquity was found in him. Isaiah 14:13-14 reveals that this iniquity found in him was birthed in his will: the will rose up against the will of God in thought. With all his beauty and glory, he believed he could be worshipped, and glorified, yea, even become like God! The Scriptures make it very clear that Lucifer (his pre-fallen name) was created by God as the “Shining One,” the beautiful one, the doxology to God. One day he, with his own thoughts and will, birthed another entity. This entity became known as Satan, the “adversary,” the Devil, the “accuser,” and the “slanderer.” Lucifer was God-created; Satan was self-born!

In Luke 10:18, Jesus stated in response to the seventy: “I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.” The verb *beheld* is in the imperfect tense, which is a present tense leading to an aorist, crisis moment. Jesus saw Lucifer’s impending fall and change into Satan. Finally, in

Revelation 12:4 another passage speaks of Satan’s tail drawing the “third part of the stars of heaven,” and casting them to the earth. This seems to indicate that Satan convinced one-third of the angelic realm to rebel against God, for which they were cast out of heaven with him.

The Self-Born Enigma of Israel

The event of the created Lucifer becoming the self-born Satan is an enigma that has often typified the history of nations. In Isaiah 5:1-7 God tells the prophet to take up a song against the nation of Israel. Israel was God’s vineyard planted on a fruitful hill (Hebrew, *ben shemen* meaning “son of oil” or one “anointed”). God had planted *sorek* (Heb., “choice seed”) in order to produce the choicest grape vine. The Lord was so confident of the result from the effort in His vineyard that he built a tower and a winepress there. “And he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes” (5:2b). These “wild” grapes in the Hebrew are *bushim*, meaning they have a bad smell. It was only in the crushing, the crucible, and the judgment moment that these apparently good grapes revealed their wretched condition. The Lord responded, “Judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?” (5:3-4). Where did the Lord fail in this matter of His vineyard? The answer must *not* be that God failed; something happened

STRAIGHTWAY

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within the grapes or vines themselves after all that was done to make them perfect. We are not told how this came about; nonetheless, it is evident something happened to cause the promised seed to go bad.

The Self-Born Enigma of an Individual

The self-born enigma can be found not only in a godly nation but also in an individual. A classic example of this would be King Saul. There is still a theological debate about this man, "Was he ever saved?" First Samuel 9-10 depicts the story of this man's rise to greatness. The Bible says "the spirit of God came upon him" (10:10); "God gave him another heart" (10:9); he prophesied among the prophets (10:11); he hid himself as if he were a deeply humble man (10:21-22); he held his peace when the children of Belial refused to bring the new king presents (10:27). It is also evident that Samuel deeply loved Saul and truly desired the best from this man.

Following these good words Saul is revealed projecting himself into the priestly office by sacrificing the burnt and peace offerings (I Samuel 13). In I Samuel 15 we read of his incomplete obedience to God's Word and his anger in response to the prophet's actions and words. In chapter 16:14 the Spirit of the Lord departs from Saul and an evil spirit from the Lord troubles him. In chapter 28 he seeks out a witch for guidance and help. Finally he ends

his life through suicide (31:1-5; I Chronicles 10:1-6, 14). The world may invent a number of psychological reasons for this decline of Saul: for example, that the prophet Samuel was too hard on him or there was too much pressure on him to do right.

Nevertheless, we must discern the process of Saul's own destruction. In I Samuel 15:22 he was disobedient, not hearkening to the things of God; in 15:23 he was rebellious to God, to His Word, to His Spirit; and he was stubborn in not yielding to the dealing and rebuking of the Lord. Samuel's words to Saul in 15:22 are a defining moment that reveals to us the heart of Saul:

Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

Obedience from the heart is the crucial key for any man. God can only be served with the heart; mere sacrifice is outward. Saul by this time is self-deceived; in that self-deception he is rejecting the Word of the Lord. He had come to believe truth a different way, from a different perspective than God and His Word. He truly believed he had a right to go against the Word of God. Thus in so doing, he created another self, becoming a self-centered man, consumed with his own desires and ambitions alienated from God.

