

The State of Man in Death

by Woody Oliver

When considering death, the scriptures speak directly, or imply there are three kinds of death: Everyone is familiar with the physical death, to which all who are born into this world eventually succumb. Two other deaths relate to the inward man - the spiritually dead, of those who do not know God, and may not want to know Him, and those who must die to self to know God (i.e. put to death the Old Man - Rom 6:6) by receiving His knowledge.

Physical death: **Gen 2:17**: (literal translation) *but of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil you may not eat, for in the day that you eat of it, dying you shall die.* The KJ and other versions of the Bible put surely die and acknowledged marginal note. I believe two deaths are indicated by the Hebrew text. Adam was instructed that he could eat from any tree except one, or, dying spiritually you shall die physically. **Rom 5:12**: *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:* Death is a result of disobeying God, and separating from Him. In the beginning Adam was not separated from God, but because of his sin, everyone born since, comes into this world spiritually dead, and with the expectation of eventual physical death.

Sometimes death is spoken of as sleep: **Jn 11:11-13**: 11. *...Our friend Lazarus sleeps; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.* 12. *Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.* 13. *How be it, Jesus spake of his death...* Though Lazarus was resurrected, he was still subject to death. What about the millions who have gone before us? **1 Th 4:16-18**: 16. *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:* 17. *Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.* 18. *Wherefore comfort one another with these words.* There IS a resurrection and we are to comfort one another that there is. *For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.* (1 Cor 15:16-18)

Think about what is being taught here: 1) there is a resurrection 2) otherwise, those who died in Christ would be lost. If, when the righteous die they go to heaven, why would they perish if there was no resurrection? If the righteous are already in heaven, why would there need to be a resurrection? Some, who believe the righteous go to heaven at death, say the resurrection is to reconnect the soul, which is in heaven, with the body, which is in the grave. This simply does not make sense: **1 Cor 15:51-52**: 51. *Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,* 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.* In context, Paul is talking about what type body a person will have in the resurrection. The verse just quoted indicates the change comes at the end, at the resurrection. If everyone is getting a new body why not make the change where ever they are, instead of having graves be opened to make the change? If they go to heaven immediately, why not give them their new body then? Because, *All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.* (Eccl 3:20)

David, an ordinary man who made mistakes, but was said to be a man after God's own heart (1 Sam 13:14). In the disciple's day, they expected that David would be in heaven someday: **Acts 2:34**: *For David is not ascended into the heavens:...* And in a prayer of David he did not expect to see the Lord until his resurrection: **Ps 17:15**: *As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.* Job thought the same thing. **Job 14:14**: *If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.* The evidence is clear that the dead rest in the grave until resurrection.

Can the dead communicate with the living, or do they know anything? **Eccl 9:5-6, 10: 5.** *For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. 6. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.... 10. Whatsoever thy hand finds to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, where you go.* What ever a person is to do must be done before their death, as it will be too late to change. **Ps 146:2-4: 2.** *While I live will I praise the Lord... 3. Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. 4. His breath ⁽⁷³⁰⁷⁾ goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.* It is pretty clear, while a person lives they praise God, but when they die their very thoughts perish, and they wait for the resurrection.

If the dead rest in the grave until resurrection, what happens to the spirit and soul? Each individual is made up of two primary parts - a physical body, wherein there is a brain, and a mind, which resides in the brain. We can see and feel the brain, but we cannot see or feel the mind. In the Bible the mind is also referred to as the inward man (Job 38:36; Ps 51:6; 2 Cor 4:16). Functions of the mind are described with words like - heart, soul and spirit. The Hebrew word for breath in Ps 146:3 is *ruwach* ⁽⁷³⁰⁷⁾. The same word is used in the next verse, but translated as spirit: **Eccl 12:7:** *Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit ⁽⁷³⁰⁷⁾ shall return unto God who gave it.* From a physical point of view, when a person dies the breath of life ceases. Looking at the inward person, the breath is a symbol for spirit, and the spirit of a person is what expresses their thoughts, as words we hear out of their mouth. Jesus said, *The words I speak to you are spirit...* (Jn 6:63). The love, hate and envy, spoken of in Eccl 9:6 are some of the feelings, or heart, that perishes. The soul represents all that is recorded in the mind. While our thoughts may perish, God retains in His mind all that we are, and restores our inner person in a resurrected body.

