

# KOINONIA KONNECTION

A Publication of Grace Covenant Church

Winter 2007

Volume 8, Issue 1

## **AFTER DEATH, WHAT?**

*"Today you will be with me in paradise."*

*-Luke 23:43*

### **"WHAT HAPPENS TO ME WHEN I DIE?"**

*This is a question every rational person asks concerning his future. Humanity's concern about eternity is one of the many aspects which mark us as distinctive from the rest of the creatures, and reveal the reality of an immortal spirit as an element of our personhood.*

*For people who have come under the influence of materialistic philosophy (of which Evolutionism is a prime example), questions regarding the future of the soul are pointless. The human being, like all other creatures and material objects, merely consists of a chance gathering of atoms. Once our life functions cease, our atoms will return to the environment from which they came, to be engrafted again into some other object or creature. That's the only future humanity may speak of...a future of decay and assimilation.*

*Others, while rejecting the dreary assertions of materialism, yet find their convictions regarding their spiritual future blurry at best. These know that they are spiritual creatures, and therefore assume that something must await them after death; but what that "something" is, they have no idea. Eternity becomes a matter for creative guesswork, offering a vast array of conflicting opinions which offer very little comfort.*

*It is here that we should pause and give thanks to God for His Word. Rather than leave us in the dark, Jehovah has distinctly instructed us as to the immortality of our souls, and likewise has told us so many details in regard to our heavenly*

*future as to leave us breathless. What a comment on the compassion (and pastoral sensitivity) of our God! And truly, every phrase of the Bible is like that...addressing "bang-on-target" the anxious questions of our race.*

*All uncertainty about death is not avoided, however. While fully embracing all the Bible has to say about eternity, a nagging question often plagues Christ-loving souls: What happens at the moment of our death? The inquirer has no doubt regarding heaven, eternal life, or the resurrection. These doctrines are well and happily settled within him. But what of his soul at the hour of death? What will become of him prior to resurrection?*

*I wish I could say that the Church has always been a reliable counselor in the face of such questions; but she hasn't. Two particular heresies have taken shape as churchmen have endeavored to explain what happens to the soul immediately after death...*

### **SOUL SLEEP**

*This view holds that the soul continues to exist after death as a particular being, but in a status of unconscious repose. This condition comes to an end only at the resurrection. During the Middle ages, this view enjoyed quite a number of followers. At the Reformation, certain of the Anabaptists advocated soul sleep, inspiring Calvin to write a dissertation against it. Today, there are still those who promote a belief in the sleep of the soul. These tend to be, in the words of Louis Berkhof, "those who find it hard to believe in a continuance of consciousness apart from the corporeal organism." Such fail to realize that the brain is but the means by which the mind (the conscious being) operates. To*

assume that once the body fails the Self must surely fail is like presuming that once a machine is turned off, the worker who operates it turns off too.

The Scriptural evidence given for this position is doubtful. Those who argue for this doctrine assert that the Bible itself teaches clearly that men sleep at death (e.g. I Thess. 4:13; I Cor. 15:51). Yet, such arguments fail to demonstrate a proper sensitivity to manners of expression customary at the time the New Testament was written. To speak of the dead as "asleep" was a common figure of speech in Graeco-Roman society, expressive of the observable similarity between death and slumber. The Bible never asserts that the soul, or the Christian's consciousness, sleeps at death. In fact, as we shall see below, the Scripture teaches quite the opposite.

#### **PURGATORY**

Another false view, historically advocated by the Roman Church, has been that of purgatory. According to the Catholic Church, those souls which die in a status of perfect purity are forthwith admitted to heaven. Yet, most men do not die in such an estate. The vast majority are yet burdened with the guilt of sin at their death. These must undergo a process of cleansing. In purgatory, souls are purified through two kinds of suffering. For one, they grieve over their failure to enter immediately into heaven. Second, they endure the "punishment of sense," in which they partake of active, physical pains as atonement for their remaining sins. The length and degree of suffering depends upon the volume of sin which needs purging. The stay of a soul in purgatory can be shortened by the prayers and good works of saints remaining on earth, and especially by the sacrifice of the mass in the departed's name. The Pope has complete jurisdiction over purgatory, and may grant indulgences to shorten or even terminate the purgatorial sufferings of the departed.

