

Death

- I. die: *intr.* To lose life, cease to live, suffer death; to expire.
- II. Scripture identifies six types of death:
 - A. Spiritual death in trespasses and sin. **GEN 2:17; EPH 2:1.**
 - B. Separation from fellowship and accord with God. **JAM 5:19-20; EPH 5:14; 1TI 5:6.**
 - C. Physical death. **JAM 2:26.**
 - D. Reproductive death. **ROM 4:19.**
 - E. Death unto sin (repentance, sanctification).
ROM 6:11; GAL 5:24; ROM 8:13; 1CO 15:31 c/w LUK 9:23.
 1. This is a death we should desire and work for.
 2. Sin has no power over a dead man.
 3. Death unto sin is a form of resurrection unto life. **EPH 5:14.**
 - F. The second death or eternal separation from God in the lake of fire. **REV 20:14; 21:8.**
- III. This study concerns itself with physical death and its subsequents. It will be helpful to remember that man is a tripartite being. **1TH 5:23.**
- IV. Death is the result of sin. It is earned; salvation is not earned. **ROM 6:23; JAM 1:15.**
 - A. Death came by sin, which was preceded by law. **1JO 3:4.**
 - B. Sin and death came by one man's (Adam) disobedience. **ROM 5:12, 17.**
 1. Adam, by himself, **DEFILED** his children with sin.
 2. Jesus Christ, by Himself, **PURGED** His children's sins. **HEB 1:3.**
 3. Eve is *the mother of all living* (**GEN 3:20**); Adam is *the father of all dying*.
 - a. Sin passes from man, not from woman.
 - b. This is how God could become a man born of a virgin and sinless. Jesus did not inherit the sin principle and nature from an earthly father.
 - c. Since death came from sin, and that from Adam, no Christian should believe in the evolutionary concept of death and bloodshed on earth prior to Adam's sin.
 - C. Since death is the consequence of sin, how can some say that infants have no sin, and yet some of them die?
 1. If infants have no sin, they do not need a Savior.
 2. Men are conceived in sin and are sinners by nature before commission of sin.
PSA 51:5; ROM 9:11; EPH 2:3.
- V. Death and the grave is an appointment which all must keep until the return of Christ. **JOB 30:23; HEB 9:27.**
 - A. Enoch and Elijah are exceptions to the rule. **2KI 2:11; HEB 11:5.**
 1. Exceptions do not nullify a rule, they qualify a rule. Making an exception into a rule played a role in how sin and death entered. **GEN 2:16-17; 3:1.**
 2. Saints which are alive and remain at Christ's coming also escape the rule.
1TH 4:15-18.
 3. Yet all are reckoned as legally dead and judged in Christ Who suffered death and the grave for them. **GAL 2:20; COL 3:3.**
 - B. The days of our life on earth are by the appointment of God. **JOB 7:1; 14:5.**
 - C. Only God knows that appointed day of death and He may alter it at His discretion.
ISA 38:1-5.

- D. As a general rule, godly living will be rewarded with a lengthy life. **PRO 11:4; EPH 6:2-3; 1PE 3:10.**
- E. God may bring the righteous to the grave prematurely as an act of mercy. **ISA 57:1-2; 2KI 22:20.**
- F. The designs of rebels and fools to avoid the natural consequence of their sins amount to nothing. **ECC 8:8; ISA 28:14-15, 18.**
 - 1. Cryogenics is a fool's dream pretending to claim God's power to raise the dead. The only departed spirit that has power to return to quicken its own flesh is Christ's. **ROM 8:11 c/w JOH 10:17-18.**
 - 2. Transhumanism has a mad goal of uploading human consciousness to "the cloud" to evade the demands of death. Here's hoping they figure out how to not upload sin along with the consciousness or there would only be cyber-misery.
 - 3. Our hope is not in a vain covenant with death but that God made a covenant with us to save us in Christ. **2SAM 23:5 c/w HEB 13:20-21.**
- G. The lifespan of man has undergone drastic reductions since the time of the flood of Noah.
 - 1. Man's lifespan decreased rapidly from multiple hundreds of years to less than 200 at Abraham's time. **GEN 25:7-8.**
 - 2. It eventually levelled off to an average of 70. **PSA 90:10.**
 - a. Let Moses' words sink in. There are still exceptional lifespans of 100+ years to this day but don't assume that the spring of youth continues in great age. **ECC 12:1-7.**
 - b. We should make the best of the life we have in the fear of God, not the fear of death, working good for our Master with zeal. **ECC 9:10 c/w JOH 9:4.**
 - c. The resurrection gives true liberty, not the false liberty of hedonism to counter death. **1CO 15:32.**
- H. It is the height of folly to assume we have plenty of time left in this world to do well and prepare to meet our God. **PRO 27:1; JAM 4:13-15.**
 - 1. It behooves us to *number our days*. **PSA 90:12; EPH 5:16.**
 - 2. Prepare to meet God on good terms. **1JO 2:28-29 ct/w AMO 4:12.**

