

Thurs

9. Did Methuselah really live to be 969 years old? It seems almost biologically impossible.

You are quite right that the Bible says that Methuselah lived to be 969 years old (Gen. 5:27), and altho this is the longest life recorded in the Bible, many others of that period lived long lives as well. For example, Adam lived to be 930 years old before he died. Indeed, the average age of the men recorded in the Bible who lived before the flood (with the exception of Enoch who did not die but was taken directly to heaven) the average age of the patriarchs was 912 years.

You remember that man was originally created to be immortal, and physical death came upon the race as a judgment from God because of man's sin. So man was originally created biologically to live forever. But sin affected his physical abilities and sin also affected the world in which he lived. And personally I believe that conditions changed radically after the flood of Noah's time so that this changed environment in which man lived after the flood accelerated the ageing process and the coming of death. In other words, man cannot be expected to live such long lives today because of the effects of sin throughout all these generations of human history both on man himself and on his environment. But before there had been enough time for sin to build up its natural consequences and before the changed conditions on the earth prior to the flood, men could and did live these long lives. But don't forget, though 969 years is a very long time, eternity is much longer. Our purpose is not to try to ~~gmk~~ make it possible for men to live longer on earth but to offer people eternal life. Death faces all of us. The important question is, where are you going to live after death. You will live somewhere for ever. Either in heaven or in hell. Think about it.

Fri

10. What does it ~~mean~~ mean when in 1 Thes. 4:13 it speaks of those who sleep in Jesus. Does this passage teach soul sleep.

The teaching of soul sleep says that between death and the resurrection the souls of all who die are without sense, feeling or perception. Not only does the body die but the soul is without consciousness until the body is raised and the soul is awakened to consciousness at the resurrection. However, when the Bible speaks of sleep in connection with death it refers to the state of the body only. The body is what dies and the body sleeps until the resurrection. The soul is very conscious between death and resurrection. Remember the story of Lazarus and the rich man. The rich man, who was not a believer, was very conscious after death. Remember that Paul said of believers that when we are absent from the body we are present with the Lord. Remember too the passage in Rev. 6:9 ff. which tells of people who though martyred on earth during the coming tribulation days will be very conscious and active in heaven, waiting the resurrection of their bodies. John said in that passage that he saw the souls of those who had been slain, and they talked with the Lord. Very clearly, then, the Bible does not teach soul sleep. Death does not end it all, as the popular saying goes. Death simply changes one's state of existence. ~~If~~ For the believer it is the gateway to heaven. For the unbeliever it is his entrance into eternal torment.