The staple proof text presented as support for the doctrine of purgatory is found in II Maccabees 12:42-45 (an apocryphal work), where it is said of Judas Maccabeus: "Therefore he made atonement for the dead, so that they might be delivered from their sin." And so from this phrase the Roman Church deduces the reality of purgatory, and thus the necessity of making atonement for the sake of departed souls. The Protestant Church has never recognized apocryphal writings as canonical, and thus has forever discounted the doctrinal value of this proof text. Those few passages of canonical Scripture which have been put forth by Rome as evidences of purgatory can only made to teach that doctrine with a very forced and irresponsible exegesis (e.g. Mal. 3:2,3; Mic 7:8; I Cor. 3:13-15).

#### **THE SCRIPTURAL VIEW**

The Bible is absolutely clear on the point that immediately after death the souls of believers enter into a conscious and delightful fellowship with God and with Jesus Christ. For instance, the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (cf. Luke 16:19-31) depicts righteous Lazarus as enjoying the blessedness of Abraham's Bosom (which for the Jew was paradise). In II Corinthians 5:8, Paul declares that the opposite option to be alive and present in the body is to be "absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." (compare Philippians 1:23) John's Revelation portrays the souls of the persecuted departed as perfectly conscious when they cry "How long, O Lord, holy and true, will you not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (Revelation 6:10) Consider also the transfiguration of Christ, in which a conscious Moses and Elijah, bright with heaven's glory, fellowship with Jesus (cf. Matt. 7:23 and parallels).

One of the more striking passages in this regard is that quoted at the beginning of our meditation. Christ hangs upon the cross. Upon His right and left hang two thieves being crucified along with Him. At first, both malefactors revile and

-continued on back cover

# FAMILIES IN FOCUS

## THE DUTIES OF PARENTS - PART 2



### **3. TRAIN YOUR CHILDREN WITH AN ABIDING PERSUASION ON YOUR MIND THAT MUCH DEPENDS UPON YOU.**

Grace is the strongest of all principles. See what a revolution grace effects when it comes into the heart of an old sinner - how it overturns the strongholds of Satan, how it casts down mountains, fills up valleys, makes crooked things straight, and new creates the whole man. Truly nothing is impossible to grace. Nature, too, is very strong. See how it struggles against the things of the kingdom of God - how it fights against every attempt to be more holy, how it keeps up an unceasing warfare within us to the last hour of life. Nature indeed is strong.

But after nature and grace, undoubtedly, there is nothing more powerful than education. Early habits (if I may so speak) are everything with us, under God. We are made what we are by training. Our character takes the form of that mould into which our first years are cast.[2]

We depend, in a vast measure, on those who bring us up. We get from them a colour, a taste, a bias which cling to us more or less all our lives. We catch the language of our nurses and mothers, and learn to speak it almost insensibly, and unquestionably we catch something of their manners, ways, and mind at the same time. Time only will show, I suspect, how much we all owe to early impressions, and how many things in us may be traced up to seeds sown in the days of our very infancy, by those who were about us. A very learned Englishman, Mr. Locke, has gone so far as to say: "That of all the men we meet with, nine parts out of ten are what they are, good or bad, useful or not, according to their education."

