# <u>a sermon:</u> ON AN ELDERLY CHRISTIAN'S FUNERAL

Robert Baral 2/28/2007 AD

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# I. A PRAYER

"Almighty GOD, with Whom do live the spirits of those who depart hence in The Lord, and with Whom the souls of the faithful, after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh, are in joy and felicity; We give Thee hearty thanks, for that it hath pleased Thee to deliver this our brother out of the miseries of this sinful world; beseeching Thee that it may please Thee, of Thy gracious goodness, shortly to accomplish the number of Thine elect, and to hasten Thy Kingdom; that we, with all those who are departed in The true Faith of Thy holy Name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in Thine eternal and everlasting glory; through JESUS CHRIST our Lord. Amen!"

# II. A HYMN

I am bound for The Promised Land, I am bound for The Promised Land; oh, who will come and go with me? I am bound for The Promised Land.<sup>2</sup>

# **III. A PROPOSITION**

The burdens of this world shall pass away, and we whose souls are secured in JESUS CHRIST shall enter into life eternal in Heaven forever!

## IV. A SCRIPTURE TEXT OF ASSURANCE

JOHN 10:27-30

27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me:

28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.

29 My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand.

30 I and My Father are one.<sup>3</sup>

# V. THE LORD KNOWS HIS SAINTS, FOR THEY FOLLOW HIM!

On Jordan's stormy banks I stand, and cast a wishful eye to Canaan's fair and happy land, where my possessions lie!<sup>4</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> 1, BCP, service for "Burial of the Dead," 1<sup>st</sup> prayer after The Our Father prayer, page 531.
<sup>2</sup> 2, The hymn, On Jordan's Stormy Banks I Stand, Refrain.
<sup>3</sup> 3, KJV, JOHN 10:27-30.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>2, The hymn, On Jordan's Stormy Banks I Stand, Stanza 1.

In JOHN 10:27 our Lord declares, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me!" <sup>5</sup> Of what comfort is this when we who earnestly profess JESUS CHRIST as our Saviour stand on the edge of life in this world and gaze with wishful eyes and in expectant hope for entry into the life eternal with Him forever?

It tells us firstly that we who are elected unto salvation are drawn to our Lord, seeking joyfully to serve Him and keep His Commandments. For the man that loves CHRIST and His brethren will, as Matthew Henry puts it, "…tread in His steps, and walk as He walked--follow the prescriptions of His Word, the intimations of His Providence, and the directions of His Spirit... [For] In vain do we hear his voice if we do not follow Him."<sup>6</sup> Recall CHRIST's Words in JOHN 14:15 to us, "If ye love Me, keep My Commandments." <sup>7</sup> This in itself is an assurance for our souls! So we find Saint Paul declaring this very thing in II TIMOTHY 2:19, "…the foundation of GOD standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, Let every one that nameth The Name of CHRIST depart from iniquity!"<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, no matter where we may roam to in this life, The Son of GOD holds secure our most valuable possession – our salvation – which awaits us in that fair and happy everlasting Canaan Up Above. Though we stand in the midst of the storms of life on this side of The Jordan, besought by the temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil, we as His sheep hear His voice calling to us as in MATTHEW 11:28, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest!"<sup>9</sup>

It tells us secondly that we - the redeemed in CHRIST - are not a mass of impersonal collection of sanctified souls, but that our Lord knows and loves each one of us personally and as it were face to face! When in EXODUS 33:10-11 The Presence of The LORD in the form of "...the cloudy pillar [came to] stand at the Tabernacle door: and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man in his tent door. And The LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend…"<sup>10</sup> Though the Israelites stood afar off and worshipped, there was Moses the friend of GOD, to Whom this mere man spoke to The LORD face to face. So we no longer stand afar off, but enter into The Presence of the GOD Father by our salvation in GOD The Son!