VI. The entire person of the elect, including his body, is the purchased possession of God. **1CO 6:20; JOB 14:12-15; 19:25-27.**

- A. The inward part of man lives on after the body dies. **LUK 16:22-24; REV 6:9-10.**
- B. Cultures and religions worldwide have believed in life after death of the body.
 - 1. "O happy day, (says he), when I shall quit this impure and corrupt multitude, and join myself to that divine company and council of souls who have quitted the earth before me! There I shall find, not only those illustrious personages to whom I have spoken, but also my Cato, who I can say was one of the best men ever born, and whom none ever excelled in virtue and piety. I have placed his body on that funeral pyre whereon he ought to have laid mine. But his soul has not left me; and, without losing sight of me, he has only gone before into a country where he saw I should soon rejoin him. This my lot I seem to bear courageously; not indeed that I do bear it with resignation, but I shall comfort myself with the persuasion that the interval between his departure and mine will not be long."
(*Cato Major De Senectute*, Cicero, 1st C. B.C.)
 - 2. Christianity is unique in that it has a testimony of One who died and resurrected bodily to declare the certainty of life after death. **REV 1:18; 19:10.**
 - 3. This testimony changed the world by delivering men from the fear of death. **HEB 2:14-15.**

- VII. Death and the grave are the great leveller of men. They are the common home of all, good or bad. **ECC 9:2-3; JOB 21:23-26; 3:16-19.**
- A. The grave is man's *long home*. **JOB 17:13; ECC 12:5.**
 - 1. But it is a temporary home. **JOH 5:28-29.**
 - 2. It is the earth-womb that has a long gestation. **JOB 1:21.**
 - 3. Mother Earth had ever been barren until Christ resurrected to die no more.
 - 4. This is why proper baptism is a figure of the temporary death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ which is the proof and guarantee of the temporary death, burial and resurrection of sinners.
 - B. It is a land of darkness and disorder from which no sinner can will his spirit back. **2SAM 12:23; 14:14; JOB 10:21-22; ECC 8:8.**
 - C. Then, the grand thoughts of man perish. **PSA 146:4 c/w JAM 4:13-14.**
 - 1. All of natural man's schemes and dreams are arrested by death. He will not carry on his ambitions "from the other side." Death is not like prison on earth for a mobster!
 - 2. The station and relationships of this world do not carry over.
 - a. Consider the pagans who thought it proper to have their servants slain upon death so as to continue their service in the afterlife.
 - b. It is proper that marriage vows state, "Till death us do part." **ROM 7:1-2.**
 - 3. The acquisitions of this world have no influence beyond the grave.
 - a. Consider the pagan Egyptians who would be buried with their treasures and implements which they supposed would be useful to them in the afterlife.
 - b. You can't take it with you. **PSA 49:16-17; 1TI 6:7; JOB 1:21; ECC 5:15.**
 - 4. Men's deceived thoughts about God, heaven, hell, etc. also end with death. **LUK 16:19-31.**
- VIII. Death and the grave met their match in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was manifest to destroy the works of the devil, and did so. **1JO 3:8 c/w HEB 2:14-15.**
- A. Only Christ, by virtue of a perfect, sinless life had power to lay down His life and take it up again. **JOH 10:17-18; ACT 2:24.**
 - B. As a show of His mighty power, the bodies of many sleeping saints arose likewise. **MAT 27:51-53 c/w COL 2:15.**
 - C. In destroying the works of the devil, Christ took away:
 - 1. the dominion of death. **ROM 6:9.**
 - 2. the law of sin and death. **ROM 8:2.**
 - 3. the sting of death. **1CO 15:55-56.**
 - 4. the fear of death. **HEB 2:15.**
 - 5. the keys of hell and death. **REV 1:18.**
 - a. That fact that He liveth (present tense) now and was (past tense) dead, declares His resurrection.
 - b. That He is alive *for evermore* declares His immortality.
 - c. He thus holds the keys of hell and death.
 - (1) key: In pregnant sense, with reference to the power of custody, control, admission of others, etc., implied by the possession of the keys of any place; hence, as a symbol of office, and *fig.* the office itself.
 - (2) Christ holds authority over hell and death.
 - (3) The key that locks the damned in hell also locks the saved out.

