

A Difference in Perspective

"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Philippians 1:21

As Moses began the Exodus, Israel found herself with her back to the Red Sea facing the advancing army of Egypt. Note her response: "And they said to Moses, 'Was it for want of graves in Egypt that you brought us to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, taking us out of Egypt? Is this not the very thing we told you in Egypt, saying, 'Let us be, and we will serve the Egyptians, for it is better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness?'"¹

By way of contrast the Apostle Paul wrote that he would rather be dead than alive. Israel said, "It is better to live than to die, even if it means living as slaves." Paul said, "It is better to die than to live, irrespective of my circumstances in life." Why the stark difference between these two attitudes?

Paul understood that he was a stranger in this world, living as an alien in a foreign land, as he says later in his letter to the Philippians: "For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ."² Apparently Israel had no eternal hope, while Paul did.

One of the marks of people with a biblical hope is, no matter how happy their circumstances, they would rather be dead than alive. Why spend time in this sin-sick environment when an eternity with Jesus awaits you? You wish to live as Jesus' obedient follower as long He wants you to remain here on earth, but you can hardly wait until He calls for you!

¹ Exodus 14:11-12 ² Philippians 3:20