

# Bible Epitaphs

# Epitaphs Are An Ancient Custom

- From Latin epitaphium, a funeral oration;
- From Greek epitaphion, a funeral at the tomb
- In English: 1. an inscription on or at a tomb or a grave in memory of the one buried there; 2. a brief statement commemorating or epitomizing a deceased person or some past event

# Some Are Quite Amusing

- In a Georgia cemetery: “I told you I was sick!”
- “The children of Israel wanted bread  
And the Lord sent them manna,  
Old clerk Wallace wanted a wife,  
And the Devil sent him Anna.” -  
Ribbesford, England
- “Here lies Ezekial Aikle, Age 102, The Good Die  
Young”
- “Here lies Johnny Yeast. Pardon me for not  
rising” - Ruidoso, New Mexico
- “Here lies Ann Mann,  
Who lived an old maid,  
But died an old Mann” - Dec. 8, 1767

# Epitaphs Are An Ancient Custom

- Most are a profound, concise reminders of the impact the depart had in life
  - George Washington was “the father of this country”
  - Benedict Arnold was a traitor

# Well Known Bible Epitaphs

- There are many well known wonderful Bible epitaphs
  - Heb. 11:4 - Abel “he being dead yet speaketh”
  - Job 42:17 - “So Job died, old and full of days”
  - Acts 9:36-39 - Dorcas was “full of good works”
  - Gen. 5:18, 21-24 - Enoch “walked with God”
  - James 2:23 - Abraham was a “friend of God”
  - Acts 21:13; 2Tim. 4:6-8; Phil. 1:21 - Paul was ready to die; wrote his own epitaph
  - Rev. 2:13 - Jesus said “Antipas was My faithful martyr”

# Well Known Bible Epitaphs

- Wonderful epitaphs can be given to every faithful Christian
  - Matt. 25:21 - “well done good and faithful servant”
  - 1Thes. 4:14 - “asleep in Jesus”
  - Rev. 14:13 - “they rest from their labors, and their works follow them”

# Well Known Bible Epitaphs

- There are several bad epitaphs in the Bible
  - Matt. 26:21-25, 27:3 - Judas betrayed the Lord
  - 2Tim. 4:10 - Demas “loved this present world”
  - Luke 12:20 - the rich farmer was “Thou fool!”
  - Acts 24:25 - Felix wanted “a more convenient season”
  - Acts 26:28 - King Agrippa was “almost persuaded”
  - 1Tim. 1:20 - Hymenaeus and Alexander “made shipwreck of the faith”
  - Acts 5:4 - Ananias “lied to God”

# Well Known Bible Epitaphs

- Some will be given to every unfaithful Christian
  - Rev. 2:4 - “left your first love”
  - 2Peter 2:20-22 - “the latter end is worse for them than the beginning”
  - Heb. 6:4-6 - “Impossible to renew them to repentance”
  - Luke 16:25 - “Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented.”

# Bible Epitaphs That Should Be Remembered

- Zedekiah - “Alas lord!”
  - Jer. 34:2-5 - “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: 'Go and speak to Zedekiah king of Judah and tell him, "Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire. 3 'And you shall not escape from his hand, but shall surely be taken and delivered into his hand; your eyes shall see the eyes of the king of Babylon, he shall speak with you face to face, and you shall go to Babylon. 4 Yet hear the word of the LORD, O Zedekiah king of Judah! Thus says the LORD concerning you: 'You shall not die by the sword. 5 'You shall die in peace; as in the ceremonies of your fathers, the former kings who were before you, so they shall burn incense for you and lament for you, saying, "Alas, lord!" For I have pronounced the word, says the LORD.”

# Bible Epitaphs That Should Be Remembered

- Zedekiah - “Alas lord!”
  - We can repent of a sinful life and go to our graves in peace, but the temporal consequences of sin often remain

# Bible Epitaphs That Should Be Remembered

- Abner - “Should Abner die as a fool dies?”
  - 2Sam. 3:33-34 - “And the king sang a lament over Abner and said: Should Abner die as a fool dies? 34 Your hands were not bound Nor your feet put into fetters; As a man falls before wicked men, so you fell. Then all the people wept over him again.”
  - Another translation: “Shall Abner die a death like a villain's? Your hands not bound, nor were your feet bound in the fetters; like one who falls before the sons of guilt, so have you fallen!”