A True Christian Versus a Self-Born One

It is no enigma to see a child grow up in a drunkard's home, a cursing home, a lying or cheating home and find him living the same life. Apart from a miracle of deliverance through Christ, we can even expect the child to be the same. Sometime ago I ministered in a county jail that was separated into four large cells. In one cell there was a grandfather, in another cell a father, and in a third cell a son/grandson. Although the grandfather had never met the nineteen-year-old grandson, a family reunion took place in a jail. The three were incarcerated for the same offence, drunk driving. The grandfather had killed a man by his drunk driving; the father and son in separate incidents were caught drunk while driving. If drinking was the master sin of the family, it is understandable that a son and grandson would end up the same way.

However, there is an enigma when such a child comes from a loving, caring, godly home. Although the child was trained in the precious environment of the ways of the Lord, changes often come during his teenage years. During these years his concepts of life begin to change contrasting that which was instilled in him from birth.

This new thought-life is a powerful thing. Babies do not think; there are no concepts yet by which to

reason, only images of the mind. As his concept of language develops so does his thought life. His rationality starts out rather simple; but as knowledge increases his conceptual mind broadens. Eventually the child enters a season in which his thinking can be independent of what he was taught. This happens to all children in both secular and Christian homes. It is a time when self begins to think independently. This in turn is influenced by the heart and will of the teenager as well as his environment outside the home and church.

Life viewed by this new, independent self is also very powerful. A young person can grow up in a Christian home, a good church, and even attend a good school. He can be taught and instilled with principles and concepts of God. But there is a season when the heart of self begins to readjust what it has been taught. By the time the child reaches his late teens, if he has given himself to such independent thinking, he will become perverted or void of the most basic concepts of God and what a Christian is.

It is at this point that an enigmatic transformation takes place: the young person creates his own belief-system even while sitting and hearing the truth. He creates in thought a secret rejection of the biblical God and begins justifying his way of thinking along with its resulting failures. From this new belief-system he individually births his own new Christianity, a "self-born" Christianity.

This change of thinking happens not only to teenagers and young adults within good Christian homes but also in a Christian who begins to backslide. There is the danger of changing truth he once was taught. To accommodate his backsliding he often creates new thoughts about a Christian life, about biblical separation, about doctrine, about the Bible, and about truth itself. Other factors may contribute to it such as friends, readings, relatives, and carnal Christianity with its weakness and shallowness. Ultimately, however, he creates his own new entity. This individual finally becomes a stranger to God and His people; he becomes a self-born enemy of God.

It must be remembered that all of us have the power within self to alter truth, to forge our own error, and finally to believe it to be the truth. When communion with God is broken, when we fail, when we sin and refuse to recover from that sin, when busyness overtakes the Christian life, there is ever the potential of empowering a self-birth pursuing that which is heresy, error, and even apostasy.

After David's sin with Bathsheba and nine months of unrepentant silence, God sent the prophet Nathan to him. David could have retaliated against Nathan with deep anger as Saul had. However, Psalm 51 was his cry; he wanted to keep the record straight about his sin. At this time God gave David sight to his sin and how it was rooted all the way back

to his conception. A self-born person does not see the continuity of his life; he does not see how the changes he makes in thought and action reverse the good he might have had within and through God. A self-born person is fragmented in his thinking; there is no law, no order or design to his life. He cuts off all that was given to him and literally creates another life.

David knew what must be done. In Psalm 51:10 he desired for God to create a clean heart within and prayed for God to renew a right spirit within. In verse 11 he pled with God not to cast him away from His presence, entreating the Lord not to take His Holy Spirit from him. In verse 12 he cried out to God for Him to restore unto him the joy of His salvation as well as to uphold him.

The heart of a man is the core of the self. It is for this reason Solomon asks "My son, give me thine heart" (Proverbs 23:26). Why such a desire from the father? The son is under a father, under his care and commands. No obedience will be known in the life unless one sees this father and son relationship. We are not God's enemies or slaves; we are His sons. No son can project himself into fatherhood over the Father. The heart has many claimants: Heaven and Hell contend for it; the world with its riches, honors, and pleasures is also crying, "Give me thine heart." Even Satan in his tempting voice is declaring, "If thou

wilt worship me, all shall be thine.” But there is the Father: He is calling through His Beloved Son to us as adopted sons, “My son, give me thine heart.”

