

You Only Live Once

Ecclesiastes 9:1-12

Pampered prince

- His father, the king, sheltered him from anything troubling.
- Three palaces were built to keep the prince in perpetual pleasure.
- At 16 he was given a beautiful bride. They had a son.
- He lived in luxury until age 29, but pleasures could not satisfy him.







Karma

“Buddhists understand karma as a natural law. There is no judgment, no divine intervention, and no gods that steer man’s destiny, but only the law of karma itself, which works on a global time frame. Deeds yield consequences either in the next second, in the next hour, day, month, year, decade, or even in the next lifetime, or in another distant lifetime.”

Reincarnation

“Rebirth, or reincarnation, has always been an important tenet in Buddhism; and it is often referred to as walking the wheel of life (samsara). It is the process of being born over and over again in different times and different situations, possibly for many thousand times.”

Enlightenment: no self

“In the Buddhist analogy, the universe is in motion due to karmic forces. A ripple, a wave, or a billow may seem as an individual entity for a moment, creating the illusion that it has a self, but it is gone in the next moment. The truth is that all individuals are one. A ripple is a temporary phenomenon; it is just water in motion... it would be ridiculous to say that a single ripple or wave has a self.”



Gary Zukav says of karma: “The Universe does not judge. It compassionately provides for us the consequences that we create with our choices, whatever those consequences are. That is how karma works. The power to create your experience is fully in your hands. That is the lesson of karma.”

Reincarnation

Gary Zukav: “You do not suffer for eternity because you do the wrong thing once, or twice, or even time after time. It is not possible to do a wrong thing. You do what you do, and you experience the consequences of it. It’s that simple. If you don’t experience those consequences before you die, your soul creates another life so that you can. That is reincarnation.”

Enlightenment

Life is one and I am one with all life.
Enlightenment is simply your natural state of felt oneness with Being.

(Eckhart Tolle, author of #1 bestsellers *The Power of Now* and *A New Earth*)



Your innermost I Am?

“Yes, you *are* the Truth. If you look for it elsewhere, you will be deceived every time. The very Being that you are is Truth. Jesus tried to convey that when he said, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life.’ Jesus speaks of the innermost I Am, the essence identity of every man and woman, every life-form, in fact. He speaks of the life that you are. Buddhists call it your Buddha nature; for Hindus, it is Atman, the indwelling God.” (Tolle, *A New Earth*, p. 70-71).

The god within

G.K. Chesterton: “Of all horrible religions the most horrible is the worship of the god within... That Jones shall worship the god within him turns out ultimately to mean that Jones shall worship Jones. Let Jones worship the sun or moon, anything rather than the Inner Light; let Jones worship cats or crocodiles, if he can find any in his street, but not the god within.”

“Christianity came into the world firstly in order to assert that a man had not only to look inwards, but to look outwards, to behold with astonishment and enthusiasm a divine company and a divine captain. The only fun of being a Christian was that a man was not left alone with the Inner Light, but definitely recognised an outer light, fair as the sun, clear as the moon, terrible as an army with banners.” (G.K. Chesterton)

Bible

- One life
- Revelation
- Personal God
- Desire is a fleeting pointer to God and greater pleasures
- Providence can't be predicted or controlled
- Resurrection to eternal joy or punishment

Buddhism

- Many lives
- Meditation
- Impersonal force
- Desire is the source of all suffering; desire is to be snuffed out
- Cause-and-effect karma determines all
- Nirvana: escaping body and thought