Here are three more verses that contribute to the state of man in death: **Jam 2:26:** *For as the body without the spirit (KJ margin - breath) is dead... Ps 115:7:* *The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence.* And again, a person does not know anyone attending their funeral - **Job 14:21:** *His sons come to honor, and he knows it not; and they are brought low, but he perceives it not of them.*

Spiritual death: Since sin entered, every person who comes into the world is spiritually dead - **Rom 3:9-12:** *9. What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin (i.e. governed by our sin); 10. As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11. There is none that understands, there is none that seeks after God. 12. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that does good, no, not one. (Ps 14:1-3; Ps 53:2-3 being quoted). If no one seeks God, then how are we saved? Because God seeks us: **Ps 139:7-8:** *7. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? 8. If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.* It is the Spirit of God which pricks the heart, and continually seeks after man.*

Answering the call of the Spirit is referred to as repentance, or, a time when a person begins to think differently. The ritual of baptism is a symbol of the inward change that begins to take place as we learn of Christ and become immersed in His death and resurrection. Additionally, it is the revelation of the love of God that changes the heart (Rom 5:6-8). Another term for this experience is conversion - **Acts 3:19-20:** *19. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, (so) that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. 20. And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:*

Notice that sins are not blotted out until after conversion. From where are the sins blotted out? From the heart, from the old thoughts and ideas we have been carrying. How does it happen? **Jn 5:24-25:** *24. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that hears my word, and believes on him that sent me, has everlasting life, and*

shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. 25. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. Jesus is speaking of a spiritual resurrection which happens when a person begins listening to the voice of the Spirit of Jesus. There are many people today that have come to a conversion experience because of the influence of the Spirit on their hearts, but the next step is to be resurrected in Christ. - THIS is spiritual life! THIS is the new birth.

Spiritual death and resurrection are not instantaneous events in our lives. **Rom 6:3-7:** 3. *Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?* 4. *Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.* 5. *For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:* 6. *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.* 7. *For he that is dead is freed from sin.* These experiences teach us to lay down our old way of thinking and receive the teachings of Christ. When we apply what we learn, sin is being blotted out of our fleshly way of thinking.

Summary: The outward is a picture of the inward - the physically dead know nothing, and the spiritually dead know nothing, all brought about by sin. **1 Cor 15:56:** *The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.* It is rebellious man's corrupt understanding of the law and the false teachings which result, which bring the sting of death. (Cf Rev 9:10; Eze 2:6; Isa 9:15). So, physical and spiritual death go hand in hand. A spiritually dead person does not have God's knowledge, and one having been converted must grow in God's understanding to receive spiritual life, so that *The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death* (1 Cor 15:26) - both, spiritual and physical death. Yet at present, both wicked and righteous go to the grave.

Why do the righteous not receive immortality right away? It is because they have not reached a completed perfection, which only happens when the Spirit of the Father is received. This idea was spoken of by Paul: **Rom 8:10-11:** 10 *And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness.* 11 *But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead (Gal 1:1) dwells in you, he that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall give life also to your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwells in you.* (American Standard) The Son gives us eternal life (Jn 5:24-25) by his spirit, while bringing us to the Father, but it is the Father who gives us immortality by His spirit. Enoch, Moses and Elijah are types of what God is doing with humanity. So, those already in heaven are completed in their understanding after the resurrection.

This idea is found in **1 Th 4:16-17:** 16. *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:* 17. *Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.* Connect this with **1 Cor 15:54:** *So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption (inward cleansing), and this mortal shall have put on immortality (undying body), then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.* Total victory over death does not happen until the last generation. Those whom Paul mentions as being *alive and remain*, are represented in scripture by a group called the 144,000 (Rev 14:1-5), who have the Lamb's Father's name in their foreheads - i.e. have the character of the Father.

1 Jn 5:4: *For whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world: and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.* And our faith comes by means of Jesus Christ! (Gal 2:16). Amen.