

What Happens When I Die ?

Text : **II Cor. 5: 1-8 , Luke 16: 19-31**

S#1.

S#2.

A. What is mankind's greatest fear ?

1. Countless surveys have been taken to determine man's greatest fear.
 - a. I read many "Top Ten Fears" lists and found them to be affected by age and socioeconomic circumstances of those making the list, but similar.
 - b. College students fear different things than seniors fear.
2. Some things appeared on most every list :
 - a. Things like : "the unknown," "not being loved," pain or "not being in control."
 - b. However, death appeared at or near the top of almost every list.
 - c. Sociologist, "#1 Death and the "uncertainty" of what happens after the grave."
3. Why does death bring such great fear that many people refuse to even discuss it.
 - a. "Man fears most that which he knows the least about, God, death, the future ..."
 - b. Psychiatrist said, "Death; it's a concept that holds loads of human hangups. The fear of the unknown, fear of judgment, fear of pain and suffering, fear of loss..."

ILL. – After the war General George Patton confided in a close friend, **S#3.**
"Every time I heard a gunshot I realized I'm a coward; I'm afraid to die."

B. Men fear the unknown and what they don't understand.

S#4.

1. The story of Job was the oldest in the bible. (*Often repeated before written.*)
**Job 14: 14 – If a man dies, will he live again? All the days of my struggle
 I will wait until my change comes.**
2. Some of the greatest ancient works ever found were preparations for death.
 - a. The Pyramid of Khufu at Giza is the largest Egyptian pyramid.
 It is the only one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world still standing.
 - b. Qin Shi Huang Di—the First Emperor of Qin created an elaborate mausoleum including the terra-cotta army created to accompany the emperor into the afterlife,
 - c. Out of fear of death these great monuments consumed the wealth of the country.

C. Science can give no comfort to those who fear death.

S#5.

1. Science can study only what can be observed, but observation stops at death.
 - a. People with near death experiences are questioned.
 - b. People who have supposedly been dead for minutes are interrogated without result.
2. No one can observe what happens to the soul after death and report on it.

D. Those who trust God's word have no uncertainty and should have no fear.

S#6.

What comes after death may be an uncertainty to some, but
I. Death is a certainty for all people.

S#7.

A. Our society is obsessed with statistics; we keep statistics about most things. S#8.

1. Who uses what products and how.
2. Who marries who and for how long. (*Monitor social change*)
3. One statistic that has never changed ... 100 out of 100 people will die.

B. God's word clearly teaches that all will die. (*Never live forever on earth*) S#9.

1. The prophet David declared death to be universal. S#10.
II Sam. 14: 14 – For we will surely die and are like water spilled on the ground ...
2. The death of all mankind is a consequence of sin. S#11.
Rom. 5: 12 – Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned
3. Though all will die because of Adam, all will live again because of Christ. S#12.
I Cor. 15: 22 – For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

II. What is death ? *Many fear death because it's unknown to them.*

S#13.

A. In order to understanding death, one must understand the nature of man. S#14.
Man is created in the image of God.

1. God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
2. Man is body, soul, and spirit. (*All three parts are required to make man.*) S#15.
I Thes. 5: 23 – Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (*3 parts at the resurrection*)

B. God gave man life from Himself. S#16.

1. **Gen. 2: 7** – Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a **living soul**. (being)
2. Death is a reversal of that creation process. S#17.
Eccl. 12: 6-7 Remember Him before the silver cord is broken and the golden bowl is crushed, the pitcher by the well is shattered and the wheel at the cistern is crushed; **7** then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.
3. When God reclaims the spirit which He gave, man is no longer alive. S#18.
 - a. **James 2: 26** – For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.
 - b. Man is only alive when complete as “spirit and soul and body.”

