

Life After Death

Erling Calkins

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1. Lord, how can I learn what happens to my loved ones who have died? Where can I find the truth about death?

“Thus with the Lord, Ask Me of things to come concerning My sons, and concerning the work of My hands.” Isaiah 45:11.

2. Then tell me, Lord, do people really die or is death just a change from bodily existence to some other state of being?

“It is appointed unto men once to die.” Hebrews 9:27.

3. Is death the end of those who have died or will they live again?

“The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.” John 5:25-29.

4. Lord we know when our loved ones die, but when will they live again? When will they hear the voice of Jesus and come out of their graves?

“So man lies down and rises not till the heavens be no more; they shall not awake nor be raised out of their sleep.” Job 14:12.

5. When will the heavens be no more?

“The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.” 2 Peter 3:10.

6. Then, when the day of the Lord comes, will the dead come to life again?

“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.” 1 Thessalonians 4:16.

7. It is comforting to know that they shall rise again. But where are they from the time of death until the coming of Christ?

“If I wait, the grave is mine house.” Job 17:13.

“All that are in the graves shall hear His voice.” John 5:28.

“Death and the grave delivered up the dead which were in them.” Revelation 20:13.

8. I know that the body goes to the grave but what about the spirit? Where does that go?

“Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return to God who gave it.” Ecclesiastes 12:7.

9. Yes, I've heard that there is some immaterial part of man that goes to heaven at death. Those spirits must be very happy. I imagine they sing Your praises day and night, don't they?

“The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence.” Psalm 115:17.

“In death there is no remembrance of You: in the grave who shall give Thee thanks?” Psalms 6:5.

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10. Well, Lord, if the spirits of the dead cannot praise Thee, then they must not have any intelligence or power to think, for everyone in Heaven will be praising You. Don't the spirits of good people love, or the spirits of wicked people hate, after death?

"Their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished." Ecclesiastes 9:6.

11. But doesn't man have a conscious immaterial existence some sort of intelligent "ego" that lives on from death until the resurrection?

"The living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything." Ecclesiastes 9:5.

12. Can't the dead think at all, even a little bit?

"His breath (spirit) goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish." Psalms 146:4.

13. Somebody told me that the spirits of the dead can see what their children are doing and even can communicate with them. If the dead do not know anything, then how can they know what the living are doing?

"His sons come to honor, and he knows it not; and they are brought low, but he perceives it not of them." Job 14:21.

14. Then what is the spirit which returns to God at death?

"Thou takes away their breath (spirit), they die, and return to their dust. Thou sends forth Thy spirit (breath), they are created." Psalms 104:29, 30.

(Note: The word "spirit" is translated from the original word which means literally "wind" or "breath" and when applied to man, means the breath of life which makes a perfect body a living soul. [See Genesis 2:7] This "spirit" or "breath of life" in man should not be confused with the good and evil angels which are called "spirits," nor with the "Holy Spirit" [Holy Ghost] who is the third person of the Godhead.)

15. Well, then, somebody must have told me a lie in saying that the dead appear in spirit form to the living. Is that right?

"Thus said the Lord God; Woe unto the foolish prophets that follow their own spirit and have said nothing! They have seen vanity and lying divination, saying, The Lord said: and the Lord hath not sent them." Ezekiel 13:3, 6.

16. Who are these spirits that appear in darkened rooms and imitate the dead?

"They are the spirits of devils, working miracles." Revelation 16:14.

17. Then is the devil responsible for these lies of spiritualism?

"When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own: for he (the devil) is a liar and the father of it." John 8:44.

18. What was his first lie?

"And the serpent (the devil) said unto the woman (Eve), You shall not surely die." Genesis 3:4.

19. What shall I do when the spirits of devils appears apparitions of the dead?

"And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? To the law and to the testimony: If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isaiah 8:19, 20.

20. Yes, Lord, I believe what You say: but please explain about the soul.

"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Genesis 2:7.

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21. What is the soul?

“Whosoever, therefore will save his life (soul) shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life (soul) for My sake shall find it.” Matthew 16:25.

