

DEATH AND AFTER

Introduction to the Biblical Concept of Death

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Every person must die except for those believers in Christ who are alive when the Lord returns (Acts 9:27). In the normal course of events, sooner or later the experience of death will come to us. Nothing is more certain in life than the fact of death.
- B. Because death is that final event that awaits every man, it behooves the Christian to know what the Bible teaches about death. A person is not ready to live until he is ready to die.

II. THE MEANING OF DEATH: In its most simple and basic meaning death is separation. The usage in context will determine what kind of separation is involved in the concept of death.

III. THE USAGE OF DEATH

A. Physical Death

- 1. Definition: Physical death is the separation of the human soul and spirit from the body which terminates one's physical existence on this earth. The soul and spirit continue to live even after death, and every person's body will be raised in the future. There is a resurrection unto life and unto death (John 11:25, Matt. 8:22, 10:28; James 2:26; Phil. 1:23). NOTE: Some scholars think that soul and spirit are used interchangeably.
- 2. Cause: The cause of physical death was Adam's original sin which was imputed to the human race (Rom. 5:12-14; I Cor. 15:21-22).
- 3. Results: The sin of Adam, because he was the head of the human race, was imputed to every person born into this world which brings about physical death to every person.

a. Points to Ponder

- (1) Physical death is not a result of sins but the sin of Adam. The context of Rom. 5:12-14 says, "all sinned." This is a perfect tense in the Greek which refers to the act of Adam's sin in the past which has continuing effects. This sin is imputed or given to every person born into this world.
- (2) Physical death is not through the breaking of the Mosaic Law because men died before the Law was given.
- (3) Physical death is not a result of willful sin because infants, who do not sin willfully, die.

b. How Did the Christian Sin in Adam?

- (1) Federal Headship View: Adam is the representative of the whole human race and had every person been there they would have sinned too. Therefore, when Adam sinned, his original sin was given or imputed directly to all mankind.

- (2) Seminal View: Every person was actually present in the loins of Adam when he sinned. When he sinned every person actually participated in Adam's sin and this sin was later directly imputed to them at birth (Heb. 7:9-10). NOTE: As a limitless forest of oak trees may be embraced in one acorn, so a race was contained in Adam.
4. Subjects: All men. Without exception, all people, men, women and children are sinners by imputation and therefore are victims of physical death.
5. Remedy: The remedy is resurrection. The participation in Adam's sin was universal; therefore, physical death is universal. Physical death will one day be destroyed (I Cor. 15:25-26). Every person who has ever died will be raised again bodily in the future (John 5:25-29). There will be a resurrection unto life for the saved and a resurrection unto death for the unsaved. NOTE: The way to avoid the resurrection unto damnation is to receive the imputed righteousness from Christ (II Cor. 5:21). The answer to imputed sin is imputed righteousness. One brings death, the other brings life.

B. Spiritual Death

1. Definition: The separation of man from God in time. Man, because of sin, has no fellowship with God. To be spiritually dead means that man has no capacity for God (Rom. 6:23; I Cor. 15:22; Eph. 2:1). NOTE: Since men are spiritually dead, there is nothing they can do to establish a relationship with God. Men cannot reestablish in their own efforts that spiritual relationship that Adam originally had in the garden.
2. Cause: The cause of spiritual death can be traced back to the original sin of Adam. When Adam sinned, at that moment, he himself died spiritually (Gen. 2:17). NOTE: How do we know that Adam and Eve were spiritually dead when they sinned? Because when God came to the garden, Adam and Eve had to hide because they no longer had fellowship with God. God had to make the first move in order to restore Adam and Eve to fellowship. It was God who called out first (Gen. 3:9-10).
3. Results: All men who are the offspring of Adam die spiritually. Adam could propagate people only after his own kind. Every person is born into this world as a sinner and spiritually dead. Each person has an old sin nature which has been passed down from Adam to parent to child. This is inherited sin (Psa. 51:5; Eph 2:3). The sin of Adam is mediated through subsequent generations. All persons receive from their fathers and mothers a sin nature which makes them spiritually dead.
4. Subjects: All men.
5. Remedy: Regeneration or the new birth (John 3:1-8; Titus 3:5). Men who are born spiritually dead need to have a new life that they may have fellowship with God.

C. Second Death

1. Definition: Separation of man from God in eternity. This is the eternal perpetuation of spiritual death – unending separation of soul and spirit from God (Rev. 20:12-15).
2. Cause: Refusal to receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour (Rev. 20:6).
3. Results: Judgment and cast into the Lake of Fire (Heb 9:27; Rev. 20:12-15).

4. Subjects: All who have refused to receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.
5. Remedy: Receiving Jesus Christ as Saviour (John 3:36).

D. Sin Unto Death

1. Definition: A refusal by a Christian to do the Lord's will in some area by repeated acts of sin, so that the believer is put under the most extreme type of discipline by God and taken bodily out of this world by physical death (I John 5:16; I Cor. 11:30).
2. Cause: A wanton, presumptuous action in the face of clear knowledge that it is wrong. It is persistence in a determined course of action when you know that God has said it is wrong.
3. Result: Physical death but no loss of salvation, yet much loss of reward in heaven.
4. Subjects: Christians.
5. Remedy: There is no remedy. One can prevent it from happening by doing the Lord's will, but once the Christian has passed the point of no return God will take him home. Confession should be applied, for perhaps God will be gracious as He was in the case of David who should have died after his sin (II Sam. 12:5, 13).

E. Operational Death

1. Definition: A professing Christian who says he has faith in Christ but repeatedly gives no evidence of it in the life (James 2:14-20).
2. Cause: No real saving faith. There is profession of Christ but not possession of Christ.
3. Results: No works to evidence salvation; therefore, no salvation.
4. Subjects: Professing Christians.
5. Remedy: A saving faith in Christ that produces saving works (Eph. 2:10).

F. Positional Death

1. Definition: Every Christian has been positionally put to death by baptism (identification, union) into the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. When Christ was judged for sin, the believer was also judged, giving him the position of being dead in Christ (Rom. 6:3-5).
2. Cause: The baptizing work of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27).
3. Results: The sin nature has been judged positionally. Therefore, the believer is dead to the Mosaic Law and its penalties, and the Christian no longer has to be a slave to sin (sin no longer has to "lord it over" the Christian) (Rom. 6:14).
4. Subjects: Every believer in Christ Jesus.

G. Sexual Death: Abraham was unable to procreate; therefore, he was said to be sexually dead (Rom. 4:19).