

MSB267

MORE Seed and Bread

BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

Otis Q. Sellers, Founder - David R. Hettema, Director

TO ALL DADS WHO BELIEVE THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD

By Louis J. Tonetti

My daughter gave me a thoughtful gift for Christmas—a silver ornament with an inscription in loving memory of my mother who died during this past year. There was a poem accompanying it with words to the effect that my mother was looking down from heaven and spending Christmas with Jesus. I know my daughter believes my mother is in heaven and *is now an angel*; but, Dads, where does it say in the Bible that we go to heaven when we die? I have examined every mention of the word "heaven," both in the Hebrew and Greek, and this idea is not anywhere in Scripture.

I am writing to Dads who are believers because I am concerned for our country. I think this nation is in its present condition because many Dads largely have given up their divinely-appointed responsibilities. It seems the role of Dads nowadays has been relegated to that of a good-natured buffoon who brings home the paycheck so the rest of the family can buy stuff. That is, if the Dad is present at all. However, the Dad is supposed to be the spiritual head of the family, instructing members in the ways of the Lord God, bringing up children as God-fearing citizens. In my own family, I believe my wife and I both instilled good basic values in our children, a strong sense of right and wrong. But, I never properly instructed my children in His Ways and His Truth to the extent I should have. So, even though I am writing to Dads, I hope my children will read this and begin to understand that to fear the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. To fear Him doesn't mean to be afraid of Him, but to revere, love, respect and worship Him.

I am writing to Dads who are believers—those who believe in the One whom God has sent, and believes the record He has given us concerning this "sent one." The record is called the Holy Bible. A believer knows that in the original manuscripts every word was divinely inspired and is true. Without setting aside the personalities of the various writers, God caused His meaning to be clearly written down, and it is our job to know what He has said to us in His Word.

Sadly, many Dads who are believers don't really know what the Word of God says about so many different subjects, including "heaven." They take for granted that Orthodox Christian leaders know everything and tell us all we are "required" to embrace and believe. To think otherwise practically amounts to "heresy;" besides, they are all "learned" scholars and priests and popes! I know you go to Bible study and such, but do you let others tell you what the Bible says? Maybe it is time to find out for yourselves. It will have much more meaning for you and will give strength, courage and health to your bones. You can and must *know* what God tells us through His Word, His Truth.

Getting back to "heaven," Dads, you have to make a choice: stand up for the Truth, or continue to flow along with the Orthodox Christian viewpoint about what happens at death. You have to decide whom you believe: do you believe Jesus or Plato? Orthodox Christianity believes Plato, although it won't be readily admitted. Plato taught that death is a separation, that the soul is wondrously freed from being trapped inside a body and goes on to enjoy the freedom of a disembodied state somewhere, forever. Since the soul has to go somewhere, this place is described as the "happy hunting grounds," "nirvana," "the Elysium fields," "Valhalla," or "heaven." Don't get me wrong, I absolutely believe there is a place called "heaven." I think God is there now, along with a heavenly host of angels and principalities and powers, plus possibly the two men, Enoch and Elijah. I just don't think the Bible says we go there when we die.

Jesus taught that death is a return, that man returns to the dust of the ground from which he is made, and that the breath of life returns to God who gave it. Jesus also taught "the resurrection of the dead" (there is not one mention in the Bible of "the resurrection of the body"—a phrase commonly used by Orthodox Christianity with such authority that it is supposedly found almost everywhere throughout the pages of the Book). If there is the resurrection of the dead, then it is very important for us to know what "death" is, especially in order to properly understand and appreciate what "resurrection" is. If at "death" a good person goes to heaven to be with God, then what need would there be for "resurrection"? If I were happy with God in heaven, I would not appreciate having to undergo the process of "resurrection" at all. However, if I were dead and buried in the ground, I would totally appreciate and embrace being resurrected from the dead. Along these lines, here are some interesting questions to consider:

1. Where was Lazarus for the four days he was dead (John 11:1-45)?
2. Where was the young man who was dead and being carried on the funeral bier (Luke 7:1-15)?
3. Where was the young maid who had died (Luke 8:49-56)?
4. Where was Jesus for three days and three nights when He was dead (Matt. 12:40)?

