

The Days Of Youth

*“His flesh shall be
fresher than a
child’s: he shall
return to the days
of his youth.”*

—*Job 33:25*

THESE WONDERFUL WORDS

of Scripture were written many centuries ago and foretell a yet future time when the human family will be lifted out of the terrible pit of sin, corruption, and death, and elevated to a relationship of favor with the all-wise and loving Heavenly Father. This great work of restitution for the human family will be accomplished under the establishment of Christ’s kingdom that we believe will soon be set up over all the earth. Under that righteous government, mankind will learn obedience to the Divine rule, and appreciate the provisions provided under the terms of the New Covenant arrangement that will be designed for the blessing of all the families of the earth.—Gen. 22:16-18

A SAVIOR NEEDED

To bring this Divine plan of reconciliation to pass, it would be necessary for our Lord Jesus to leave his heavenly estate, come to earth and pay

the ransom price for sin by shedding his own precious blood for the poor groaning human creation. The Heavenly Father's method would be manifest to all mankind in due time and course. In connection with this plan, we further read in Job's account, "If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness; Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom."—Job 33:23,24

Writing many centuries later, the Prophet Malachi also spoke of our Lord as a special messenger from the Heavenly Father. "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts."—Mal. 3:1

Great rejoicing will take place when men begin to realize and appreciate the blessed promises of a loving God that will be made available under Christ's kingdom and rulership. We read further in Job, "He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him: and he shall see his face with joy: for he will render unto man his righteousness. He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light. Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man, To bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living."—Job 33:26-30

THE GLORIOUS PROSPECT

From the early days of earth's creation and man's fall into sin and death because of disobedience to the Divine Law, men have been seeking, by their own means, a way to return to the former state of vigor, health, and youthfulness. No one has yet found such a way to do this, but with an ultimate design and purpose our loving Heavenly Father has set in motion a Divine plan for the recovery and reconciliation of the fallen race; and that reconstruction work will be fulfilled under the administration of Christ's future kingdom of Truth and righteousness.

With a theme for the glorious and righteous work of Christ's kingdom, the psalmist wrote, "Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's."—Ps. 103:1-5

THE FORETOLD PROMISE

This ultimate promise for the sin-sick world of today was foretold in the wonderful words of the Prophet Isaiah, to which Jesus turned when he began his earthly ministry. "He came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place

where it was written [Isaiah 61:1-3].”—Luke 4:16,17

When our Lord Jesus began to read he confirmed the Heavenly Father’s promise. “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.”—vss. 18-21

IN THE DAY THOU EATEST THEREOF

From the Bible record, we read concerning Adam and the penalty that he would suffer because of his disobedience to the Heavenly Father and his righteous laws. “The LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die [dying thou shalt die, *Marginal Translation*].”—Gen. 2:16,17

The alternate translation from the Margin suggests that Adam would not die instantly, but that a dying process would be carried out before his sentence of death would end in the grave. This fact is corroborated in the scriptural record where we learn, “All the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died.” (chap. 5:5)

Thus is clearly shown that ‘the day’ of which God was speaking, was a thousand years long. “Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” (II Pet. 3:8) Methuselah lived the longest of any human being, but he, too, died within the divinely established limit of God’s thousand-year day. “All the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years: and he died.”—Gen. 5:27

THE CESSATION OF LIFE

The seriousness of God’s warning about the penalty of death and its consequences was straightforward, and thus fully understood by Adam. “Unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” (Gen. 3:17-19) Thus the whole world, including those yet unborn, would come under the penalty of death as explained by the Apostle Paul. “As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”—Rom. 5:12

THE PROCESS OF DYING

Those who have studied the aging process report that it depends on a combination of both genetic

and environmental factors, and that every individual has their own unique genetic makeup and environment. Therefore, the aging process and eventual death occurs at different rates in different people. Genetic factors are usually more powerful than environmental factors in determining the large differences among people in aging and life span.

Some specific genetic disorders may speed up the aging process, but there are also many environmental conditions, such as the available quality of health care that may have a substantial effect on aging. The aging process also causes basic functional changes in the body's cells. The rate at which cells multiply tends to slow down with age, such as the cells that are important for our immune system to work properly. Aging also causes changes in our responses to environmental stresses, exposure and other factors.

