

ARE THE DEAD ALIVE?



A small lad, making his way through a graveyard, stopped to read an inscription on the headstone marking a grave. He was intrigued by the following epitaph: "Stop, my friend, as you go by. As you are now, so once was I. As I am now, you soon shall be. So prepare yourself to follow me." The boy stood there for some time thinking. Then, taking a piece of crayon from his pocket, he added this message: "To follow you I'm not content, until I know which way you went." The message he wrote may not be good poetry, but the thought expressed is a profound one.

Every person should be interested in what will happen to him at death. He should know just where he will go when the last breath leaves his body, for everyone faces death, sooner or later.

The Bible pictures death as an enemy of mankind. God tells us that the last of our enemies to be destroyed is death. Death came into the world because of the disobedience of Adam and Eve. In Romans 5: 12 Paul writes, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." God had provided that man should eat of the tree of life and live for ever. When man disobeyed God, he was deprived of this privilege. Genesis 3: 22, 23.

Ever since death entered this world, Satan has worked long and hard to confuse the mind of man and to keep him from understanding God's plan for giving us eternal life. This was the first lie ever told. Genesis 3: 4. The Bible teaches in a simple way what God wants us to know about death and its remedy. When we understand the Bible teaching regarding death and the resurrection, the sting of death is less painful.



Let us lay aside all preconceived ideas and let God guide us as we study from His Book to see what He has to say about death.

WHAT JESUS SAID ABOUT DEATH

“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.

As you study, be thinking about the Life Quest questions.

- What does this topic tell me about God?
- What difference does this topic make to my daily life?
- How does this topic help me in my relationship with Jesus?

HIS WORD SAYS

1. What two elements were used by God to make man a living “being” or “soul”?

Genesis 2:7.

God did not put a living soul into man, but the combination of breath and body made man a living soul. We do not have a soul, we are a soul.

2. What happens to the body of man at death? Genesis 3:19.

3. What happens to the "breath of life," or the "spirit," at death? Ecclesiastes 12:7.

This spark of life is called the 'spirit' or 'breath of life.' These terms are used interchangeably and denote only the element of life, not consciousness or intelligence. See the following texts: Job 27:3; Genesis 2:7. Strong's concordance calls it breath. H7307 rûach from H7306; wind; by resemblance breath, that is, a sensible (or even violent) exhalation. In Greek we have the word pneuma from G4154; a current of air, that is, breath (blast) or a breeze; Spirit and breath are the same word, and neither denotes a conscious intelligence that can exist apart from the body.

4. How much does man know during the time that he is dead? Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6.

Death is an unconscious state. There is no thought or knowledge. The dead cannot visit their loved ones or communicate with us in any way.

5. How much of man's knowledge remains when he is in the grave? Ecclesiastes 9:10.



6. What does the Bible say about the possibility of the dead praising the Lord? Psalm 115:17; Psalm 6:4, 5.

Surely if the righteous dead had been taken up into Heaven they would not be able to hold back words of love and praise for God. The fact that they are not doing this is clear evidence that they are resting, waiting for the Lord to bring them forth on that Day.

7. What did Jesus call death? John 11:11-14.

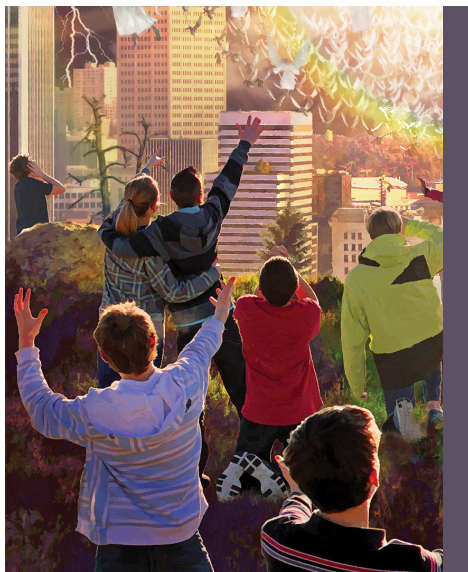
Jesus called death a sleep because this is the best way to describe those who have died. This same language was employed repeatedly in the Old Testament. Death is a deep, unconscious sleep from which we will not wake until the resurrection. "Consider and hear me, O LORD my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death;" Psalms 13:3.

8. If there were no resurrection what would happen to all of the dead?

1 Corinthians 15:16-18.

9. Because Christ rose from the dead, when can we look forward to the resurrection of our loved ones? 1 Corinthians 15:21- 23.

Christ's resurrection is the promise that we have been redeemed from death to life. Just as Jesus came up from the grave we have the assurance that all those who have fallen asleep trusting in Him will come forth to life everlasting when He shall come to take us home.



10. How many will be resurrected, according to the Bible? John 5:28, 29.

Both the righteous and the wicked will be raised. The righteous come up at His second coming (1 Corinthians 15:23), while the wicked are raised at the end of the millennium to face their judgement and punishment (Revelation 20:5).

11. What does Paul say will happen to the righteous at Christ's second coming?

1 Thessalonians 4: 16, 17.

While the dead are raised to life, the living are changed in a moment, from mortality to immortality (1 Corinthians 15:51-53). After this we go up together to meet the Lord in the air. The dead do not go up to heaven ahead of the living, neither will the living go up to heaven before the dead. Both groups receive their eternal reward at the same time. The righteous living will be reunited with those loved ones that were torn from them in death, never to be parted again.

12. How will all of the righteous be changed at the coming of Christ?
1 Corinthians 15:51-54.

13. How will the bodies of the righteous be changed? Philippians 3:20, 21.

Just as Jesus came forth from the grave with a physical body, we too will take a physical glorified body with us to heaven. See Luke 24:38-39.

14. Who alone will enjoy eternal life? John 3:16.

15. Who alone is immortal? 1 Timothy 6:15, 16.

Man is mortal (Job 4: 17). Only divinity has immortality. Eternal life is the gift of God only to those who believe in and obey Christ.

People today try to emulate and be like their sports heroes, even more so should Christians want to love and obey Jesus and be like Him because of what He has done for all of humanity.



“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;”

1 Timothy 4:1



LIFE QUEST:

Have you thoughtfully reviewed these Questions?

- What does this topic tell me about God?
- What difference does this topic make to my daily life?
- How does this topic help me in my relationship with Jesus?

YOUR TURN

Check the statements that most closely reflect your response to this study.

___ I still have questions on the state of the dead and would like more information.

___ I have always believed what this study teaches about the dead.

___ I have a clear understanding of life after death following this study and am thankful there will be a resurrection of the righteous at the soon coming of Jesus.

___ Please pray for me that I will make the correct choices in my life.

___ Other _____