

KEENER THOUGHTS

June, 2012

LIKENESSES AND DIFFERENCES IN OUR PERSONAL HISTORY

And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died. And Seth lived an hundred and five years, and begat Enos: And Seth lived after he begat Enos eight hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years: and he died. And Enos lived ninety years, and begat Cainan: And Enos lived after he begat Cainan eight hundred and fifteen years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Enos were nine hundred and five years: and he died. (Gen. 5:5-11)

In the previous lines, I have copied the briefest possible history of three men. These men's lives were lived about five thousand years ago, and we have little information about, and very little ability to even imagine, how they lived. From the creation of Adam to the death of Enos, a period of 1,140 years transpired. We know a little of the changes that took place, but really, very little. All three of these men lived to be more than 900 years old, and each of them saw things the others had not seen, but they all had one thing in common. **THEY DIED.** Last week I visited a doctor I had not met before, and humorously asked him the question. "Doctor, do you think I will die?" He smiled and said, "Yes, I expect so, most of us will." Obviously, I was not surprised, nor was I disturbed, I knew what his answer would be. Even little children will soon learn, even if we were so foolish as to try to hide it from them, that all of us are destined to death. That is true of all men, of course, with the exception of Enoch, Elijah, and the group mentioned by Paul in 1 Thes. 4:17. Death is one point in human history that, with a very few exceptions, is uniform. The man who spends all his time preparing to live, and none preparing to die, is a fool. "*But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?*" (Luke 12:20). I am now near seventy-nine years of age, and most of the people I knew in my early life have

died. Almost daily I think of a friend of days gone by, and wonder if they are yet alive. Some of them are, but most have past that most common experience of life, "And he died."

There is another likeness in our individual histories, and that is seen in Heb 9:27-28. "*And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this **the judgment:** So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*" Let me forego the exposition of this passage, and simply call to your attention the obvious statement of verse 27, that after death there is divine judgment. This is another fact of our history that every single one of us holds in common. Judgment is a fact of life that surrounds us all. There is personal judgment, legal judgment, moral judgment, righteous judgment, unrighteous judgment, objective judgment, subjective judgment, and endlessly we might go on. Men often quote the passage that says "Judge not that ye be not judged," which usually means I do not want to be judged by other men, either rightly or wrongly, but I want to do as I please with impunity. Be sure this desire will never come to fruition for any of us. Our judgment is an impending fact in our history that is absolutely universal. I do not know all about these various judgments, nor does space allow me to discuss all I do understand of the subject at this time. What I do know is that after death it will be God's judgment, it is righteous judgment, and it is inescapable judgment.

Above, I have mentioned two likenesses in all of our individual history. Essentially, everyone shares these two events in our histories. However, I can tell you that there are some great differences. These differences are more important than life, because they are eternal differences which cannot, and never will, be changed. The depth of these differences is most clearly stated in Luke 16:19-25. "*There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man*

also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.”

Our Lord does not, in this passage, explain the reason for these differences, but simply the magnitude and gravity of them. One is a state of **eternal** comfort, and joy, and the other is a state of **eternal** misery. You see, our human history does not end at death, nor even with divine judgment. The comfort or discomfort of this life is just not all there is to this life. What does make the determining difference of our eternal state? It is not the good that we have done during our life, nor yet the sins that we committed. It is rather a state referred to in scripture as **“IN CHRIST.”** *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. (Rom 8:2) These two words (IN CHRIST) are the most important words in human history to me, and they are to you as well.*

Where does your hope lie?

--FLK