The End-time enigma of children leaving Christian homes for a “new” Christianity or simply the world and its pleasures is becoming more common. They with increasing boldness claim, “I have no heart for God,” or “I cannot make up my mind yet,” or “I believe I can come to know and live for God another way.” To save the teenager from following his ponderings of question and denial, God must send conviction at this season in his life. Right when these thoughts are swirling, God must conquer them with true repentance, a true change of perception of mind (*metanoia*). To conquer these thoughts God wants the heart as a gift that rightfully is His; God the Father is striving with His child’s will.

When a child grows up in a Christian environment, there is the tendency to believe that his goodness is his salvation. His outward submission is often considered the evidence of his Christianity. Yet Christianity has no true meaning without the heart. All other religions can be performed with outward submission; only Christianity demands the heart. Delilah made a statement to Samson that is very profound: “How canst thou say, I love thee, when thine heart is not with me?” (Judges 16:15). To truly love God will demand His ownership

of our heart. The greatest commandment witnesses to this fact: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind” (Matthew 22:37). This commandment does not mention the physical aspects of hands, feet, and tongue. The deepest form of love is found in the realm of the spiritual—the heart, soul, and mind. If we do not love God within, we do not truly love Him.

Although the heart must be broken, it cannot be divided. The heart will either be given to self or God. God needs to regenerate the heart; He needs to shed abroad in that heart His love by the Holy Ghost. Nevertheless, He wants ultimately the full control and possession of that heart or else it will become the womb for another entity of self.

Can Men Who Were Anointed Change?

It is a sobering thought to ask, “Can men who have known the anointing of God turn from God and eventually become the product of themselves?” Can a true Christian belief become a neo-Christian belief in a man over a period of time?

Sadly, we are witnessing this mutation in our day. It has happened to great movements such as Methodism. Methodism was a movement God used to bring a great revival of biblical spirituality

throughout the world. Next to Romanism, though, Methodism today has become the deepest apostasy in Church history. How do we explain the changes in men whom God in earlier years anointed to preach the Gospel? How do we explain the apathy of churches that once were the product of the grace of God, fighting against compromise and error? How do we explain the ecumenicity of denominations that were birthed in biblical separation? How do we explain the capitulation to Neo-Evangelicalism of schools that were once citadels of truth?

Although we must fully acknowledge that they were God-born and used mightily of God in the past, something has happened. The heart, the will, the thought life has changed; their identity is no longer God-born but self-born. A man may have had from God an honorable vision in the birth of his ministry; he may have had years of leading it in a precious, biblical way. Yet as he grew older, he may have become a tyrant and lord over his God-appointed flock.

Note carefully the difference between the Old Testament names *Adonai* and *Baal*. *Adonai* refers to a tender lord, master, or husband; *Baal* was an oppressive lord. Although Baal worship afflicted its adherents, God always was an *Adonai* to those who loved and served Him. Observe Peter's exhortation to pastors:

Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight

thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock (I Peter 5:2, 3).

In the Olivet Discourse, Christ gave three parables that are warnings for us in the End Time. His first parable (Matthew 24:44-51) warned of fellow servants smiting one another while the Lord delayed His coming. This has been true of the power of oppressive Romanism over its parishioners throughout the centuries. This has been true of the Shepherd Ministry some years ago among certain Charismatics. This has been true of denominational leaders who rise to power and use that power over the laity. This is what the Bible calls the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, a doctrine "which I hate" saith the Lord (Revelation 2:15). Although many of the charlatans of our time never had a biblical beginning, others began seemingly well only to compromise and capitulate to the Neo-Christianity for expediency. They have become self-born. Just as no one can blame God for the existence of Satan, no one can blame God for this falling away in Christianity.

Conclusion

David cried out in his lamentation on the death of Saul and Jonathan, "How are the mighty fallen!" (II Samuel 1:19, 25, 27). We are going to be witnessing more and more the fall of the mighty. Many

have passed before us: mighty angels, mighty kings, mighty nations, mighty churches, mighty denominations, mighty schools, and mighty preachers. As more and more mighty in our day fall away, many will be convinced that "all is well." Instead of repenting and fervently going back to the landmarks of truth, hearts will slowly leave truth and minds will try to reasonably vindicate the changes. One day, the creature of God's beauty, glory, and anointing of the past will become a self-born creature, an adversary of the truth.

