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5 MINUTE LESSONS ON THE KINGDOM OF GOD

When Do We Die?

WHEN DO WE DIE? It has been discovered through medical science that different parts of the human body die at different rates. The brain can die without oxygen as quickly as four minutes, kidneys thirty minutes, eyes six hours, and fingernails several days after a person has been declared clinically dead.

Some doctors now believe that death occurs when the brain dies and measures no brain waves for more than thirty minutes.

God, on the other hand, has told us hundreds of years ago exactly when death occurs,

“For as THE BODY WITHOUT THE SPIRIT IS DEAD, so faith without works is dead also.” (James 2:26)

According to this Scripture death is not ceasing to exist, but rather it is a separation. A separation of the spirit/soul from the physical body.

A German doctor named Josef Issels told of a woman close to death whom he visited in his clinic in Bavaria, Germany. As he was making his rounds, he approached this woman's room and greeted her. The woman told him that she had left her body and had seen a woman in room 12 who was writing a letter to her husband. She described in great detail the letter and its contents. Dr. Issels quickly walked to room 12 and discovered to his surprise everything the woman had told him down to the last detail. As he returned to the woman's room to demand an explanation, he discovered that she had died. If we are to believe the Biblical account of God's Word, we must conclude that this woman did indeed leave her body and described things she had seen in the physical realm before departing this physical realm on a permanent basis.

A former policeman of the Louisiana State Police Department, who had a near death experience stated, “The spirit, when removed from flesh, can see and communicate with other spirits. It can “see” and “hear” those things of the physical world also, but it cannot communicate with that world except through a physical body. Not only does the spirit of man need a physical body through which to communicate to this physical world, but so do all the spirit beings (demons & angels). The only way open for clear, concise communication from spirit beings to physical beings is through physical bodies...It is impossible for the soul or personality of any spirit to be reflected to this physical world except through a physical body” (Demons, an eyewitness account, pages 3-4).

At death the spirit is released from the physical body and is no longer capable of contacting the physical world. Thomas Edison spent years trying to develop a telephone in which the dead and the living could communicate. He also developed a blueprint from which a model was made. The only problem was it didn't work.

SO WHAT IS BEYOND THE GRAVE? For a true Christian the Bible says, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8). For those who have not truly repented of their sins, the Bible gives us a glimpse of a most horrible condition. The story is found in Luke 16:19-31 and was told by Jesus about a rich man who had died. The odd thing about this story is that the dead man (although conscious in another realm) had a request for the living on earth. It involved the necessity of hearing and obeying God's Word. It was a request for someone to testify to the living and plead for them to repent. "Repentance" is a request for a man or woman to change their mind, to change their heart and turn to God from sin to receive His mercy and grace. The "good news" of the kingdom is that God accepts imperfect people through the blood of Jesus Christ. "Forgiveness" means that God is willing because of Jesus Christ death upon the cross, to pardon us, that is, to pass over our offenses without punishment and to let them go as if they had never been committed (Hebrews 8:12). The scripture says, it's by God's grace we are saved (Ephesians 2:5, 8-9).

Needing forgiveness in any meaningful sense of the word presupposes our guilt (Romans 3:10; 6:23). "Conversion" means "a turning to God." Would you be willing to turn to God and Jesus Christ for your personal salvation from sin? Would you be willing to cry out to God from your heart for the forgiveness that you so desperately need? Go now to Psalm 51 in the Bible and make it your sincere prayer. Go directly to God through Jesus Christ, for it is He to whom you must be reconciled (2 Corinthians 5:20).

Questions

- 1** The rich man who had died in Luke 16 had a request for the living, what was that request?
- 2** What did the rich man in Luke 16 need to do in order to avoid hell?
- 3** For a true follower of Jesus, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.

True or False

Answer Key

- 1** The rich man who had died in Luke 16 had a request for the living, what was that request?

“27Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father’s house:

28For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.” (Luke 16:27-28 KJV)

- 2** What did the rich man in Luke 16 need to do in order to avoid hell?

Repent, to have a change of mind and heart that turns one toward God (Acts 26:18).

“And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.” (Luke 16:30 KJV)

- 3** For a true follower of Jesus, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.

True

“We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.” (2 Corinthians 5:8 KJV)

We want to hear from you!

We would love to hear your feedback on these lessons and how you use them in your own study or in discipling others. If you have any thoughts, stories, testimonies, comments, or questions we would love to hear them!

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