

1-26-2020 Message What The Bible Says About Life After Death

I Corinthians 2:4 And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:

I Corinthians 2:5 That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

I Corinthians 2:6 Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:

I Corinthians 2:7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

I Corinthians 2:8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

I Corinthians 2:9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

I Corinthians 2:10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

I Corinthians 2:11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

I Corinthians 2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

Intro:

Years ago Pastor Vucish preached a message at our church entitled "Is it Really Real". In the message he tells the story about going to visit one of his members in the hospital. She was told she did not have long to live. When Pastor Vucish went to visit her she said to him "Pastor I want to ask you something." He said. "what do you want to ask?" She simply said, "Pastor is it really real?" He said, "What do you mean?" She said, "You know, heaven and all that: Is it really real?"

You see when we used to sit around and have family devotions with my kids; we used to have these little Bible story books that we would read to them. They would often sit on my lap and ask me, "Daddy, is this a real story or a make believe story.." You see many times kids don't know the difference. Let me say, I think that this is the case with many adults when it comes to the Bible. I think they read the Bible like it is just a story, like so many other stories.

But the Apostle Peter said,

II Peter 1:16 For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

Now the question at hand is how can we know what happens after we die?

What is the most important thing about our faith? Is it not what we believe about the after life. Our Lord gives us answers about the meaning of life and death and even the after life. Now there is no authoritative answer to what happens to us when we die apart from the Bible.

Someone may say, there is no way to know unless you died and came back. Now there are stories about people dying on the operating table for a minute or two and coming back to life and being resuscitated. In each case where people can remember what happened they were often in a dream state, and tell stories of what they dreamt at the time.

The problem is sometimes when I am asleep I dream sometimes I don't. Sometimes when I dream I can remember everything clearly, sometimes I know I was dreaming something, but I can't remember a thing. Our dreams are not authoritative and I wouldn't want to stake anything on what a person dreams or does not dream. The fact is that you can biologically keep someone alive in a coma state for some time, but when the plug is pulled and your body shuts down the heart stops beating and after 3-5 minutes of no oxygen to the brain, there is irreversible damage done. Biologically your organs can be kept alive longer; this is why they can do organ transplants. A person can be clinically dead, meaning their brain function is gone and there is no chance of resuscitating them, they can keep their organs alive long enough to transplant them into someone else. After 12-24 hours of no blood circulating every organ is useless and also dies. So no one in our medical records has been resuscitated and lived after more than 5 minutes of no oxygen to the brain.

The only one that really ever came back from the dead never to die again was Jesus. So if you want a witness, He alone is the authority on what happens to us after we die. No church, no theologian, no doctor, no scientist, no one else. The other witness we have is the Bible. There are some recorded in the Bible, even in the Old Testament, that give light about the after life.

Now today with the advancement of communication, the internet, abundance of documentaries, you can find all kind of ideas about death and the afterlife. These stories may seem compelling but we need to take all of them with a grain of salt and stick with what the Bible says.

VERSES ON WHAT HAPPENS AFTER WE DIE:

I. FIRST OF ALL CONSIDER THE BIBLICAL DEFINITION OF DEATH FROM THE BEGINNING OF WHEN IT CAME INTO THIS WORLD.

Genesis 2:17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

God said that very day they would die. But I will have you note what happened the day they ate they ate the fruit.

Genesis 3:6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

Genesis 3:7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

Genesis 3:8 And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.

Here is what happened after they ate the fruit,

- A. THEY SAW DIFFERENTLY (THEY SAW THEY WERE NAKED).
- B. GUILT ENTERED IN AND THEY TRIED TO COVER UP THEIR NAKEDNESS.
- C. THEY RAN FROM GOD (THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD WAS DIFFERENT).
- D. THEY WERE CAST OUT OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

Yet they did not cease to be people.

Therefore the biblical definition of death involves separation. In the garden men were separated from God because of their sin, and this is:

*Spiritual Death. We are all born into this world spiritually dead.

When we receive Christ we become spiritually alive to God. This is what it means to be born again.

*There is Physical Death.

Many times the Bible says when a person dies physically they gave up the Ghost. Our Ghost is our soul. When our soul leaves our bodies we are physically dead.

*There is Soul death or eternal death.

This is when our souls are separated from God for eternity in hell. This is what we read about in Luke 16.