And all this is one of God's merciful arrangements. He gives your children a mind that will receive impressions like moist clay. He gives them a disposition at the starting-point of life to believe what you tell them, and to take for granted what you advise them, and to trust your word rather than a stranger's. He gives you, in short, a golden opportunity of doing them good. See that the opportunity be not neglected and thrown away. Once let slip, it is gone for ever. Beware of that miserable delusion into which some have fallen - that parents can do nothing for their

children, that you must leave them alone, wait for grace, and sit still. These persons have wishes for their children in Balaam's fashion: they would like them to die the death of the righteous man, but they do nothing to make them live his life. They desire much, and have nothing. And the devil rejoices to see such reasoning, just as he always does over anything which seems to excuse indolence, or to encourage neglect of means.

I know that you cannot convert your child. I know well that those who are born again are born, not of the will of man, but of God. But I know also that God says expressly, "Train up a child in the way he should go," and that He never laid a command on man which He would not give man grace to perform. And I know, too, that our duty is not to stand still and dispute, but to go forward and obey. It is just in the going forward that God will meet us. The path of obedience is the way in which He gives the blessing. We have only to do as the servants were commanded at the marriage feast in Cana, to fill the water-pots with water, and we may safely leave it to the Lord to turn that water into wine.

### **4. TRAIN WITH THIS THOUGHT CONTINUALLY BEFORE YOUR EYES - THAT THE SOUL OF YOUR CHILD IS THE FIRST THING TO BE CONSIDERED.**

Precious, no doubt, are these little ones in your eyes; but if you love them, think often of their souls. No interest should weigh with you so much as their eternal interests. No part of them should be so dear to you as that part which will never die. The world, with all its glory, shall pass away; the hills shall melt, the heavens shall be wrapped together as a scroll, the sun shall cease to shine. But the spirit which dwells in those little creatures, whom you love so well, shall outlive them all - and whether in happiness or misery (to speak as a man) will depend on you.

This is the thought that should be uppermost on your mind in all you do for your children. In every step you take about them, in every plan, and scheme, and arrangement that concerns them, do not leave out that mighty question, "How will this affect their souls?"

*Soul love is the soul of all love. To pet and pamper and indulge your child, as if this world was all he had to look to, and this life the only season for happiness - to do this is not true love, but cruelty. It is treating him like some beast of the earth, which has but one world to look to, and nothing after death. It is hiding from him that grand truth, which he ought to be made to learn from his very infancy: that the chief end of his life is the salvation of his soul.*

*A true Christian must be no slave to fashion if he would train his child for heaven. He must not be content to do things merely because they are the custom of the world - to teach them and instruct them in certain ways merely because it is usual, to allow them to read books of a questionable sort merely because everybody else reads them, to let them form habits of a doubtful tendency merely because they are the habits of the day. He must train with an eye to his children's souls. He must not be ashamed to hear his training called singular and strange. What if it is? The time is short - "the fashion of this world passeth away." He that has trained his children for heaven, rather than for earth - for God, rather than for man - he is the parent that will be called wise at last.*

##### **5. TRAIN YOUR CHILD TO A KNOWLEDGE OF THE BIBLE.**

*You cannot make your children love the Bible, I allow. None but the Holy Ghost can give us a heart to delight in the Word. But you can make your children acquainted with the Bible; and be sure they cannot be acquainted with that blessed book too soon or too well.*

*A thorough knowledge of the Bible is the foundation of all clear views of religion. He that is well-grounded in it will not generally be found a waverer, and carried about by every wind of new doctrine. Any system of training which does not make a knowledge of Scripture the first thing is unsafe and unsound. You have need to be careful on this point just now, for the devil is abroad, and error abounds. Some are to be found amongst us who give their church the honour due to Jesus Christ. Some are to be found who make the sacraments saviours and passports to eternal life. And some are to be found in like manner who honour a catechism more than the Bible, or fill the minds of their children with miserable little story-books instead of the Scripture of truth. But if you love your children, let the simple Bible be everything in the training of their souls; and let all other books go down and take*

*the second place. Care not so much for their being mighty in the [Sunday School], as for their being mighty in the Scriptures. This is the training, believe me, that God will honour. The Psalmist says of Him, "Thou hast magnified Thy Word above all Thy name" (Ps. 138:2); and I think that He gives an especial blessing to all who try to magnify it among men.*