It tells us thirdly that we who are His shall indeed follow Him to that Fair and Happy Land, there to join the throngs of the saints who stand before His holy throne and worship Him in joy and in truth forever! When we cross the Jordan River of earthly death, our souls shall fly away to He Who redeemed us by His very Body and Blood given for us! And we shall be there, casting down our crowns before Him, singing with all the hosts of Heaven, "...Holy, holy, Lord GOD Almighty, Which was, and is, and is to come!" <sup>11</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> 3, KJV, JOHN 10:27.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>4, Matthew Henry, JOHN 10:22-38, "CHRIST's Conference With The Jews," III, 2, (3.), [1]. Verse 27.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>3, KJV, JOHN 1415.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> 3, KJV, II TIMOTHY 2:19.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>3, KJV, MATTHEW 11:28.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> 3, KJV, EXODUS 33:10-11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> 3, KJV, REVELATION 4:4.

VI. OUR ETERNAL JOY OF SALVATION IS ASSURED IN JESUS CHRIST

O'er all those wide extended plains shines one eternal day; there GOD The Son forever reigns, and scatters night away! <sup>12</sup>

In JOHN 10:28, our Saviour assures us, "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand!"<sup>13</sup> Of what comfort is this to the redeemed in JESUS who yet remain behind in this world, while our loved ones in CHRIST go on before us to that place where there is no darkness or night?

It says to us firstly that forgiveness of sins and eternal life is from The Lord JESUS CHRIST and Him alone. For as Saint Peter declared to Israel in ACTS 4:12, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other Name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved!" <sup>14</sup> This is the work of GOD's grace that shines as one eternal day over the wide extended plains of eternity, of which Isaiah prophesied. Therefore The Almighty declares in ISAIAH 14:22-23, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am GOD, and there is none else. I have sworn by Myself, The Word is gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear!" <sup>15</sup> What is this that all men shall confess, some willingly in joy and others unwillingly in bitterness? That JESUS CHRIST is Lord!

It says to us secondly that we who are given eternal life, being redeemed from sin guilt and everlasting condemnation by our Lord JESUS CHRIST, shall never perish from out of His Presence! Nor may our souls ever be plucked out of His sovereign hand into eternal death and damnation by any man! Matthew Henry observes here, "...Those [souls] are safe who are in the hands of The Lord JESUS. The saints are preserved in CHIRST JESUS: and their salvation is not in their own keeping, but in the keeping of [The] ...Mediator. The Pharisees and rulers [of The Jews who rejected JESUS The Messiah] did all they could to frighten the disciples of CHRIST from following Him, reproving and threatening them, but CHRIST saith that they shall not prevail!" <sup>16</sup> Nor shall any other!

Yet we must fight the battle daily to remain true to The LORD. Though we be elected to salvation according to His will, we must persevere. So Azariah prophesied to good King Asa of Judah as he stood on the eve of battle against the heathen host in II CHRONICLES 15:2, "...The LORD is with you, while ye be with Him; and if ye seek Him, He will be found of you; but if ye forsake Him, He will forsake you!" <sup>17</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> 2, The hymn, On Jordan's Stormy Banks I Stand, Stanza 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> 3, KJV, JOHN 10:28.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> 3, KJV, ACTS 4:12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> 3,KJV, ISAIAH 14:22-23.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> 4, Matthew Henry, JOHN 10:22-38, "CHRIST's Conference With The Jews," III, 2, (3.), [2], Secondly, b. Verse 28.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> 3, KJV, II CHRONICLES 15:2.

And so Saint Paul counsels in II TIMOTHY 2:12, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him: if we deny Him, he also will deny us!" <sup>18</sup> So the faithful soldier of The Cross is to remain true to CHRIST, that he may rest in Him in that place where The Son forever reigns and where He scatters the night of suffering and death away forever! But yet, to the faithful soldier of the Cross, our Lord gives the grace and gifts needed to persevere unto eternal life!

VII. ALL OUR WORLDLY SORROWS SHALL BE NO MORE IN HEAVEN No chilling winds or poisonous breath can reach that healthful shore; sickness and sorrow, pain and death, are felt and feared no more!<sup>19</sup>

In JOHN 10:29, our Redeemer reveals, "My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand!"<sup>20</sup> Of what comfort is there here when we, though saved by The Body and Blood of our Saviour, still must endure the chilling winds and poisonous breath of affliction, sickness, sorrow, pain and death?