Dear reader, to witness such a metamorphosis will cause one to stand in awe of how it could ever happen and could shake the very foundation of one's theological system. One could easily be tempted to dismiss this drastic change completely. An observation was made some years ago that although a certain individual believed Billy Graham to be a Christian, he also believed he had done more damage to destroy true Christianity than any other man in the twentieth century.

How can both statements be true? Yes, this is an enigma that the Christian world does not know how to handle.

Nonetheless, the Bible speaks clearly in John 7:17, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." The first phrase is a very accurate declaration that if any man "willeth" (in the present tense) to do God's will, he shall know of the doctrine. This is the focal truth of this enigma: "Am I willing to do God's will?" If a person inwardly concludes "no," then his thought life will begin to form a new view of being a Christian, in turn birthing a new person that is not of God. This transformation takes place in the heart and will over a process of time.

May God ever keep us as God-birthing creatures to the end of our days; may He keep us from covering self in a failure or sin that could lead, over a period of time if not resolved in Christ, to a self-born creature away from God.

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Ending Life Well

Dr. H. T. Spence

On April 10, 2006, a special home-going service was held at Foundations Bible Collegiate Church for a dear church member. She was a wife, mother, sister, daughter, daughter-in-law, and dear friend. Her spiritual journey to Christ and with Christ is briefly recounted here as a witness and testimony for the Lord.

For a number of her married years, she was a good woman as the standards of the world would view it. Although she ran hard from the convicting power of the Holy Spirit, for seventeen years her husband and the Foundations Ministries earnestly prayed for God to save her soul. On Sunday night, February 13, 2000, in the balcony of the Whitefield Sanctuary of the Foundations Bible Collegiate Church, she knelt and gave her heart to Christ. Her conversion brought a great and obvious change in her life. Her labor of love in this ministry was particularly precious as she served in the kitchen along with other ladies for special events and conferences. It was refreshingly evident that she enjoyed being with God's people; she loved attending the House of God.

A little over two years ago she was diagnosed with cancer at a severe stage. The immediate months following the diagnosis were marked with constant suffering. She underwent extensive and painful surgery, followed by intense chemotherapy and radiation. Although these months were extremely taxing physically, she attended church and sat in a special, red-velvet chair provided for her comfort.

Eventually her doctors informed her and her husband that the medical world had exhausted its help. Although we had prayed for God to heal this dear lady, it was evident that God's will was to be otherwise. When she and her husband were given the news of this terminal sickness, she immediately resigned her heart to this divine appointment of God. Regarding her concluding days, she told her husband that she "wanted to do this well," desiring spiritual dignity in witness for God.

A Pastoral Letter

In the last number of weeks of her life at home, she lay in a bed in her living room. When her husband was working, the ladies of the Foundations Ministries along with her sister spent the mornings and afternoons with her. As her pastor, we felt the need to help ready her soul for the "shadow of death" with spiritual exercises as she drew nearer heaven's gates. We sent her a pastoral letter to express our heart for the importance of these

remaining weeks to prepare for her home going. A portion of the letter sent is the following:

February 21, 2006

Dear Sister:

It is with choice Christian greetings that I write you today with thanksgiving to God for being with you to this hour. It has been in recent days that the Lord has laid several things upon my heart as your pastor; I believe it is now time to express these matters to you. May the Holy Spirit accompany my written words to you at this time in your life.

The Lord saved your soul six years ago this month, forgave you of all your sins, and brought you into the family of God. He is now drawing upon this spiritual family to prepare you for your home going, especially with the ladies of the Foundations Ministries assisting a part of your daily life now. I have been seeking the Lord as to these appointed days of your life and what must be done to prepare your soul for your home going. This is the burden of my letter today believing it is important how you prepare yourself for the crossing into eternity.

Your life has been in much pain, and medication is now a part of your daily need; nonetheless, you must be conscious of these days and your need to prepare your soul amidst the decline physically of your life. Therefore, I believe what I shall tell you will aid you in this final preparation of soul and mind for the glory of heaven.

