

## Searching For The Fountain of Youth

Legend has it that Conquistador, Juan Ponce de Leon was attributed with finding the fabled Fountain of Youth somewhere in Florida in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

“However, Ponce de León did not mention the fountain in any of his writings throughout the course of his expedition. While he may well have heard of the Fountain and believed in it, his name was not associated with the legend in writing until after his death.”

*Wikipedia*

Stories were told of locals who “paid visits to the fountain. A frail old man could become so completely restored that he could resume ‘all manly exercises... take a new wife and beget more children.’ ...Spaniards had unsuccessfully searched every ‘river, brook, lagoon or pool’ along the Florida coast for the legendary fountain.”

*Wikipedia*

So what exactly is this fascination with being forever young? The allure has produced such enterprises as the plastic surgery and cosmetics industries along with health spas and workout gyms where the idea is that if you look, feel and act young it would keep you in such a youthful state of feeling you might almost live forever. After all, who really wants to die? And how often have you wondered why cemeteries are so scary? Is it because there might be ghosts and goblins waiting in there at night to grab and terrify all who would enter? Could it be that the real frightening thought is the reality of knowing every one of us have to face the idea of our own personal mortality? The same goes with visiting nursing homes where folks have been abandoned for the innocent fact that they’re just getting old. And just maybe some of those abandoning them don’t want to face the fact that they too might someday end up in such a place. All the wrinkle creams, face lifts, tummy tucks and hours spent sweating at the gym won’t keep time from ticking away and the body from degenerating from within.

1Ti 4:8 for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life (*through godliness we stay away from what our human nature delights in, things that would speed up our physical mortality*) and also for the life to come. 9 The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance. 10 For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, Who is the Savior of all people, **especially** (*Gk.3122- particularly*) of those who believe. (*Christ came to save the world even though “many are called, but few are chosen”.- Mat 22:14*) (*Emp. Added*)

So how we take care of the **spiritual** should rate higher than how we indulge the **physical**. After all, the human body is as Jesus said, with reference to the hypocrites when He called them “whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people’s bones” (*Mat 23:27*). Our destiny toward the grave began the moment we were conceived and there hasn’t been one human being on the face of the earth so far that has come up with a way to stop the aging process to which we are all susceptible. Do you know of anyone who has? Of course there are those who believe the kingdom, which Jesus proclaimed would come shortly after He returned to Heaven, hasn’t arrived yet. They teach the concept of it being a physical kingdom from which our Savior will reign from a physical throne on this physical planet. Maybe they believe such ancient persons of Christ’s audience still exist if they really believe Jesus wasn’t referring to the church when He spoke of a spiritual kingdom.

Luk 9:27 But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God.

If they can produce any of those as witnesses to what Jesus said it might go a long way toward making their claim. But they cannot. There **were** those Jesus was speaking to that **did** see the kingdom come and were added to it according to passages such as Acts 2:47 and Col 1:13. Why **is** it then so hard for mankind to even think of giving up this physical existence that has so many struggles associated with just being human? And why try to make perfect something that's only ultimately going to deteriorate, even when so much time and effort are expended toward improving it? Of course that's not to say, Christian, that you're not to take care of "your body [which] is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, Whom you have from God [since] you are not your own" (1 Cor 6:19). Those of us who proclaim Jesus as our Lord and Master, in truth, cannot even think of wanting to remain here, knowing "what God has prepared for those who love Him" (1 Cor 2:9). But, why do people always seem to look in the wrong place for answers to simple questions such as what Job asked, rhetorically, so long ago?

Job 14:14 If a man dies, shall he live again? All the days of my service I would wait, till my renewal should come.

Job understood even then that this is not all there is. But what he didn't know then, we can now **better** understand since we've been blessed with living in the Christian age. What Job didn't understand about the fountain of youth, i.e. eternal life, we find in the pages of the complete, inspired word of God. Why is that so hard for the average mortal to understand?

Rev 21:6 And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from **the spring of the water of life** without payment". (Emp. Added)

This concept of 'living water' is the same with reference to the fountain Jesus spoke of to the Samaritan woman in John 4. When He asked her for a drink she was amazed that He would even speak to her because of the enmity that existed between the Jews and Samaritans at that time.

