

Prayer Requests & Announcements

- Tom & Kate are in Nevada visiting Family. They plan to return early this week.
- Empey's are in Boise. April will be seeing her Doctors this week. They plan to return this Wednesday.
- Porters are in Nevada, they plan to return tomorrow.
- The Bible class at Chad & Kass' will resume soon.
- The Christians in the Philippines.

Assignments

Today Bible Study – Ross Ward Song Leader – Ross Ward Lord's Table – Chad Mitchell Sermon – Ross Ward	Wednesday Bible Study – Ross Ward Song Leader – Tom Mitchell Invitation – Ross Ward
Next Sunday Bible Study – Tom Mitchell Song Leader – David Porter Lord's Table – Tom Mitchell Sermon – Ross Ward	Next Wednesday Bible Study – Ross Ward Song Leader – Chad Mitchell Invitation – Ross Ward

Blackfoot Church of Christ
370 North Shilling Ave.
Blackfoot, Idaho 83221

Meeting Times:

Sunday Morning Classes 10:00AM
Sunday Morning Worship 11:00AM
Wednesday Evening 7:30PM



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You Really Don't Want To Go There

By Ross Ward

It was announced this week that Charles Manson died. The acts that he was charged with happened long before I was aware. Over the years, I suppose at anniversary dates, I've heard bits and pieces of the story. A quick review of any article about him shows just how evil he truly was. His lawlessness started when he was 9 years old. At one point he claimed to be Christ making is second coming. He led a cult in which he had them kill 8 people in the most horrific way possible. One of the dead was an almost full term baby. I found the events of his life to be downright sickening, but isn't that what sin is really about? Sin is simply when we fail to adhere to God's commands. It is a failure of man to reflect the righteousness of God. God has promised that all unrepentant murderers (and many others) have their place in the Lake of Fire. Presuming Manson's fate is sealed for eternal punishment, does that not add another reason why we really don't want to go there? If the fear of eternal torture is not enough, if the disgust of spending eternity with Satan is not enough, how about spending an eternity in the presence of a Charles Manson, or any other sickening evil doer that we see among us. All the unrepentant pedophiles, rapist, murderers, etc. will spend eternity in this punishment. Who is not there? God is not there. Our heavenly Father, our Savior, and the Spirit are all absent from the realm of eternal punishment. This means an absence of righteousness, light, sympathy, love, mercy, relief, and escape. It is really hard to imagine how evil eternal punishment will be. We live in a world where we can find all these things if we look for it, but in eternal punishment, these things cannot be found. Eternal punishment is not just a place for the really evil, it is a place for any who do not follow God's

will. At times we have a really bad habit of categorizing sin, meaning we perceive one sin to be less heinous than others. Sometimes we think, well I'm not as bad as..., insinuating that we are surely worthy to enter heaven, after all, so and so is much worse than I am. This type of attitude leaves us comparing ourselves against others but not against God's pattern. God does not categorize sins like we do! He has his own standard that only He is qualified to establish. God does not ask us to just be better than others, He commands that we be transformed, Rom 12:2, and that we "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness", Eph 4:24. If we fail to do this, it means we remain worldly, in a sinful state, a state opposed to God. This is missing the mark, the very definition of sin. Scripture states that sin leads to death, Rom 3:23, and that the reward for sin is death, Rom 6:23. This is not talking about physical death but spiritual death. A death that lives forever in hell. Eternal punishment is a place devoid of our Father, our Savior and his Spirit and of all the blessings that come through them. It is a place devoid of righteousness. Needless to say, we really don't want to go there.

If The Dead Could Talk

Mike Thomas | Beaver Dam, Kentucky, USA

People leave this world every day. In a world of seven billion in population there is likely never an hour when someone is not passing from this life. But that doesn't mean a person ceases to exist spiritually when they depart, for "the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12:7). Jesus confirmed this fact in His account of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16. Unlike a parable, which never identifies people by name, this account gives insight into the ongoing condition of those in eternity. Specifically for the rich man, "And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom" (verse 23). This nullifies the idea of inactivity or unawareness after death. People truly do continue to exist beyond the grave, as further evidenced by Jesus' resurrection from the dead. And with His account of Luke 16, Jesus confirms that we will either exist in torment or in comfort. That being so, what would the dead tell us if they could talk to us?

This world is temporary. Paul made the observation that "the things which are seen are temporary" (2 Corinthians 4:18). I challenge you to find one

thing that is seen that is not temporary. Everything on the earth and in the heavens will "will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up" (2 Peter 3:10). This includes every house, car, movie, document, title, deed, award, record, statistic, coin, stock, and credit score. Not only is that which is seen temporary, we lose access to it once we leave this life. Solomon said of the dead, "Also their love, their hatred, and their envy have now perished; nevermore will they have a share in anything done under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 9:6). Since this is so, why lose our eternal soul for that which is temporal? Why trust in things and in people who are but for a moment? The dead know better than that. In fact, the rich man in Luke 16 cared nothing about the riches he left behind. His primary concern was for his family and whether "they also come to this place of torment" (verse 28). The dead know there is no lasting value in earthly things, do we?

Obey the gospel. Those who have passed are fully aware of the spiritual consequences of sin and how "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). If they could speak to us, they would zealously preach on repenting of sin and being converted to the Lord (Acts 3:19). They would have no shame in telling sinners to be baptized into Christ (Acts 22:16; Romans 1:16). "If the dead would have such an important message, why doesn't God let them come back to warn us?" He's already done that in the resurrection of Jesus. The Bible states, "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because he has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead" (Acts 17:30-31). If we won't listen to Him, neither will we listen to others (Luke 16:31; Hebrews 1:2).

You're next. If your relative or friend could come back, they would plead with you to realize that your time on earth is fragile and fleeting—and it's about to be taken from you. This world is a façade that hides true reality. They know without any misunderstanding that life is "a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away" (James 4:14). They would beg you to use your time wisely in learning and obeying God's will before your time is up (2 Thessalonians 1:8).

Wisdom is speaking to you, do you hear her? He who has an ear to hear let him hear!