

WERE THE ANCIENT WORTHIES ON TRIAL FOR LIFE?

THE Ancient Worthies were not on trial for life or death; they were never brought to that condition of intelligent opportunity for eternal life which would make them amenable to a sentence of death. Such a condition of knowledge and opportunity did not obtain in the world until our Lord came. "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ"; "he brought to light, life and immortality." These were never disclosed before our Lord's time, and consequently no such responsibility, as now exists, had come.

In a certain sense the Jewish nation had been typically justified and was typically on trial for life or death, but this was

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because God knew in advance that they could not keep the Law, and that they could never have eternal life under it; and he had arranged in advance that they should be redeemed from the curse of the Law irrespective of anything they might themselves do in the matter. Hence it was only in the typical, or figurative sense, that they were on trial for life or death.

The Ancient Worthies "had this testimony that they pleased God." They pleased him in that when they ascertained his will they set about doing it, even before he gave it to them as a law or obligation, even before he could ask them to obey him and promise them eternal life for their obedience. Abraham manifested his faith in God although there was no redemption yet accomplished in the world. Christ had not yet come. And although Abraham was not on trial for life or for death God granted Abraham his favor and declared that he pleased him; and his word tells us that "a better resurrection" is to be not only to

Abraham, but to all these Ancient Worthies – a resurrection to human perfection. But since human perfection will come only under the mediatorial reign of Christ, the Ancient Worthies will not be introduced to the Father in the complete sense until the close of the Millennial Age.

Hence, they will not have life, in this fullest sense, until that time, when, at the close of the Millennial Age, the Kingdom shall be delivered over to the Father. What they will have in the meantime will be the perfection of human nature and all the blessings that God provides for mankind, through the great Mediator. But they will not come into actual and personal relationship to God, so as to be determined worthy of eternal life, until the completion of the Millennial Age, because that age is set apart for the very purpose of determining who of all mankind may have eternal life, aside from the spirit-begotten ones of the present time. At the close of the Millennial Age, when all mankind shall be in perfection of being, they shall be tried of the Father for their worthiness or unworthiness of eternal life – just as Adam, while enjoying perfection, was tested as to whether or not he was worthy to have life made perpetual or eternal.

Since the Ancient Worthies will be a part of the world under the New Covenant arrangements, it follows that they will not have this decision of the Divine Court, Divine Justice, respecting their worthiness of eternal life until the completion of the Millennial Age, until the conclusion of the trial at the end of that age, which will bring to them, as it will bring to all others who are faithful, the great reward of life eternal.