It declares to us firstly that, as GOD The Father elects His saints to forgiveness of sins and eternal life, so GOD The Son works His redemption to claim our souls for His everlasting Kingdom. If our salvation was dependent upon our own ability to attain holiness, to work enough good things to merit eternal life, to rescue ourselves from the penalties of GOD's Law, who then could be saved? Our lot then in this world would be to lie unprotected from the storms of life now, and we would have no assurance of our lot in the next life to enter into a place where those storms would not follow us!

But GOD is sovereign and we who are in Him are His servants. It is GOD Who works out His will for our salvation and His Spirit that regenerates our souls into His Image. Therefore Saint Paul gives us these words in EPHESIANS 2:8-10, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of GOD: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in CHRIST JESUS unto good works, which GOD hath before ordained that we should walk in them!"<sup>21</sup> This is our assurance, which by His grace shall give us entrance into His very Presence in to That Land where no chilling winds or poisonous breath can reach us! It is by His Providence upon our souls that we in CHRIST shall dwell forever with Him, where neither sickness nor sorrow, pain nor death, shall ever again be felt or feared!

It declares to us secondly that our salvation rests upon The sure and mighty decrees of The LORD, and on Him alone! Those whom The Father in Heaven has decreed to be His adopted children He has given to The Son as His own, and there is no

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> 3, KJV, II TIMOTHY 2:12.
<sup>19</sup> 2, The hymn, On Jordan's Stormy Banks I Stand, Stanza 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> 3, KJV, JOHN 10:29.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> 3,KJV, EPHESIANS 28-10.

power of man or angel that may pluck them away out of The Kingdom, out of the very hand of GOD! So Matthew Henry observes, "The safety of the saints ...[secure in GOD The Son by GOD The Father, for] neither man nor devil is able to pluck them out of the Father's hand, not able to deprive them of the grace they have [received], nor to hinder them from the glory that is designed [for]them; not able to put them out of GOD's protection, nor get them into their own power. ...[For] He that secured the glory of The Redeemer will secure the glory of the redeemed!"<sup>22</sup>

For if The Almighty decrees a thing, who shall stand before Him to counsel or question His great will? So David sings to The LORD in PSALM 24:3-5 of the righteous whose hope of salvation is in GOD alone: "Who shall ascend into the hill of The LORD? or who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from The LORD, and righteousness from The GOD of his salvation!"<sup>23</sup>

For GOD alone is "...The LORD strong and mighty, The LORD mighty in battle... The LORD of Hosts, He is The King of Glory...!"<sup>24</sup> Shall we who are saved in CHRIST then need fear the chilling winds and poisonous breath of sickness, sorrow, pain and death? Does this mean that our earthly lives shall be devoid of such Crosses? No. But it does mean that, when we enter into GOD's great and glorious Mansion Up Above, these things shall not follow us there! And as sure as our redeemed brethren in CHRIST who have passed on in physical death now rest secure in that Happy Land, so shall we!

### VIII. THEREFORE WE SHALL DWELL WITH GOD FOREVER IN HEAVEN

When I shall reach that happy place, I'll be forever blest, for I shall see my Father's face, and in His bosom rest! <sup>25</sup>

In JOHN 10:30 our Great High Priest reveals, "[For] I and My Father are one!" <sup>26</sup> Of what comfort to us are these words? Of what importance is it that we know that GOD The Son is one with GOD The Father?

It reveals to us firstly that the promises of our Lord JESUS CHRIST under The New Covenant are sure and wholly reliable. Why? Because of The Oneness of The Son with The Father. Moses records the preexistence of GOD eternally outside of creation in GENESIS 1:1, "In the beginning GOD created the heaven and the earth." <sup>27</sup> He made all that is according to His purposes, and is sovereign in and over all things. This same authority and truth thus applies to all that GOD The Son decrees and wills. Saint John

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> 4, Matthew Henry, JOHN 10:22-38, "CHRIST's Conference With The Jews," III, 2, (3.), [2], Secondly, b, [c]. Verse 29.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> 3, KJV, PSALM 24:3-5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> 3, KJV, PSALM 24:8-10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> 2, The hymn, On Jordan's Stormy Banks I Stand, Stanza 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> 3, KJV, JOHN 10:30.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> 3, KJV, GENESIS 1:1.

