

The Biggest Lie

Last week in our study of Genesis 3, we read in verse nineteen and several other that we do not “go to Heaven” when we die. Now this isn’t going to be a morbid discussion on death but hopefully it will poke your brain and shed some light on a choice we *all have to make*.

Genesis 3:19- “In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you *are*, and to dust you shall return.” (We do not go to Heaven when we die: Job 14:12-14, 34:14-16, Ecclesiastes 9:4-6, 12;7, Daniel 12:1-3, John 5:28-29, Acts 2:34-35, Hebrews 11:13).

This topic is where the majority of all “Christian” churches spin their own version of what the Bible actually says. It may not always be for gain or to fill the pews on a Sunday morning. It is an easier pill to swallow than a seemingly life of “denial” living under the perceived strictness of God’s Commandments and Holy Days. People would rather take the effortless way out. I always find it amazing how anyone can twist scripture to fit their narrative, totally ignoring God’s Word (and His warnings- **Galatians 1:8-9, Revelation 22:18-19, plus breaking the 9th**

Commandment). I can think of no bigger lie than selling a bill of goods that does not exist.

The concept of going to Heaven, or some other “paradise,” is nothing new (**Ecclesiastes 1:9**). The idea of souls going to heaven at death long precedes Christianity. We can look into the history of many ancient cultures, including Babylon and Egypt, and see many held similar beliefs. In very early times that idea increased not just among the Babylonians and Egyptians, but also among the barbaric tribes in and around Greece. Man has always wanted to live forever without ever dying. Our world and all it offers has never been able to satisfy people. For centuries mankind has searched for security and happiness in the hope of going to heaven at death. Sadly, people have embraced beliefs that they cannot prove to be true. Why the need?

My dad always said, “funerals are for the living,” meaning they are designed to comfort those surviving members of a family. It just so happens that it’s been 14 years this week since my dad passed away. Another of his quips was “short time living, long time dead.” He’d always find humor in most everything. It is by far more comforting for family members to envision their departed loved ones in

Heaven with Jesus and others who had gone before them, than the truth of decaying back to dust in the ground...even though that's what the Bible says. I see numerous posts on social media wishing the deceased a "happy heavenly birthday," and even instructions to say hi to everyone they are with. I probably mentioned before of being at a bike club funeral for a member and heard one person say, "I'll bet he's up there right now drunk as a monkey riding his motorcycle." Maybe Heaven has gas stations and cycle shops? It is understandable for people to want to believe their loved ones are in a better place. The pain of loss and a void left by someone's passing is painful. We no longer have to fear the sting of death, "O death, where is your sting? O grave where is your victory?" -1

Corinthians 15:55. In any case when you actually read and **DO** what God says in His Word and the truth is revealed, His plan far outweighs anything we can imagine.

1 Corinthians 2:9- "But according as it is written, "The eye has not seen, nor *the* ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

God alone has the answers to any mystery of life and death, and His plan of salvation is readily available to those wise enough to find it. Of course, He searches the hearts and does the calling, but God does not promise Heaven as a reward. God's incentive is far greater in that we are heirs to His Kingdom and future rulers with Jesus Christ when it is established *on the earth!*

Revelation 1:6- “And has made us kings and priests to God and His Father; to Him *be* the glory and the sovereignty into the ages of eternity. Amen.”

Revelation 5:10- “And did make us unto our God kings and priests; *and we shall reign on the earth.*”

Our soul does not float off as so many believe. I realize this may be an old topic, but it is the most distorted. According to the definition of “soul” on Bing, soul refers to the spiritual or immaterial part of a human being or animal, regarded as *immortal* or a person's moral or emotional nature or sense of identity. So, without attaching the “immortal” label, essentially our soul is our essence; **our mind, will and emotions** that make us who we are as a human being.

As a child, I often wondered what exactly would happen if I died when I went to sleep. Would I float off to Heaven because I was good? What was my soul and where would God keep it? With grandma's periodic warnings to me, "the bad man will get you if you're not good" We've dispensed the "good" qualification with scripture in previous studies.