- d. The death and hell which were the bane of the creation shall be cast into the lake of fire at the Second Coming. **REV 20:14.**

- IX. Believers have the comfort and assurance that there is a bodily resurrection at the end of time, of which the resurrection of the body of Jesus Christ is the firstfruits. **1CO 15:19-23; REV 1:5.**
- A. What was legally confirmed and personally realized by Jesus Christ shall then be fully brought to pass: death swallowed up in victory. **1CO 15:54.**
 - B. Those justified by Christ shall be resurrected at the *last day*.
JOH 6:39-40, 44, 54 c/w JOB 14:12.
 1. This will be at His *coming again*, His *second appearing*. **JOH 14:1-3; HEB 9:28.**
 2. The resurrection will be general, *both of the just and unjust*.
ACT 24:14-15; JOH 5:28-29; MAT 13:30, 38-39, 47-50.
 3. Mind how this contrasts a popular fable which holds:
 - a. Jesus returns invisibly to resurrect the righteous. The rest are left behind.
 - b. Life and death continue on earth during a great tribulation.
 - c. Jesus comes a third time to resurrect tribulation martyrs.
 - d. A thousand years later, Jesus resurrects the wicked dead.
 - C. The resurrection of the body was the hope of the believing ancients and patriarchs.
JOB 19:25-27; HEB 11:19.
 - D. The resurrection of the body was the hope of O.T. prophets and martyrs.
ISA 26:19; HOS 13:14; HEB 11:35.
 - E. The resurrection of the body is the true hope of Israel.
ACT 24:14-15; 26:6-8; 28:20; 1PE 1:3-4, 13.
 - F. The resurrection of the body is the hope of all believers now, as ever. **1TH 4:13-18.**
 - G. Resurrection hope has a purifying effect. **1JO 3:1-3.**
 1. Without the Christian hope, men will give themselves to their own desires (**JER 18:12**). This explains materialism, philosophies of despair, free sex, and the drug culture.
 2. The great dilemma of mankind is that it wants the hope of an afterlife but it doesn't want a hope that means curtailing lusts in this life and so it places its hope in something else that accommodates its lusts.
 - H. Resurrection hope has a healing effect. **2CO 1:8-9.**
 1. Since the gospel is a message of hope, the gospel brings healing.
LUK 4:18; PSA 107:17-20.
 2. Perhaps it is through the gospel of hope that we have access to the leaves of the tree of life which are "for the healing of the nations."
1CO 2:7 c/w PRO 3:13, 18 c/w REV 22:2.
 - I. This hope puts our present trials into perspective. **ROM 8:18; 2CO 4:17-18.**
 - J. This hope fosters patience and a sound mind. **ROM 8:24-25; 2TI 1:7-10; 1PE 1:13.**
- X. This section addresses the afterlife experienced between the death of the body and its resurrection.
- A. In **PHIL 1:20-26** Paul expounds what life and death were for him.
 1. For Paul, to live was Christ.
 - a. Paul's life was given and sustained by Christ (**GAL 2:20**), was directed by Christ (**1CO 9:21**), was an instrument of Christ (**ROM 15:18-19**), and aimed at Christ in all things. **PHIL 3:8.**
 - b. Christ was the sum of his life.
 - c. What is your life? Wherein does your life consist? **LUK 12:15.**
 2. For Paul to die was *gain*. If Christ is our life here, then death will be gain for us.

