

What Happens After Death? VIII

By Greg Rangel

Is there any reason why we should fear death? What happens when we die? These are questions that we have already answered throughout this series. We have given them answers directly from the Word of God. And now we want to dedicate ourselves to what happens to believers after we die.

The Scriptures make it very clear that there is life in Jesus. Jesus said in John 11:25-26, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" This is the hope of the believer. Everyone who truly believes in Jesus will never die. We know that the body will die, there is no doubt about that, but Jesus is referring to an eternal death. And in John 5:24 Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." Therefore according to the words of Jesus, when a believer dies, he is passed from death unto life. That is, he/she inherits eternal life. This is the teaching in Scripture.

Paul gave us the understanding as well that when a believer dies, he/she goes immediately into the presence of God. There is no waiting in a state of sleep as many believe. We have already dealt with that false belief and have established that according to Scripture, the sleep portion refers only to the body, not the spirit of man. Failure to believe this is failing to believe in the truth of the Word of God. The body, which remains in the earth, will be joined together with the spirit of man, which is in heaven, at the resurrection of the just. We will dedicate the upcoming articles to that topic.

Paul wrote in Philippians 1:21, 23, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain...for I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better." Why did Paul say that to die was gain if we do not inherit eternal at the moment we die? Why did he also say that he had a desire to die and to be with Christ which is far better if one goes to sleep? It is very obvious that Paul knew without a shadow of a doubt that the moment he died he would immediately go with Christ, that is why it would be far better. To think otherwise is to go against Scripture.

In 2 Corinthians 5:6-8 Paul once again makes it very clear that while we are alive here in our bodies we are obviously not with Jesus Christ in heaven. But if we were to die, we would be with Jesus in heaven. He wrote, "Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord...We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord" (see 2 Corinthians 5:1-10).

Jesus spoke about the place that He would prepare for us, so that where He is, we would be there with Him. In John 14:2-3 Jesus said, "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you, I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

We have these promises in Scripture for our benefit. The moment we die, if we believe in Jesus, we will go to heaven. Psalm 116:15 says, “Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.” Why would our death be precious to the Lord if nothing happened after death or if we went to sleep? Our death is precious because we go home to be with Him. That is our hope. Jesus is our hope. The Psalmist also wrote, “Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory” (Psalm 73:24). Once again, the Psalmist is proclaiming life after death. God will guide us with His counsel in this life, afterward, that is, after we die, He will receive us in glory.

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