Joh 4:9 The Samaritan woman said to Him, "How is it that You, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) 10 Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and Who it is that is saying to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." 11 The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do You get that living water? 12 Are You greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock." 13 Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up **to eternal life**." 15 The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water." (Emp. Added)

- The woman at the well misunderstood what Jesus was referring to. When a physical well runs dry the physical thirst cannot be satisfied. As Jesus told her, the water He had to offer was not what came out of the ground or found its source in a physical well, but would thrive with an everlasting supply of life giving water from within. What He had, and has, to offer comes from above in the form of eternal life. But in order to drink of this spiritual water we first need to be immersed in the physical.

Joh 3:3 Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again (*Gk.509- from above*) he cannot see the kingdom of God." 4 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" 5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is **born of water** and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and **that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.** (*Emp. Added*)

- Jesus gave Nicodemus the simple answer on how to obtain eternal life in the kingdom of God. People will search high and low and will go to great ends to avoid something as simple as being born from above, attempting to thwart any spiritual authority in vain out of human pride. We cannot preach the Gospel without including being immersed in water for the forgiveness of our sins which is what we need to do on our part to receive the blessings of this good news from above. If it was part of Jesus' commission then, it should be part of what we teach today!

Mar 16:16 Whoever believes **and** is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. (*Emp. Added*)

- Even Jesus' own disciples didn't understand the way to attain eternal life. And we can't say they should have known better since at that time they didn't have the insight that we now have.

Joh 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

- Time and again the Bible gives the answer that we all at one time or another have sought after. The question we might not have asked verbally, but in one fashion or another have asked ourselves personally, is "how can I avoid death, how can I live forever without having to suffer through the aches and pains that seem to befall every human being?" If we've never asked such questions, why is it then that we mortals go to such ends to improve our health and physical appearance? And even the atheist, whether they want to admit it or not, has pondered the thought out of curiosity. Again, Jesus gave the answer to the Jews then that still applies to everyone today.

Joh 6:48 I am the bread of life. 49 Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. 50 This is the bread that comes down from Heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. 51 I am the living bread that came down from Heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is My flesh."

Php 2:8 And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Joh 6:55 For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. 56 Whoever feeds on My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. 57 As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on Me, he also will live because of Me. 58 This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever."

- It didn't take long for some of His followers to question what this meant and there are still those today who will look at this passage in the same way they did then.

Joh 6:60 When many of His disciples heard it, they said, "This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?" 61 But Jesus, knowing in Himself that His disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, "Do you take offense at this? 62 Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where He was before? 63 It is the Spirit Who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.

- Once again, all the physical things we can do to improve our outward man cannot even begin to rejuvenate what lies beneath.

2Co 4:16 So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. 17 For this light momentary affliction **is preparing for us** an eternal weight of glory **beyond** all comparison, 18 as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen **are transient**, but the things that are unseen **are eternal**. (*Emp. Added*)

- The physical with all its allurements, pomp and pageantry is but temporal. And the struggles of life are only to prepare us for the afterlife. But because of their lack of faith...

Joh 6:66 ... many of His disciples turned back and no longer walked with Him. 67 So Jesus said to the Twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?" 68 Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the **words of eternal life**, 69 and we have believed, and have come to know, that You are the Holy One of God." (*Emp. Added*)

- Just to be clear on what Jesus was intimating; He was not saying that in order to have eternal life we all have to become cannibals as the teaching known as ‘transubstantiation’ implies. His point was that in order to obtain eternal life and one day “take from the water of life without price” (*Rev 22:17*) we need to figuratively consume Him by studying His word in order for us to abide in Him and for Him to dwell in us through His Spirit. Remember, Christians are temples of the Holy Spirit (*1 Cor 6:19*) and “that Jesus Christ is in [us]... unless indeed [we] fail to meet the test” (*2 Cor 13:5*).

#### To Those Who Love Him

- We may pursue a better physical health and there’s nothing wrong with that. We can’t neglect our health as long as we can do something to keep it from deteriorating. But to go beyond the norm and want the health that takes time and money to obtain, may be asking for more than God will give. After all, if time is so limited and we’re given only so much of it, how we oversee the amount that none of us know we have, shows the level of our faith. As long as we watch our health and are healthy, we need to...

Heb 13:5 ... be content with what [we] have, for He has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” And...

1Pe 3:3 Do not let your adorning be **external**—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear-- (*...or in keeping up with the Jones’ physically speaking.*) (*Emp. Added*)

- And not that we who are married aren’t to continue to be pleasing to our spouses either if we can help it. It just takes a lot of time, sweat and effort to pursue bodies that please the eyes of those we shouldn’t be pleasing in the first place. And if the reason we’re working toward such goals is to look good in our own eyes then we have a problem with vanity.

