



DEATH Lesson 1 The Doctrine Of Death Part 1: Spiritual Death

Though it may not sound like an encouraging topic or study, death is very biblical. The reality of death makes our present life all the more precious. The Bible exhorts us to lay the imminence of death to heart, for in doing so, we are made much wiser (**Psalm 90:12; Ecclesiastes 7:2, 4**).

- **And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; . . . ¹⁹In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.** **Genesis 3:17, 19**

Thanks to Adam and the Original Sin, death awaits each and every one of us. Our days are numbered. Biblically speaking, we each have an appointment with death. For this reason, death is as much a part of life as life itself.

- **To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose (*delight, activity*) under the heaven: ²A time to be born, and a time to die: . . .** **Ecclesiastes 3:1-2a**
- **It is better to go to a funeral than a feast. For death is the destiny of every person, and the living should take this to heart.** **Ecclesiastes 7:2 NET**
- **And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:** **Hebrews 9:27**

Both Old and New Testaments agree that physical death is an appointed event for all mankind. Except for the Church's participation in the catching away of the saints, death is unavoidable. Consider the following facts about death:

- Death is mentioned nearly 1,000 times in the Old Testament.
- Death is a biblical event and experience.
- Death is the way of all men.
- All who have gone before us have died.
- Death has already touched every person's life with the passing of a loved one.
- Jesus tasted death for every man (**Hebrews 2:9**).
- God is the God of the living and the dead.

- Should the Lord tarry and you not see the catching away of the saints, you too will experience the death of your body.
- Death is not to be feared unless you deny Christ (**Hebrews 2:15**).
- Because of the Curse, all flesh is corrupted. Our mortal body must put on an immortal body—this requires death (**1 Corinthians 15:53**).

THE THREE DEATHS

The Bible establishes three deaths: spiritual death, physical death, and The Second Death.

- Spiritual Death is the separation of the spirit-man from God due to sin (**Isaiah 59:2**).
- Physical Death is the separation of the spirit-man from the human body (**Romans 7:24**).
- The Second Death is the eternal banishment of the total man from God into the final misery known as the lake of fire (**Revelation 2:11, 20:14, 21:8**).

SPIRITUAL DEATH

Most people understand death as the cessation of life. This is only partially true. The Bible describes two stages to death: first spiritual death, then physical death. Spiritual death is the result of a person's initial rebellion against God requiring one to be "born-again." Spiritual death implies that there was a time in which the person was "alive spiritually." This condition of being "spiritually alive" is confirmed in the Scriptures:

- **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 (*living person*).**
Genesis 2:7

Man was made to be alive in a different sense than plants and animals. Man was given the "breath of life" directly from God Almighty. **Genesis 7:22** (NKJV) calls it "the breath of the spirit of life." Man was created to have not just a soul, but also an eternal spirit, made after the image of God.

- **In him was life; and the life was the light of men . . . ⁹That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.**
John 1:4, 9

Every man coming into the world is lighted with life by the "Father of spirits" (**Hebrews 12:9**). This individual spirit-man is the breath of life given to each person upon their biological conception. Since God is the Father of spirits, our spiritual essence proceeds from Him. It is breathed into us, giving us our unique dispositions and callings. Jeremiah confirms this:

- **Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.**



Jeremiah 1:5

Before Jeremiah's biological body was physically conceived, his real person was intimately known by God, set apart, and given a special assignment. There are three foundational truths here worth noting. Before our parents conceived our biological bodies, our spirit-man was:

1. Already known by God.
2. Already set apart for His use.
3. Already ordained (given a divine purpose).

The real us, the essence of who we are, is not our body, but our spirit-man that proceeds from God. It gives life to the physical bodies conceived in our mothers' wombs. Without the breath of God, our biological bodies are nothing but inanimate water and dirt.

We begin life as an infant alive unto God, even as Adam was made a "living person." At some point we receive knowledge of the commandments of God and choose to rebel against one or more. It is at this moment that a person dies spiritually; that is, they are cut off from fellowship with God. Their spirit-man does not cease to be, it merely ceases to be alive unto God. Divine fellowship is terminated. God forewarned Adam that rebellion would result in death—spiritual death.

- **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.**

Genesis 2:17

God delivered to Adam the first spiritual commandment with ramifications: don't eat or you'll die. Adam disobeyed God and instantly died spiritually, even though his body lived another 930 years. He was also thrust out of God's garden.

****A man's rebellion indicates to God that he doesn't want what God has to offer.****

Paul echoes this spiritual law of "rebellion brings spiritual death" in **Romans**:

- **For I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.**

Romans 7:9

It is evident that Paul was referencing spiritual death here. His rebellion against the Law of God killed him spiritually, though his body was still alive to write the Roman epistle. His physical death would take place about seven years later when he was beheaded in Rome at the command of Nero. So at what point can spiritual death take place?

THE AGE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

For an unknown season of time, Adam and Eve were alive to God until they rebelled, died spiritually, and were thrust out of the Garden of Eden. Paul stated in **Romans 7:9** he too, was alive to God once, but at some point he received the Law of God and rebelled against it, killing him spiritually. Adam, the proto-man, and Paul, an every-man, had to grow into their souls. They both started as innocent, naïve, and ignorant, but through experience, growth, parenting, and training were then presented with the option to serve God or not. They both eventually chose to *not* obey (as we all have). The logical and theological question that arises is this: At what age then, does man become responsible for hearing the Law, understanding the Law, and then choosing from their own free will to either obey or disobey the Law? This is called the *Age of Accountability*.

We know that little children, though born with the sin nature in their flesh, are innocent in many regards to rebellion and sin, and therefore are not held to the same level of accountability as an adult. Foolishness is sealed up in the heart of a child, but acts of willful rebellion only develop as the child's soul develops. Consider what David said about the death of his young son:

- **But now he [the young child] is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.**

2 Samuel 12:23

David clearly indicates that the boy did not go to the abode of the damned, for David himself would join his son. Everyone agrees David was righteous and went to Abraham's Bosom (see *Lesson 2: The Doctrine of Hell*); therefore, we have clear evidence that this boy died innocent but with a sin nature. It was, after all, David's sin that brought divine judgment upon his son and not the child's own sin.

The Scriptures are not clear on the *Age of Accountability*, but we trust that God is merciful and just. For some, willful rebellion may come at 4 years old, for others it may be 10 years old. There are many other questions to posit here, of which I can only speculate:

- Do mentally handicapped people ever reach an age of accountability?
- Can a child be born-again before ever dying spiritually?
- If a child dies while they are still alive to God, but aren't born-again (e.g., aborted babies, accidents, sickness, etc.), will they ever obtain eternal life in Christ, having never needed to be "born-again"?
- If not, does that mean there will be two classifications of spirits in heaven: born-again spirits and spirits still alive unto God? or do children get to hear the Gospel in heaven and make the decision to receive eternal life there?

Great is the mystery of righteousness. I am, personally, still working out my doctrine on these questions.

