



Truth For These Times



10. THE NATURE OF MAN IN LIFE AND IN DEATH

Death is a cruel reaper, and most people have felt the sadness it brings. There are many differing ideas concerning the state of death, ranging from an immediate heaven or hell, to a total end, or reincarnation, or a spirit world, to a quiet sleep in the grave awaiting the resurrection. With so many conflicting thoughts, it is comforting to find a definite answer in the Word of God.

Genesis 2:7 And the LORD God FORMED MAN *OF* THE DUST OF THE GROUND, and breathed into his nostrils THE BREATH OF LIFE; and man became a LIVING BEING.

Before we can understand death, we need to know something of life, and how it began. Man consists of two main ingredients:

1. The dust of the ground.
2. The breath of life.

Adam had a brain, but it was not thinking. He had a heart, but it was not beating. He had muscles, but they were not moving – until God breathed the breath of life. And what was the result?

Dust of the Ground + Breath of Life = A Living Soul.

In the same way, a light globe + electric current = a light. Take away the current and the light is non-existent. Remove the breath of life, and there is no soul – just a dead body. The “soul” is not something separate from the body, rather a living person is a soul. At death, man ceases to be a living soul.

Genesis 2:16,17 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in THE DAY THAT YOU EAT OF IT YOU SHALL SURELY DIE.”

This is the Bible’s first mention of death. Adam and Eve had known only a world of life, and must have looked upon death as a mystery, because they had never seen it. But here was God’s warning if man disobeyed – death.

Genesis 3:3,4 “But of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’ ” Then the serpent said to the woman, “YOU WILL NOT SURELY DIE.”

Here was the first lie – ye shall not surely die. Eve had the choice of believing God or the serpent. God said death would come through disobedience, and the devil speaking through the serpent said there would be no death.

Romans 5:12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus DEATH SPREAD TO ALL MEN, because all sinned.

Adam and Eve experienced death, but sinful tendencies were passed on to the whole human race, so that death became the lot of all men.

Romans 6:12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your MORTAL BODY, that you should obey it in its lusts.

The devil would have Adam and Eve believe they were immortal (not subject to death) but here it is clearly taught that our bodies are mortal (subject to death). Many today believe man is naturally immortal, even if he has been the worst of sinners, and that some part of him will never die. Millions have been deceived by the devil's assurance: "You will not surely die".



Adam & Eve were tempted to believe that they were immortal.

2 Timothy 1:10 ...But has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, *who* has abolished death and brought life and IMMORTALITY TO LIGHT THROUGH THE GOSPEL,

For those who accept Christ as their Saviour, the "gift" of immortality is given, but it is not naturally present.

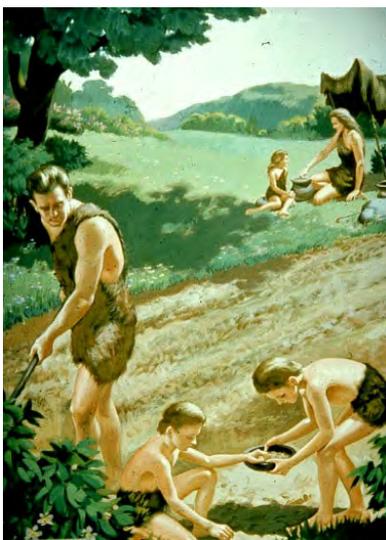
1 Timothy 6:15,16 The King of kings and Lord of lords, WHO ALONE HAS IMMORTALITY.

Only God is immortal. The teaching of the immortality of the soul has no Bible foundation.

Genesis 3:19 In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you *are*, And TO DUST YOU SHALL RETURN.

If man's body was broken down into its various minerals, it would be found that they are identical with the soil. When a man dies, his body turns to dust.

Ecclesiastes 12:7 Then the DUST WILL RETURN TO THE EARTH as it was, And the SPIRIT WILL RETURN TO GOD who gave it.



In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return unto the ground.

This text does not say that the spirit of "good" men return to God – there is no distinction between good and bad. The logical question here is – "What is the spirit?" The Hebrew and Greek words for 'soul' and 'spirit' are used 1,700 times in the Bible. The word 'Spirit' is the Hebrew word (RUACH) that simply means 'breath'. Sometimes it is translated 'breath', and sometimes 'spirit' – the words being used interchangeably.

Psalm 115:17 THE DEAD DO NOT PRAISE THE LORD, nor any who go down into silence.

The Bible never suggests that the "spirit" is a kind of second, living personality that can enjoy personal existence separated from the body. Rather, it teaches that man has no conscious awareness of anything after death. If the "spirit" that returned to God was something capable of operating apart from the body, it would

certainly praise God in His presence, but this text says the dead praise not the Lord. The simple explanation is that they cannot.

Ecclesiastes 9:5,6 For the living know that they will die; But the DEAD KNOW NOTHING, and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten. Also THEIR LOVE, THEIR HATRED, AND THEIR ENVY HAVE NOW PERISHED; nevermore will they have a share in anything done under the sun.



The dead know not anything.

Here it is explained in a nutshell – the dead know nothing. Even their emotions, such as love and hate, cease to operate.