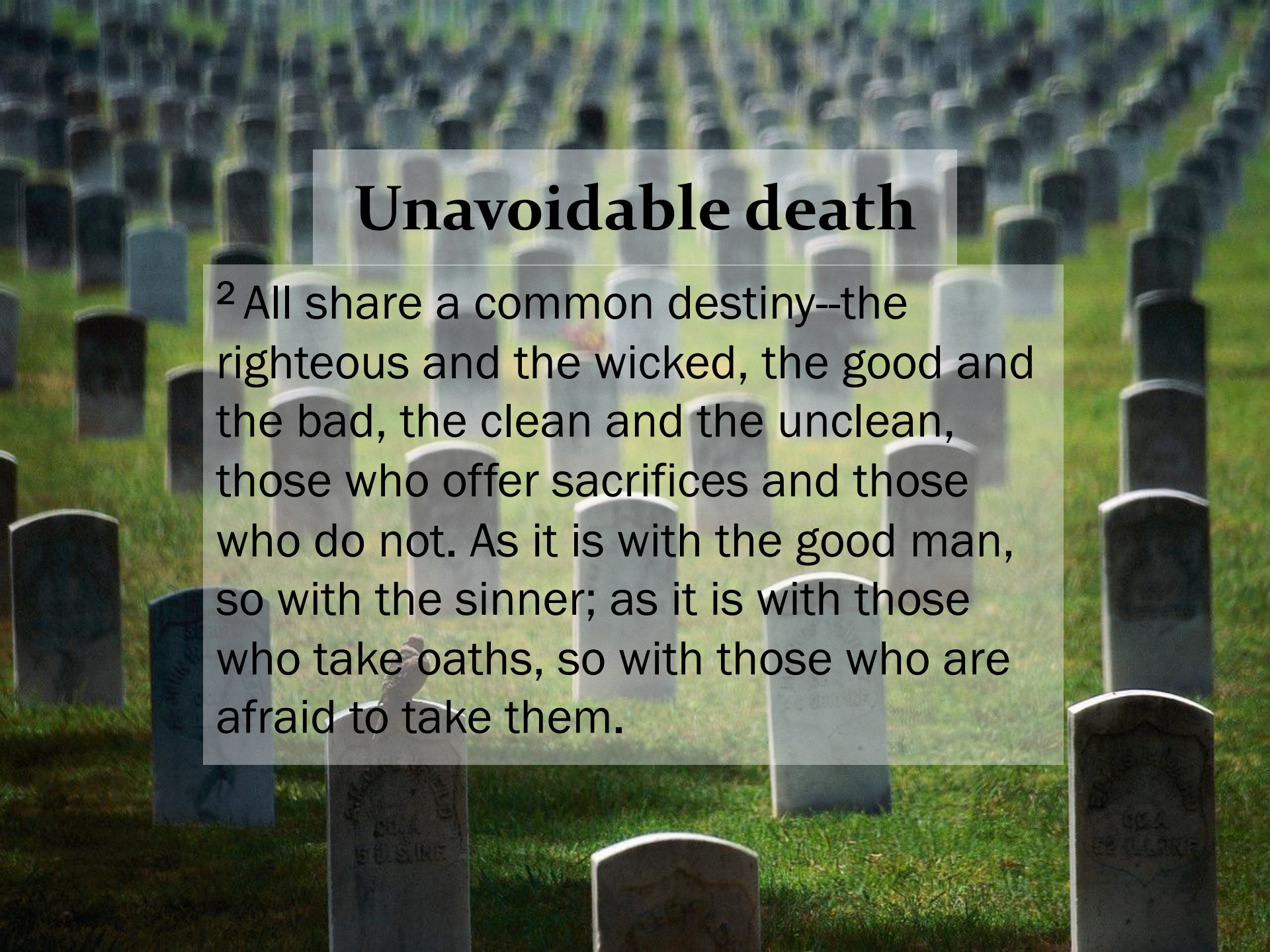
Providence, not predictability

¹ So I reflected on all this and concluded that the righteous and the wise and what they do are in God's hands, but no man knows whether love or hate awaits him.



Ultimate B
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Unavoidable death

² All share a common destiny--the righteous and the wicked, the good and the bad, the clean and the unclean, those who offer sacrifices and those who do not. As it is with the good man, so with the sinner; as it is with those who take oaths, so with those who are afraid to take them.

Life can be wasted

³ This is the evil in everything that happens under the sun: The same destiny overtakes all. The hearts of men, moreover, are full of evil and there is madness in their hearts while they live, and afterward they join the dead.

When it's over, it's over

⁴ Anyone who is among the living has hope—even a live dog is better off than a dead lion!

⁵ For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing; they have no further reward, and even the memory of them is forgotten. ⁶ Their love, their hate and their jealousy have long since vanished; never again will they have a part in anything that happens under the sun.

Facing four facts

- **Trust God's providence, not predictability.** God holds in his hand those who are in tune with him—but that's no guarantee that life will be easy or fun.
- **Death is unavoidable.** No matter who you are or what you do, death awaits you.
- **Life can be wasted.** People tend to waste their one life on evil and madness.
- **When it's over, it's over.** When you die, your earthly actions and hopes end.

You only live once!

- Enjoy what you have.
- Do what you can.
- Accept that you can't control everything.
- Be ready to meet your Maker.

Enjoy what you have

⁷ Go, eat your food with gladness, and drink your wine with a joyful heart, for it is now that God favors what you do. ⁸ Always be clothed in white, and always anoint your head with oil. ⁹ Enjoy life with your wife, whom you love, all the days of this meaningless life that God has given you under the sun—all your meaningless days. For this is your lot in life and in your toilsome labor under the sun.