“And the sons of Joseph, which were born him in Egypt were two souls: all the souls (persons, see Deuteronomy 10:22) of the house of Jacob which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten.” Genesis 46:27.

22. Can the soul die?

“The soul that sins, it shall die.” Ezekiel 18:4.

“And every living soul died in the sea.” Revelation 16:3.

“Fear Him that is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” Matthew 10:28.

“God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave.” Psalms 49:15.

(Note: The word “soul” is translated from the original word meaning “life,” “person,” “breath,” “emotions,” or “mind,” about 1,000 times in all and never once is it said to be immortal or deathless.)

23. Then, Lord, what about the poems and songs and writings of philosophers that speak of the “immortal soul” - doesn’t man have immortality?

“In His times He shall show who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, Icho only hath immortality.” 1 Timothy 6:15, 16.

24. Well, Lord, if You alone have immortality, then man must be mortal. Is that right?

“Shall mortal man be more just than God?” Job 4:17.

25. How, then, can man become immortal?

“Jesus Christ ... has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.” 2 Timothy 1:10.

“The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 6:23.

26. But, Lord, now I am puzzled. I have accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior, therefore I have eternal life. Do I not also have immortality?

“Whoso eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.” John 6:54.

27. Yes, Lord, but You also told us in John 3:16 that “whosoever believeth in Him” hath “everlasting life.” I believe; therefore, do I not have immortality?

“Every one which sees the Son, and believeth on Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.” John 6:40.

28. I think I understand. Do You mean that eternal life is ours now by faith and we shall become immortal in the resurrection at the last day?

“We shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.” 1 Corinthians 15:51-54.

29. Suppose there is no resurrection, what then?

“For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.” 1 Corinthians 15:16-18.

30. Let me make sure I understand You, Lord: When man dies, You take the spirit of life, the body turns into dust again, and the thoughts stop. The soul ceases to be. Then from the moment of death until the coming of Jesus, the dead are unconscious. When Jesus comes, the spirit returns to the glorified, resurrected body, and the dead live again. Is this right?

“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at His coming.” 1 Corinthians 15: 22, 23.

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31. Then it must be just like going to sleep and waking up at the resurrection.

“He said unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleeps; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Howbeit Jesus spoke of his death.” John 11: 11-14.

“They storied Stephen, and he fell asleep.” Acts 7:59, 60.

“And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake.” Daniel 12:2.

32. But, Lord, it is a strange feeling to think of the dead being in the graves, not knowing anything. Might not some of them be forgotten in the resurrection and be lost?

“And this is the Father’s will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.” John 6:39.

“You are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.” Colossians 3:3, 4.

33. Thank You, Lord, for that comforting thought. According to Thy Word, then, the wicked are not suffering punishment now, are they?

“The Lord knows how to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished,” 2 Peter 2:9.

“There (in the grave) the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest.” Job 3:17.

34. If the wicked are not being punished now, then the righteous are not in Heaven, either, are they?

“David is not ascended into the heavens.” Acts 2:34.

35. How about the other just men? Have any of them received the immortality which was promised them?

“And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without its should not be made perfect.” Hebrews 11:39, 40.

36. What a wonderful thought that God, our Father, makes us all perfect and takes us to Heaven together. What a wonderful homecoming that will be! But when do we receive our rewards?

“For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then shall He reward every man according to his works.” Matthew 16:27.

“Behold, I come quickly and My reward is with Me to give to every man according as his work shall be.” Revelation 22:12.

37. Did the Apostle Paul agree with this? Did he expect to receive his crown at the appearing of the Lord?

“The time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.” 2 Timothy 4:6-8.

“If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.” Philippians 3:11.

38. Thank You, Lord. This knowledge is a great comfort to me. But one more question- after the resurrection, will there be any more death for God’s people?

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.” Revelation 21:4.

39. Lord, I want to be there with Thee! I am determined, by Thy Grace, to lay aside every false and evil notion and follow Thee alone, even if it means forsaking friends, relatives, or former well-meaning teachers.

“You shall be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.” Luke 14:14.

Prepared by Erling Calkins

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