3. If Paul lived in the flesh, the fruit or effect of his labor was to magnify Christ in his body. **PSA 71:14-18.**
 4. Paul was in a great strait between departing the flesh to be with Christ and abiding in the flesh to serve the church of God.
 - a. strait: A narrow confined place or space or way generally. *fig.* A narrow or tight place, a time of sore need or of awkward or straitened circumstances, a difficulty or fix.
 - b. Paul was being pressed by these two alternatives and had difficulty deciding between them. He *wot not* (did not know) which to choose.
 - c. Paul desired to depart and to be with Christ, but it was more needful to abide here for the church.
 - d. Paul was thus torn between what he wanted and what was needful. Sound familiar?
 - e. This was a blessed strait because it was a strait between two *good things*: remaining here for the glory of Christ or departing and being with Christ.
 - (1) Would that all straits in Christian experience were straits between two good things! c/w **2SAM 24:13-14.**
 - (2) That both choices were desirable for Paul was only owing to his certain faith in Christ's life, His residence, and His promises. Thus, his physical death was not an unsavory option.
 5. This departure and being with Christ is Paul's description of bodily death.
 - a. Paul's words concur with **LUK 16:19-31** in countering the doctrine of soul sleep.
 - b. Advocates of the doctrine of soul sleep apply the expression "to be with Christ" to the coming resurrection of the body.
 - c. Paul's *desire* (singular) had as its object *departing and being with Christ*. Would Paul desire to depart, if it did not mean being immediately in the presence of Christ?
 - d. Departing and being with Christ are placed in contrast to abiding in the flesh.
 - e. Paul would not be in a strait between the future resurrection and abiding here to help the church. At the future resurrection his help would not be needed since all the elect will be caught up to be with the Lord in resurrection perfection. **1CO 15:51-52.**
 - f. Therefore, this language cannot be referring to entering the presence of Christ bodily at the resurrection.
- B. Paul desired death because it meant *to depart and to be with Christ*.
1. Paul did not desire death as merely a means to escape suffering in this world.
 2. Many wicked men desire death to escape suffering. **JER 8:3; REV 9:6.**
 - a. This is the whole rationale for assisted suicide, a risky and slippery slope which, once accepted in society, would likely morph into "death panels" determining when someone is worth saving.
 - b. There is nothing Christian about desiring death merely to escape suffering, especially if there are other options to mitigate suffering (palliative care, medication, counselling, self-improvement, etc.).
 - c. The righteous Job desired death to escape his misery and later realized he had misspoken. **JOB 3; 42:1-6.**
 - d. Remember *the patience of Job* as a model, not his errors. **JAM 5:11.**
 - e. "God teaches us, in the midst of life's greatest comforts, to be willing to die,

and, in the midst of its greatest crosses, to be willing to live.”

(Matthew Henry)

3. Being at peace with dying or bravely facing death *of itself* is no evidence of God’s saving grace.
 - a. Atheists and devil-possessed heathen have been at peace with death.
 - b. Soldiers who fornicate, get drunk, and blaspheme have died bravely for their country and yet upon dying went down into hell. **EZE 32:27.**
 - c. Atheistic Communists have died bravely for love of their cause and country.
 - d. Wicked people who have no fear of God may also not fear the judgment of God. They just block it out of their thinking. **ROM 1:32.**
 - e. The devil can deceive men at the time of death just as he can during the course of their life on earth.
4. Asaph gave this description of the wicked, who prosper in this world: “For there are no bands in their death” (**PSA 73:4**).
 - a. They are not shackled like God’s people are.
 - b. “Many of the godly have sore conflicts at their death. Their enemy then thrusts sore at them that they may fall; or that their confidence in their God may be shaken. But of this the ungodly know nothing. Satan will not molest them; he is sure of his prey; they are entangled, and cannot now break their nets; their consciences are seared, they have no sense of guilt. If they think at all of another world, they presume on that mercy which they never sought, and of which they have no distinct notion. Perhaps, 'they die without a sigh or a groan; and thus go off as quiet as a lamb' - to the slaughter.” (Adam Clarke Commentary)
5. One dies *wholly at ease and quiet* while another dies *in the bitterness of his soul*. **JOB 21:23-26.**
6. A child of God who battles with sin and who knows the holiness and wrath of God, and the sinfulness of his sin has cause at times to be uneasy about dying.
7. It is not so much how one dies that reveals grace in the heart. It is rather how one lives.
8. If while living one desires death as a pathway to be with Christ, that shows God’s grace in the heart even if at the time of death they are in bitter pain of body and mind.
- C. Death to the believer is a departure from the body into the presence of Christ. **2CO 5:6-8; ACT 7:56-60.**
 1. The believer leaves his body and goes to be in the presence of the glorified man Christ Jesus, Who is at the right hand of God in heaven. **MAR 16:19.**
 2. Something about a believer does not die when the body dies. **JOH 11:26; 2CO 4:16.**
- D. On the day of the death of his body, the believer goes to be with Christ in *paradise*. **LUK 23:43.**
 1. The word *paradise* means *a park or a garden*.
 2. Sinful man was cast out of the garden of Eden, where the Lord walked. **GEN 3:8, 23-24.**
 3. Saved man at death goes to be in a garden with the Lord. What a blessed reversal!
- E. **REV 6:9-11** teaches that saints are consciously in the presence of Christ between the death and resurrection of their bodies.
 1. John was an eyewitness beholding events that take place in *heaven*. **REV 4:1.**
 - a. Jesus Christ also bore witness of this place. **JOH 3:12-13.**

