

Beyond Death's Door: What Happens at Death?

Matthew 17:1-4

Introduction:

A. What happens to the body, the soul, and the spirit when a person dies?

James 2:26 - For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

1. It does not say: "As the spirit without the body is dead."

B. Jesus indicated that we continue to have life after death.

Matthew 22:31-32 - "But regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God: 'I AM THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB'? He is not the God of the dead but of the living."

1. Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus in the Mt. of Transfiguration.

C. There is life outside the body.

2 Corinthians 12:2-4 - I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago--whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows--such a man was caught up to the third heaven. And I know how such a man--whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows-- was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak.

2 Corinthians 5:8 - we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.

Discussion

I. ***Death And The Physical Body***

A. At the time of conception, God put our spirits in our bodies.

Numbers 27:16 - "May the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation,

Ecclesiastes 3:21 - Who knows that the breath of man ascends upward and the breath of the beast descends downward to the earth?

Ecclesiastes 12:6-7 - Remember Him before the silver cord is broken and the golden bowl is crushed, the pitcher by the well is shattered and the wheel at the cistern is crushed; 7 then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.

Zechariah 12:1 - The burden of the word of the LORD concerning Israel. Thus declares the LORD who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him,

Hebrews 12:9 - Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?

B. Death does not end the existence of the body, but it does terminate the life of the body.

Genesis 3:19 - By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return."

Ecclesiastes 12:7 - then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.

1. We're talking about Physical life.

Acts 17:25 - nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things;

2. We're talking about Physical death

Matthew 20:18 - "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death,

3. We cannot have both at the same time

Philippians 1:20 - according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.

C. Death is a result of sin

II. *Death And The Soul And Spirit*

A. Do the soul and the spirit die with the body dies?

Matthew 10:28 - "Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

1. Death to the body does not mean death to the soul

B. The soul and spirit leave the body at death

1. Rachel's soul did not die with her body

Genesis 35:18 - It came about as her soul was departing (for she died), that she named him Ben-oni; but his father called him Benjamin.

2. The soul of the widow's son returned when he was brought back to life

1 Kings 17:21-22 - Then he stretched himself upon the child three times, and called to the LORD and said, "O LORD my God, I pray You, let this child's life return to him." The LORD heard the voice of Elijah, and the life of the child returned to him and he revived.

3. Jesus' soul was not buried with His body

Psalms 16:8-11 - I have set the LORD continually before me; Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will dwell securely. For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay. You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.

Acts 2:29-31 - "Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. And so, because he was a prophet and knew that GOD HAD SWORN TO HIM WITH AN OATH TO SEAT one OF HIS DESCENDANTS ON HIS THRONE, he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that HE WAS NEITHER ABANDONED TO HADES, NOR DID His flesh SUFFER DECAY.

4. The rich fool was told:

Luke 12:20 - "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?'

5. When Jesus died:

Luke 23:46 - And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, "Father, INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT." Having said this, He breathed His last.

C. We conclude: at death the body dies but the soul and spirit do not!

III. Death And The Assurance Of Life

A. Assurance of life after death is importance to us

1. Most of us want to continue living
2. Most of us hope there is life after death
 - a. ILLUS: The skeptic Robert Ingersoll, who scoffed at the existence of God, did not suppress his inner longing for life after death as he grieved the death of his brother. At the funeral he eulogized over his brother's lifeless body:
 - b. Life is a narrow vale between the cold and barren peaks of two eternities. We strive in vain to look beyond the heights. We cry aloud and the only murmur is the echo of our wailing cry. From the voiceless lips of the unreplying dead there comes no word. But in the night of Death, Hope sees a star, and listening Love can hear the rustle of a wing.
3. Most of us do not want death to be a closed door, but a passageway into a future existence.

B. Assurance comes from the O.T.

Deuteronomy 32:39 - 'See now that I, I am He, And there is no god besides Me; It is I who put to death and give life. I have wounded and it is I who heal, And there is no one who can deliver from My hand.

Psalms 17:15 - As for me, I shall behold Your face in righteousness; I will be satisfied with Your likeness when I awake.

Ecclesiastes 12:7 - then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.

Isaiah 26:19 - Your dead will live; Their corpses will rise. You who lie in the dust, awake and shout for joy, For your dew is as the dew of the dawn, And the earth will give birth to the departed spirits.

1. Job spoke of the condition of the dead:

Job 3:17-19 - "There the wicked cease from raging, And there the weary are at rest. The prisoners are at ease together; They do not hear the voice of the taskmaster. The small and the great are there, And the slave is free from his master.

Job 3:26 - "I am not at ease, nor am I quiet, And I am not at rest, but turmoil comes."

C. Assurance comes from the N.T.

1. Eternal life is one of the major themes of Jesus' teaching

John 6:54 - "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

John 6:28 - Therefore they said to Him, "What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?"

John 6:25 - When they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, "Rabbi, when did You get here?"

John 6:2-3 - A large crowd followed Him, because they saw the signs which He was performing on those who were sick. Then Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat down with His disciples.

2. The resurrection of Jesus gives us proof of life after death

John 11:25 - Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies,

1 Corinthians 15:20-22 - But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

3. We should have a greater understanding and appreciation for life after death

2 Timothy 1:10 - but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,

a. Our assurance of life after death is based upon Christ's resurrection and God's revelation.

Conclusion:

- A. We know that when we experience the event called death, we will not walk into extinction, but into life.
- B. When we pass through death's door, the soul and spirit depart for the body and the hadean realm. The body returns to the ground from whence it came.
- C. Beyond Death's Door there is life!
- D. Next: Beyond Death's Door: What Happens After Death?