records for us This Mystery in JOHN 1:1, "In the beginning was The Word, and The Word was with GOD, and The Word was GOD!" <sup>28</sup> It can not be otherwise that there is no disunity within The Godhead, for as that Old Testament saint Moses declares in DEUTERONOMY 6:4, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our GOD is one LORD!" <sup>29</sup>

So Matthew Henry observes here again that, because GOD The Father Almighty and our Redeemer The Son of GOD JESUS CHRIST are one, the promises of our salvation pronounced under The New Covenant are sure and certain: "This ...[is] the harmony, and consent, and good understanding, that were between the Father and the Son in the work of man's redemption. ...[This is] the oneness of the nature of Father and Son, that they are the same in substance, and equal in power and glory!" <sup>30</sup> This is The Truth which the early Church Fathers declare in The Nicene Creed to which the faithful Christian confesses, "I believe in one GOD The Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, And of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord JESUS CHRIST, the only begotten Son of GOD, Begotten of His Father before all worlds, GOD of GOD, Light of Light, Very GOD of very GOD, Begotten, not made. Being of one substance with The Father, By Whom all things were made...!" <sup>31</sup>

Therefore when we reach That Happy Place, we shall be forever blessed! This is the blessed assurance of eternal joy of which Saint Paul writes in PHILIPPIANS 4:7, "And the peace of GOD, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through CHRIST JESUS!" <sup>32</sup> When the leaders of the Jews came in this passage before The Lord in The Temple, they besought Him in JOHN 10:24-25, "...How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be The CHRIST, tell us plainly!" CHRIST answered them, "...I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in My Father's Name, they bear witness of Me!" <sup>33</sup> We believe the words and works of GOD The Father. The Father and the Son are one. Therefore we may believe the words and works of GOD The Son! For when we in CHRIST leave this world, we shall forever see our Father's face in Heaven, and eternally in His bosom rest!

### IX. IN CLOSING

The burdens of this world shall pass away, and we whose souls are secured in The Saviour JESUS CHRIST by His Body and Blood shall enter into life eternal in Heaven forever:

I am bound for The Promised Land, I am bound for The Promised Land; oh, who will come and go with me? I am bound for The Promised Land. <sup>34</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> 3, KJV, JOHN 1:1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> 3, KJV, DEUTERONOMY 6:4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> 4, Matthew Henry, JOHN 10:22-38, "CHRIST's Conference With The Jews," III, 2, (3.), [2], Secondly,

b, [c]. Verse 30.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> 1, BCP, Nicene Creed, page 16-17.

 $<sup>^{32}</sup>$  3, KJV, PHILIPPIANS 4:7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> 3, KJV, JOHN 10:24-25.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> 2, The hymn, On Jordan's Stormy Banks I Stand, Refrain.

Here then we may take certain assurance in The Word of The LORD: CHRIST firstly declares, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me:" <sup>35</sup> Therefore The Lord knows His saints, for they follow Him! CHRIST secondly declares, "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand." <sup>36</sup> Therefore our eternal joy of salvation is assured in JESUS CHRIST! CHRIST thirdly declares, "My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand." <sup>37</sup> Therefore all our worldly sorrows shall be no more in Heaven! CHRIST fourthly declares, "I and My Father are one." <sup>38</sup> Therefore we shall dwell with GOD forever in Heaven!

Let us part then with these words from HEBREWS 13:20-21, "Now The GOD of peace, That brought again from the dead our Lord JESUS, That Great Shepherd of the sheep, through The Blood of The Everlasting Covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in His sight, through JESUS CHRIST; to Whom be glory for ever and ever..."<sup>39</sup> In The Name of GOD The Father, and of The Son and of The Holy Spirit, AMEN!

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> 3,KJV, JOHN 10:27.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> 3, KJV, JOHN 10:28.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> 3, KJV, JOHN 10:29.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> 3, KJV, JOHN 10:30.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> 3, KJV, HEBREWS 13:20-21.

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