*See that your children read the Bible reverently. Train them to look on it, not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, written by the Holy Ghost Himself - all true, all profitable, and able to make us "wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."*

*See that they read it regularly. Train them to regard it as their soul's daily food - as a thing essential to their soul's daily health. I know well you can not make this anything more than a form; but there is no telling the amount of sin which a mere form may indirectly restrain.*

*See that they read it all. You need not shrink from bringing any doctrine before them. You need not fancy that the leading doctrines of Christianity are things which children cannot understand. Children understand far more of the Bible than we are apt to suppose.*

*Tell them of sin, its guilt, its consequences, its power, its vileness: you will find they can comprehend something of this.*

*Tell them of the Lord Jesus Christ, and His work for our salvation - the atonement, the cross, the blood, the sacrifice, the intercession: you will discover there is something not beyond them in all this.*

*Tell them of the work of the Holy Spirit in man's heart: how He changes, and renews, and sanctifies, and purifies - you will soon see they can go along with you in some measure in this. In short, I suspect we have no idea how much a little child can take in of the length and breadth of the glorious gospel. They see far more of these things than we suppose.[3]*

*Fill their minds with Scripture. Let the Word "dwell in them richly." Give them the Bible, the whole Bible, even while they are young.*

*-by J.C. Ryle  
(to be continued)*

# YOUTH'S CORNER

## CODED MESSAGE

One of the most favorite Old Testament texts is hidden in this code. See if you can break the code.



# MISSION SPOTLIGHT

## CHRISTIAN MISSION WORK IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND ITS EFFECT

"La ilaha illa Allah, Muhammadu Rasool Allah" (There is no God, but God, and Muhammad is the Messenger of God.) This is the Shahada or Kalimah. It is the Islamic confession of faith. These words are the first that a Muslim baby hears, and often they are that last words that a Muslim utters on his death bed. This Shahada is not merely a common creed. It is the very fabric of every facet of life for approximately one million people world wide.

Muslim. When you hear that word, what is the first emotion that comes to your mind? Perhaps for you, especially since September 11th, 2001, the first emotion you experience is anger. This is understandable. Perhaps it is disdain, disgust, or hatred. Or perhaps the first emotion you experience is fear. For most Americans, there is a myriad of many emotions we all feel, when we hear the word Muslim, or Islam, which as most by now know, is the faith of Muslims.

"Four thousand years ago, Abraham cried out to God, "If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!" This heart rending plea of a father touched God's heart, and He replied, "And as for Ishmael, I have heard you: I will surely bless him... I will make him into a great nation." Genesis 17:20, 21 - Today the spiritual sons of Ishmael are called Muslims - the people of Islam. They have been blessed in a material sense, but they have not been saved. They have submitted to God, but not to His Son, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ." (quotation by David K. Irwin from his book, "What Christians Need to Know about Muslims")

We all still feel the open, raw wound left on our beautiful nation by the attacks of September 11th. And we all feel a tremendous sadness and anger at the senseless loss of

the over three thousand lives that day. How could any American not have been touched and deeply affected by the horrible events of that day?

However, there is also a percentage of Americans among us who, though we experience all the same emotions, we must make the effort to see past them. We must make an effort to see past the circumstances, past the religion, past the hurt, to the people. For those of us in that percentage, when we hear the word Islam, we feel trepidation, anxiety, perhaps even sorrow.

When we hear the word Muslim, we feel compassion, love, the softening of the heart. There is a word for these Americans. Perhaps right now, you may be thinking, traitor, turn-coat, Arab lover. And though you have every right to your opinion, and your emotions, no one would begrudge you that, the word I am referring to, is missionary.