A SPAN OF LIFE

Some die at birth or at a very early age, while others may live a few short years longer than the average life span. The process of dying, however, always ends in the grave. This fact is emphasized in the book of Job, where it is made clear, "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not. And dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into judgment with thee? Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one. Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass."—Job 14:1-5

The psalmist also speaks of fallen man's life span and ultimate fate, saying, "Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust." (Ps. 104:29) Again, we read, "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish." (chap. 146:4) Solomon wrote, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."—Eccles. 9:10

THE FABLES OF MAN

Dating back to ancient times, numerous fables that were surrounded by mystical thoughts and dreams spoke of fountains of youth and healing waters in faraway places. Alexander the Great had searched for such waters in eastern Asia, and medieval writers had mentioned them. There were also similar legends known to the Polynesians whose tradition supposedly located the fountain of youth somewhere in Hawaii.

Soon after the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus in 1492, Spanish adventurers sought gold and other riches in the newly discovered lands. On his second voyage to the new world, Juan Ponce de Leon accompanied him and claimed the subtropical islands of Puerto Rico for the king of Spain. The island remained under Spanish control despite numerous attempts of conquest by buccaneers and pirates, as well as by English and Dutch expeditions. In 1508, Juan Ponce de Leon became the first governor.

THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

The thirst for wealth and power eventually led some adventurers to an exploration of the territory of what is now the southern part of the United States. In the meantime, Ponce de Leon had become interested in a tradition that prevailed at that time among the natives of Hispaniola, Puerto Rico, and Cuba. They believed that there was a fountain in a mysterious land to the north where there were healing springs with waters capable of renewing the youth, and that would invigorate every person who bathed in its waters.

Ponce de Leon had become wealthy in the colonial service and was therefore financially able to equip three ships for the purpose of setting out in search for the land of riches, and the mythical fountain of youth that would restore his health and make him a vigorous young man again. He perhaps may have been vaguely familiar with some of the fables of the distant past. In hopes of finding such a place, he and his followers roamed throughout the islands of the West Indies, searching for the fountain which had now become the chief object of the expedition. On their voyages, they visited islands and continents of whose existence mankind in former ages had no conception.

On one of these expeditions in 1512, Ponce de Leon discovered a new and strange land which he thought was another island. He named it Florida which means "feast of flowers" having found himself surrounded by unfamiliar and exotic types of plants and flowers. It is also not unreasonable to conclude that he may have thought that the fountain of youth was also nearby. However, he was

never able to locate the elusive fountain of youth that he had spent so much time, effort, and expense to find. He was eventually killed by hostile Indians in a second visit to Florida in 1521.

RAPIDLY PASSING TIME

Time is relentless and everyone feels themselves growing older with increasing speed. It has been said that the older one gets, the faster the time passes. As the years glide by, the ability to look unaffected by the rapid passage of time and to maintain an appearance of youth is a goal that many often seek. As one increases in age, physical and mental strength grows weaker, and yet at the same time the demands of life and time may grow more intense and stressful. This is especially true in our modern-day world that has been accelerated by the great increase of knowledge and the frantic pace of life.

Celebrities and people who have financial means are more able to take advantage of the wide variety of lotions, potions, and other preparations that have been prepared to make one look and feel younger. There are also healing spas, health resorts, invigorating baths and many other related products and techniques that are available to help rejuvenate the human body for a time. More drastic measures including plastic surgery and Botox procedures have also been implemented in an attempt to reverse the inevitable process of aging. The Prophet Isaiah wrote, "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."—Isa. 64:6

GOD'S REMEDY

Our loving Heavenly Father has the ultimate plan and only answer for the sin-sick and dying human family. Christ's future kingdom of life-giving blessings will be available for all of the obedient of mankind. In the prophetic words of Isaiah, we read, "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying."—Isa. 65:17-19

Under Christ's kingdom rule of righteousness, it will be possible for all who are obedient to the Divine law to return to the freshness of youth, as outlined in our featured scripture. Isaiah said, "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed."—vs. 20

AN ALL ENCOMPASSING PLAN

Isaiah's prophetic words point to our loving Heavenly Father's design for his human creation that will extend blessings of life and peace to the farthest reaches of the earth. All will be brought under the arrangements of his kingdom. "They shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of

a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them. And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD."—Isa. 65:21-25

At that time, the wonderful words of our featured scripture will be fulfilled. "His flesh shall be fresher than a child's: he shall return to the days of his youth."—Job 33:25 ■