

The Meaning of Life



Throughout time, men and women have asked the big question: what is this life all

about? Is there a purpose or meaning to it? To answer these questions, we can turn to the Bible message and see that it is still relevant to us living in the 21st century. We will look at what the Bible tells us about the meaning of life, then go on to consider the Bible message to us personally.

We will consider the meaning of life in three sections:

- ❖ Where did we come from?
- ❖ What is life all about?
- ❖ Where are we going?

Then we shall look further at God's plan and the promises which He has made.

Where Did We Come From?

We were put here by a power greater than ourselves, by the unchanging Creator. The natural laws which govern our world do not change and those same constant laws apply outside of Earth. This indicates that the same



power is in control throughout the universe. The Bible tells us in Genesis 1 that God is that power, He created our world and keeps it going. In Malachi 3:6 we read that God is constant:

For I am the Lord, I do not change.

Because our Creator does not change, His message does not change either. This is crucial when we are thinking of the vital issues of life and death:

You are God, and your words are true (2 Samuel 7:28).

Not only that, but God will bless those who read His word and try to follow it:

Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord! Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, who seek Him with the whole heart (Psalm 119:1-2).

What is Life All About?

The Bible shows that our Creator is concerned about us; in fact, God's care for us is seen all through the Bible. He assures us that the natural cycles which support our lives will continue. He told Noah after the flood:

While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, and day and night shall not cease (Genesis 8:22).

God wants us to reflect His care, and the apostle John told us that we should show God's love to others:

And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also (1 John 4:21).

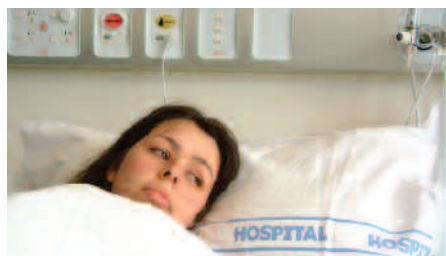
God also cares about our future and He offers us life after death, through the work of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. This is summarized by what is perhaps the best-known verse of the Bible:

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16).

This can give us a real hope for the future, whatever our present problems. Jesus Christ promised that those who believe in him will be given endless life:

And this is the will of Him who sent me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day (John 6:40).

The problems we encounter can make our lives very difficult. Sometimes, however, they can serve to make us think about our long-term future.



In Jesus' day, a tower in Jerusalem fell and killed eighteen people. Jesus said that we should take notice and understand that without a part in God's plan, when we die that will be the end of us (see Luke 13:4-5). We are also given good advice on this in the Old Testament. Proverbs 16:25 tells us that only

those who respect God have any hope for the future, and we should not rely on our own ideas:

There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.

Where are We Going?

God's plan is for a peaceful worldwide kingdom. Throughout the Bible, many verses talk of a future world order, ruled over by Jesus Christ, which will be very different from today's fractured experience. Here is just one example:

Give the king your judgments, O God, and your righteousness to the king's Son. He will judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice... In his days the righteous shall flourish, and abundance of peace until the moon is no more... There will be an abundance of grain in the earth... (Psalm 72:1, 2, 7, 16).

The Bible tells us that some people will be raised from the grave and given



endless life when Jesus returns to the earth to establish this kingdom:

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first (1 Thessalonians 4:16).

God plans to fill the earth with those who respect Him, so we can be involved in this peaceful worldwide kingdom on earth, and even help in solving the world's problems:

Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection... They shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years (Revelation 20:6).



Bible Promises

We shall now look at the Bible message and what it should mean to us personally. This is the good news, the Gospel. Early on in the Bible we read of the promises that God made to Abram (later called Abraham), the father of the Jews.

Now the Lord had said to Abram: "... I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Genesis 12:1-3).

God makes it clear right at the start that everyone can be involved in the blessings on Abraham's descendants. The rest of the Bible is the account of how God works out this promise. Now,

through Abraham's son Isaac, the Jews are his natural descendants. How then can all nations be blessed with Abraham? We find the answer in the New Testament, in the letter that the apostle Paul wrote to the believers in Galatia, an area of modern Turkey. He explains that Jesus Christ is the particular descendant who would bring blessings on all nations:

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your seed," who is Christ (Galatians 3:16).

This shows that it is through Jesus Christ that all nations can be involved in the promises made to Abraham. Both Jesus and the apostle Paul confirm the Jewish connection with God's plan:

- ❖ Jesus said in John 4:22: "Salvation is of the Jews".
- ❖ Paul wrote in Acts 28:20: "...for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain".

Our Part in this Plan

In Galatians chapter 3, Paul also explains how we can be involved in God's plan:

[God]... preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed." So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham (Galatians 3:8-9).

So it is those who believe and have faith in God's promises who will be involved in His plan. When we have

that faith, then we need to be baptized to demonstrate our trust and commitment:

For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise (Galatians 3:27-29).



So by having faith in God's word, being baptized and living as God asks mankind to do, people from any and all nations can be involved in the promises that God made to Abraham and his descendants.

Think about that for a moment. If we are part of God's plan, we have the hope of being raised from the dead when Jesus returns, and to live for ever in a perfect world – that really is a hope which can give our life meaning!

Lawrence Cave

Faith

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen... Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

(Hebrews 11:1, 6)

Baptism

As many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death... Therefore we were buried with him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

(Romans 6:3-4)

Baptism [is]... the answer of a good conscience toward God.

(1 Peter 3:21)