

Lighthouse Baptist Church

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Death – Study Six

Genesis 2 tells us that “... the LORD God took the man [Adam], and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.” Then, “... the LORD God commanded the man [Adam], saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (2:15:17).

God promised Adam something in these verses that we often overlook, or something that we give little attention to: “... for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” God promised Adam that if he disobeyed Him, he would “surely die.”

And die Adam did. Because he disobeyed God and ate of the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” The very moment Adam ate, he, for the first time, became afraid of God – fear gripped his very being. When fear came it did not come alone, it was accompanied by embarrassment – Adam and Eve had died spiritually, and later on they both died physically.

And this death has passed to all of humanity. The writer of Hebrews put it like this: “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27).

Death is a reality for every member of the human race, and when the Bible speaks of death, it refers to the physical death of the body, not the soul of man. The body dies, but the soul, the life-principle of man, lives on.

Jesus put it like this in the Gospel of Matthew:

“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matthew 10:28).

Jesus again said it like this in the Gospel of Luke when referring to hypocrisy of the religious group known as the Pharisees:

“And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him” (Luke 12:4-5).

The Bible denotes the death of the body, not the death of the immaterial nature of man. Death can be defined as the end of physical life through the separation of soul and body.

The body was made from the elements of the ground, at death the body returns to the dust.

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God said to Adam after he had sinned that “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (Genesis 3:19).

Physical death results because of sin. Through the sin of Adam in the garden of Eden, death spread to the entire human race; no one is exempted. When the Apostle Paul was dealing with the issue of righteousness in the book of Romans, he said this about Adam’s sin:

“Wherefore, as by one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all [men] have sinned” (Romans 5:12).

Furthermore, Paul said to the Romans that death is the wages of sin, but he didn’t leave them without any hope. He said,

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

Death, however, should not be understood as annihilation. Life continues on for the believer and unbeliever alike after the death of the body. Jesus in Luke 16:19-31 graphically describes what happens at death. Jesus refers to two men in the text of Luke 16:19-31.

One was a “certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day.” The other “was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his [rich man’s] gate, full of sores.” Both men die, and at death there was a major change for both men – the change had nothing to do with their station in life, but it had all to do with what was in their hearts.

When the poor beggar died, he went into eternal paradise, described as “Abraham’s bosom” (Luke 16:22a). When the rich man died, he went into the eternal torments of “hell” (Luke 16:22b-23).

The impact upon a person when he or she dies is staggering to the imagination according to Scripture. Our Lord taught in Luke 16:19-31 four things: (1) conscious existence after death, (2) the reality and torment of hell, (3) no second chance after death, and (4) the impossibility of the dead communicating with the living.

What about you when you die?

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