

LESSON SEVEN

DEATH

A. DEFINITION OF DEATH.

Physical death is the separation of soul and spirit from the body. It introduces man to ETERNITY and the unseen world.

B. DESCRIPTIONS OF DEATH.

The Bible speaks of death in the following terms:

1. Sleep - Deuteronomy 31:16; John 11:11; I Corinthians 15:6; I Corinthians 15:51; and I Thessalonians 4:13-14.
2. Earthly house being dissolved - II Corinthians 5:1.
3. Putting off this tabernacle - II Peter 1:14.
4. God requiring the soul - Luke 12:20.
5. Going the way whence there is no return - Job 16:22.
6. Being gathered to one's people - Genesis 49:3 3.
7. Yielding up the ghost - Genesis 49:33; Acts 5:10.
8. Going down into silence - Psalm 115:17.
9. Returning to the dust - Genesis 3:19.
10. Being cut down - Job 14:2.
11. Departing - Philippians 1:23.

C. PHYSICAL DEATH IS CERTAIN TO EVERY MAN.

Scriptural Reference:

"And as it is appointed unto man once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27).

The only persons who will escape physical death are those living saints at the time of the Coming of Jesus. These will be translated but all others will die. Although the redemption of the body has been provided for and purchased on Calvary, yet only at the First Resurrection shall we be able to enter into this full physical redemption.

D. DEATH HAS BEEN CONQUERED.

Scriptural Reference:

"The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (I Corinthians 15:26).

"...Death reigned by one... shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ..." (Romans 5:12-21).

"Who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." (II Timothy 1:10).

Death was the first outward and visible effect of sin and it will be the last effect of sin from which we shall be saved. Jesus has abolished death, and in Him we may have eternal life and immortality.

E. AFTER DEATH WHAT?

1. THE INTERMEDIATE STATE.

The righteous do not enter into their final reward or the wicked into their final punishment until after their respective resurrections. The righteous is in conscious rest in Paradise but the unrighteous are in conscious unrest and torment in Hades.

2. THE RESURRECTION.

At the resurrection the soul and spirit of the dead are united with the resurrected body.

3. THE JUDGMENTS.

Just as there is no escaping death there is no escaping the judgment which follows (Hebrews 9:27). The righteous receive their rewards and the unrighteous receive their punishment.

4. ETERNITY.

There are only two final destinies for man: a heaven to gain, and a hell to shun. Which will it be for you?

F. THE LOCATION OF PARADISE AND HADES.

Before the resurrection of Jesus Christ these two places were separate compartments of Sheol. They were located adjacent to one another with a gulf fixed between them (Luke 16:26). Because of this when Jesus died He visited both places (Luke 23:43; Acts 2:31). This also explains I Peter 3:19-20. When Jesus arose He emptied one compartment and changed the location of Paradise to the third heaven (II Corinthians 12:2). What the witch of Endor was able to do with the spirit of Samuel (I Samuel 28:14) can never be done with the departed spirits of the redeemed since the resurrection of Jesus, for Paradise and Hades no longer have adjacent locations in Sheol. Jesus led captivity captive (Ephesians 4:8).

G. FALSE TEACHINGS.

1. PURGATORY.

This teaches that even the faithful need a process of purification before becoming fit to enter God's presence.

Scripture teaches the immediate happiness of the dead in Christ. There are only the saved and the unsaved, and the destiny of each is determined in this life. Death closes the period of probation and then judgment follows.

References: Luke 16:22; Luke 23:43; II Corinthians 5:6-10 and Hebrews 9:27.

2. SPIRITISM.

This teaches that we may communicate with a departed spirit through a "medium."

The Bible expressly forbids consulting such spiritist, the very prohibition indicating that there is evil and danger in the practice. In Luke 16 the account of the rich man and Lazarus proves that the departed are not permitted to communicate with the living.

References: Leviticus 19:31, Isaiah 8:19.

3. SOUL SLEEPING.

This teaches that the soul is unconscious until the resurrection.

Scripture teaches that there is an immediate conscious rest in Paradise for the saved and a conscious torment in Hades for the lost. Lazarus and the rich man were both conscious. Why did Jesus visit Paradise and Hades if the souls were unconscious? This should answer the error once and for all time.

References: Isaiah 14:9-11; Luke 23:43; Philippians 1:23; Psalm 16:10; II Corinthians 5:8 and Revelation 6:9-10.

4. UNIVERSALISM.

This teaches that everybody will finally be saved that God is too loving to exclude anyone from heaven.

The Scriptures refute this error. It is in reality a mercy that God excludes the sinful from Heaven for it would be a hell to them, and their presence would soon make it a hell to the redeemed.

References: Proverbs 29:1; Romans 6:23; John 3:36 and Luke 16:19-31.

5. RESTORATIONISM.

This teaches that hell is not eternal but a temporary experience for the purpose of purifying the sinner to fit him for heaven. If this were the case then the fires of hell would have more power than the blood of Christ. Experience teaches that punishment in itself is not regenerative; it can restrain but not transform. Those who believe this error contend that the word "eternal" in the Greek means "age-long" and not endless duration. According to Matthew 25 :41-46 if the punishment of the wicked man has an end so does the bliss of the righteous. God will no more force a man to be saved in the future than He does in the present.

6. ANNIHILATIONISM.

This teaches that the wicked will be annihilated. Those who believe this error point to II Thessalonians 1:9 and other passages which state that the wicked will be destroyed. However, this does not mean annihilation but ruin. In this Scripture if it meant annihilation then the word "eternal" would be useless. They also point to death as the penalty for sin. This means separation from God and not the ceasing to exist. God's promise of life does not mean the promise of existence for all men have that - therefore the opposite is true, death as a penalty does not mean the mere loss of existence.

LESSON SEVEN

SELF HELP TEST

A. *Place the correct word in the blank:*

1. The last enemy to be destroyed is _____ .
2. _____ teaches that we may talk with a departed spirit.
3. At one time Paradise and _____ were adjacent in Sheol.
4. _____ teaches that everybody will be saved.
5. Death is the _____ of soul and spirit from the body.

Hades, Death, Universalism, Separation, Spiritism.

B. Write a clear explanation why Jesus was able to visit both Paradise and Hades after He died (Luke 23:42 and Acts 2:31).

C. Where is the present location of Paradise and how do we know this?