

INTRO: FISKE PLANETARIUM, ON THE CAMPUS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO, NEEDED MONEY, SO ITS DIRECTOR DREAMED UP A GIMMICK. HE PRINTED BROCHURES THAT OFFERED 1,000-ACRE LOTS ON THE PLANET MARS FOR ONLY \$20. THE FLYER READS: "THIS LAND STILL FEATURES PINK SKIES, UNLIMITED ROCK GARDENS, AND NOT ONE BUT TWO MOONS. SO PEACEFUL, QUIET, AND ROMANTIC -- EVEN THE NATIVES ARE FRIENDLY." THE LITERATURE PROMISED, "AT ONE-SIXTH THE GRAVITY OF EARTH, YOUR GOLF GAME WILL IMPROVE IMMENSELY -- DRIVES WILL BE SIX TIMES LONGER. MARS WILL PROVIDE A WORLD OF ADVENTURE FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY." THE GAG WAS SURPRISINGLY SUCCESSFUL. PEOPLE ACROSS THE COUNTRY HAVE SENT IN THEIR \$20 FOR A DEED, FOR SPACE FLIGHT INSURANCE, AND FOR A SIMULATED SAMPLE OF RED MARTIAN SOIL. This was a hoax, a joke, a gag to just raise some much needed finances and I don't know if people were just stupid or really thought they were buying land on Mars, but humans are strange creatures. I remember as a young boy at home, we had some cereal that had a deed to one square inch of land in Alaska and I ended up with a couple of square inches and as a young boy, I thought I might be rich one day cause oil had been discovered in Alaska and perhaps it was on my deed. Don't know if I ever became rich or not cause eventually I lost the deeds to my two square inches of land. But getting closer and closer to retirement on this planet makes me realize there is coming a day when everything here will be gone and a new heaven and a new earth will be established and for those who are ready, for those that are qualified, for those who have "**washed their robes**" will have access to the tree of life, that is, eternal life and for that "retirement day", I have really been looking forward to.

- A.** As young people, there is not always that desire for heaven as we want to "experience" the things this world has to offer, but let me tell you young people something – the world has nothing to offer that can compare with what awaits the saints of God in heaven. Even your "best" time here will amount to nothing when compared to the grandeur in heaven, the splendor of the city is indescribable and in your wildest imagination we cannot conceive of such a place that the Lord has prepared for those that love Him, for those "**who wash their robes**" in the blood of the Lamb. Even as a young person, you should desire that city of God that has been prepared for the saints cause in reality, the younger you are when the church is taken into heaven, the less heartaches and pains you will have to suffer on this earth. For this earth is often a place of tears and losses, disappointments and discouragements, sometimes even fears and worries, but in that City of God that will all be gone. And NO EVIL of any sort will be in that city but it will be occupied by the BEST people that have ever walked on this earth.
- Those characters you have heard of in Sunday School, you will be able to speak with. Bro. Noah will be there, talk to Daniel about the Lions, old Jonah can be asked about the big fish, David and the size of the giant he faced, etc., and then Paul and Silas singing in the jailhouse, the disciples and how the early church survived, etc., so many to see, so many questions to ask and then Jesus Christ, whom you have heard of since birth, and upon whom you place you place your salvation, will also be there and we can worship Him and I believe we will be able to speak with Him and listen to Him as He speaks.
 - Those of us that are a little older maybe can sit down and say "why did I have to go through this and that" or "why did this occur" or perhaps when we arrive in that city, it will be so tremendous and so impressive and so awe-inspiring, there will be no need of questions.
 - But if we are to have access to that city, we see that there are some requirements, which would only make sense, so what are those requirements and are they possible?
- B.** This verse is the last beatitude in the Bible, "**Blessed are those who wash their robes...**" This could as easily be rendered "**who do His commandments**" for certainly the sense is the same. We wash our robes by keeping His commandments. 1 John 5:1-4, "**Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith.**" If anyone expects to go to heaven, keeping His commandments is the key and the only way; but He also states so many times, they are not burdensome, they are not too heavy, there are not so hard we cannot do them. It is simply our choice.
- Throughout the Bible we see "Robes" as being symbolic of character and those that know and do His commandments are clean, John 15:3, "**You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.**" The verb here indicates that this is a phrase of continuity,

in other words, it must continually be done so in order to be holy, in order to be worthy of entering into the gates of heaven, we must continually be clean, that is holy.