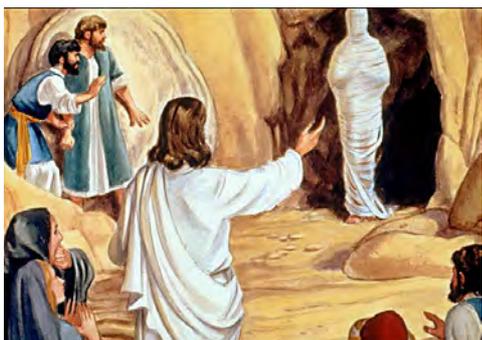
Psalms 146:4 His spirit departs, he returns to his earth; in that very day HIS PLANS PERISH.

His body ceases to function, and so do his thoughts.

Acts 2:29,34 Men *and* brethren, let *me* speak freely to you of the PATRIARCH DAVID, THAT HE IS BOTH DEAD AND BURIED, and his tomb is with us to this day. For DAVID DID NOT ASCEND INTO THE HEAVENS, but he says himself: “The LORD said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand’”.

God said David was a man after His own heart, yet even this great man did not go to heaven at death. Many hundreds of years after his death the Scripture records that his grave was still there, and he had not ascended to heaven. Death is not a continuation of life, as many suppose, but it is a waiting period until the call of the Life-giver is heard. There is no text in all the Bible which says we go to heaven or hell at death.

John 11:11-14 These things He said, and after that He said to them, “OUR FRIEND LAZARUS SLEEPS, but I go that I may wake him up.” Then His disciples said, “Lord, if he sleeps he will get well.” However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep. THEN JESUS SAID TO THEM PLAINLY, “LAZARUS IS DEAD”.



Jesus raises Lazarus from the sleep of death.

Here we find Jesus referring to the death of Lazarus as a sleep, and this is not uncommon, for there are over 50 references in the Bible that call death a sleep.

Psalms 13:3 Consider *and* hear me, O LORD my God; enlighten my eyes, lest I sleep THE SLEEP OF DEATH;

This is but one of the references.

John 5:28,29 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.

The sleep of death does not last forever; instead it will be broken by the voice of Jesus as He calls the dead to life on the day of resurrection. It can be clearly seen why the dead do not go to heaven or hell at death. If this were the case, there would be no need of the resurrection day to receive the rewards, for one would have them already.



The resurrection of the righteous.

1 Corinthians 15:19,20 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. But now CHRIST IS RISEN FROM THE DEAD, *and* has BECOME THE FIRSTFRUITS OF THOSE WHO HAVE FALLEN ASLEEP.

How can we be certain of the resurrection? Because Jesus was resurrected, we can have the absolute assurance that we too will be raised. Christ has already gained victory over death.

1 Thessalonians 4:16,17 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And THE DEAD IN CHRIST WILL RISE FIRST. Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

This is the day of victory. Death is conquered. Man will live forevermore. It is like a child who has been tucked into bed and closes his eyes in sleep, not knowing another thing until he awakes in the morning. There has been no sense of the passing of time while he has been sleeping. So, when we close our eyes in the sleep of death, it will seem but a moment when we hear the voice of Jesus calling us to life everlasting. Some may have been dead for thousands of years, but time is compacted into a moment.

Some are concerned for those who have died in some terrible way, and the body has been mangled or eaten by wild animals, or some other tragic thing has happened. There is no need to be concerned. God promises in 1 Corinthians 15 to give us a new incorruptible body. We will not possess the same atoms of flesh we now have. In the meantime, God preserves our individual personality and character, then just as He created Adam, so He will re-create us – perfect – to live forever.



At the Second Coming of Jesus –
Death will be conquered.

When we think of it, God's way is best. The dead are not aware of the problems and trials of those they have left behind. If they were able to observe their loved ones in need or grief, they could not enjoy heaven. Instead, their first sight upon awaking from the sleep of death is Jesus. The troubles of this earth are over, and they awake to eternal joy and happiness.

My friend, there are two resurrections, one for the saved, and one for the lost. One is a resurrection of glory, and the other one of shame. Which one do you plan to be in? Jesus is The Way – choose Him.

Review Sheet – The Nature of Man in Life and in Death

Assignment: Read the Bible study carefully before answering the following questions.

1. God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into him the breath of life. What did this combination make man? Gen 2:7
And man became _ _ _ _ _.
 2. God said man would die if he ate the forbidden fruit, but what did the devil say through the serpent? Gen 3:3,4
You _ _ _ _ _.
 3. As a result of Adam's sin, what is the consequence to all his descendants? Rom 5:12
And thus _ _ _ _ _.
 4. Who only is immortal? 1 Tim 6:15,16
The King _ _ _ _ _ , _ _ _ _ _.
 5. What happens to man at death? Gen 3:19
And to _ _ _ _ _.
 6. Does the "spirit" have the ability to act independently of the body?
Yes ___ No ___.
 7. How much do the dead know? Eccl 9:5,6
But _ _ _ _ _ . Also _ _ _ _ _ , _ _ _ _ _ , _ _ _ _ _ .
 8. Did the righteous king David ascend to heaven at death? Acts 2:29,34
He is both _ _ _ _ _ ... for David did _ _ _ _ _ .
 9. What did Jesus call death? John 11:11-14
Our friend _ _ _ _ _ .
 10. When will the righteous awake from the sleep of death? John 5:28,29
Those who have done good, _ _ _ _ _ .
 11. When does this resurrection take place? 1 Thess 4:16,17
For the Lord _ _ _ _ _ ... and the _ _ _ _ _ .
 12. Why can we be certain of the resurrection? 1 Cor 15:19,20
But now _ _ _ _ _ , _ _ _ _ _ .
- If you should die before Christ comes the second time, is it your desire to be in the resurrection of everlasting life? ___.