



Death and Resurrection

“So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grace, where is thy victory?” (1 Corinthians 15:54, 55).

Eileen and Jay’s furlough time had passed quickly. Shortly before time to go to the airport, Eileen’s sister-in-law, Edna, said, “Please come into the bedroom with me.” Standing together beside her bed, she spoke slowly. “For sometime now I’ve had a very strange feeling in my head. I can’t explain it, but I know something is not right. Before you leave I want you to pray that God will be with our family and our children and that I shall be ready for whatever is ahead.”

They knelt together, committing the future to God. Eileen never forgot that last goodbye at the airport, as they left for Singapore 12,000 miles away.

One evening less than two months later, she opened a letter from her brother which began, “Sis, this is probably the saddest letter you have ever received from me, but there is also much for which to be thankful. The doctors just discovered a massive melanoma cancer behind Edna’s right ear, plus numerous small tumors scattered through her entire brain. Already, she is completely blind in her left eye, and the sight of the right eye comes and goes. Her breathing is becoming difficult. They can do nothing for her and doubt she can live more than another month.

“But God is so merciful. He seems to be holding her in His arms. She understands her serious condition but rests in Jesus, knowing that everything is right between her and God. We know that when she goes into that final coma, the next voice she will hear will be her Master calling her. For this we are eternally grateful.”

When tears no longer dimmed Eileen’s eyes, she went outside and looked up at the tropical night sky full of stars. The words of Jesus filled her with hope: “I am the bright and morning star. Surely, I come quickly.”

Preview

At funeral services, many sincere, honest Christians, mourning the loss of a dear one, have heard their minister say, “Our beloved one is with the Lord dwelling in blissful happiness, enjoying the beauties of heaven.”

Confused, their minds flip back to Genesis 3:4. Didn’t Satan lie to the unsuspecting Eve in the Garden of Eden, when he said, “You will not surely die”?

Before them is their dead friend in the casket. Could the minister be misinformed, unwittingly echoing that first lie? Somehow, Satan has twisted that divine sentence. Instead of “The soul that sinneth, it shall die,” (Ezekiel 18:20), many tend to believe “the soul, even though it sins, shall live eternally.”

Points to Ponder

Their minds whirl with inconsistencies. Why would Jesus talk so much about the resurrection of the dead, if the good people are already in heaven and the wicked in hell? Why call people from the grave,

when they aren't there? And an even more perplexing question: "If the dead are alive and in the presence of God, why could they not return to earth and communicate with the living?" Could it be that the devil and his angels have used deception to establish a channel of communication that can lead to eternal destruction? Please turn to the Bible for answers.

When King Saul turned away from serving the Lord, he could no longer ask God for help. Though He had formerly destroyed all witches, he now sought counsel from a spiritualistic medium. He requested, "Bring up Samuel for me" (1 Samuel 28:11).

Samuel, the prophet, was a righteous man. When he died, he certainly didn't go to hell, so why did Saul ask him to be brought "up" and not "down"? During that séance the medium saw an old man "ascending out of the earth" (vs. 13). Was it really Samuel's spirit that made that horrible prediction? Who actually spoke to Saul?

It is vitally important to you and me that we understand the subject of death, communication with the dead, and the two resurrections.

Turn to "The Difference Between" and understand clearly the meanings and differences between "mortal," "immortality," and "conditional immortality."

Nuts & Bolts

1. When God created Adam and Eve, He promised them life on the condition of obedience.

Genesis 2:17: "But of the _____ of the _____ of _____ and _____, thou shalt _____ of it: for in the _____ that thou _____ there of thou shalt _____."

2. God created Adam and Eve with a free will—the power of choice. They could choose to obey or disobey. Their continued existence depended upon continual obedience to God. The Bible says they chose to disobey God and listen to Satan. What was the result?

Romans 6:23: "For the _____ of _____ is _____; but the _____ of God is _____ through _____ our _____."

3. What did Adam transmit to his children?

Romans 5:12: "Wherefore, as by one _____ sin _____ into the world, and _____ by sin, and so _____ passed upon all _____ for that _____ have _____."

4. Through Jesus Christ, God has made it possible for humans to be redeemed and have eternal life.

Romans 5:19: "For as by one man's _____ many were made _____, so by the obedience of one [Christ] shall many be made _____."

2 Timothy 1:10: Christ "hath abolished _____, and hath brought _____ and _____ to light through the gospel."

5. Those who don't accept the gospel won't receive immortality.

1 John 5:11: "God hath _____ to us _____, and this life is in His Son."

1 Corinthians 15:22: "In _____ shall all be made _____."

John 5:28, 29: "All that are in the grave shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done _____, unto the _____ of _____; and they that have done evil, unto the _____ of _____."

