

Lifting Up Jesus

#12

DEATH

When a man dies, what becomes of him? We know something of life and what it is and means. However, what in the world happens to us when we die? Where do we go? Heaven? Hell? Purgatory? Limbo? What awaits us in the shadows ahead? What about our dead loved ones? Since we know that the Bible is the word of God, shouldn't we turn to the one dependable source of information? The Bible's teaching on death is consistent, not confusing. There may be some surprises. Nevertheless, its answers are reasonable, satisfying and best of all, comforting.

1. How did Jesus refer to death? John 11:11–14

2. How does the Old Testament refer to death? Deuteronomy 31:14–16; 2 Samuel 7:12

3. How did Paul understand the condition of death concerning the resurrection? 1 Thessalonians 4:15, 16; Acts 13:36

4. What about Daniel in the Old Testament? How did he understand death and the resurrection? Daniel 12:2

5. What did Jesus teach regarding death and the resurrection? John 5:28, 29

6. Who alone is immortal? 1 Timothy 6:15, 16; 1 Timothy 1:17

7. How is man described compared with God? Romans 1:23

8. At what point does man become immortal? 1 Corinthians 15:51–54

Note: The Bible describes death as sleep over 50 times. In order to understand the condition of death or “sleep/rest” we must first understand the condition of life.

9. What two elements did God combine to make man a living soul? Genesis 2:7

10. How is the process God used in creating a soul reversed when we die? Psalms 104:29

11. Can a soul die? Ezekiel 18:20

12. When life ends, what is left? Genesis 3:19

13. How does the Bible define “life?” Job 27:3

14. What happens when the breath returns to God? Job 14:10–12

*Note: God did not **put** a living soul into Adam. Adam **became** a living soul as a result of the combination of the body plus the breath or spirit from God. When a light bulb is connected to electricity, we get light. No one puts the light in the bulb. It is the result of uniting those two components. When we take away the electricity, the light ceases to exist. According to the Bible, the soul is a combination of body plus breath, or spirit. When the breath (life force) or “spirit” of God departs from the body, the soul ceases to exist.*

DUST + BREATH = SOUL

SOUL - BREATH = DUST

15. How much does man know during the time that he is dead? Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6, 10

16. Can the dead praise God? Psalms 115:17

17. Can a dead person return to his house as a “departed spirit” ghost? Job 7:9, 10

Note: As we have studied earlier, many demons can produce miracles not least of which is impersonating dead loved ones. The story is told of an evangelist who preached on the state of death. Afterwards one of the people in the audience had an “appearing” of his wife who had died earlier. She had the same voice and mannerism of his wife. Convinced of this Bible teaching, he told his “wife” to leave in the name of Jesus Christ and she disappeared and turned into a demon. There is truth only in God’s word.

Conclusion: So when a man dies he does not live somewhere else. He is not in heaven, not in hell, not in purgatory. He is not alive at all, anywhere, in any condition. He is in a state of sleep or unconsciousness. The dead rest quietly in their graves until Jesus comes. Moreover, when we stop to think it through, how could this be improved upon? As always, God has arranged what is best. Instead of permitting the departed one to look down from heaven and see the distress and grief his departing has caused; instead of allowing a departed husband or wife to see his spouse quickly transfer his love to another; instead of permitting parents to witness their children suffering through problems, Jesus has arranged death to be a short period of unconscious sleep. There is no hardship on the departed one, for they are not conscious of passing time. They fall asleep and the next moment (so it seems) they awake and are reunited with their loved ones and Jesus.¹

¹ Lewis, K. A. (2010). *Lifting up Jesus: Bible Study Lessons*. Walla Walla, WA: Karen Ann Lewis.