For each person alive today there are the possibilities of two deaths we can face. Physical death and eternal death. Jesus said this:

Matthew 10:28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Now consider, God made man to be an eternal being, so people who think that after death you just cease to exist are in great error. This error is leading a lot of people to do some horrific things. This is one of the reasons we have so many people committing atrocities, mass shootings and abominable actions, and then committing suicide. They think when they die all suffering will cease. They are going to have a rude awaking when they find themselves in hell.

According to the Bible whatever happened in the garden was God's definition of death and still is.

In fact, when you are made alive to God when you receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior the Bible says you will never suffer the second death or soul death. So for those of us who are Born Again of the Spirit of God and have accepted Christ as our Lord and Savior, the Bible says we shall never die.

John 11:25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

John 11:26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

Years ago I was talking to a little lady that was sick and told that she was dying. I went to visit her and said, what if I could tell you how you could live forever? She said that would be great but I don't think it possible. I then said, I realize you are very sick and sometimes people get so sick that the doctors have to amputate a leg for them to live. Could you live without a leg? She said, yes. Sometimes doctors have to amputate both legs, could you live without both legs? She said I guess. How about if they took both legs and both arms. Could you still live? She laughed and said I guess but not very well. I said, well the Bible says, if you give your heart to Jesus, even if you shed your whole body you can live with Him eternally.

The truth is we make the body the most important thing about life, but it is actually the most fragile and the one that is going to be easily taken from us. Your soul is the most important thing. You are a living soul, not just flesh.

Now I am going to assume that the ones I am preaching to today have received Jesus as your Lord and Savior. I am assuming you have asked Jesus into your heart and you are one of the ones that Jesus talked about when he said,

John 11:26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

Notice He said, liveth, and believeth. If you do not live for Jesus I would question whether you believe in Jesus. Now for those of you that live for Jesus and believe in Jesus I hope that the following Bible study will be a comfort to you.

II. First of All, Consider, The Greatest Witness for What Happens After You Die Was Jesus:

His body was in the grave three days and three nights, so we can say for sure He was dead, and it was scientifically impossible that he was resuscitated. His coming back to life was a miracle and an evidence of the power of God's resurrection promise.

So consider His teaching on the afterlife:

1. In Luke 16:20-31 Jesus gives an account of what happened to two people after they died.

Many people wonder, will we be able to recognize our loved ones who died before us after we die?

A. Notice each person was recognizable after death.

Luke 16:22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;

Luke 16:23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

Luke 16:24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

Luke 16:25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

Luke 16:26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

Lazarus was recognizable and Abraham was recognized. Even the unsaved rich man could be recognized after death.

Notice Lazarus was comforted by Abraham. It would seem that we can be comforted by loved ones who have gone before us. Here Abraham comforts Lazarus. This, I believe, happened when he first entered this eternal state. So it would seem that we could comfort one another in heaven after all the suffering we have experienced here on earth.

How do we comfort one another? When our mothers wanted to comfort us what would they do? They would give us a hug or a kiss. Linda McKeeby asked if when she dies could she give Jack a hug. Someone told her that won't happen. I tell you according to this verse, that can happen.

But notice even that an unsaved man could be recognized:

Luke 16:23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

If this unsaved rich man was able to recognize Abraham and Lazarus afar off how much more will we who believe and live for Jesus be able to recognize our loved ones when we get to heaven and comfort each other?

2. *Jesus clearly said men who know the Lord never cease to exist and will be recognized in eternity even before the resurrection.*

Matthew 22:32 I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

In other words Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob's souls and spirits are very much alive in heaven and can be recognized. As we saw in Luke 16:

Abraham was recognized. There are some who think that you will be in a state like sleep after you die. Now when the Bible uses the word sleep for the death of a Christian it is talking about their bodies not their souls. When you sleep you imagine you see people. When your soul is freed from your body and you enter the eternal state you will see other souls who passed on before you.

You do not cease to exist as some claim.

You do not get absorbed into the cosmos as some surmise.

You do not get reincarnated and become part of nature.

Forget all the fables and fabrications of men. The only authority for what happens to you after death is Jesus and the Bible. No other person has come back to clearly explain what takes place.

3. *Moses and Elijah appeared to Jesus and the Apostles recognized them.*

Matthew 17:3 And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias (Elijah) talking with him.

Matthew 17:4 Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias (Elijah).

If people cannot recognize one another after death why did Peter John and James recognize Moses and Elijah? They were dead for some time.