Matthew 19:17- "And He said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one *is* good except one—God. But if you desire to enter into life, keep the commandments." (also **Mark 10:18, Luke 18:19**)

As a little kid, I really was afraid to die. So where would my "soul" float off too if my body died? God's Word provides the answers we were never taught in church.

Psalm 146:4 says- "His breath goes forth; he returns to the earth; in that very day his thoughts perish."

We know this is the result of Adam and Eve's sin in the Garden of Eden. God told them in **Genesis 3:19-** "In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you

return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you *are*, and to dust you shall return.”

It is apparent that when we die, we die. Our physical bodies cease to function. Our physical bodies go back into the ground to become the dust from which we were taken. All that we are when we were alive dies with us. We were given the breath of life when we were created and that belonged to God. When we die, He takes it back (**Psalm 104:29, Genesis 6:17, 7:15, Job 12:10, 33:4**). God’s Holy Spirit, for those who are blessed to have it, also returns unto Him (**Ecclesiastes 12:6**).

God knows what happens to us when we die, and he has told us that when a person dies, his life is over. Death is *the opposite* of life. So, when someone dies, his feelings and memories don’t float off to live somewhere else. When we die, we can’t see, we can’t hear, and we can’t think and all of our thoughts and memories perish with us.

“For the living know that they shall die; but the dead do not know anything, nor do they have any more a reward; for their memory is forgotten.”-**Ecclesiastes 9:5**.

“Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might; for there is no work, nor plan, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave where you go.”-**Ecclesiastes 9:10.**

“For in death there is no memory of You; in the grave who shall give You thanks?”- **Psalm 6:5.**

We may have no memory, but God does.

Malachi 3:16-18- “Then those fearing the LORD spoke together, *each* man to his neighbor. And the LORD listened and heard. And a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who feared the LORD, and for those who thought upon His name. “And they shall be Mine,” says the LORD of hosts, “in the day that I will make up My own special jewels. And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him.” Then you shall return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between the one who serves God, and the one who does not serve Him.”

We will be changed upon our resurrection, and our memory will be restored.

Matthew 17:2-3- “And He was transfigured before them; and His face shined as the sun, and His garments became white as the light. Then behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah talking with Him.”

What did Jesus have to say about death? We can refer to **John 11:11-** “These things He said, and after that He said to them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going so that I may awaken him.”

Jesus referred to His dead friend as only sleeping. The rest of the story we can read in **John 11:12-44. (also, Psalm 13:3, Daniel 12:2)**. Jesus overcame sin and death through His sacrifice and resurrection.

Although sin and death are conquered through Jesus Christ, we must all face our “sleep” at some point in time. “And as it appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.”-**Hebrews 9:27. (Ecclesiastes 3:2, 1 Thessalonians 5:10)**.

If we liken death unto sleep and we know and believe in Jesus Christ and His Resurrection (**1 Corinthians 15:20**), fear of dying is replaced with the hope and

promise of life eternal in the Kingdom of God in our new roles (**Revelation 1:6, 5:10**).

When we went to sleep last night, in the absence of a clock, do we know how long we actually slept? Have you ever been so tired, you went to sleep and woke up a day later than you thought it was? Keeping these thoughts in mind, replacing the fear of dying with sleep is somewhat calming. Although we have this hope, I'm sure none of us look forward to their final "nap." Imagine going to sleep one night and your next waking moment you are in your glorified body and on your way to the Sea of Glass to meet Jesus in the air!

Unlike Rip Van Winkle who slept for 20 years and right through the American Revolution, *knowing* and *keeping* God's truth and being *heirs* in the First Resurrection, we will *not sleep* through the establishment of God's Kingdom **on the earth**, we *will be a part of it*. What better assignment could we have than to be present for those loved ones who have fallen asleep and are not in the First Resurrection?

So, *is* death the final word? We know *it is not* and *we can prove it from scripture*
(1 Thessalonians 5:21). We have the very promise of Our Creator and the sacrifice
of His Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. Eternal life is ours ***IF*** we live a life of
obedience to God's Way of life. Amen.

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