

THE STATE OF MAN AFTER DEATH AND THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

Martin Lloyd Jones said, “The moment you come into this world you are beginning to go out of it”. Death is something we most definitely cannot avoid; we don’t need to belong to any religion to believe *that*, - death is simply a fact of life.

Of course, there are countless views regarding death and what it might actually mean, - from reincarnation to alien abduction, annihilationism to the ultimate perfect nothingness of Nirvana.

However, we are not concerning ourselves with anything else other than what the Bible teaches. It *is* a subject relevant to us all. *What happens when you die?* ...

DEATH COMES

- * Isn’t it fantastic that a little breath of air is all that is keeping us from death? The most powerful men in this world ... all that is keeping them is the air they breathe. You couldn’t put a price on it!
- * But we also know that, if it were not for the Provider, we would not have the air to breathe. All living creatures owe their life to the Sovereign, Almighty God.
- * The first time we come across this phenomenon is in [Gen. 2:7](#), the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.
- * God formed man, - man didn’t evolve; he wasn’t something else before he became a human being.
- * He wasn’t crouched over as a consequence of his past as some form of ape-man.
- * When God made the first man He made him perfectly formed out of the dust of the ground.
- * This new creation that God had formed lay absolutely perfect, without blemish or fault; God made him as faultless, flawless, complete and unspoiled as you would expect the holy God to make him.
- * ... Just one thing though, ... this faultless, flawless, unspoiled creation did not have a single breath in his perfect body. – He wasn’t dead ... *he just wasn’t living!*
- * The LORD God then took this man and breathed into him *life!* ... He became a living soul. The breath of God was the source of that man’s life.

- * He began to see and hear, to think for himself and make decisions, he began to feel and he began to do. This was a living person with all the facilities and capabilities we have.
- * But without the Spirit of God breathing into that lifeless man, Adam would not have had life. In the same way, without the Spirit of God breathing into the life of the sinner (being made alive in Christ, Eph. 2:5) there would be no life and the sinner would remain dead in trespasses and in sins (Eph. 2:1).
- * Job believed this, *10:6 The tabernacles of robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure; into whose hand God bringeth abundantly. 7 But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee: 8 Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee. 9 Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the LORD hath wrought this? 10 In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind ... 33:4 The spirit [רוח ruach] of God hath made me, and the breath [נשמה nashamah] of the Almighty hath given me life.*
- * Such is the power of the breath of God ... *Job 37:10 By the breath of God frost is given: and the breadth of the waters is straitened. 41:21 His breath kindleth coals, and a flame goeth out of his mouth. Ps. 33: 6 By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. God is the Giver of life ... but God is also the Taker of life, Ps. 104:29 Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust. ... Yes, God gives life and He takes it away. J.C. Ryle wrote, "All the care in the world will not make us continue a minute beyond the time God has appointed" ... **death comes.***

DEATH CONSUMES

- * It is almost ridiculous to spend too long emphasising the fact that **death comes** but, at the same time many people live, - even Christians, - as if death is irrelevant and is not a reality. We must remember *it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment (Heb. 9:27) ...* and that God is behind when we are born and when we die.
- * **Death consumes** ... it finishes everything that has gone before. The richest person in the world cannot take one single item of their riches with them. **Death consumes** them to the same degree as the poor.
- * Death is the same for Royalty as it is for the starving child in the deserts of the Sudan!
- * What a morbid subject we are exploring this evening! Yes, but it is also a realistic subject.

* The Bible says that death is the consequence of sin. It is not simply the consequence of old age or serious illness. We die because of the existence of sin. God said to Adam, [Gen. 2:16](#) Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: [17](#) 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*. ... What did Adam do? [3:6](#) And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and *he did eat*. What ultimately happened? [5:1](#) In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; [2](#) Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created. [3](#) And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth: [4](#) And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years: and he begat sons and daughters: [5](#) And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and *he died*. ... [I Cor. 15:22](#) as in Adam *all die*.

* What happens the moment the final breath of air is expended? At that very moment *your soul* enters into the holy presence of God. At that moment you are perfected, - there is no shadow of sin upon the believer in Christ, the work of Christ has been perfectly completed.

* Your redemption is accomplished. Chosen from before the foundation of the world God has triumphantly done in your life all He had purposed to do and you are standing before His throne in His righteousness because of His plan of salvation He had for your life.

* What is the first thing you will do? Beyond any shadow of a doubt you *will* look upon the face of your Saviour. He will be your Focus, the Centre of all your concentration. He will be the first One you see!

* You are looking forward to seeing your loved ones but the first you will see is your Saviour, - He will immediately take up all your attention.

* Shall we know one another in Heaven? It is a beautiful picture ... but is it true that we shall be gathered with our loved ones again?

* We need to be careful in these matters, Paul told the Corinthians, [I Cor. 13:12](#) now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

* Some commentators would say the question is irrelevant and that we probably won't know each other in Heaven. They quote, for example, [Mt. 22:30](#) in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. They tell us that such relationships will be irrelevant and a thing of the former days on earth. ... What do you think?

* Some contend we *shall* know each other ... using such verses as ...

- * Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was *gathered to his people* (Genesis 25:8). (i.e. the insinuation he is going to be with people whom he shall know).
- * And these are the years of the life of Ishmael, an hundred and thirty and seven years: and he gave up the ghost and died; and was *gathered unto his people* (Genesis 25:17).
- * And Isaac gave up the ghost, and died, and was *gathered unto his people*, being old and full of days: and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him (Genesis 35:29).
- * And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was *gathered unto his people* (Genesis 49:33).
- * Aaron *shall be gathered unto his people*; for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel, because ye rebelled against my word at the waters of Meribah (Numbers 20:24).
- * And the Lord said unto Moses, Get thee up into this mount Abarim, and see the land which I have given unto the children of Israel. And when thou hast seen it, thou also *shalt be gathered unto thy people*, as Aaron thy brother was gathered (Numbers 27:12, 13).
- * When David's first son by Bathsheba was born we read that II Sam. 12:15 the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick. David's heart was breaking as he began to fast and weep, seeking God to spare the child (v.16).
- * Day after day and night after night he neither slept nor ate ... until the news came on the seventh day that the little boy had died.
- * When David discovered the child was dead he prepared himself and came into the house of the Lord and worshipped. On returning home his servants were absolutely confounded as to how he had 'pulled himself' together again, v.21 What thing is this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child, while it was alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread.
- * David replied calmly, v.22 While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether GOD will be gracious to me, that the child may live? 23 But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? *I shall go to him*, but he shall not return to me. ... And what did David say in Ps. 23:6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.
- * The Scriptures *do not* teach universal salvation for every infant but the point that many commentators make is that David is being comforted because he would meet again in eternity with his son and the question is then asked ... would there be any comfort for David if he met his son again and did not know who he was? ... It seems David was implying he would indeed know and recognise his son.

* Will there be infants in Heaven? ... No. Will there be deformed people in Heaven, or blind people or deaf, or dumb? No. Will there be old people in Heaven? No, there won't be.

* These are things of the past; there will be no old age or infancy or infirmity in Heaven, I Cor. 15:52 *In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.* 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

* What kind of a change will this be ... *describe it!* I can't, I Jn. 3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

* The Bible doesn't tell me exactly what Heaven will be like ... how can it, I wouldn't understand! But Paul said all we need to know about it, Phil. 1:21 *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.* Christ is the sum total of my being and the reason for my living, and death opens up to me a relationship that far exceeds what I presently have.

* Yes, **death comes** and **death consumes**, but for the believer ...

DEATH IS CONQUERED

* *Confession*, "The souls of the righteous, whose holiness is at death perfected, are received into paradise, where they are with Christ, looking upon the face of God, in light and glory, and waiting for the full redemption of their bodies".

* God spoke to Hosea, 13:14 *I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. Paul wrote, I Cor. 15:55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? 56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

* For the believer death is conquered ... what does that mean, since the believer must die and the unbeliever must die? What makes it different for the believer?

* Yes, there is pain and heartache, even for the believer. I have sat so often with the saint whom God is soon ready to call home and they are filled with so much hope, - it's as if God gives them an extra abundance of grace to deal in the situation (which, of course, He does). On some occasions though, the dying saint has also told me of their concerns for their husband/wife/children ... natural concerns.

* But the believer has the hope in Christ and in the mercy of God as his companion. He knows his destiny, - he has no doubt that he will be absent from the body, and ... present with the Lord (II Cor. 5:8).

* I will continue to be me, - I won't be some sort of robot ... because my worship of God in Heaven would not be real.

* But I will be complete in Christ, - my eyesight will be perfect, my speech won't stutter, I won't forget my words, everything about me God will perfect to His honour and to His glory so that the praise He receives from me will be worthy of a child whom He has saved and who belongs to the eternal and Almighty King of kings. ... **Death is conquered.**

DEATH CONQUERS Sadly, for all those who have chosen to reject Christ eternity will be an everlasting horrendous experience. For the unsaved, death is an awful and a terrible event. Unbelievably frightening.

* Despite what the unbelievers say, Hell is a reality. Some people tell you it doesn't exist, - God's Word says it does.

* Even some of the theologians would lead you to believe in a doctrine known as 'conditional immortalism', i.e. the saved will enter glory while the sinner will simply die and not suffer the eternal wrath of God.

* But it is not what the Bible teaches Jesus said, Mt. 13:41 *The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; 42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.*

* There is no Limbo or Purgatory, no reincarnation or Nirvana or any other state after death ... except Heaven and Hell.

* For those outside of Christ ... **death conquers.** Death becomes the gateway, - not into eternal life through believing faith in Christ, - but death is the gateway into eternal and everlasting punishment, worse than anything imaginable even with the most intelligent of minds.

Conclusion There is so much in this subject of such great importance. Our *Confession of Faith*, - along with many other evangelical and Reformed *Confessions of Faith*, - plainly teaches the Biblical truth there is life after death ... and that it is lived in either the beauty and presence of God or the horrors and suffering of an eternal Hell in which every occupant is fully aware of its dreadfulness.

* But here is the hope in which we trust ... yes, the Bible says, Heb. 9:27 *it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: 28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*