

World's Oldest Man Dies

You may have missed the news but Saturnino de la Fuente Garcí passed away last week. According to the Guinness Book of World Records, he was born February 11, 1909, in Spain. Saturnino lived 112 years and was closing in on his 113th birthday. He started working at a shoe factory at the ripe old age of 13, he survived the Spanish flu of 1918, and due to his short stature of under five feet tall, he was not drifted into any wars. An avid soccer fan he helped found a local team. In describing his life and reason for its longevity he said, he lived a quiet life and did not hurt anybody. He and his wife had seven daughters, 1 son, and 22 grandchildren. It should be noted that Saturnino was not the oldest person alive as that distinction goes to Kana Tanaka of Japan and she is 119 years young and climbing. She was born January 2, 1902.

This brings some thoughts to mind. While living such a long life it is hard to imagine it does not compare to those in the Book of Genesis. Saturnino was just a youngster compared to Cainan who lived 910 years or of course Methuselah at 969 years. Even those after the flood lived longer as Abraham was 175 years old at his passing. Our judgment of time and its length is clouded by our age and those around us.

Can you imagine the changes one would see over 900 years? The population growth of the world during the days of Methuselah and the wickedness he would have seen had to of been amazing and sad. The world's population around the time of Garcí's birth would have been around 1.6 billion people, in 2020 it was listed just under 8 billion. Besides the population growth, the changes in technology, medicine, and wars he would have lived through. As someone said the only thing that remains the same is change.

His philosophy of "lead a quiet life and do good" has a Biblical ring to it. "Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, 2 for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence." (1 Timothy 2:1-2) If more people would seek to abide by God's word and live in a peaceable manner, this world would be a better place. "And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good?" (1 Peter 3:13)

Yet the biggest thought which comes to mind is still the brevity of life. Living over one hundred years seems really long but it is a brief period of time. Genesis five is the first list in the Bible which speaks of people birth and death in length of time. There

are many other such list, the Kings of Israel, Northern Israel and Judah. Each of those lists should remind us that there were those who lived before us and those who live after us. As Job said, "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle," (Job 7:6a). Thankfully our existence is not tied to this physical body. Our bodies by design get hurt, get sick, wear out, and die. No one will live eternally here on this earth as it will perish one day. "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up." (2 Peter 3:10) Our soul is eternal and designed to be with God forever and is of greater value.

Finally, the word of God is one thing which will not change. Personally, I know nothing of Saturnino de la Fuente Garcí religious beliefs and his stance before God, but I do know who the judge will be. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." (2 Corinthians 5:10) I also know the standard by which we will all be judged. "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day." (John 12:48) I know the two possible outcomes of that judgment. "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation." (John 5:28-29)

We do not determine when we die, but we determine how we live and whether we are ready for eternity as we live. Let us be ready for that day. Perhaps living a quiet life and not hurting anybody is a good place to start with the addition of obeying the Gospel of Christ. – Dennis Tucker