- b. Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel saw it. **EXO 24:10.**
 - c. Isaiah and Ezekiel saw it. **EZE 1; ISA 6:1-5.**
 - 2. John saw under the altar *the souls of martyrs*.
 - a. Under Moses' law, the blood of the sin offering was poured at the bottom of the altar of burnt offering. **LEV 4:25.**
 - b. The death of a martyr is described as an offering to God. **PHIL 2:17; 2TI 4:6.**
 - c. Hence, the souls of the martyrs appear under the altar.
 - 3. The martyrs had been slain for the word of God and the testimony which they held.
 - a. These souls died rather than abandon their faith.
 - b. Like Paul, they magnified Christ in their body by life and by death.
 - 4. John beheld the *souls* of them who were slain for their faith.
 - a. Their bodies were obviously dead at this point.
 - b. Man consists of spirit, soul, and body. **1TH 5:23.**
 - c. The soul and spirit are *within* the body. **JOB 14:22; 1CO 2:11.**
 - d. At death, the soul and spirit depart the body which is the *tabernacle* of the soul and spirit. **GEN 35:18; ECC 12:7; LUK 8:55; 2PE 1:13-15.**
 - e. A man can be *caught up to paradise* while he is out of the body. **2CO 12:1-4; LUK 23:43.**
 - 5. These souls are told to *rest for a season*.
 - 6. These souls are told that others must yet be killed.
 - a. If others must be killed, then the general resurrection of the bodily dead had not yet taken place. c/w **2TI 2:16-18.**
 - b. After the resurrection, no more saints will be killed. **1CO 15:51-54.**
 - c. This counters the notion that there will be tribulation martyrs after Christ raptures the church out of this world.
 - 7. These souls are in God's presence; they are conscious; they speak; they hear; and they are consoled. They are such as Paul described in glory, "...the spirits of just men made perfect..." (**HEB 12:23**).
- F. The departed saints are *presently desiring the better country*. **HEB 11:13-16.**
 - 1. The passage is dealing with Old Testaments saint who *died in faith*.
 - 2. Yet these dead saints "...desire (present tense) a better country..." (**HEB 11:16**).
 - 3. They will not inherit that country without us. **HEB 11:35-40.**
 - 4. It will be after the resurrection and the judgment that all of God's elect will inherit the new heavens and the new earth, that better country.
 - a. They shall do so in sin-free, *incorruptible, immortal* bodies. **1CO 15:52-54.**
 - b. This is a state superior to Adam's before the fall in that he was an immortal who lost that to Satan who will not be in that better country. **REV 20:10.**
- G. The departed saints are in a state of peace, comfort, and rest. **ISA 57:1-2; LUK 16:22-25; REV 14:13.**
- H. By contrast, death for the wicked is the beginning of endless torment. **LUK 16:22-23; JUDE 1:6-7.**
- I. Considering what this departure involves for the believer, no wonder Paul said this was *far better* than staying here.
 - 1. In life, Paul was consciously in fellowship with Christ through the Holy Spirit.
 - 2. How would a state of unconsciousness be far better than that and why would Paul desire it?
 - 3. Understanding what death would mean for him, Paul desired it!