YOU MUST BE BORN-AGAIN



Spiritual death requires one to be born-again:

- **Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God . . . ⁵Verily, Verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.**
John 3:3, 5
- **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,**
1 Peter 1:3
- **Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.**
1 Peter 1:23

Spiritual death is what condemns mankind to an eternity apart from God Almighty. Dead spirits cannot live forever in the presence of the Living God. Dead spirits can only be redeemed through the atoning work of Jesus Christ.

DEATH

Lesson 2

The Doctrine Of Death

Part 2: Natural Death

As covered in Lesson 1, death requires a two-step process: 1) spiritual death and 2) natural death. Natural death, or the death of the biological body, can be caused by any number of things, e.g. cancer, traumatic injuries from accidents, murder, or simply falling asleep in the Lord. The death of the biological body releases the spirit of man into eternity (whether it be heaven or hell), and the body cannot live without the spirit-man.

- For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.
James 2:26

DISSOLVED TABERNACLES

It should be noted that the Bible graciously elaborates upon all doctrines from numerous perspectives and with several examples. The doctrine of death is no different. Peter and Paul both describe our bodies as “tabernacles” (or tents), calling them our “earthly house.”

- Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; ¹⁴Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. 2 Peter 1:13-14

Peter described death as “putting off” his tabernacle. The tent in which our spirit resides will be taken down upon our death. Paul described physical death in different terms. He described death as the dissolution of our tabernacle.

- For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.
2 Corinthians 5:1

Here, dissolved (Gr. *kataluo*), literally means to *loosen down*. This vividly alludes to the decomposition of the human body. Our “tabernacles” will all decompose one day, not to be discouraged though. Paul adds that when we lose this body, we have an eternal body, made without hands, awaiting us.

DEATH: A SPIRITUAL EXODUS

Death is also viewed as a spiritual exodus—the spirit’s departure from the body and from this fallen world.

- And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias:
³¹Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease (*exodos*) which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. Luke 9:30-31

According to the Greek, an *exodos* is an exit or a departure. The Lord's death at Calvary was His departure from His body and from this world.

- **Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease (*exodus*) to have these things always in remembrance.** **2 Peter 1:15**

Peter described the “putting off of his tabernacle” as his *exodos*. Paul also said something very similar:

- **For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:** **Philippians 1:23**

Physical death results in the spirit-man departing the earthly house in order to be with Christ or, if wicked, to go to hell. One day, all born-again believers in Christ Jesus will get to depart this life and see Him face to face.

THE SLEEP OF DEATH

The Bible refers to the death of the natural body as “sleep.”

- **And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.** **Daniel 12:2**

This verse from Daniel recalls God's curse upon Adam and Ecclesiastes' declaration:

- **... till thou return unto the ground: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.** **Genesis 3:19b**
- **Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.** **Ecclesiastes 12:7**

THE SLEEPING BODY

Generally speaking, and with the exception of explosions or cremation, human bodies are buried back into the earth and left to decompose and return to the elements. Some believe that upon death, the spirit of man, and therefore his consciousness, is actually asleep until the Resurrection. This teaching is often called *Spirit Slumber* and is doctrinally incorrect. The Bible does not teach “spirit slumber.” To “sleep” is a Hebraic idiom for *death, to die, or a dead body* (see **1 Kings 2:10; 11:43; 14:20, 31; 15:8, 24; 16:6; 22:50**). Daniel figuratively describes bodily death as *sleeping in the dust of the earth*. The body was said to be “sleeping” because at the Resurrection, it would be raised up again, just as people get up when they awake from natural sleep. Jesus used this Hebraism when speaking of Lazarus' death:

- **Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep . . .**
¹³Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of
taking rest in sleep. ¹⁴Then Jesus said unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.
John 11:11b, 13-14

The disciples thought Lazarus was merely sick and resting, not dead. Jesus was using “sleep” in the traditional Hebrew sense to communicate that Lazarus’ body was dead. Matthew, author of the Jewish Gospel, uses this expression in reference to dead bodies:

- **And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,**
Matthew 27:52

Matthew is very clear—it is the bodies of the saints that sleep, not their souls. Building upon Daniel’s doctrine of “dust sleep,” Paul also uses the term “sleep” in reference to the death of the human body, not the “spirit slumber” of the disembodied spirit.

- **But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.**
1 Corinthians 15:20

We know Jesus didn’t lose consciousness for three days while He was in the grave. He told the thief, “This day will you be with me in Paradise.” Christ’s bodily resurrection from the dead proved the long-held doctrine of the Resurrection was real, and that others would follow. He was the first fruits of those to be resurrected after Him.

Paul further demonstrated that God views death as slumber for the corrupted body while it awaits its resurrection:

- **Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. ⁵¹Behold I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed.**
1 Corinthians 15:50-51

In reference to corruption’s (or flesh’s) inability to inherit incorruption (heaven), Paul stated that not all of our bodies will sleep (die), but all of our bodies, whether alive or dead, shall be changed into glorified, immortal, incorruptible bodies.

- **But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others who have no hope. ¹⁴For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. ¹⁵For 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 . . . ¹⁶and the dead in Christ shall rise first:**
1 Thess. 4:13-15, 16c

It is further evident from this passage that all references to “sleep” apply to a dead human body and not to a slumbering spirit, as some believe. This passage concerning *the Resurrection of the Dead* is clearly in regards to the dead bodies of believers rising and being transformed before the bodies of the saints who are alive at the moment of the catching away (the Rapture). Consider what Paul said about the spirit-man’s relation to the body:

- **Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: . . . ⁸We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.**
2 Corinthians 5:6, 8

As long as our body is alive, we are absent from the heavenly presence of the Lord. But once our bodies die, our spirit-man doesn’t sleep; we are instantly in the presence of the Lord. Remember the story of Lazarus:

- **And it came to pass, that the beggar dies [his body died], and was carried [his spirit] by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: . . .** **Luke 16:22**

Even before the Resurrection, when a person died, their spirit didn’t sleep but was awake, conscious, and in fellowship with Abraham, able to be comforted; or else in torments very much aware of their present condition and agony.

THE DISEMBODIED SPIRIT

Physical death separates our body from our spirit-man. Before the resurrection of Jesus Christ, all disembodied spirits went to the grave (*sheol*), also known as hell (see *Lesson 3: The Doctrine of Hell*). Now, after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, those who are born-again go to heaven while those who are lost must go to hell.

- **For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:** **Philippians 1:23**

Because Christ has ascended, all who now die in Him depart planet earth to be with Him—which is far better! For this reason alone, we should never begrudge someone their desire to pass away in order to be with Jesus, especially at the end of their life or after long failing battles against horrific diseases.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, our body is our earthly house, a dissolvable tabernacle, which must be put off in order to put on our immortal house from heaven. When our earthly house is put off, it will both dissolve yet sleep until it is awakened in the Resurrection.

DEATH Lesson 3 The Doctrine Of Hell

Death releases mankind into the eternal realm. The righteous dwell eternally with Christ, while the wicked dwell for eternity in suffering and torments. We understand that suffering and torments is collectively known as hell. However, hell has not always been pure torments. The Bible reveals that hell once received the righteous dead.