In order to become a missionary, you must have the ability to separate the followers from the religion. Contrary to popular belief, not every Muslim wants to harm non-Muslims. Being a Muslim also does not mean he supports the massacres of September 11th, 2001. Being a Muslim does not mean he is in support of terrorism. And we must remember, there are radicals in every religion. For those of us who are Evangelical Christians, that means even our own. Becoming a missionary also requires a love and compassion for a people, regardless of the circumstances throughout our country, and the world right now. If you cannot feel compassion, and love enough for a people to be concerned with their eternity, then this job is not for you. It would be far too draining, and difficult. And you must be

willing to put your very life on the line. We have to remember that evangelism is highly illegal in the Middle East. When a missionary goes to the Middle East, he or she is fully aware that they may not return to their home land alive. This is a risk that must be taken for those who know the truth, and for those who accept the Great Commission as laid out by Christ over two thousand years ago. It is not a decision lightly made. And it is not for those who have not been called. One must have a passion and a genuine love for the culture, the area, but most importantly the people.

There are thousands of missionaries who leave the country every year to go to the farthest reaches of the globe. Most trips will take the missionary to places like China, Brazil, Portugal, Russia, Africa, Indonesia, and many other countries on many other continents. With approximately one billion follower's world wide, Islam is one of the fastest growing faiths and it is the second largest with Christianity being the largest. And yet, by far, ministry and missions among Muslims in the Middle East, is the most neglected in the mission field. Several missions have reported that the mission force working among Muslims currently is as small as one percent. That is approximately one missionary to every one million Muslims. There are more missionaries working among Alaska's 400,000 residents, then are working in the entire Muslim world. Over eighty percent of Muslims have never heard the Gospel. That is a staggering number. These statistics are at the very least, compelling, and heart-breaking for any compassionate Christian who knows the truth of the Gospel. Each and every one of us has a final destination, where we will be for eternity.

A great missionary, Samuel Zwemer, stated, "One might suppose that the church thought the Great Commission did not apply to Muslims." Mr. Zwemer has easily summed up the frustration of many missionaries who look to local churches for aide, and are instead faced with fear, and prejudice which closes doors. But who reserves the right to pick and choose who deserves to hear the truth? How can anyone make such a callous oversight? It is not for the church to choose whom they feel deserves Jesus. And neither is it our right to make this choice. If we choose to exclude one group because of hatred or anger, then we are no different then the men who attacked our country, or the spirit which was behind that attack. This is where we must separate the religion from the followers. Muslims are as much a victim of their faith as is one who is attacked by a radical Muslim. Islam is not like Christianity. Be grateful that in Christianity, no matter what country you live in, you can at any time choose to leave Christianity. Muslims face something completely different.

For instance, here are some things to think about. If you are a Christian, and you choose to leave this faith for whatever reason, do you feel you would face any persecution in this country, for making that decision? Would

your church or other churches commit their members to hunt you down until they killed you, because you left and betrayed Christianity? Do any verses in the Bible give orders to kill Christians who leave the faith? The answer to all these questions is most assuredly "no". However, if a Muslim leaves his faith, he can expect to face a number of things, unless he is very fortunate. He could lose his job, and be rejected for work anywhere else in his country. He could be arrested, and tortured by the police. Islamic groups or even his own family may try to kill him. And they are only following Islamic law, or the Shariah. By all accounts, Muslims are under a spiritual and social bondage of fear by their own religion. The have been lied to for thousands of years, blinded from the truth.

If a Muslim becomes an apostate-- Allah forbid!--The Imam should grant him three days' grace; he is not to be killed before this period expires, for the apostasy of a Muslim from his faith often results from his confusion. Therefore a period of grace is necessary, so that he can reflect and that the truth can become clear to him again. We, the Shafi'ites have determined that this time should consist of three days, whether he has asks of it or not. It has been told about our master, Umar ibn Al-Khattab-- may Allah be pleased with him--that a man was sent to him by Abu Mosa al-Ashaari. Umar asked him: "Do you have any good news?" The man said, "Yes, a man apostatized from Islam, so we killed him." Umar said: "Did you first take him into custody for three days, giving him one loaf per day, so that he may repent? Oh, Allah-- you are a witness, I was not there, neither did I give any orders, neither did I concede to that action." This story was mentioned by Malek, the Imam in his book, "Al-Muwattu" to the effect that Umar disapproved of what they did. Thus one can conclude from this event that an apostate must be given a three- day time limit before he is put to death." The same punishment is used for a female apostate.