- b. So those who are holy will have authority or right to the tree of life, from which we will receive eternal life. Therefore the opposite is also true, without authority, no right, without right no enjoyment. Disobedience will keep anyone out of the kingdom of God. Remember the case of Moses, who wanted desperately to lead the children of Israel into the Promised Land, but he disobeyed the Lord. We would have considered it such a small thing and even justifiable but it was disobedient. In Numbers 20:8 Moses was told to "speak" to the rock, but his frustration took over and he "struck" the rock and because of that disobedience, God told Moses he would not lead the Israelites into the Promised Land. Folks, just as sin is sin, so disobedience is disobedience.
- c. In Deuteronomy 30:15-20 Moses gave some great advice to the nation of Israel that is just as relevant today as it was then for they were heading to their Promised Land just as we are. **"See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and adversity; in that I command you today to love the Lord your God to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that the Lord your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it. But if your heart turns away and you will not obey, but are drawn away and worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall surely perish. You shall not prolong your days in the land where you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess it. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before your life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, by loving the Lord your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the Lord swore to your father, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."** They were just across the border from their Promised Land, we are just across the border from ours.

CONCLUSION: People place such an emphasis on this life almost excluding any thought about what will happen after this life. We build dreams of what we would like to accomplish here and spend little, if any time thinking about our eternal location. It seems rather than holding things of earth lightly and clinging tightly to heavenly things, we do just the opposite. If we expect to go there when this life is over, we need to study the route that will get us there and do not expect to just slip in at the last moment. Maybe too many of us are like the average person that has not stored up enough treasure in heaven to make a down payment on a harp. To those that think this world is worth it all, C.S. Lewis wrote an interesting anecdote, **"AIM AT HEAVEN YOU GET EARTH THROWN IN. AIM AT EARTH AND YOU GET NEITHER."** We know that if the Lord delays His coming we will all have to face a crossing from this life into another – some may be fearful of that day while others may be anxiously awaiting that day for they have prepared for it for years, they have **"washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb"** and they are prepared, ready and looking forward to that day when this earth is left behind us as we ascend to be with the Lord. As Christians, we should not fear the inevitable, we should just prepare for that great event and be ready just in case our time to exit this earth is today. I want to close with a story related by Catherine Marshall, Peter Marshall's husband, in a book entitled "A Man Called Peter".

It tells of a young terminally ill son asking his mother what death was like, if it hurt.

"KENNETH," SHE SAID, "YOU REMEMBER WHEN YOU WERE A TINY BOY HOW YOU USED TO PLAY SO HARD ALL DAY THAT WHEN NIGHT CAME YOU WOULD BE TOO TIRED EVEN TO UNDRESS, AND YOU WOULD TUMBLE INTO MOTHER'S BED AND FALL ASLEEP?"

"THAT WAS NOT YOUR BED -- IT WAS NOT WHERE YOU BELONGED.

"AND YOU WOULD ONLY STAY THERE A LITTLE WHILE. IN THE MORNING, MUCH TO YOUR SURPRISE, YOU WOULD WAKE UP AND FIND YOURSELF IN YOUR OWN BED IN YOUR OWN ROOM.

"YOU WERE THERE BECAUSE SOMEONE HAD LOVED YOU AND TAKEN CARE OF YOU.

YOUR FATHER HAD COME -- WITH BIG STRONG ARMS -- AND CARRIED YOU AWAY.

"KENNETH, DEATH IS JUST LIKE THAT.

WE JUST WAKE UP SOME MORNING TO FIND OURSELVES IN THE OTHER ROOM -- OUR OWN ROOM WHERE WE BELONG -- BECAUSE THE LORD JESUS LOVED US."

THE LAD'S SHINING, TRUSTING FACE LOOKING UP INTO HERS TOLD HER THAT THE POINT HAD GONE HOME AND THAT THERE WOULD BE NO MORE FEAR -- ONLY LOVE AND TRUST IN HIS LITTLE HEART AS HE WENT TO MEET THE FATHER IN HEAVEN.

HE NEVER QUESTIONED AGAIN.

AND SEVERAL WEEKS LATER HE FELL ASLEEP JUST AS SHE HAD SAID."

I am saying there is awaiting a great day for the saints of God, for those that have prepared, for those that are pure, for those that have the character that is required to enter into that city and for those who are ready, there should be no fear. If you are not ready, then you have a lot to fear. I would say to make that decision today and do not fear the tomorrows, rather be ready to Enter the Gates of the City!