SHEOL

The Hebrew definition of *Sheol* is quite revealing:

- *a proper noun indicating where the dead dwell (apart from their bodies)*
- *the underworld, the grave, hell, the pit*
- *the place of no return*
- *the world of the dead as if a subterranean retreat, including its accessories and inmates*

With 65 uses of the word *Sheol*, the Old Testament very thoroughly describes the place of the mortally departed:

- *Sheol* (hell, grave) is located beneath us and so is descended into (**Genesis 37:35; Numbers 16:33; Job 7:9; Psalm 55:15; Proverbs 15:24; Isaiah 14:9, 15; Ezekiel 31:15, 17; 32:27**).
- *Sheol* is a very large and deep abode (**Job 11:8; Proverbs 9:18; Isaiah 5:14**).
- *Sheol* is a place people are sent against their will (**1 Samuel 2:6; 1 Kings 2:6, 9; Ezekiel 31:16; Isaiah 14:15**). This is ascertained from the usage of *sheol* with the verb *yāradh*, “to go down,” indicating the action was against the person’s will.
- *Sheol* is a place of worms, darkness, fire, hopelessness, sorrow, pain, and loneliness (**Deuteronomy 32:22; Job 17:13-16; Psalm 116:3; Isaiah 14:9-11; Mark 9:43-48**).
- *Sheol* is a place from which only the righteous can be redeemed by God (**Jonah 2:2; 7:9; Psalm 9:17, 16:10, 30:3, 86:13, 89:48**).
- *Sheol* is the place even the righteous departed to after their mortal bodies fell asleep.
 - Joseph (**Genesis 37:35**)
 - Jacob (**Genesis 43:28**)
 - David (**Psalms 16:10, 86:13**)
 - Jonah (**Jonah 2:2**)

HADES

The Greek equivalent to *Sheol* is *Hades*, “the abode of the dead and the common receptacle of disembodied spirits.” The New Testament uses the word 30 times. The Greek’s

definition parallels the Hebrew *Sheol*. A few new insights to the nature, condition, and rules of hell can be gained from the New Testament.

- Even cities will be cast down to *Hades* (**Luke 10:15**).
- *Hades* (hell, grave) was divided into two compartments separated by a great gulf between. One side was called torments; the other side was called Abraham's Bosom or Paradise. Once a person's body had died, their soul was relegated to either Torments or Paradise—both once being in hell:
 - **And in hell (*hades, the grave*) he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom . . . ²⁶And 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.** **Luke 16:23, 26**

GEHENNA

Jesus often called hell *Gehenna*, a Hebrew word that means "Valley of Hinnom." *Hinnom* derives its name from the cries (*wailing*) of the little children that were burned alive in this valley as the Israelites sacrificed them to the god Moloch. This is a valley south of Jerusalem where later—after King Josiah had eliminated Moloch worship—trash, refuse, and criminal and animal carcasses were cast out and burned. This valley was defined by a continuous stench of decay and burning flesh; a continuous smoldering fire; and smoke without end. The place, therefore, was the perfect picture of the nature and conditions of the eternal torments of hell (see **Matthew 5:22, 29-30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5; James 3:6**).

Gehenna is the compartment of Hell (*sheol, hades*) that offers nothing but torment to the wicked interned there. It is the equivalent of *Torments*.

TARTARUS

In Greek mythology, *Tartarus* is the deepest abyss in the netherworld used as a dungeon to torment the wicked and imprison the Titans (traitorous offspring of Ouranos and Gaia) after their defeat by the Olympian gods. Here the Titans are kept, bound with chains in a "misty gloom," according to Greek mythology. Homer describes it as "a black hole, a bottomless pit."

Peter uses a verb form of *tartarus*—*tartaroo*—to describe how God cast out the fallen angels by "throwing them to Tartarus." First Century believers, deeply acquainted with Greek mythology, would have fully understood the implication of such a statement.

- **For God did not spare even the angels who sinned. He threw them into hell (*tartaroo*), in gloomy pits of darkness, where they are being held until the day of judgment.** **2 Peter 2:4 NLT**

- **And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.**
Jude 6

These two passages mirror one another and, without a doubt, speak of the same event and scenario. This helps establish a precedent that there is a third part to hell. In addition to *Torments (Gehenna)* and *Abraham's Bosom (Paradise)*, we are presented here with *Tartarus*. It is evident that *Tartarus* is different than *Gehenna* and *Paradise*. It may be that *Tartarus* is what is at the bottom of the "great gulf" that was fixed between *Paradise* and *Torments*. It may also correspond to the Bottomless Pit of **Revelation (9:1-2, 11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1, 3)**.

PARADISE (Abraham's Bosom)	TORMENTS (Gehenna)	DARK ABYSS (Tartarus)
For Humans	For Humans	For Angels
Cooling Water	Unquenchable Fire	Darkness
Comforts/Consolation	Torments/Torture	Chains
Fellowship	Worms	Holding Cell
In heaven now	Destined for the Lake of Fire	Destined for the Lake of Fire

JESUS WENT TO HELL

Perhaps, one of the more controversial doctrines for some Christians is Christ's descension into hell (the grave). Now that we have thoroughly established that all souls—righteous and wicked—descended into hell, this should not be as hard to comprehend or believe.

- **For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.**
Psalms 16:10

This Messianic psalm is the first prophecy indicating that Christ would descend into hell like all men before Him had to.

- **For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.**
Matthew 12:40

Jesus spent three days and three nights in hell while his body spent three days and three nights in the tomb.

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

As we previously saw, Paradise was part of hell or the grave. The thief on the cross was not about to beat everyone else to heaven, travelling directly to heaven with Jesus. The thief could not enter into heaven without the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Paradise was the righteous portion of hell (the grave).

- **Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden. ²⁵For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: ²⁶Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: ²⁷Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.**

Acts 2:24-27

“Pains of death” implies that there is a literal “agony and intolerable anguish” in death, but death could not hold Him. Imagine, that God would taste death just like man must.

- **He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.**

Acts 2:31

Christ’s resurrection is as much a reference to His soul coming up out of hell as it is to His body coming up out of the grave.

- **(Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? ¹⁰He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heaven, that he might fill all things.)**

Ephesians 4:9-10

Part of what Jesus did in hell was preach the Gospel to those spirits (both human and fallen angels) that were being held there:

- **By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;**

1 Peter 3:19

Many Christians ignorantly believe that Jesus died on the cross and returned to heaven to be with the Father for three days and three nights. This passage is our third witness that Jesus went to hell and stayed down there until His resurrection. His ascension into heaven, to be seated there at the Father’s right hand, didn’t take place until **Acts 1** (40 days after the resurrection). We must make a distinction between *Resurrection* and *Ascension*. Immediately following His resurrection, Jesus revealed to Mary that He had not yet been to the Father:

- **Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: . . .**

John 20:17a

At the empty tomb, it appears Jesus had only ascended up from the lower parts of the earth to re-inhabit His now glorified body. This is His resurrection. At His ascension in **Acts 1**:

- **. . . he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. Ephesians 4:8b**

Christ's ascension released the ministry gifts into the earth and also allowed for the Holy Spirit to be poured out upon all flesh through the Pentecostal experience (10 days after the Ascension). Pentecost officially launched the Church Age—the dispensation of time that could only have been produced by the death (and resurrection) of Jesus Christ.