Shouldn't we rather spend the same time and effort taking care of "the inside of the cup and plate, that the outside also may be cleaned"? (*Mat 23:26*) When we take care of our spiritual, inner person and do so as first priority, the outward person benefits immensely. Have you ever met a person that is attractive to look at but, as soon as they open their mouth and show who they really are, you find them not so attractive after all?

Mat 12:34 ... For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. 35 The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil.

- Maybe you know of someone that the world deems unattractive who in your eyes is so beautiful because of their godly attitude. Why? Because their...

1Pe 3:4 ... adorning [is] the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious.

### Fearing the Future

- Sometimes the fear of dying has more to do with the fear of the unknown than it does a lack of faith. But the more we know from the study of scripture the more our faith grows and in turn our fear of death subsides. A faithful, repentant Christian, who is victorious over whatever temptations that life throws at them, doesn't have to fear death because...

Rev 2:11 ... The one who conquers will **not** be hurt by the second death.' (*Emp. Added*)

- And how wonderful are the words of Jesus when He spoke of judgment when it concerns a faithful believer.

Joh 5:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears My word and believes Him Who sent Me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has **passed from death to life**. (*Emp. Added*)

- You may have heard it said before but it needs to be repeated; **faithful Christians don't die!** Yes, our bodies may suffer to the end and we may experience horrible pain before we die, but the fact remains that when the body of a faithful saint passes in death their soul, the person beneath all the external flesh and bone, awakens in Paradise where all the pain and suffering will be forgotten because of such wonder we'll experience there. According to Jesus' words in this passage, it's as though faithful Christians have already received eternal life without having to face the judgment that all others will. Why? Because we have our down payment in hand.

Eph 1:11 **In Him** we have obtained an inheritance, **having been** predestined according to the purpose of Him Who works all things according to the counsel of His will, 12 so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of His glory. 13 **In Him you also**, when you heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation, and **believed** (*Gk.4100- to entrust [especially one's spiritual well-being to Christ]*) in Him, were **sealed with the promised Holy Spirit**, 14 Who is the **guarantee of our inheritance until** we acquire possession of it, to the praise of His glory. (*Emp. Added*)

- The only way to obtain this inheritance is to be "in Him"! If we entrust our spiritual well-being to Christ then we need to obey whatever He has commanded in order to obtain an

eternal life in Heaven with Him. *(And as long as we remain faithful we will keep this guarantee.)* But time is of the essence since we have no idea when this life will end, either personally or as Peter's words described the end of the world as a whole.

2Pe 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed *(has to do with sins being revealed openly)*. 11 Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, 12 waiting for and hastening *(Gk.4692- to urge on; to await eagerly)* the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn!

- We aren't to fear Christ's return but are to embrace it and earnestly look forward to it in faith. It's all part of...

### God's Promise

2Pe 3:13 But according to His promise we are waiting *(Gk.4328- anticipate)* for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. 14 Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by Him without spot or blemish, and at peace.

- If we anticipate His return we won't be caught red handed when it happens. Just as those Jews who became Jesus' followers were not left wondering why they didn't know the signs of when to flee Jerusalem. But at first Jesus' own inner circle, along with the nation of Israel as a whole, couldn't imagine that God would allow their beloved temple to be destroyed. Just as many who espouse the millennialism movement today can't accept the possibility that God "by the same word [with which He spoke all things into existence has reserved] the heavens and earth that now exist [and is preserving them] until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly" *(2 Pet 3:7)*. *The physical creation will be replaced with a new spiritual one.*

Mat 24:14 And this Gospel of the kingdom *(good news of His church)* will be proclaimed throughout the whole world *(Gk.3650- specifically the Roman empire)* as a testimony to all nations, and **then** the end *(of the Mosaic dispensation)* will come. *(Emp. Added)*

- The message was to be preached throughout the Jew and Gentile world via the apostles and the disciples they converted before Jerusalem would fall in 70 AD.

Mat 24:15 "So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel *(Dan 9:26-27; 11:31; 12:11)*, standing in the holy place *("Some soldiers...were able to go all the way to the Temple and put up the Roman Eagle and their battle standards in the Temple".- Ray Murray, Jr.)* (let the reader understand), 16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17 Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, 18 and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. 19 And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! 20 Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath.