These days need to be given to prayer, Bible reading, and words concerning the Lord. The ladies of this ministry desire to aid you in this spiritual exercise. It would be wonderful if you would allow them to spend a little time with you in the morning, as well as in the afternoon, in Bible reading, reading from a devotional book, and a time of prayer. We certainly want you to rest as you need it, but these moments will be important too. Perhaps they can ask you as the morning unfolds the appropriate time for these spiritual exercises.

There is the matter of dear _____, your son. Another reason for you to pursue the things of God with greater intensity in these final weeks is so that God will speak with him in your behalf. I am truly praying that God will save this young man before your home going. If he sees your increased burden for spiritual things and less of the secular world, God may use it to speak to him of the futility and vanity of this world and the need of preparing for the world to come.

Dear Sister, these days could be the greatest of your life with God if you will spend them wisely with Him and with your dear husband and son. Conversations of resolve, of love, of hope, of reflection and memories; all of this will be important at this time in your life.

I want to truly be a pastor to you at this time, dear Sister, not being in the way but being there for spiritual assistance and guidance. God has given you a dear family at Foundations for this season in your life. No other kind of family will be able to do what they can for you.

Please accept my words as from one who dearly loves you and your husband, and I want only the best for you in Christ. May the Lord bless and keep your heart during these days. May God pour out His Spirit upon you and deepen your spiritual life as you anticipate meeting your Savior face to face.

Remembering you in prayer today,
In His Majesty's Service,

H. T. Spence, Th.D.
Your Pastor

Care in What Is Seen and Heard in the Shadow of Death

Another important concern in our day and time as the Christian enters the "shadow of death" is the matter of occupying remaining time. Television is a natural interest to individuals confined to bed; however, it can become a grief to the soul and one's relationship to God. Apart from escaping its mostly unwholesome influence, the minimizing of the television watching also gives more quality time with friends, family members, and caregivers. One needs to take advantage of Christian conversations with those visiting. It is better at this final season of earthly life to fill the time with such things as sacred recordings. Even certain videos that spiritually contribute to the soul and mind in the things of God can prove both beneficial and honorably enjoyable.

Amidst these possible suggestions, one must desire to do all he can to prepare for God's call home. The mind should be filled with thoughts that will bring glory to Him and give the soul confidence at the moment of departure. The Devil will often try at this final season to contaminate the mind and draw the heart away from God. It is not that the Christian will go to Hell if this is not fully a part of those conscious, final days; it is simply to fill the days with anticipation and expectation of a home going. This season is not to be feared or dreaded. The Christian, if it seems inevitably God's will, should be preparing in an honorable way. We tend to be anxious to resolve funeral arrangements and service; yet, how much more should spiritual preparation be of benefit.

The Body of Christ in Ministering

After the previous letter was sent to our beloved sister in Christ, the ladies of the ministry began staying with her in shifts during the day as her husband worked. Each lady provided not only companionship of presence

but also the reading of Scripture, readings from selected books, seasons of prayer, and God-honoring conversation. The ladies kept a “Spiritual Journal” on their shift which included information of Scriptures read, prayers, hymns sung, pages of books read, an honorable description of her physical condition that day, and what medicine was given. In addition, as a token of their care, those ladies who had assisted in her last weeks of life were chosen to stand by her casket two at the time at fifteen-minute intervals during the visitation service. In the final days her beloved husband kept his hours at his business to three mornings a week with the rest of the time caring for his dear wife.

In the last five days of her life my wife and I visited daily. Although her eyes were closed, she seemed to be hearing us. We read through all of the passages in the book of Revelation dealing with heaven. Singing a hymn about heaven followed by a closing prayer would follow the Scripture reading. In the providence of God the last reading took place on a Friday with a text taken from Revelation 22. Then we sang the hymn “I Shall Know Him.” That afternoon at 4:30, with her husband and mother-in-law present at home, she passed from this life into the presence of her Lord.

It must be acknowledged that in the last few weeks she often would speak of the Lord to those who were present. In her final days, in a semi-conscious state, she uttered words of love to God, His Son, and audible thoughts about heaven.

The Need of Dying Well

Many on this planet do not die well. Yet death is a crucial time in a person’s life. Apart from the Rapture, death is the only portal through which one can get to heaven. The prelude to death is when the soul readies itself for the transition into eternity; it goes into the shadow of death. This is a very important season if God allows death to linger for any portion of time. The Christian must face it well and not fearfully. Some enter this season with fear and bondage. But Christ’s death was also to help us through this dying process. “That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Hebrews 3:14-15).