DEATH

Lesson 4

How To Die

As we have previously seen, it is appointed unto man once to die. Though our inner-man can live forever through the eternal life of Jesus Christ, our bodies cannot. Each of us has been given an assignment and purpose in life, but we only have so many years to accomplish it before our time expires. However, the Bible offers us many ways to extend our biological life, and conversely, reveals numerous ways in which we can also cut our life short. As one preacher once said, “You can’t live wrong and die right!”

SHORTENING YOUR LIFE

Ignorance and culture produce baseless maxims like, “You never know when it’s your time to go,” and, “When it’s your time to go, it’s your time to go.” God promises long life to those who faithfully serve him without the unknown “time to go.” The Bible tells us there are sure ways to shorten your life. These will certainly hasten your “time to go.”

- Running with greedy people will rob you of life (**Proverbs 1:19**).
- Reject wisdom.
 - **But he that sinneth against me [wisdom] wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death (Proverbs 8:36).**
 - **... but fools die for want of wisdom (Proverbs 10:21).**
 - See also **Proverbs 1:24-33**.
- Chasing dirty women (whorish people).
 - **Her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead (Proverbs 2:16-19).**
 - See also **Proverbs 5:3-14; 6:24-29; 7:5-27; 9:13-18**.
- Wickedness cuts your life short.
 - **But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it (Proverbs 2:22).**
 - **The fear of the LORD prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened (Proverbs 10:27).**
 - **For the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23).**
- Reject instruction.
 - **He shall die without instruction [or self-control]; and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray (Proverbs 5:23).**
- Wicked speech.

- **He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction (Proverbs 13:3).**
- **Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof (Proverbs 18:21).**
- **Strife, unforgiveness, hostility, and disunity toward the Body of Christ.**
 - **For if you eat the bread and drink the cup without honoring the body of Christ, you are eating and drinking God's judgment upon yourself. That is why many of you are weak and sick and some have even died (1 Corinthians 11:29-30 NLT).**

LENGTHENING YOUR LIFE

Thankfully, we have many promises and instructions on how to lengthen our days. God is the God of life, and He wants to satisfy us with long life (**Psalm 91:16**).

- **Obey wisdom**
 - **But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil (Proverbs 1:33).**
 - **For whoso findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the LORD (Proverbs 8:35).**
- **Discretion shall preserve thee (Proverbs 2:11).**
- **Righteous living**
 - **He . . . protects those who are faithful to him (Proverbs 2:8 NLT).**
 - **Righteousness delivereth from death (Proverbs 10:2; 11:4)**
 - **The way of the godly leads to life; that path does not lead to death (Proverbs 12:28 NLT).**
- **Keep the commandments from the heart**
 - **My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee (Proverbs 3:1-2).**
- **Depart from evil**
 - **. . . depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones (Proverbs 3:7-8).**
- **Wisdom and understanding**
 - **Length of days is in her right hand . . . (Proverbs 3:13-18).**
- **Attend to the Word of God**
 - **My words are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh (Proverbs 4:20-22).**
- **Keep God's commandments and live**
 - **Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye (Proverbs 7:2).**
- **Righteous labor**
 - **The labour of the righteous tendeth to life: the fruit of the wicked to sin (Proverbs 10:16).**

- Keep instruction
 - **People who accept discipline are on the pathway to life, but those who ignore correction will go astray (Proverbs 10:17 NLT).**
- Fear the Lord
 - **The fear of the LORD prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened (Proverb 10:27).**
- Receive correction from God.
 - **You will go to the grave at a ripe old age, like a sheaf of grain harvested at the proper time (Job 5:17-27)!**
- Love and trust in God.
 - **With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation (Psalm 91:14-16).**

THE BIBLICAL WAY TO DIE

As planet earth and humanity continue to deteriorate under the oppressive weight of The Curse and sin, mankind has found new and horrific ways to die. These new means of death and departure are not our examples to follow. We as Christians look to the Bible for our examples and life patterns.

Giving Up the Ghost

“Giving up the ghost” is an expression that refers to the purposed and intentional release of one’s spirit. Modern translations call it “releasing the spirit.” By releasing the spirit, the natural body must then die (**James 2:26**). Consider how each patriarch died:

Abraham

- **Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years (*having lived a long and satisfying life*—NLT); and was gathered to his people. Genesis 25:8**

Abraham (the father of our faith) died by giving up the ghost, not by sickness or tragedy. Notice the scriptures say, “he gave up the ghost, and died.” Releasing his spirit preceded the death of his body, not vice versa. He died when he was fully satisfied and done. He released his spirit after he’d had enough of this life and had finished his race.

Isaac

- **And Isaac gave up the ghost, and died, and was gathered unto his people, being old and full of days (*at a ripe old age*—NLT): and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him. Genesis 35:29**

Isaac died in old age as well. Like his father, Abraham, Isaac died by releasing his spirit. He died at a ripe old age once he was done with life. He determined when he was done – not sickness.

Jacob

- **And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days (KJV) . . . ²⁸These are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this what their father said as he told his sons good-bye. He blessed each one with an appropriate message (NLT) . . . ³³And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people (KJV).**
Genesis 49:1, 28, 33

Jacob set a new standard concerning death: instead of simply releasing his spirit and passing on, he first gathered together all of his sons and blessed and corrected them one final time through prophecy. Then, under his own will and desire, he drew his feet up into his bed and released his spirit, causing his body to die. This is the biblically ideal way to die. This is the pattern we should each aspire to. Hebrews speaks of “dying in faith.” I can think of no greater biblical way to die in faith than under these conditions:

1. Having set your house in order, gather your loved ones around you when you have finished your race and are ready to go.
2. Prophecy, pray, correct, and bless those that will remain, allowing them to hear from your own mouth (and not a legal reading of your last will) what your blessing and instructions are.
3. Depart this age by willfully giving up your spirit.

Moses

Like Jacob, Moses died after he set his house in order and blessed the twelve tribes. However, Moses’ death raised the bar concerning the ideal way to pass away. Consider the following details of Moses’ death:

Moses knew his days were drawing near and even where he would die:

- **And the LORD spake unto Moses that selfsame day saying, ⁴⁹Get thee up into this mountain Abarim, . . . ⁵⁰And die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people;**
Deut. 32:48-49a, 50a

Moses was able to get his house in order and bless those who would remain after him:

- **And this is the blessing, wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death.**
Deuteronomy 33:1

Moses had trained up his replacement:

- **And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the LORD commanded Moses.**
Deuteronomy 34:9

Moses got to foresee the next move of God, which foundation he had labored to build:

- **And the LORD shewed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan, ²And all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea, ³And the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar. ⁴And the LORD said unto him, This is the land which I swear unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither.**
Deuteronomy 34:1b-4

Moses died in health, not sickness:

- **And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.**
Deuteronomy 34:7

What an ideal way to die: knowing the time, preparing your home and loved ones, blessing them before you go, having trained up any necessary replacements, foreseeing the next move of God, then passing away in health (and not because your body gave out).