So the point of this is that we can see that Muslims feel that it is merciful to give this three-day time limit, before an apostate is to be killed. By a Christian and a spiritual perspective, this can clearly be seen as Satan's plan for keeping a Muslim in bondage to his faith. Muslims, in essence are prisoners to Islam. The idea being, if they are afraid to die, they will not have the courage to step out and make their own choice. So they will remain as slaves to Islam until their death, unless they consider their eternal life more important than their earthly life. In fact, by Muslim accounts, a Muslim is considered a slave to Allah. How true this is. Muslims are kept in bondage to Islam by fear. Islam claims that Allah created man to exercise his own will, however, it is clear to see this is not the case.

As Christians, and followers of the one true God, we do not reserve the right to decide who deserves to hear the truth. Jesus sent the apostles into the entire world that all may know the truth. In that, He did not refer to all but Muslims.

How can we then, if we are to exhibit the true love of Christ, set aside one group and label them as undeserving of God's love, and salvation, when we our selves have done no more to deserve God's mercy than Muslims have? As Christians we do not get to make that choice. As Christians we must set aside any fear and anger we have, and replace it with love, and compassion.

God asks this very thing of a man names Ananias. Acts 9:1-25 - "Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, and asked from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. As he journeyed, he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shown around him from heaven. Then he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" And he said, "Who are you Lord?" Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads." So he, trembling, and astonished, said, "Lord what do you want me to do?" Then the Lord said to him, "Arise, and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no one. Then Saul rose from the ground, and when he opened his eyes, he saw no one. (he was blinded) But they led him by the hand, and brought him to Damascus. And he was there three days without sight, and neither ate, nor drank. Now there was a certain Disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him, the Lord said in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." So the Lord said to him, "Arise, and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying. And in a vision, he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hands on him, that he might receive his sight." Then Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem. And here he has authority from the chief priests who call on your name." But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him all the things he must suffer for my names sake." And Ananias went his way, and entered the house, and laying his hands on him, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales; and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized. So when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus. Immediately, he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. Then all who heard were amazed, and said, "Is this not he who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and has come here so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests." But Saul increased all the more in strength, and

confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this Jesus is the Christ. Now after many days had passed, the Jews had plotted to kill him. But their plot became known to Saul, and they watched the gates day, and night to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down through the wall in a large basket."

It is clear to see that Ananias was afraid to face Paul, because he knew what he was capable of. He knew Paul was a terrorist. And he knew that Paul could kill him without a thought. But he chose to put all that aside, and to put aside his flesh, and follow God. He knew that God had a divine purpose for the seemingly dangerous task He had asked of him. And so, with his trust in God, knowing that God would protect him if God was sending him, he went. But what if he had disobeyed? What if Ananias had chosen to obey his own flesh rather than God? What effect would that have had on Paul? He may have never been prayed for. God appointed this specific task to Ananias. What effect would Ananias's disobedience have had on all the people and nations that Paul touched and witnessed to as he traveled in his ministry on earth? What effect would it have had on mankind, and on the modern world? Perhaps it was the most frightening thing Ananias had ever done. But he put himself aside, and did it.

Obedience to God is not always easy. And sometimes it is frightening, because we do not always know the outcome before hand. But we must remember that for every choice we make, there are rewards, and consequences. Obedience to God will always bring rewards. It will also bring risks which we must be willing to take if God is going to be able to use us. We must sacrifice something for God's plan. For most of us, it is our feeling of security, in return for trusting God to protect us.