III. What happens when a lost person dies ?**S#19.****S#20.****A. There are a multitude of false doctrines taught about what happens after death.**

1. People come to your door (J.W.) espousing that man ceases to exist after death.
2. Those who worship on Saturday teach that the soul sleeps until judgment.
3. The non-protestant denomination teaches that souls are cleansed in purgatory.

*** II Tim. 3: 16-17 ... *The final authority of everything is the inspired scriptures.***

B. When any person dies :**S#21.**

1. Their body is returned to the elements. (*Does not cease to exist .. disassembled*)
 - a. This can be done by burial or by the scattering of ashes. (cf – **Gen. 3: 19**)
 - b. Man tries to preserve his body by embalming or whatever means.
 - c. The resurrection is by the power of the same God who created man from dirt.
2. Though the body returns to dust, one's spirit does not cease to exist.
 - a. **Eccl. 12: 7** ... The spirit of man goes back into the hands of God who gave it.
 - b. God keeps the spirits in His custody until they are returned to the bodies.

C. God separates the spirits of the lost from the saved into different locations.**S#22.**

1. All souls go to a realm especially for departed souls ... the realm of the dead.
 - a. In the Old Testament this realm is referred to as "Sheol."

Psa. 16: 10 – For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol;

Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.
 - b. In the New Testament it is referred to as "Hades." (*Peter quotes ... Psa. 16: 10*)

Acts 2: 27 – Because You will not abandon my soul to Hades,

Nor allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.
2. Sheol / Hades is then divided into two realms called both called different things.
 - a. The place where unsaved souls go is called Hell, torment, lake of fire, destruction
 - b. The place where saved souls dwell is called Heaven, paradise, Abraham's bosom

S#23.**C. The place of the wicked, the lost is "Hell" .. translates the word (Geenna).****S#24.**

It's a figure based on a real place.

1. This was originally the Valley of the Sons of Hinnom, a place where kings Ahaz and Manassah offered their own babies to the idol of Moloch. (**II Chro. 28 & 33**)
2. The valley of Hinnom, south of Jerusalem, became the city dump where the filth and dead animals of the city were cast out and burned in a continual fire; that most reviled place in all Israel is a fit symbol of the wicked and their future destruction.

D. From our text we have seen that the unsaved soul is in a place of torment. S#25.

1. From **Luke 16** we learn :

- a. Vs. **23** ... In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment ... **right after death**
- b. Vs. **23** ... He was aware of his circumstances. (*Had senses w/o body*)
- c. Vs. **24** ... He was in great pain ... torment , agony.
- d. Vs. **25** ... He had the ability to remember and to recognize

2. From **II Thes 1** we learn :

II Thes 1: 9 – These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, S#26.

- a. They are suffering as a “penalty.” (Vs **8** ... *penalty is for not obeying gospel*)
- b. Their penalty (**destruction**) is eternal; they will never get out of that place.
- c. Their eternal destruction is away from the presence of the Lord.

IV. What happens when a saved person dies ?

S#27.
S#28.

A. Like the lost person, the saved person knows his fate immediately after death.

- 1. **Luke 16: 22** – Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham’s bosom; (*Not left alone to hover or haunt houses*) S#29.
- 2. **Luke 23: 43** – And He said to him, “Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.” (*Soul goes right after death*)

B. When the saved soul leave the body, it goes to be with the Lord.

S#30.

- 1. **II Cor. 5: 6-8** Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord— **7** for we walk by faith, not by sight— **8** we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord. S#31.

a. **Christian** ... While our body is in the grave our soul is with Christ.

b. Christ ascended back into Heaven.

c. Thus, the souls of saved people are in Heaven. (**I Th 1:13-18** S#32, S#33, S#34.)

2. The souls of the saints will be with Jesus until that great resurrection day.

a. **I Thes. 4: 14** – For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so (**Rev. 1: 7** .. every eye) **God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.**

b. What is he bringing with Him ?

c. **Souls** ... The bodies are in the graves.

V. Christians should never fear death; we await it with great expectations. S#35.

S#36.