Sadly, many reject the concept of Heaven and Hell creating their own concept of “after-life.” America is becoming more and more a nation given to a Neo-Christianity that has given to the populace a gospel of Universalism. Universalism is the belief that everyone is saved and everyone is going to heaven because of “the love of God.” But it must be understood that the love of God does not save anyone; only the grace of God saves.

Love is the *motive* for God's sending His Son to the earth to die for us, but grace is the singular *means* whereby that salvation comes. The Bible condemns Universalism and tells us that God is preparing a place for the believer in Christ (John 14:3), and God is preparing a place for the unbeliever (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:11-15). It is not whether we have lived a good life or a bad life. There is only one sin that keeps a person from going to heaven: the rejection of Jesus Christ as one's personal Savior.

America is also in a growing belief of cults and secular humanism. Some of the cults believe in annihilation while others believe we will be placed on some planet or island with many wives for sensual purposes. Others believe we will be absorbed into a bright, white light or into some cosmic energy, while others believe we will be recycled through reincarnation.

The Bible is the only infallible revelation God has ever given to man to reveal the life to come. It is within its pages exclusively that the truth of the matter of salvation and heaven is to be found for those whom God has saved.

A Soul at the Border

On several occasions God has allowed us to be present with a Christian at the border of heaven. It is a precious thing to witness the home going of a redeemed one. It is at such a time that God will witness to His own. There truly is a moment, as heaven's pull strengthens in the thoughts and heart, that the soul is hesitant to leave loved ones here. There is a final earthly burden for responsibility, of leaving behind loved ones, and what such a departure will do to a dear husband or wife or children. But God comes to help the dying one. It must be stated that the living do not know the way of dying and should not know it until they are dying.

There also comes another moment in the shadow of death, as heaven pulls the dying, that they begin to let go of this world and even their family ties. They are ready to go as the shadow of death now leads to death itself. Thoughts of wanting to leave will now become imminent. There is the appropriate desire to say "I love you" to the spouse and a longing to resolve with children and friends all things. Then more talk to God begins; some things will be said in soft words to God—at the border.

Then the moment comes that God summons the soul. It seems that God appoints angels to accompany the soul of a true child to His home. Is the antithesis true for the sinner? Do demons accompany the soul of the wicked to Lower Hades, where they will wait the final White Throne Judgment at the end of time? The White Throne will be the consummating

moment when an eternal soul stands before an eternal God to receive an eternal decree of eternal damnation to be cast into the eternal Lake of Fire, which is the Second Death.

The child of God at the moment of death may somewhat linger and finally be released. Immediately he is with the Lord in Heaven. According to Scripture, what happens right after death? Because the soul's arrival precedes the body's resurrection, the soul arrives naked, without a body. That soul is in Christ, conscious, communicating, but naked. The soul will wait the first resurrection, which will take place immediately after the rapture when Christ will bring those souls "in" Him with Him (I Thessalonians 4:14-18). Then they will receive a body, fashioned like unto His (I John 3:2). After history has come to its completion and eternity begins (Revelation 21 & 22), God's people will serve Him forever (Revelation 22:3b).

Conclusion

The dealings of God on the day of this dear lady's conversion began that Sunday morning with a message from John 4:13-15:

Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

That Sunday evening she once again sat in the balcony of God's House; the Holy Spirit came to deal with her again. My dear wife was led of the Lord in the closing part of the Sunday evening service to go up in the balcony and speak with her about giving her heart to the Lord. Over the previous years this lady was bold to stop the words of any witness; however, this time she was readied by the Lord and immediately fell to her knees and prayed to God in confession of sin receiving Christ. When she came down from the balcony after the service, it was evident to her husband and others that the crowning work of Christ had been done in her.

When asked during her trial of suffering how she was able to endure the pain with dignity, she simply responded that her dear Lord had suffered much more on the cross. Such a heart demands that there is no room for complaint and there is no room to glory. May the Lord enable all of us to desire to end life well, to honor and glorify Christ Jesus the Lord through the shadow of death and even unto death!

Seventh Annual Ladies Prayer Fellowship - August 11-12