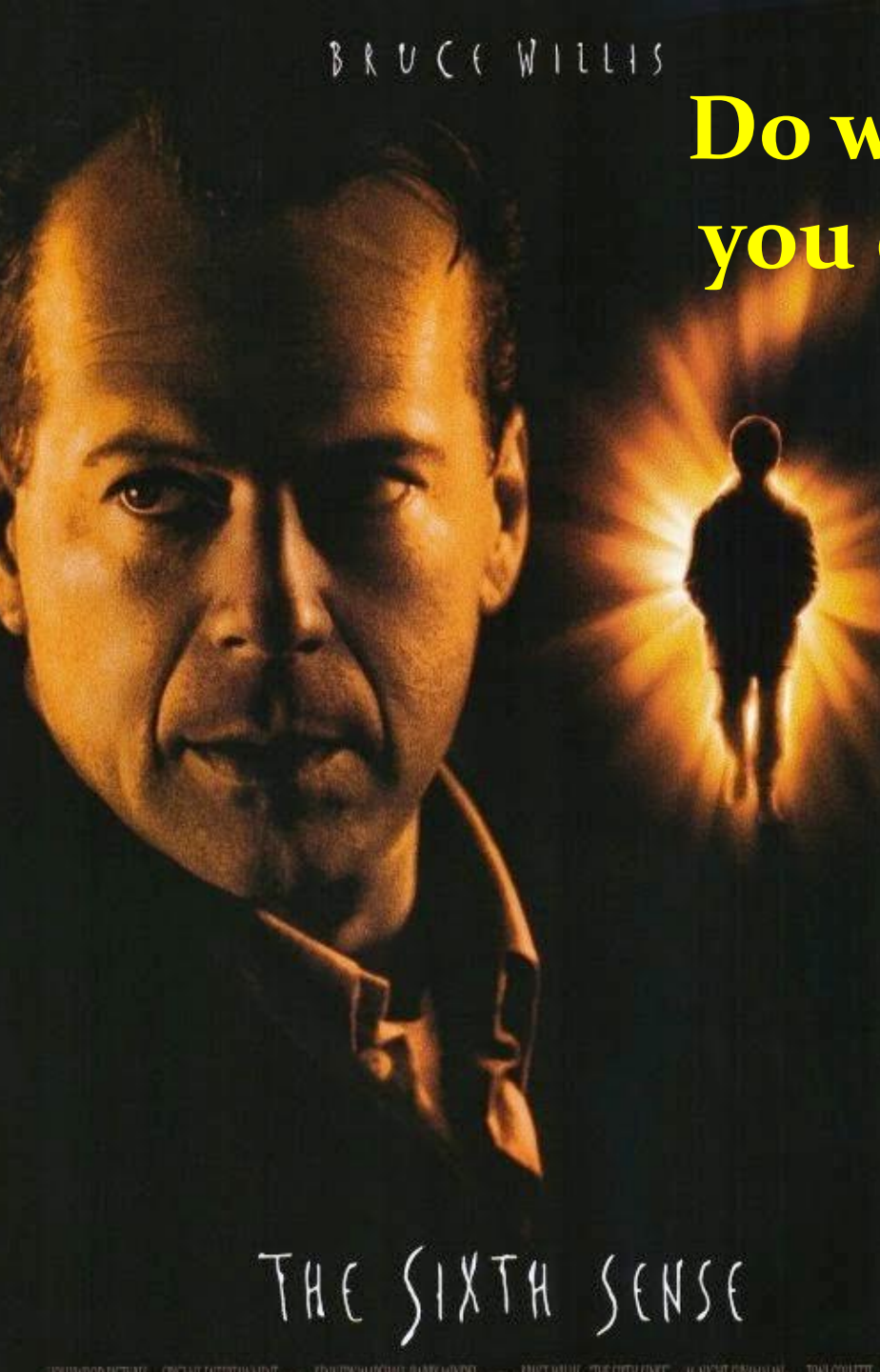
Enjoy everyday gifts

The earth is the Lord's and everything in it. (Psalm 24:1)

For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer. (1 Timothy 4:4-5)

BRUCE WILLIS

Do what
you can



THE SIXTH SENSE



Do what you can

9:10 Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might, for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going.

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward.
(Colossians 4:23-24)

Accept that you can't control everything

¹¹ I have seen something else under the sun:
The race is not to the swift or the battle to the
strong, nor does food come to the wise or
wealth to the brilliant or favor to the learned;
but time and chance happen to them all.

¹² Moreover, no man knows when his hour will
come: As fish are caught in a cruel net, or birds
are taken in a snare, so men are trapped by
evil times that fall unexpectedly upon them.

Be ready to meet your Maker

Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole [duty] of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil. (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14)

Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. (Hebrews 9:27-28)

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Resurrection not reincarnation

If the dead are not raised, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.” ... But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain. (1 Corinthians 15:32,57-58)