

The Word's Eye View

The Word's Eye View is a newspaper column written by
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Death... The Great Equalizer (Article 53)

This past week four celebrities died...Ed McMahn, Farrah Fawcett, Michael Jackson and my mother-in-law, the Troll. Frequently, over the years I have used the "T" word to describe or even introduce my wife's mother only to watch the unsuspecting recoil in semi-horror. Those were moments that appealed to the twisted humor that we both possessed. It was difficult for some to comprehend that our relationship was adversarial with premeditated forethought founded upon fun with a slice of lemon. She often responded with names for me that aren't fit to print, but I must admit it was great amusement. The Troll had one thing in common with the other celebrities in that she was an entertainer, and that's undoubtedly why she enjoyed jocular banter with her son-in-law and anyone else who would be engaged. Her celebrity status was small compared to the other well-knowns, but to those of us who loved her, her significance exceeds the stars.

Tens of thousands will celebrate the life and music of Michael Jackson, but will tragically miss the greater point---simply put, everyone dies. Michael was fifty; others are in their eighties. The media has had much to say about Jackson's relative young age; as with Elvis, the grim reaper appeared earlier than expected. The Bible concludes the issue with pointed simplicity: "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." (Hebrews 9:27) Those who are so concentrated on imitating the moon walk may fail to realize that a divine calendar exists with an X on a particular date accompanied by their name. There could be no greater evidence for this than the deaths of the rich and famous. Peter said it this way, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons." (Acts 10:34) The ancient Egyptians may have had a better grip on reality than modern society, for it is said they placed a skeleton at the head of every feast to serve as a reminder of the inevitable.

Humans do, of course, have the option of moving their appointment with death forward through planned suicides or participation in extremely jeopardizing activities. There is much speculation that the King of Pop advanced his date with lethal cocktails of prescription drugs. Glamorous life styles are not always what they seem. What is far less understood is that God reserves the right to extend life beyond the expected and has on several occasions exercised that prerogative. The Old Testament records the life of such an individual. The prophet Isaiah was commissioned by God to approach King Hezekiah with the news that it was time for him to cash in his chips, and therefore, he needed to get his affairs in order. Needless to say, old Hez took the admonishment rather hard, but responded by turning his face to the Giver of life with tears and prayer. Now the king was not only an accomplished statesman but a great contributor to science and agricultural improvements. God answered favorably by granting Hezekiah fifteen extra years on his personal calendar. The larger question is why? Was this extension because of his achievements in the realm of the worldly or was the Lord impressed with something of greater significance? A comprehensive study of the Scriptures reveals Hezekiah had a great love for the Word of God which resulted in him assembling a group of scribes for the purpose of Scripture preservation. He was the author of at least ten of the Psalms that have brought great comfort to readers for generations. This passion for truth is what captured the attention of the Architect of accuracy.

Lazarus had been dead four days but when Jesus stood at the graveside and commanded him to come forth all of heaven and hell could not have prevented it.

The Bible concludes the average life span at three score and ten, and on occasion by reason of strength, some will proceed to eighty. Connie exceeded that by three years. God was gracious in leaving her with us that long. The Troll no longer lives under the bridge of mortality for she has crossed it; the span was divinely constructed in the form of an old rugged cross. The cloud of corruptibility that we all live under has evaporated into an incorruptible existence that boggles the imagination. She has joined her husband of 62 years; Jim was a true American hero who flew 38 missions over Japan in World War II. There are no more oxygen tanks or swollen knees; the difficulty of navigating a simple sidewalk has disappeared, for together hand in hand they now skip down the streets of Glory witnessing things that are beyond description....”But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.” (I Corinthians 2:9)

If the Bible is a myth, what have I lost? But if it is true, what has the unbeliever lost? Troll, I bid you adieu, but for a little while...my faith says we will trade pleasant barbs again.