4. Jesus said to the thief on the cross he would be with him in Paradise

Luke 23:43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

Either he lied to that thief or what he said happened. Paradise is what Luke 16 referred to as Abraham's bosom.

Ephesians 4:8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

Ephesians 4:9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?

Ephesians 4:10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

This is a quote from Psalm 68:18:

Psalms 68:18 Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them.

Jesus descended from heaven, stooped to be a man, and in this He was brought forth from the lowest parts of the earth. This was the description of what it took for Jesus to take on a body.

Psalms 139:15 My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

He led captivity captive. We who were in bondage to sin and taken captive of Satan, are now free to serve Christ. So we who were captive, were led captive of Him.

So like the thief on the cross we were rebellious and sinful people who were taken captive of sin. When we cry out to Jesus for salvation, He takes us captive to serve Him. So where He is we will be also. Is Jesus dead? No He is very much alive, and so we will be with Him and forever will we be with the Lord. When we die, Jesus could say to us as well, "Today you will be with me in heaven.."

5. In an unusual situation Samuel was recognized by Saul after his death.

Trying to contact the dead is forbidden and sin. Saul sinned in doing so. But in a rare case to teach him a lesson and punish him, God allowed it to happen and it led to his death to warn others not to try and do this. But nonetheless Samuel was recognized, his

soul took on some form that would resemble who he was before he died. So it would again seem that after a person dies we will be able to recognize each other.

Again, let me emphasize what Saul did is forbidden in the Bible and because he sought after a medium the Bible said he was going to die! So don't you try it.

I Chronicles 10:13 So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the LORD, even against the word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to inquire of it;

Nevertheless, here is the account and in a rare and unusual incident the Bible confirms that we will be able recognize one another after death:

I Samuel 28:11 Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel.

I Samuel 28:12 And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul.

I Samuel 28:14 And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself.

Notice Samuel was recognized as an old man, and clothed in the manner of a prophet covered with a mantle.

6. There are many other verses concerning our state after death.

A. We will be present with the Lord after death.

II Corinthians 5:6 Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:

II Corinthians 5:8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

B. The Souls could be seen and recognized in heaven he die.

Revelation 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

C. People after they die can pray for others on earth:

Revelation 6:9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

Revelation 6:10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

Revelation 6:11 And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

God gives people temporary clothing, and a temporary form of a body in heaven. They could speak, they could pray, they could recognize each other as brothers and sisters in Christ. They are concerned about what is going on in earth and can even make petitions to God concerning these matters.

So it would seem loved ones could even be in heaven waiting expectantly to greet us when we get there.

D. THE BIBLE SAYS THAT WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT THE AFTERLIFE SHOULD COMFORT US.

The truth is that if I believed what so many people believe that is unbiblical about the after life, I would not find comfort at all.

Could I be comforted believing I would never see loved ones again?

Could I be comforted believing that when I die I go into a state of Soul Sleep?

Could I be comforted believing that when I die I might be reincarnated as a dog or cat?

The Biblical teaching concerning what happens to people who are saved, after death, are indeed a comfort.

These are just a few verses that give us comfort concerning the state of our loved ones who have gone home to be with the Lord and Scriptural teaching and proof that we will see them some day and recognize them. Then someday, the Bible says we will all be resurrected and come back down to earth and live in a glorified body and rule and reign with Jesus Christ for a thousand years and on into eternity.

I Thessalonians 4:13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

I Thessalonians 4:14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

I Thessalonians 4:15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

I Thessalonians 4:16 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:

I Thessalonians 4:17 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.

I Thessalonians 4:18 **Wherefore comfort one another with these words.**

Notice it says we shall ever be with the Lord. Meaning we will be all together one with another and we will be able recognize each other. We do not lose our identity, and we will be seen, recognized, and we will rejoice together.

Conclusion:

We have this statement made by the apostle Paul:

I Corinthians 2:9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

I Corinthians 2:10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

The Bible teaches clearly that if we love the Lord and believe in Him and live for Him, the Lord has great things in store for us.

What the Bible teaches about what happens to a believer after death is great and marvelous thing, and a great comfort, especially if we have had loved one proceed us in death.

If these promises were not true I would find little motivation to serve the Lord in this life. Paul even said,

1Cor. 15:19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

We have a great hope, we have great promises, these things we can be assured of.

But there is this great burden we should have for others who have not received Christ and are not saved. Just as the Lord promised wonderful things for His children, He has warned about terrible judgment for those who reject Him. Will you trust Him? Believe in Him?