6. When does the believer receive immortality?

1 Corinthians 15:52: "In a _____, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last _____: for the trumpet shall _____, and the dead shall be raised _____, and we shall be _____."

Read verses 51-55. Note that God does not give immortality to the righteous believer at death but at the time of Christ's second coming.

7. Both the Old and New Testaments speak of death as sleep. Compare death and sleep.

a. We are unconscious. "The _____ know not _____" (Ecclesiastes 9:5).

b. Our thinking process ceases. "He returns to his _____; in that very moment his _____" (Psalm 146:4).

c. All our day's activities end. "There is no _____, nor _____, nor _____, nor _____ in the _____, whither thou goest" (Ecclesiastes 9:10.).

d. We cannot praise the Lord. "The dead _____ not the Lord, neither any that go _____ into _____" (Psalm 115:17).

e. We wake up after sleep. "All that are in the _____ shall hear his _____, and shall come forth" (John 5:28, 29).

8. The Bible says that the dead, good and bad, go to one place—the grave (Genesis 37:35).

9. What is the meaning of "soul"?

Genesis 2:7: "And the Lord God _____ of the _____ of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the _____ of _____; and man became a living soul."

At creation, God formed a body out of the dust. It was lifeless. He breathed into it the breath of life.

The result was a "living soul." Put as a formula, we have this:

Dust of the earth + Breath of life (Spirit) = A living soul.

That is—A lifeless body + Breath from God (spirit) = A living being or living person. Therefore, *soul*, *being*, and *person* all mean the same.

10. What happens to the soul at death?

Ecclesiastes 12:7: "Then shall the _____ return to the _____ as it was: and the _____ shall return unto God who gave it."

The reverse of what happened at creation happens at death. Put as a formula, we have this:

Dust of the earth – Breath of life (Spirit) = A dead soul.

A living body – Breath from God (Spirit) = A dead being (person).

At death when the life-giving power of God is withdrawn, we have a lifeless body. There is no longer a living being, which is what a soul is, according to Genesis 2:7.

11. There is no consciousness in death.

This is the biblical teaching. The false belief that the dead are conscious has led many sincere Christians to accept spiritualism, a teaching that holds that the dead continue to live in another form of life and that they can communicate with the living. Such a teaching is nothing but the first lie of Satan in the Garden of Eden: "Ye shall not _____" (Genesis 3:4).

12. The answer to the problem of death is not another form of life after death but resurrection from the dead. This is the significance of Christ's resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15:21, 22: "For since by man [Adam] came _____, by man [Christ] came also the _____ of the dead. For as in _____ all die, even so in _____ shall all be made alive."

Words to Remember

Insensate: Without feeling, sense, understanding, or judgment. Lifeless.

Soul: Means the same as a person—a being. The soul is not a disembodied spirit of a dead person. We do not *have* a soul—we *are* souls.

Spirit: A spirit is not a ghost. It is the life-giving power of God.

Hades: The grave, where all the dead remain until Jesus resurrects them. The Bible also uses the word *sheol* for grave. At times these words also signify hell.

Spiritualism: The teaching that the dead live in a conscious state after death and communicate with the living. This is one of the final delusions that Satan will use to deceive Christians.

The Difference Between

Mortal: Subject to death. All human beings will die because of sin. Human beings are thus finite—that is, having bounds or limits.

Immortal: Not subject to death. 1 Timothy 1:7 and 6:16 state that God alone is immortal. God is thus infinite, having no bounds or limitations. He is uncreated, self-existent, and has no beginning and no ending. God is eternal.

Conditional: God gave Adam and Eve a free will or the power to choose to obey or disobey. To live forever depended on continual obedience to God.

First death: The death that comes to all humans as a result of Adam's sin. Cessation of life and all its activities. All who have died this death will be resurrected, some to eternal life, some to eternal death.

Second death: The final punishment of unrepentant sinners, from which there is no resurrection. Forever separated from God. This will take place at the end of the thousand years or the millennium described in Revelation 20.

First resurrection: The resurrection of the righteous at the second coming of Jesus to inherit God's kingdom.

Second resurrection: The resurrection of sinners that takes place at the end of the millennium. They will be cast into the lake of fire, or eternal death, forever separated from God, never to rise again (Revelation 20:14, 15).

I Truly Believe

Though our dear ones may sleep in death, soon they'll hear the voice of Jesus and rise to be with Him in the clouds. Will you be there to join them? Check each statement that expresses your desire.

[] Knowing that God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, I choose to repent and live.

[] Christ promises that "he who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death." (Revelation 2:11). I choose to accept His overcoming power in my life.

My Prayer

Dear Father,

I thank You for the promise of eternal life through Jesus. I thank You that I do not need to fear death, for I know that when Christ appears, the resurrected righteous and living righteous will be glorified and be caught up to be with Him. What a blessed hope! Come soon, Lord Jesus. Amen.