Jesus Christ

- **When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost (*released his spirit*).**

John 19:30

Jesus prophesied before His crucifixion that no man had the power to take His life from Him. He alone had the power to lay down His life, and to take it back up (**John 10:18**). This prophecy is very clearly seen in how He died—He released His spirit once all necessary scriptures had been fulfilled. It was a conscious effort on His part. He died on the cross, but the cross did not kill Him.

Ananias, Sapphira, and King Herod

- **And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.**
Acts 5:5
- **Then she [Sapphira] fell down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband.**
Acts 5:10
- **And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.**

Acts 12:23

These three individuals died under the judgment of God. In each passage, the individual's body fails first (natural death) resulting in their spirit being released into eternity. It is clear these individuals were not in charge of their death.

Live clean and purpose to be in charge of your own passing!! And remember, you can't live wrong and die right!



DEATH

Lesson 5

The Resurrection Of The Dead

Part 1: The Old Testament Doctrine

As a core tenet of the Christian faith, *The Resurrection of the Dead* is quite possibly the least taught. Our belief in the literal resurrection of the dead bodies of the saints is central to the Christian faith. Most religions believe in the immortality of the soul, but unique to Christianity is our doctrine of the total redemption and salvation for the entire man—spirit, soul, *and* body. As one theologian put it, “The Bible is not contented with a bodiless eternity.” In other words, the salvation of God and eternal life will also be extended to the human body.

There are several key points to keep in mind as we study The Resurrection of the Dead:

- This will complete the work of the salvation of Jesus Christ in us. This event will result in the salvation of our body.
 - The salvation of God is three-fold:
 - Spirit—you must born-again (**John 3:3; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15**).
 - Soul—the saving of the soul is our responsibility through discipleship (**Romans 12:2; Hebrews 10:39; James 1:21**).
 - Body—the salvation of our body occurs at The Resurrection of the Dead.
- The Saints of God will receive new glorified bodies in the last day (**John 6:39-40, 44, 54, 11:24; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-15**).
- This Resurrection will take place at Christ’s coming for the Church (**1 Corinthians 15:22-23, 51-53; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17**).
- The dead in Christ will receive their new bodies first, followed by those who are still alive on planet earth in their natural human bodies (**1 Thessalonians 4:16-17**).
- This will conclude the Church Age. For this reason, the term “the last day” may in fact be a reference to the last day of the Church.

The New Testament has many things to say about The Resurrection of the Dead. We will cover those in Lesson 6. This lesson will look at the Old Testament foreshadowing of this wonderful event.

ESTABLISHED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The doctrine and hope of a bodily resurrection were thoroughly established in the Old Testament. We know this from the Gospels. The Pharisees held strictly to a literal resurrection from the dead while the Sadducees did not. This doctrinal difference often set the two factions against each other (**Matthew 22:23; Acts 23:6-9**). Jesus also taught quite

often concerning The Resurrection of the Dead. Let us consider the Old Testament scriptures the Pharisees and the Lord Jesus used to establish this glorious doctrine.

- **So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raise out of their sleep. ¹³O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me! ¹⁴If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.**
Job 14:12-14

Job answers his own hypothetical question: If a man die, shall he live again? Job had the understanding that there was a change coming for him sometime after his death. Here “change” means *a change of garments, relief from death, or a change in the course of life*. All three of these would accurately describe The Resurrection of the Dead. “Hide me in the grave, . . . until thy wrath be past” even seems to foresee the final judgment day of God upon wicked mankind. This is very fascinating foresight from the oldest book of the Bible.

- **For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: ²⁶And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: ²⁷Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.**
Job 19:25-27

Another interesting divine insight from Job. He said he would see his God in the flesh and with his own eyes, even after the worms had destroyed his skin. No man has seen God (**John 1:18**) so this seems to allude to Job’s resurrected body yet to come. Note the confidence with which he makes the statement: “yet in my flesh I *shall* see God.”

- **Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. ¹⁰For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. ¹¹Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.**
Psalms 16:9-11

This Messianic prophecy was written by David, but the first application of this scripture is toward himself. David could foresee by the Spirit of God that he (David) would not be left in hell (the grave, *Sheol*) and that he would see a new body one day; how else could his “flesh also rest in hope”?

- **As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awaken [from the dead], with thy likeness.**
Psalms 17:15

Psalms 17 is David’s second prophecy concerning The Resurrection of the Dead. No man can see God and live; yet David, like Job, declared with great boldness that he would awake

with the likeness of God and behold His face in righteousness. This is not a Psalm about awakening to a morning prayer time. This is clearly about awakening from the dead.

- **Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of the herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.**
Isaiah 26:19

We previously saw in Lesson 2 that bodily death is referred to as “sleep” and “sleeping in the dust of the earth.” Isaiah maintains that same imagery here. The dead shall live and with Isaiah’s body, they shall rise one day. This is The Resurrection of the Dead.

- **And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.**
Daniel 12:2

Daniel’s prophecy may be one of the clearest declarations of this coming event. Daniel introduces the notion that The Resurrection of the Dead will include everyone, not just the righteous. Even the wicked will be resurrected. Jesus confirmed this in **John 5:29**, where He differentiates between *The Resurrection of Life* and *The Resurrection of Damnation*.

- **I will ransom them from the power of the grave (*Sheol*, for the spirit); I will redeem them from death [for the physical body]: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.**
Hosea 13:14

Hosea prophesied about the work of Christ and part of its atoning power: it would ransom us from death’s effect on our body and the grave’s power over our spirit. In short, this verse predicts the new birth and the new body. This prophecy is quoted in **1 Corinthians 15:54-55** as the conclusion to Paul’s lengthy teaching on the Resurrection. Paul specifically states:

- **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 the victory. ⁵⁵O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?**
1 Corinthians 15:54-55

Praise God, the Resurrection will be the final victory over death!!

DEATH
Lesson 6
The Resurrection Of The Dead
Part 2: The New Testament Doctrine

We have seen that the Old Testament prophets laid the foundation for our doctrine of *The Resurrection of the Dead*. It is abundantly evident Jesus Christ believed in and preached The Resurrection of the Dead (see **Matthew 22:23-33; Mark 12:18-27; Luke 20:27-38; John 11:25**), ultimately demonstrating that faith and setting the divine precedent by His own resurrection.

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION—THE PATTERN AND FIRSTFRUITS

- **And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, ²Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection of the dead.**

Acts 4:1-2

The Lord's resurrection from the dead was the divine confirmation that both the Old Testament promises of the prophets were true, that everything Christ preached was true, and that it all will eventually come to pass. Because of His resurrection, the early Church could preach the coming resurrection with great confidence and boldness.

- **But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. ²¹For since by man came death, by man also the resurrection of the dead . . . ²³But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.**

1 Cor. 15:20-21, 23

Christ's resurrection is the demonstration and foretaste of what God will do for us on the "last day," at "his coming." His resurrection from the dead set the precedent for what we can expect. Christ's victory over hell and the grave guarantees us our resurrection from the dead. Jesus was the firstfruits of the coming resurrection harvest. We will be the fullness of the resurrection harvest.