- The Roman army would descend on Jerusalem and "the city was sealed up so no one could get in or out" *(The Destruction of Jerusalem by Ray Murray, Jr.)*. Because of this, Jesus warned them to flee or not return for luggage items for the long arduous journey they were to undertake. Such a journey would not do well for women who were pregnant or nursing and if these things happened on the Sabbath day the city would already have been sealed because of an earlier situation the Jews were guilty of in profaning it. The prophet

Nehemiah was so concerned they would suffer the wrath of God when the inhabitants of Jerusalem bought, sold and accepted the wares of Gentile vendors on their appointed day of rest, that he had the city sealed off to prevent it. Such was the practice in Jesus' day.

Neh 13:19 As soon as it began to grow dark at the gates of Jerusalem before the Sabbath, I commanded that the doors should be shut and gave orders that they should not be opened until after the Sabbath. And I stationed some of my servants at the gates, that no load might be brought in on the Sabbath day.

- With this in mind, Jesus warned how vital it was for them to look for the signs of the impending destruction of the city.

Mat 24:21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be.

- At no time before the sealing of the city had anything happened that would have been considered as being of such horror. And nothing since this historical incident has anything happened that could compare to the horrific events that occurred within the walls as recorded by Josephus.

*“Those Jews who were caught trying to flee were crucified outside the walls so those inside could see the fate that awaited them. At one time so many Jews were being crucified that the Romans ran out of wood to make crosses. Soon the supplies in the city began to run out. A famine arose that was unbelievable. Women were even eating their own children. At other times zealots, who were breaking into people’s houses, were fed human meat. With the civil war and the famine as well as disease, 116,000 bodies were thrown over the walls of Jerusalem BEFORE the battle even began.”*

Ray Murray, Jr.

- At one point Titus *“withdrew the siege. It was at this point that all the Christians in the city fled to Pella.”* *“As far as we know all Christians were able to flee.”* (Ray Murray, Jr.) Some fled before the siege who saw it coming and the rest afterward when they saw the Romans placing their battle standard in the temple. This event was prophesied by Daniel around 539 BC and later repeated by our Lord to His faithful followers who would in turn share it with fellow believers. Those who didn’t believe Jesus was the Messiah, who didn’t believe His words concerning the fall of Jerusalem, were the ones who suffered at the hands of the Roman Empire. So what does this have to do with “our instruction, that through endurance and through encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope” (Rom 15:4)?

Joh 5:25 "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. 26 For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son also to have life in Himself. 27 And He has given Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man.

- Everything that Jesus foretold would happen to Israel, according to prophesy, came true. And the hour came when those spiritually dead in sin heard His voice and those who did, and followed through with His teaching on how to attain eternal life, were made alive. That same voice has been proclaimed, via the Gospel message, ever since. He then had and now has, the authority to judge through, as He said, “the word that I have spoken will judge

him on the last day" (*Jn 12:48*). The last day refers to the day He will leave His Father's side and "concerning that day and hour no one knows" (*Mat 24:36*). We just need to believe He has the authority to do as He said.

Heb 1:1 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets,  
2 but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, Whom He appointed the Heir of all things, through Whom also He created the world.

- We don't know when He's coming, we only need to be prepared for it.

Mat 24:37 For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 38 For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, 39 and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

- Those who had no faith in what Jesus said concerning the fall of Jerusalem suffered the consequence just as those who have no faith in His returning will also.

Joh 5:28 Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear His voice 29 and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

- Nothing will stand in the way of Christ's return. What God said He will do, will happen because of...

#### His Firm Foundation

2Ti 2:19 But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the Name of the Lord depart from iniquity."

- Christ will return to claim those who faithfully belong to Him, those of His bride the church who wear the name Christian. How can we rely on these physical bodies that change in time and will one day, unless the Lord comes in the meantime, return to the dust of the earth from which we came? We need to put our trust in God Who does not change!

Heb 1:10 And, "You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of Your hands; 11 they will perish, **but You remain**; they will all wear out like a garment, 12 like a robe You will roll them up, like a garment they will be changed. But **You are the same**, and **Your years will have no end**." (*Emp. Added*)

- The Bible speaks often of the end of all things physical. The day will come when everything we know of this physical realm will be gone. So don't you want to be in a place where...

Rev 21:4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

- If you 're still searching for the Fountain of Youth there's only one place it can be found.

Rev 22:17 The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the **water of life** without price. (*Emp. Added*)

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