We must be willing to see those who are in need of love, and compassion. Can we simply turn away from a people in need? Close our minds, eyes, and hearts to them, simply because we do not understand them? Or can we take the time to pray, and learn as much as we can, to do something to make a change? We need to be willing to do something that will help. The effect of Christian missions in Islam can have a large effect on the rest of this world, and the violence that it is experiencing right now. A missionary has the ability because of true compassion, and love, to separate Muslims from Islam. A missionary knows what kind of dangers he or she might face, and that death is a very real possibility. But the missionary sees the real prize as winning lives to Christ, and saving them from eternity in hell. We must not be afraid to share our faith, even with the most threatening person. God's love knows no boundaries. And neither should ours.

-To read this article in its entirety, including an explanation of different types of Muslims, visit the following website: <http://christianmissiontrips.org/index.php?itemid=35>

**AFTER DEATH, WHAT?  
(CONTINUED FROM INSIDE FRONT COVER)**

mock him. But it was not to remain so for long. The gracious Spirit of God had work to do even here on Golgotha's mount. The light of God shone bright into the heart of one of these callous, wicked men, revealing to him Who it was who bled before him. And thus he spoke these saving words, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom."

And then our Master uttered this blessed response, "Today you will be with me in paradise." Yes, you friend, with your mountain of sin and a lifetime of theft and depravity upon your back, today...yes, today...you will be with me in paradise. Not only are these sweet words instructive as to the forgiving character of Christ, but they have something to say about our topic also.

Here is a vile thief, a dishonorable malefactor. Just a few moments ago he joined in with his friend in mockery of Jesus. But now, touched with the awakening power of the Spirit, he calls upon the Prince of Peace for everlasting life. And when does Christ promise him that his

bright eternity will begin? When is he to enjoy blessed fellowship with his God? "Today," says the Savior, "TODAY you will be with me in paradise".

So what then of soul sleep? Will our friend the forgiven thief slumber in ignorance and unawareness until the judgment? What says our Christ? "Today...TODAY you will be with me in paradise." And so is banished that dreary doctrine.

And what of purgatory? Must this offender first endure a period of torturous purgation before he may look upon the bright face of his Savior? By no means does he meet death with anything near a perfect purity. Will he not, for certain then, need to clear his record in torment before walking heaven's shores? What say you, beloved Christ, regarding him? "Today... TODAY you will be with me in paradise." Let fear of purgatory be cast aside as well.

And what awaits you, beloved Christian, when your eyes close in death? Hear now the words of your Savior: "Today...TODAY you will be with me in paradise."

-by Edward W. Ludt

Elders: Pastor Ed Ludt  
179 Howell Road, RR#1  
St. George, ON  
N0E 1N0  
(519) 448-3129  
eludt@sympatico.ca

Mr. Bill Kroesbergen  
2244 2nd Conc., RR#1  
Lynden, ON  
L0R 1T0  
(519)647-2659  
bkkroes@execulink.com

Mr. Cope Jonkman  
RR#1  
Paris, ON  
N3L 3E1  
(519) 448-1068  
cjonkman@execulink.com

Deacons: Mr. Gary Everts  
RR#2  
Branchton, ON  
N0B 1L0  
(519)623-9674  
gary.everts@primus.ca

Mr. Evert Winkels  
121 McMillan Road  
Lynden, ON  
L0R 1T0  
(519)647-9833  
ewinkels@sympatico.ca

**GRACE COVENANT CHURCH**

*For Christ's Crown and Covenant*

Services: Sundays at 10:00 A.M. and 6:00 P.M.

1260 Sheffield Road, Sheffield

(formerly Sheffield Public School)

mailing address - P.O. Box 12-4 Sheffield, ON L0R 1Z0

phone - (519) 621-1577

email - gcc@execulink.com

web site - <http://www.gcc-opc.org/>