- **And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.**

Colossians 1:18

Jesus was the first to be resurrected from the dead into a glorified body (others have been resurrected from the dead but retained their mortal body). Peculiar is Paul's choice of the word "firstborn" in describing Christ's resurrection. It parallels John's description of salvation as being "born-again." So both salvation and the resurrection are seen as a type of birth, or new birth—a new spirit and a new body.

THE CRITICALITY OF THE RESURRECTION DOCTRINE

As previously stated, modern believers don't realize how central to the Christian faith The Resurrection of the Dead really is. Consider the following New Testament scriptures:

- **Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: ¹⁴And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. **1 Corinthians 15:12-14****

Paul's rebuke of the Corinthian doubters further establishes the validity of our coming resurrection. Very simply put, if there be no resurrection from the dead, then our entire faith is in vain.

- **Therefore leaving the principles (*word of the beginning*) of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, ²Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. **Hebrews 6:1-2****

The Resurrection of the Dead is one of the six principle doctrines of Christ. It is part of the "word of the beginning" for us as Christians. Truly, The Resurrection of the Dead is not a doctrine that is up for debate. How many of the principle doctrines of Christ can one deny before they can no longer be counted a believer?

NEW TESTAMENT WITNESS

As a doctrine, The Resurrection of the Dead is further established in the New Testament with even greater details and insight being provided. It was a critical part of both Christ's and Paul's doctrine. Consider the following New Testament verses:

- **And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. **Luke 14:14****

There are some rewards we won't see until "the resurrection of the just."

- **For just as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. **John 5:21****

Jesus stated very clearly that God the Father raises the dead and gives them life.

- **Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. **John 11:24****

At the death of Lazarus, Martha, one of the Lord's most stalwart disciples, demonstrates both a knowledge and confidence in the doctrine of The Resurrection of the Dead. She learned this doctrine from Jesus Christ.

- **Marvel not at this [the impotent man just healed]: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, ²⁹And 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 5:28-29**

In building upon Daniel's (**Daniel 12:2**) revelation of a resurrection for the righteous and the wicked, Jesus reaffirmed that everyone in the graves will hear and come forth. This passage assigns names to the two resurrections: *The Resurrection of Life* and *the Resurrection of Damnation*.

- **But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question. Acts 23:6**

Paul summarized the gospel message he had been preaching by calling it "the hope and resurrection of the dead." This statement immediately set the Sadducees and Pharisees present that day against one another.

- **But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets: ¹⁵And have hope toward God, which they [the Pharisees] themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. Acts 24:14-15**

When called before Felix, the Roman Governor over Israel, Paul proclaimed quite emphatically (and that he agreed with the Pharisees), that there *shall* be a resurrection, both of the righteous and the wicked. He again referred to this as the "hope toward God."

- **Or else let these men themselves tell what misdeed they found when I stood before the Council, ²¹other than for this one statement which I shouted out while standing among them, 'For the resurrection of the dead I am on trial before you today.' Acts 24:20-21 NASB**

Paul related to Governor Felix that the only reason he, Paul, was brought before the governor is because he declared "I believe in the resurrection of the dead" and started a tumult among the Pharisees and Sadducees (see **Acts 23:6**).

- **And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power. 1 Corinthians 6:14**

- **Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.** 2 Corinthians 4:14
- **That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.** Ephesians 5:27
- **For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.** 1 Thessalonians 4:14
- **And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,** Jude 14

At the Resurrection, we shall all be raised up together, presented together in our new bodies (without spot, wrinkle, or blemish), then come back to earth with Jesus at the Second Coming of Christ to conquer, judge, and reign.

- **And Christ lives within you, so even though your body will die because of sin, the Spirit gives you life because you have been made right with God. ¹¹The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you.** Romans 8:10-11 NLT

Though this verse is often used as a promise of life, health, and healing now, the actual context of this verse relates to the Resurrection of the Dead. How will we be resurrected? Just like Jesus was—by the power of the Holy Ghost.

- **That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; ¹¹If my any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.** Philippians 3:10-11

Paul longed to attain unto the coming resurrection. So should we.

- **[By faith] Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:** Hebrews 11:35

Many Old Testament saints refused to deny the God of Israel, looking forward to the hope and promise of salvation—that salvation which promised a resurrection from the dead. May we strive to obtain a better resurrection!!

DEATH
Lesson 7
The Resurrection Of The Dead
Part 3: The Nature And Timing Of The Resurrection

Now that we have clearly seen how established and foundational the Resurrection of the Dead is, let us further explore what this event will look like, what the nature of the new body will be, and when this event will take place.

THE RESURRECTION EVENT AND THE RAPTURE

The New Testament clearly reveals that the Resurrection of the Dead occurs at the Rapture. Anyone questioning the validity of the Rapture (or denying it outright) must carefully reconcile this with their belief in the Resurrection of the Dead. Remember, the Resurrection of the Dead is a non-negotiable doctrine. It is a principle doctrine of Christ (see *Lesson 6: The Resurrection of the Dead, Part 2*). As we are about to see, the Rapture and the Resurrection of the Dead are the same event.

- **Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. ⁵²In 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. 1 Corinthians 15:51-52**

- **For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. ¹⁵For 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. ¹⁶For 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: ¹⁷Then 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. ¹⁸Wherefore comfort one another with these words. 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18**

These two passages are discussing the same event but reveal different details. Consider the following parallels:

1 Corinthians 15:51-52	1 Thessalonians 4:14-18
"We shall not all sleep"	"We which are alive and remain"
"Last trump", "trumpet shall sound"	"trump of God"
"the dead shall be raised incorruptible"	"the dead in Christ shall rise first"
"we shall all be changed"	"we shall be caught up together with them"

The Corinthian passage emphasizes the resurrection aspect of the Rapture, while the Thessalonian passage places the emphasis on our final union with Jesus. But make no mistake about it; these two events are the same!

- **Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,** ²**That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.**
2 Thessalonians 2:1-2

Here is one more witness from Scripture that we are gathered to the Lord when He comes again. Our gathering to Him results in the ultimate transformation! The Rapture/Resurrection of the Dead is also referred to as “the day of Christ” (**Philippians 1:10, 2:16**); “the day of the Lord Jesus” (**1 Corinthians 5:5; 2 Corinthians 1:14**), and “the day of Jesus Christ” (**Philippians 1:6**). This is different from “the Day of the Lord” (see **2 Peter 3:10**).

THE FIRST RESURRECTION

Now that we have established that the Resurrection and the Rapture are the same event, we can look at the other raptures/resurrections of the New Testament (Note: the Old Testament contains two raptures—Enoch and Elijah—however, though they were raptured, their bodies were not resurrected). Curiously, the Bible assigns the term “the First Resurrection” to describe the catching away of the New Testament Saints. This appears to happen in stages. John saw the culmination of the Resurrection in heaven:

- **Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.** ⁵**But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.** ⁶**Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.**
Revelation 20:4 NASB, 5-6 KJV

This passage discusses three categories of people:

- Enthroned judges (probably the Church raptured; cf. **Revelation 2:26-27; 3:21**).
- Beheaded saints (saints martyred during the Tribulation).
- Those who had not worshiped the beast or his image (saints who had escaped martyrdom).