Whatever death is, resurrection is the undoing of it, the antidote. Is it "the resurrection of the body," or is it "the resurrection of the dead"? When a person dies, is it just the body that "dies" and the real person's soul "lives on"? Is it true that the soul is immortal? Can a soul die? We need to think about these things, so we can instruct our loved ones in the Truth. Yes, the Truth can be uncomfortable at first, especially if it comes against firmly entrenched ideas we have believed all our lives. However, we must be found walking in the Truth if we are to please God. A *thirst* for the Truth will begin to develop so that it will not matter any more what one used to believe—it becomes a matter of what God's Word says.

Are you willing to take a stand and honestly seek God's Truth? If so, are you willing to do so, no matter what the cost? Sometimes it's not very popular to proclaim ideas that are not generally accepted and that are a departure from what many hold to be so dear. Are you willing to take back the spiritual headship of your family in the eyes of God? If so, maybe we can become a great nation under God once again. Maybe youngsters can have structure and discipline again, as they learn to fear the Lord and become good citizens of this land, respecting the property and rights of others. Maybe wives will respect and reverence their husbands once again. Maybe husbands will reverence their wives as they ought. Maybe our country can be good, safe, clean, honest and pure once again. Unfortunately, probably not until God's kingdom comes upon this earth, such as the times of restoration, the times of refreshing, the times of "flowing" from everlasting, the *eon*,

By the way, the Bible nowhere mentions that people become "angels" when they die. God tells us of three orders of created beings: spiritual, human and angelic. We are human beings and we will always be humans—in life, in death and in the resurrection. To become an angelic being would be a downgrade, not an upgrade. Remember, we are to judge angels...

Understand I am trying to seek wisdom. Thinking is very hard work, and most people don't like to engage in this business of using your God-given brain. It is much easier simply to accept what "the religious leaders" tell us. In that way we can have more time to do the things we really enjoy, and God will just have to be satisfied with what we decide to give Him. I have heard more than one person say, *It really doesn't matter what we believe, as long as we are sincere*. Talk about a lie of Satan!

I want to make it clear that much of my thinking is heavily influenced by the late Otis Q. Sellers, a progressive Bible student and

teacher. He is one who did the really hard work of "blazing the trail" along the path of courageous, original thinking, so that others would be able to follow and be better armed to hack away at the choking vines of religious traditions and rituals. He embarked on a journey of letting God's Word have "the say," to give its testimony regarding what God thinks. He taught me not to try and make Scripture fit in with our man-made images, namely that blended concoction of half-truths and fantasies that travels under the name of "Orthodox Christianity." Unfortunately, that is all many people have to lay hold of—idols fashioned by their own imaginations, the worshipping of which is still offensive to the living God, just as much so as the worshipping of idols made with hands.

Even though Sellers did the work of studying and publishing his findings regarding "heaven," "death" and "resurrection," I can honestly say that I have considered every occurrence of these terms in God's Word. At first I expected to disprove everything being set forth by this **Seed & Bread** publisher. But, soon the conviction began to grow within me that God's Word was honestly and accurately being set forth by this man, and at first it was very painful indeed to give up cherished beliefs I held all my life. Reluctantly, I saw my strongholds of imagination being cast down one by one, not without a struggle on my part to hold them fast. However, God's Word is mighty and powerful, creating a thirst for truth where it is eagerly sought and satisfying "parched lips" with "rivers of living waters." God makes sure *you can handle the truth*. Thereafter, the challenge becomes one of humbly helping others who in ignorance and/or stubbornness are denying themselves the realization of the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth—so help us, God!

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