# Bible Epitaphs That Should Be Remembered

- Abner - “Should Abner die as a fool dies?”
  - The passing of some people serves as a final rebuke to the living, for those who mistreated, lied, cheated, or ignored them
  - Do good to all persons in life; otherwise whatever kind words you may say at their passing will be meaningless, hypocritical, and self-serving

# Bible Epitaphs That Should Be Remembered

- Abijah the son of Jeroboam - “in him there is found something good toward the LORD God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam”
  - 1Kings 14:1, 12-13 - “At that time Abijah the son of Jeroboam became sick... 12 Arise therefore, go to your own house. When your feet enter the city, the child shall die. 13 And all Israel shall mourn for him and bury him, for he is the only one of Jeroboam who shall come to the grave, because in him there is found something good toward the LORD God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam.”

# Bible Epitaphs That Should Be Remembered

- Abijah the son of Jeroboam
  - When men do evil, they pull many others along with them into pain, including and especially those who are nearest to them
  - Innocent children are safer and blessed in the bosom of the Lord than with sinful, worldly, or materialistic parents
  - Parents are given children as pure, innocent, blank slates. God help you if you raise them to be sinners!

# Bible Epitaphs That Should Be Remembered

- Jehoiakim - “He shall be buried with the burial of a donkey”
  - Jer. 22:18-19 - “Therefore thus says the LORD concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah: They shall not lament for him, Saying, 'Alas, my brother!' or 'Alas, my sister!' They shall not lament for him, Saying, 'Alas, master!' or 'Alas, his glory!' 19 He shall be buried with the burial of a donkey, Dragged and cast out beyond the gates of Jerusalem.”
  - One can live so wickedly or so unkindly toward others that no one mourns his passing

# Bible Epitaphs That Should Be Remembered

- Jehoram - “To no one's sorrow, departed”
  - 2Chron. 21:20 - “He was thirty-two years old when he became king. He reigned in Jerusalem eight years and, to no one's sorrow, departed. However they buried him in the City of David, but not in the tombs of the kings.”

# Bible Epitaphs That Should Be Remembered

- Jehoram - “To no one's sorrow, departed”
  - The saddest epitaph in the Bible: no one loved him while he lived, none lamented him when he died.
  - The people, even though they were idolaters, felt no obligation to honor the passing of their idolatrous king
  - Those who sin to please others or to belong to the crowd cannot expect loyalty and love from their fellow sinners

# Bible Epitaphs That Should Be Remembered

- Jehoiada the priest - “He had done good in Israel, both toward God and His house”
  - 2Chron. 24:15-16, 25 - “But Jehoiada grew old and was full of days, and he died; he was one hundred and thirty years old when he died. 16 And they buried him in the City of David among the kings, because he had done good in Israel, both toward God and His house.”
  - One can receive at his passing higher honors in death than his position in life would seem to merit
  - Faithful Christians, often unknown in this world, will live in heaven with the King and Creator
  - Contrast with Joash - 1Chron. 24:17-25 - Poetic justice

# Bible Epitaphs That Should Be Remembered

- The un-named Judean prophet sent to speak against Jereboam's idolatrous altars at Bethel - "It is the tomb of the man of God"
  - 2Kings 23:16-18 - "As Josiah turned, he saw the tombs that were there on the mountain. And he sent and took the bones out of the tombs and burned them on the altar, and defiled it according to the word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words. 17 Then he said, What gravestone is this that I see? So the men of the city told him, It is the tomb of the man of God who came from Judah and proclaimed these things which you have done against the altar of Bethel. 18 And he said, Let him alone; let no one move his bones. So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet who came from Samaria."

# Bible Epitaphs That Should Be Remembered

- The un-named Judean prophet sent to speak against Jereboam's idolatrous altars at Bethel -  
“It is the tomb of the man of God”
  - At a time when the tombs of evil men were being leveled, the tomb of a righteous man was honored
  - Prov. 10:7 - “The memory of the righteous is blessed, But the name of the wicked will rot.”
  - The wicked only prosper for a short while; the righteous will be blessed forever, even if their tombs are forgotten

# Bible Epitaphs That Should Be Remembered

- Saul and Jonathan - “How the mighty have fallen!”
  - 2Sam. 1:12-27
  - It is God’s place to judge the dead
  - It is dangerous to rejoice over the passing of the wicked
  - Remember the good and let God address the evil

# Bible Epitaphs That Should Be Remembered

- Saul and Jonathan - “How the mighty have fallen!”
  - Prov. 24:17-20 - “Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, And do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles; 18 Lest the LORD see it, and it displease Him, And He turn away His wrath from him. 19 Do not fret because of evildoers, Nor be envious of the wicked; 20 For there will be no prospect for the evil man; The lamp of the wicked will be put out.”