This tri-fold group of saints—enthroned judges, Tribulation martyrs, and Tribulation endurers—are all partakers of “the First Resurrection.” Those who are partakers of the

First Resurrection will not be hurt of the Second Death (see **Revelation 2:11**) and will reign with Christ during the Millennium. The First Resurrection is the resurrection of the righteous. The Revelation places the First Resurrection before the Millennial Reign of Christ.

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION AND THE PASSOVER SAINTS

- **Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. ⁵¹And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; ⁵²And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, ⁵³And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.**
Matthew 27:50-53

Matthew presents us with two resurrections here: Christ's Resurrection and the resurrection of a group of deceased saints I will call the Passover Saints. No doubt the great earthquake caused their graves to open up, but the bodies were not resurrected until after the Lord's resurrection. It is unfathomable to consider that these saints could be resurrected before Jesus Christ was. The resurrected Passover Saints preached unto many. We must presume that they were raptured up with the Lord in **Acts 1:9-10**. It may be that they *were* the cloud that received Jesus in the air (see **Hebrews 12:1**, "so great a cloud of witnesses").

THE NATURE OF OUR RESURRECTED BODIES

Since the Resurrection of the Dead has not occurred yet, we can only speculate from what the Scriptures foretell and what Christ's glorified body was like. Let us first consider exactly what the Bible says will happen to our old bodies:

- **For if we have been planted together in the likeness (*such as amounts almost to equality or almost to identity*) of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:**
Romans 6:5

We should be able to safely assume that if Christ was the firstfruits of them that slept, and if we have been planted (like a seed awaiting a future harvest) in the likeness of his death, then when Paul says "we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection," it implies that our glorified bodies will also be *almost equal to and almost identical to* Christ's glorified body.

- **So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: ⁴³It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: ⁴⁴It is sown a natural (*psuchikos*) body; it is raised a spiritual (*pneumatikos*) body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.**
1 Corinthians 15:42-44

The resurrection grants us our permanent, final, incorruptible, and eternal body. It will be a glorified and power-filled body, like the Lord's after His resurrection. According to the

Greek in the above passage, our current body is an extension of our soul, it is a *psuchikos soma*, or a soulish body. It is only equipped for use by the soul. The resurrected body will be an extension of our born-again spirit. It will be a *pneumatikos soma*, or a spiritual body, designed for use by our spirit man. The full implication of this is a mystery that will be revealed in the ages to come.

- **Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵²In 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. ⁵³For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.** 1 Corinthians 15:51-53

Our resurrected bodies will be incorruptible and immortal. Just as our spirit-man was born-again of incorruptible seed (1 Peter 1:23), our resurrected bodies will spring forth incorruptible.

- **Who shall change (*metaschematizo*) our vile body, that it may be fashioned (*symmorphos*) like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.** Philippians 3:21

God will change our bodies, fashioning (*having the same form as another*) them according to His resurrected body. How? By the same power that He uses to subdue all things unto Himself and by the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead (Romans 8:11).

- **Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.** 1 John 3:2

John stated very matter-of-fact, “We know. . . we shall be like him.” Just by seeing the Lord “as he is” changes our being and nature—and we shall be like Him. We have at least three witnesses confirming that our glorified body will be like Christ’s (Romans 6:5; Philippians 3:21; 1 John 3:2).

CONCERNING THE LORD’S GLORIFIED BODY

We can gain more insight into what our glorified bodies will be like by considering the Lord’s body after His resurrection:

- He walked (Luke 24:15 NASB), indicating His body could be submitted to the natural laws of physics and creation.
- Jesus’ body had substance. He was touchable (John 20:26-28). He embraced.
- He ate food (Luke 24:30, 41-43). He cooked fish on the seashore (which also implies he probably either bought or caught the fish).
- He had bones and flesh (Luke 24:39).
- He was not instantly recognizable (Luke 24:16, 31; John 21:4).

- He was able to appear and disappear (**Mark 16:14; Luke 24:31, 36; John 20:26**), indicating His body was not limited to the natural laws of creation.

THE NATURE OF THE RESURRECTION

- There is no marriage in the Resurrection (**Matthew 22:23-32; Luke 20:35**).
- We cannot die anymore (**Luke 20:36**).
- We become like the angels (**Luke 20:36**), worshiping and ministering to the Lord, and ever serving Him.
- We become “sons of the resurrection” (**Luke 20:36**).
- It would seem we are given a new glorified body that we might more fully enjoy the goodness of God—spirit, soul, *and* body—for the ages to come (see **Luke 20:35 NASB; Ephesians 2:7**).

THE TWO RESURRECTIONS

Not everyone has eternal life, but everyone does have eternal existence. All will be raised but not all at the same time. The just will be resurrected to eternal life and the wicked will be resurrected to eternal condemnation.

- **And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.**
Daniel 12:2
- **Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, ²⁹And 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 5:28-29
- **And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.**
Acts 24:15

It is clear that there are two types of resurrections: one to life and one to damnation. The Second Resurrection will occur at the end of the Millennial Reign of Christ.

- **But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished . . .**
Revelation 5:6a

The Resurrection of Damnation is reserved only for the unjust and defined by shame and everlasting contempt. It must produce a body for the wicked dead just as the Resurrection of Life produces a body for the righteous dead, for how else do the dead live again? And yet they live again only to be judged for eternity. It appears they are given another body, an eternal body, in order to more fully suffer eternal damnation—spirit, soul, *and* body! For the Bible is not contented with a bodiless eternity.



BONUS SECTION

The Timeline of the Resurrections

1. Christ's Resurrection (**Matthew 28:1-10; Mark 16:1-14; Luke 24:1-39; John 20:1-17**)
2. The Resurrection of Old Testament Saints (**Matthew 27:52-53**). At the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
3. The Resurrection of the Church at the Rapture (**1 Thessalonians 4:16; 1 Corinthians 15:52**). This occurs sometime in the future, at the end of the Church Age.
4. The Resurrection of the Two Witnesses (**Revelation 11:12**). This occurs during the Tribulation Period.
5. The Resurrection of the Tribulation Saints (**Revelation 20:4-6; Daniel 12:1-2**). This occurs during the Tribulation Period.
6. The Resurrection of the Unrighteous (**Revelation 20:5, 11-14**). This occurs at the end of the Millennial Reign of Christ and is called the Second Resurrection.

DEATH Lesson 8 Mourning The Dead

MOURNING IS BIBLICAL, GODLY, AND NECESSARY

Sadly, some in “Faith” circles have taught that faith in God doesn’t mourn or experience sorrow. This is error and could not be further from sound biblical doctrine. Mourning is part of life and is often necessary to express faith and true repentance. Mourning is simply the expression of sorrow or grief (don’t forget that the Holy Spirit can be grieved). Because God has designed us to be capable of both sorrow and grief, mourning should not be foreign to us.

We mourn the death of loved ones because they are dear to our hearts and they will be missed. We mourn because our heart aches at their departure. This is what the Bible also calls a “broken heart.” The Bible never condemns the brokenhearted; however, God is not content to leave anyone brokenhearted (**Isaiah 61:1**). There is a time to mourn, but then there will be a time to rejoice.

