

## "What Is Death"

Scripture Lesson: - Psalm 23. Job 14: 1-14.

Text: - Job 14:14.

Introduction: - Job was a man. He was a man such as we are. He had the same questionings regarding the doings of the Almighty God that we have. He always asked, "Why". When he reached the end of his questionings God spoke to him. In the face of questionings, God gave a word of assurance. The first question God asked Job was, "What do you really know about the mysteries of nature, the mystery of creation, of light, of rain, of the stars. And Job had to say, "Nothing." He was like Thomas A. Edison, who said, "No one knows one seven-billionth of one percent about anything".

"What do you know about nature. And Job had to explain, "We are but of yesterday, and know nothing." Yes, in the mysterious realm of nature we have to trust to the wisdom and greatness, the goodness and integrity of God.

"What do you know about evil as a social problem. Do you really comprehend the motives for the crime and violence now menacing the nation, "the black fringe around our society," as the late Joseph Fort Newton once called it. Again, Job was called upon to say, "I know but fragments concerning evil as a social problem".

God's provision for the forgiveness of our sins is no less beyond our powers to understand. We are "lost in wonder, love and praise" as we contemplate the plan of salvation from sin. Through his atoning sacrifice of himself, his death upon the cross, Christ satisfied the divine justice, procured our pardon before the holy God, and was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

God's power to change human life is as mysterious to us as his plan of salvation. His only begotten Son's blood can make the foulest clean, as white as snow, releasing men and

women from the thralldom of sin, lifting them out of the horrible pit, put of the miry clay, and setting their feet upon a rock, transfiguring the worst of characters into the best.

We trust the mystery of evil, its existence and control, its redemption and conquest to God. Should we not trust also in him the quite inscrutable dispensations to his providence.

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The third question which God addressed to Job in his perplexity and which he puts to us here today is, "What do you know about the mystery of death? What do you know about that undiscovered country which lies beyond the last door of life?"

God said to Job, "Behold now behemoth," and again, "Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook? Behemoth indicates the hippopotamus and leviathan the crocodile. Thomas Macaulay said in an essay, "I have seen the hippopotamus both asleep and awake and I can assure you that awake or asleep he is the ugliest of the creatures of God." In the mythological imagery of Egypt and the ancient east, the hippopotamus and the crocodile always represented death and the realms of the dead. In the early Coptic church of Egypt in the early centuries Christ is depicted standing upon the head of a crocodile. Our Lord is thus shown in the splendor and power of his resurrection triumph over sin and the grave.

We know little of that soft, fascinating sleep that men call death. We know little of that strange country of the beyond. It is sufficient for us to know that he has the keys of death and the realm of the dead. It is reassuring for us to know that, "Christ leads us through no darker rooms than he has before." It is adequate comfort for us to possess the confidence that when we lie down to sleep for the last time, or when we watch our loved ones put out to sea, Christ stands at the gateway of eternity as our Savior and friend.

We trust our heavenly Father in the mystery

of nature, in the mystery of evil and in the mystery of death. Should we not trust him through all the changing scenes of life?

At last Job in his experience passed beyond a mere intellectual concept of God to a knowledge of him as Father and friend. "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eyes see thee." Thou art the God who loves and cares for me and all whom I love here and beyond the bounds of vision.

We who know God in Christ trust him as the creator of the ends of the earth, the one in whom all things cohere, the redeemer who by his cross and precious blood answers the problem, sounds the doom and interprets the uses of evil. He is Lord of life and death who "abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

In the bitter waves of woe,  
Beaten and tossed about  
By the sullen winds that blow  
From the desolate shores of doubt,  
When the anchors that faith had cast  
Are dragging in the gale  
I am quietly holding fast  
To the things that cannot fail.

In the darkest hour of the year  
When the stars have all gone out,  
I know that courage is better than fear,  
That faith is better than doubt.  
And that somewhere beyond the stars  
Is a love that is better than fate,  
When the night unlocks her bars  
I shall see him and I will wait.

Conclusion:- Yes, Mrs. Brown has lived her life.  
She has answered the call to the great beyond. We  
her destiny in the hand of the Lord. Farewell.