

MSB201
MORE SEED AND BREAD

BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM
THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

Otis O. Sellers, Founder ∴ David R. Hetteema, Director

IMMORTALITY

THE SCRIPTURAL MEANING

by David R. Hetteema

Most of the words God has used in the book He gave us are actually self-explanatory, but when Greek is turned to English many men erase this explanation altogether. For example, the Greek word for immortality is *athanasia* which is two simple words combined. In Greek the word *alpha* means devoid of, or without the element of truth in the word before which it is placed. This is called by Greek students the **alpha-primitive** and signifies the deprivation of what could be contained in the word which it qualifies.

The Greek letter *a-* when prefixed to words is an inseparable syllable such as the Latin in- and the English un-. *Thanatos* the word to which this has been joined is a well known word in the Greek and has been carried over into the English by poetry and prose writings such as Milton's, "Thanatopsis."

Thanatos means mortal or dying. With *alpha (a-)* meaning without and *thanatos* meaning death *athanasia* can only mean without death. None of us is in this condition today except our great God the Lord Jesus Christ, the only being without death (1 Tim. 6:16).

Now and then we come upon men who because of certain health practices ♥
{The mark ♥ is the point where the dictation of Mr. Sellers ended(see Notes at the end of this study). I have attempted to present in this continuation what I feel was his intent, to make plain the truth of immortality. Drh }

feel that they have reached immortality, or that it can be attained by some such way of life. This dream of avoiding death has been generated in the human heart

ever since death entered upon the human scene. The historical Spanish explorer Ponce de Leon hoping to find eternal youth died without success in his search for the fabled "Fountain of Youth."

The plain hard facts of scripture are this: that ever since the first man Adam sinned in disobedience, the curse of death works in all of his descendants from conception to expiration. Death embraces every individual in the whole human race without exception and only relents when it has finished its cruel work.

For as in Adam all are dying, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. (1 Cor. 15:22).

We are mortals, (*thneytos*) liable to dying and it is only through the victorious work of Jesus Christ that the gift of another life is made possible. We can avail ourselves of this new life by believing the record that God has given to us concerning His Son Jesus Christ. Believing God's record clears our record and we are seen as righteous in God's sight.

While all, will be made alive, both the good and the bad, some will not keep this gift of life because of their own sins. This great setting in order begins when God intervenes and Jesus Christ takes up His great power and authority, He reviews the records of all who happen to be living upon the earth in that aweinspiring day. There will be a sorting out of those who are not accounted worthy to obtain that world. What a tragic loss for them, but what a wonderful portion for those that have God's promise of eonian life. He will also set all of the dead into their resurrection group or order, a determination that will raise them up to life at their set time in the Kingdom of God before His return to the earth, or they must wait in death another 1000 years for their order at the time of the Great White Throne Judgment.

By divine inspiration in 1 Cor.15: 51-54 the Apostle Paul reveals a hitherto unknown truth about God intervening in the lives and affairs of men in this earth. In this passage where the only other (3 total) occurrences of immortality (*athanatos*) are used, Paul gives us a description of every believer's first day in the Kingdom of God.

Behold, I show you a mystery (secret); We shall not all sleep (go into the state of death), but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at (in) the last trump; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead shall be

raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." (1 Cor. 15:51-54).

The "then" in the last verse refers to the establishing of God's government in the earth. Note the passage in Isaiah 27:6 and the verses that follow where the Prophet is describing the bountiful earthly blessings that flow out from His established mountain (government). Then a profound statement is made about the changes that come about when God takes over this earth.

And he will destroy in this mountain (government) the face of the covering cast over all peoples, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow UP death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it (Isa. 25:7-8).

Now that we have determined by the scriptures that immortality will not be the possession of any human being until our God rules this earth, and possessing immortality in the Biblical sense simply means that we do not have death working in us, we are (*athanatos*) without death. No one will ever again die because Adam sinned, but one can die for his own sin, and one possessing immortality could lay down his life as a martyr if his service for God required it. Jesus Christ, the only one possessing immortality, willingly laid down His life for the world.

We can test our findings by the scriptures: When our Lord was relating to His disciples the events of the consummation of the Kingdom eon that precede His second coming and personal presence (His parousia, Matt. 24), He gave them many words of warning and instruction because these events, still future, would involve them very personally, even to the loss of their very lives.

Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and you shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. (Matt. 24:9)

It becomes obvious to anyone that reads these passages that all of the disciples are now dead. That it will require resurrection for these men to take their places among the living in the Kingdom of God when these prophesied events take place.

Our Lord had already spoken of the twelve seats of authority, judgment and responsibility that would be their portion and position in His government. These men, raised from the dead and possessing the immortality that resurrection brings, will gladly die for the sake of their Lord as martyrs. If they do they will not remain in the state of death long as they will be among those that are raised from the dead with much honor at the victorious return of Jesus Christ. (1 Thess. 4:16-17). The word of God is as true and as sure for the believer today as it will be in the future Kingdom of God. The believer has this to bank on:

He that believeth on the Son hath (God's irrevocable gift) everlasting life (eonian life that flows from God): and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. (John 3:36).

This immortality that scripture sets forth is a condition of life that we will experience every day in the Kingdom of God, the eonian life flowing down to us in wave after wave of perfect health and life. It is not now our possession nor will it be our possession until God intervenes in His great government and then swallows up death in victory.

Many believers have entered into the state of death convinced by the Satanic deception that they were a "never-dying soul", and death would usher them into the presence of Jesus Christ. When Jesus Christ speaks their names and calls them up in resurrection and as they experience that new life and light, they then will recognize that the truth was already stated in **1 Timothy 6:14-16; Our Lord Jesus Christ which in his times he shall show who is the blessed and only Potentate (powerful ruler), the King of kings and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality.**

Jesus Christ stated a humbling truth when he said for all of us **..because I live, you shall live also. (John 14:19).**

Notes: In his final years, when Otis Q. Sellers was tolerating the debilitating effects of a stroke, he fretted because he could no longer write although he could with effort speak and be understood. He still had in his heart and mind many Biblical subjects to set forth, and discussed many of these with those around him. We attempted to have him dictate his thoughts as we wrote them down. We did transcribe a number of pages in several efforts although no subject reached completion.

In Seed & Bread number 132 Otis had dealt with the subject of immortality very well but was disappointed that many of his readers still held the idea that immortality meant "cannot die" and missed the simplicity of God saying "without death." There is a great difference

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