

aired on KALS October 4, 2005

Psalm 49:7-20

7. “No man can by any means redeem *his* brother or give to God a ransom for him--

8. For the redemption of his soul is costly, and he should cease *trying* forever--

9. That he should live on eternally, that he should not undergo decay.

10. For he sees *that even* wise men die; the stupid and the senseless alike perish and leave their wealth to others.

11. Their inner thought is *that* their houses are forever *and* their dwelling places to all generations; they have called their lands after their own names.

12. But man in *his* pomp will not endure; he is like the beasts that perish.

13. This is the way of those who are foolish, and of those after them who approve their words.

14. As sheep they are appointed for Sheol; death shall be their shepherd; and the upright shall rule over them in the morning, and their form shall be for Sheol to consume so that they have no habitation.

15. But God will redeem my soul from the power of Sheol, for He will receive me.

16. Do not be afraid when a man becomes rich, when the glory of his house is increased;

17. For when he dies he will carry nothing away; his glory will not descend after him.

18. Though while he lives he congratulates himself--and though *men* praise you when you do will for yourself--

19. he shall go to the generation of his fathers; they will never see the light.

20. Man in *his* pomp, yet without understanding, is like the beasts that perish.”

There is something about the heart and mind of man that so naturally rationalizes away the reality of physical death. Even at funerals, the natural man fights reality, his inner voice consoles, saying, “It may happen to the other guy, but never to me.” Verse 11 of Psalm 49 puts it this way: “Their inner thought is that their houses are forever and their dwelling places to all generations; they have called their lands after their own names.” But the spiritual man understands that even their own lands will someday come to an end.

Not only does Psalm 49 speak of man’s self-deception concerning physical death, but also his notions of value and importance during his life here on earth. In verses 7-10 God speaks to those who trust in their wealth and boast in the abundance of riches: “No man can by any means redeem his brother or give to God a ransom for him--for the redemption of his soul is costly, and he should cease trying forever--that he should live on eternally, that he should not undergo decay” Even

wise men die, the stupid and the senseless alike perish and leave their wealth to others.”

In other words, riches gained here on earth are worthless for redeeming the soul or keeping one’s body from death and decay. Yet so many people today look to doctors and the medical community to keep them alive; spending fortunes to postpone the inevitable. And so the doctors become as gods. Yet even the doctors all eventually die, too. To which the psalmist responds in verse 13: “This is the way of those who are foolish.”

So as the psalmist of old accurately predicts; the rich continue to congratulate themselves, and men praise them for doing well. But when he dies he will carry away nothing, his wealth will not descend after him.

We who are spiritual, then, must not fix our hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on our Lord Jesus. Yes, unless the Lord returns first, we will all physically die. And I acknowledge that this includes even me!

Coming to grips with this most basic fact of life, has everything to do with how we live.

In John 10:10, Jesus says: “I have come that they may have life, and have life abundantly.”