

R.I.P.

It is an interesting adventure to visit various cemeteries, especially those with very old grave markers. As one surveys the cemetery and reads the names and dates on the markers, he is brought face-to-face with the reality that one day life as we know it will be over, and that death is no respecter of persons. Sooner or later death comes to the rich and poor, famous and infamous, learned and ignorant, young and old. The beckoning call of death comes when least expected.

Reading the inscriptions on the grave markers one may see the initials “R.I.P.” which mean “Rest In Peace”. Possibly there may be similar inscriptions. But, are they really resting in peace? In those graves are the bodies, or remains of people, but they are in a state of decay. So, then, their bodies cannot possibly be resting in peace.

The soul of man is eternal and does not die, nor will experience death as we know it. Speaking of death and the eternal soul, Ecclesiastes 12:7 says, “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.” The soul is eternal, it is that part of you which goes on living after the body dies, but is it “resting in peace”?

When a person dies, the body goes to a grave and the soul goes to one of two places, Heaven or Hell. The soul of those who, in faith believing, have received Jesus Christ as personal Saviour will go to Heaven, while the soul of those who have not accepted Jesus Christ as personal Saviour will go to Hell. There is no purgatory according to the Bible; the soul goes immediately to one place or the other — for all eternity! But are these souls, in either place, resting in peace? Hear ye what the Scriptures saith!

Speaking of those who are in Hell now, or those who will be should they die in their unsaved condition, the Bible says of the rich man in Luke 16:23, “And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments,...” and verse 24 “...for I am tormented in this flame.” Psalm 11:6, “Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Rev. 20:10, “...and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”

Rev. 20:15, “And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” Rev. 21:8, “...shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone...” These are but a few of the verses God uses to tell of the fate of the unsaved. Did any of these verses say anything about an unsaved soul resting in peace?

Addressing those who are in Heaven now, or who will be as a result of by faith believing, having received Jesus Christ as personal Saviour, the Bible says, Luke 20:36, “Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.” Rev. 21:3,4, “...Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” These verses point to the fact that the soul of one who is in heaven is resting in peace.

And now I ask you, will the inscription on your grave marker say “Resting in Peace”, or will it say “Tormented In Hell”? If you have never asked Jesus Christ to come into your heart as Saviour, then by the mercies of God I invite you to do so, now. Christ died on the Cross of Calvary as your substitute; He shed His blood as full and final payment for your sins; He was buried and rose again as proof that God’s demand had been met and that all those who accept Him as their personal Saviour shall also be raised to a new life (Heb. 9:11-14; John 14:19; I Thess. 4:15-18). Will you this day, by faith from your heart believing, pray and ask Jesus Christ into your heart? You may pray a prayer similar to this: “O God, be merciful to me a sinner. I know that I am lost and in need of a Saviour. I repent and turn from my sinful ways and ask for Jesus Christ to save me now and for ever.” According to I John 5:11-13, those who call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation may know that they are saved. You and you alone must choose which inscription will be on your grave marker, “Resting In Peace,” or “Tormented In Hell.”

Accept Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour, today!

-Richard A. Ciarrocca