A. Life may be great but while on this earth we have it the worst we'll ever have it.

1. Our body is but a dwelling in which our soul and spirit reside here on earth.
 - a. When this dwelling is destroyed, our soul and spirit continues on in paradise.
 - b. Neither this earth nor our bodies were made to last for eternity, but our souls do.

II Pet. 3: 10 – But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens **S#37.**
will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with
intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.

2. This earthly dwelling is decaying, but God will supply one suitable for Heaven.

II Cor. 5: 1-2 For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, **#38.**
we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal
in the heavens. **2** For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be
clothed with our dwelling from heaven,

3. The Apostle's second letter reinforce the first. **S#39.**

I Cor. 15: 53 – For this perishable must put on the imperishable,
and this mortal must put on immortality.

B. It is irrational for a Christian to fear death BUT reasonable for the lost. **S#40.**

1. Part of the ministry of Jesus was to eliminate the fear of death.

a. **Heb. 2: 14-15** Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He **S#41.**
Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He
might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the
devil, **15** and might free those who through fear of death were
subject to slavery all their lives.

b. By His resurrection Jesus proved He has the power to raise us from the grave.

2. The Apostle did not fear death; he longed to be freed by it.

Phil. 1: 21-24 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. **22** But if I am to **S#42.**
live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and
I do not know which to choose. **23** But I am hard-pressed from
both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ,
for that is very much better; **24** yet to remain on in the flesh is
more necessary for your sake.

3. Wait expectantly; Heaven is greater than anything we will experience on earth.

II Cor. 4: 16-18 Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is, **S#43.**
decaying yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. **17** For
momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory
far beyond all comparison, **18** while we look not at the things which **S#44.**
are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are
seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

CONCLUSION :**A. What happens when we die ?** S#45.

1. *What happens when you die depends on what happened while you were alive.*
2. As long as the earth stands everyone will go into the grave.
3. When the earth ends everyone will be raised from the grave. **John 5: 25 ff**

B. While out of the body, one's soul remains aware and maintains its senses. S#46.

1. He can see. **Luke 16: 23** (*As if they were not aware they had no body ...*
2. He can remember. **Luke 16: 25** cf. – *II Cor 12: 2-4*)
3. He can feel pain. **Luke 16: 24**
4. He can feel emotions. **Luke 16: 27**

C. Jesus wants for us to be with Him. We should want to be with Him. S#47.

1. He died on the cross to save us from the rich man's fate. (**Rom. 5**)
2. He has prepared a dwelling place in Heaven with Him.

John 14: 1-4 Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me.² "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. ³ If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also.

D. The Christians attitude toward death should be one of joyous expectation. S#49.

1. Trust in the promise of Jesus.
John 11: 25-26 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?" S#50.
2. If one has faith to believe he cannot help but be eager to receive. S#51.
Rom. 2: 25 – But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it. (Cf. – Heb. 11:1)

INVITATION :**A. There's no reason to fear death it's merely a doorway through which one passes from one realm to the next.** S#52.**B. What one does in this realm determines which realm he enters next.** S#53.**C. If one places his faith in Jesus and obeys the gospel, he goes to be with Him.** #54.
S#55.

Lesson Text :**II Cor. 5: 1-8**

1 For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. **2** For indeed in this *house* we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven, **3** inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked. **4** For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life. **5** Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge.

6 Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord— **7** for we walk by faith, not by sight— **8** we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.

Luke 16: 19-31

19 “Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day. **20** And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, **21** and longing to be fed with the *crumbs* which were falling from the rich man’s table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores. **22** Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham’s bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. **23** In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom. **24** And he cried out and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.’ **25** But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. **26** ‘And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and *that* none may cross over from there to us.’ **27** And he said, ‘Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father’s house— **28** for I have five brothers—in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.’ **29** But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’ **30** But he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!’ **31** But he said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.’ ”