

1. Preparing for Eternity

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Subtitle: Where are the Dead?

- Most people have a fear of dying – they are not sure what happens on “the other side”
- Multitudes of people are still un-prepared for “the other side”
- Many Christians do not possess a “working knowledge” of Bible truths around the subject of death, dying, etc.
- (Reading the Bible is much more enjoyable when we understand the subjects we are reading about)

Hebrews 2:14–15 (NLT) *Because God’s children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—the Son also became flesh and blood. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death. 15 Only in this way could he set free all who have lived their lives as slaves to the fear of dying.*

- Jesus Christ, the Son of God became a human being & died a sacrificial death on the cross
- (Through His death, He paid the price for our sins [Heb. 9:12 NIV])
- Vs. 14 ... only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death
- Vs. 15 Only in this way could he set free all who have lived their lives as slaves to the fear of dying
- Vs. 15 (NKJV) ... release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage
- When we commit our life to Jesus Christ, we are no longer in bondage to the fear of death

1 Corinthians 15:51–55 (NKJV) *Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “**Death is swallowed up in victory.**” 55 “**O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?**”*

- Apostle Paul is speaking about the rapture of the church
- Although this event is still future, for us believers today, death has no more sting, and hades (hell) no longer has any claim on us
- Once we are born again, heaven is our destiny

1. The Bible speaks about different kinds of deaths:

- a. Physical death
- b. Spiritual death
- c. Second death

In this session(s), we hope to bring a biblical understanding about these different kinds of death.

2. The story of the rich man and Lazarus

Luke 16:19–31 (NKJV) *“There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. 20 But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, 21 desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 So it was **that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. 23 And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 “Then 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.’ 25 But Abraham said, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. 26 And besides all this, **between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.’ 27 “Then he said, ‘I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father’s house, 28 for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.’ 29 Abraham said to him, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.’ 30 And he said, ‘No, father Abraham; but **if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ 31 But he said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.’ ”*******

- Please note:
 - This is not a parable or an allegory, but a **real story of real people** ending up in **real places** after they died and left this earth

- Lazarus did not end up in paradise because he was poor
- Neither did the rich man end up in hades because he was rich
- Salvation is not a matter of our economic status while on earth
- Salvation is a matter of faith, (Rom.4:3) & right living (James 2:22)
- The key word about salvation occurs in vs. 30: “repent”
- Lazarus died (physically) and went to a place called “Abraham’s bosom”
 - Abraham’s bosom – NIV. Abraham’s side
 - Lazarus went to the place where Abraham was since his death
- The rich man also died:
 - His body was buried
 - His spirit (soul) ended up in Hades (Hell)

a. Hades: hell (Vs. 23)

- Place of departed souls (the unrepentant, unsaved, wicked)
- Lower regions of the earth (O.T. “Sheol”, netherworld)
- Place of perpetual torment in flames

b. Abraham’s bosom (Vs. 22)

- O.T. Place of departed souls (Repentant, O.T. saints)
- A place of comfort (vs. 25)
- A temporary holding place for O.T. saints, until Christ liberated them after His resurrection & took them all to heaven (Eph. 4:7–10)
- Abraham’s bosom is no longer used after Christ’s resurrection

c. A great gulf fixed (Vs. 26)

- An impassable chasm (Gr. chasma)
- A gap between two places (Hell & Abraham’s bosom)

3. Jesus Christ liberated the righteous souls from Abraham’s Bosom

Ephesians 4:7–10 (RSV) *But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift. 8 Therefore it is said, “**When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men.**” 9 (In saying, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that **he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth**? 10 He who descended is he who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)*

- vs. 8: ...when He ascended on high He led a host (multitude) of captives
- After Christ rose from the dead, He went to Abraham’s bosom and liberated the O.T. saints, and took them to heaven with Him
- Now, in the N.T., the souls of born again people go straight to heaven

4. Born again people go straight to heaven when they die

Philippians 1:23 (NKJV) *For I am hard-pressed between the two, **having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.***

- Depart (die) and be with Christ (in heaven)

Revelation 6:9 (NLT) *When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, **I saw under the altar the souls of all who had been martyred** for the word of God and for being faithful in their testimony.*

- This is a future scene in heaven that confirms the presence of the souls of believers who had died (martyred)

2 Corinthians 5:6–8 (NKJV) *So we are always confident, 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 confident, yes, well pleased rather **to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.***

- Paul speaks about being “at home in the body” (still alive on earth)
- He says: (then) “we are absent from the Lord”
- But when we are absent from the body (once we had died & our spirit has left our body), then we are “present with the Lord”

Salvation Prayer: (Pray this from your heart, out aloud)

“Heavenly Father, I thank You that You sent Your Son Jesus Christ into the World to save me. I recognise that I have broken Your commandments, and that I cannot save myself by my own good deeds. Lord Jesus, I thank You that You have taken the punishment for my sins by dying on the cross. I make a decision now to surrender my whole life to You and everything that I have. I receive You as my personal Lord and Saviour. I thank You that I am now forgiven, and that I am born again. Please lead me and guide me and show me Your plan for my life. Help me to be strong so that I can live according to Your plan and purpose for my life. In Jesus’ Name, amen. “