- **To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: . . . ⁴A time to weep (*in grief and lament*), and a time to laugh; a time to mourn (*to lament and wail*), and a time to dance; **Ecclesiastes 3:1, 4****

The Bible is very clear: there is an appointed season for weeping and mourning. The Bible even commands mourning and lamentation at times. Not all mourning involves the death of a loved one. Some mourning is produced by sin (**Ezra 10:6**), shame (**Joel 1:11; 1 Corinthians 5:2; 2 Corinthians 7:10**), and defeat (**Nehemiah 1:4**). Some mourning moves God and some mourning is even commanded of God (**Joel 1:13; James 5:1**).

- **She [Hannah] was very upset as she prayed to the LORD, and she was weeping uncontrollably . . . ¹⁶‘Don’t consider your servant a wicked woman, for until now I have spoken from my deep pain and anguish.’ ¹⁷Eli replied, “Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant the request that you have asked of him.”
1 Samuel 1:10, 16-17 NET**

Hannah’s barren womb was a tremendous source of grief and mourning for her, but this deep anguish activated her faith and she conceived a son: Samuel, the boy prophet.

- **to strengthen those who mourn in Zion, by giving them a turban, instead of ashes, oil symbolizing joy, instead of mourning, a garment symbolizing praise, instead of discouragement. They will be called oaks of righteousness, trees planted by the LORD to reveal his splendor. **Isaiah 61:3 NET****

This famous passage concerning the Lord's anointing to preach the Gospel concludes by stating that Jesus is anointed to strengthen anyone mourning and discouraged. The Gospel replaces mourning with a turban of confidence, ashes with the oil of joy, and discouragement with a garment of praise. All of this establishes the believer as a tree of righteousness.

- **And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.**
Zechariah 12:10

Zechariah prophesied that when the spirit of grace and supplication was poured out upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, it caused them to mourn for Jesus like He was their own firstborn son. Here we see the anointing of God can cause mourning and sorrow in time of death. It would not be a stretch to say there is an anointing to mourn and grieve.

- **Let there be tears for what you have done. Let there be sorrow and deep grief. Let there be sadness instead of laughter, and gloom instead of joy.**
James 4:9 NLT

The New Testament declares tears, sorrow, deep grief, sadness, and gloom are exactly what is called for when you realize how sinful your behavior has been.

- **Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted.**
Matthew 5:4

Jesus Christ declared in the Beatitudes that there is a blessing in time of mourning because God Himself will comfort them. God comforts the mourner.

PEOPLE OF FAITH MOURN

Abraham is the first person the Bible records mourning at the loss of a loved one. The father of our faith (**Romans 4:12**) mourned the death of Sarah.

- **And Sarah died in Kirjatharba; the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan; and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her.**
Genesis 23:2
- Israel mourned for Aaron for 30 days (**Numbers 20:29**).
- David mourned the death of Saul and his sons (**2 Samuel 1:11-12**).
- Bathsheba mourned for her husband Uriah (**2 Samuel 11:26**).
- David mourned the death of Absalom (**2 Samuel 19:1**).



- The angel prophesied that Mary would mourn the loss of her son (**Luke 2:35**). He described sorrow as a “sword piercing your soul.”

THINGS TO REMEMBER IN TIME OF LOSS

Death is one of the very few events all men share in common. It is an unstoppable event coming for us and everyone we love. It should then come as no surprise that the Bible teaches many things concerning death. All people and cultures mourn differently. Some people mourn for weeks and months. Others mourn for years. As with all things in life, grief is bordered by two ditches. On one side of grief is the ditch called “refusing to mourn.” On the other side of grief is the ditch of “inability to move on” (see **Deuteronomy 34:8** and **Joshua 1:1-2**). In between the ditches everyone is different. Here are some things to keep in mind:

- **Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.**
Psalm 116:15

Remember that our loss is God’s gain. Our loved one’s departure is heaven’s homecoming. Their death was precious to God because He finally gets to be with His child face to face.

- **Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope.**
1 Thessalonians 4:13 NIV

We are free to mourn but not as those who have no hope. Our hope is the coming Resurrection. Dwight L. Moody said, “As I go into a cemetery I like to think of the time when the dead shall rise from their graves... Thank God, our friends are not buried; they are only sown!”

- **For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:**
Philippians 1:23

If our departed loved one was a believer, they have departed to be with Christ, which is far better. Ultimately, death is far better.

- **So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.**
Psalm 90:12

Remember that your days are numbered, too. Death events are good for reminding us of our mortality. The best way to honor the memory of your loved one is to live for Jesus like never before.

- **He [King Josiah] asked, “What is this grave marker I see?” The men from the city replied, “It’s the grave of the prophet who came from Judah and foretold these very things you have done to the altar of Bethel.” ¹⁸The king said, “Leave it alone! No one must touch his bones.” So they left his bones undisturbed, as well as the bones of the Israelite prophet buried beside him.**

2 Kings 23:17-18 NET

It is proper to honor the grave of your love one. Every culture is different, but it is proper to keep the weeds off of the grave and occasionally place flowers there as a memorial. This is a demonstration of honor, not worship.

- **There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, ¹¹or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. ¹²For whoever does these things is detestable to the LORD; and because of these detestable things the LORD your God will drive them out before you.**

Deut. 18:10-12 NASB

Be careful that in your time of grief you continue to direct all of your prayer toward Jesus Christ and not the dearly departed. Christians often cross over into communication with the dead. Be cautious of the attitude of your heart and the manner of your prayers if/when you visit cemeteries to grieve or pay respect. Strangely enough, some believers learn how to pray only after a loved one dies. The only problem is, they aren’t praying to God. Familiar spirits are always looking to gain entrance.

- **Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; ⁴Who comforteth us in all our tribulations, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any (*every*) trouble but the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.** **2 Corinthians 1:3-4**

Remember that God is the great Comforter. He gives power to the weary and restores our soul. There is a time to mourn but then there is a time to rejoice, laugh, dance, and continue on with life! You don’t get to quit your life simply because someone you love finished theirs. There is more life left to live!!

DEATH Lesson 9 Getting Your House In Order

Death is the one event guaranteed to all mankind the instant we are conceived. The second we receive life, we know that one day our biological body will be extinguished. Death is our final enemy. It has yet to be destroyed (**1 Corinthians 15:26**). It will not be destroyed until the end of the Millennium (**Revelation 20:14**). Until then we can only overcome death through the Resurrection of the Dead (**1 Corinthians 15:54**); therefore, you can count on death coming for you should the Lord's return tarry.

You can't "faith" death away. You can't pray it away. All you can do is prepare for it and live for Jesus Christ every day. Part of living for Jesus Christ includes giving the more earnest heed to prepare for our impending passing.

GOD IS A GOD OF ORDER

His triune nature is in order. His creation is in order. The Mosaic Tabernacle had a divine order. Solomon's Temple had a divine order. His Old Testament priesthood had a divine order. His New Testament church has a divine order. He requires order and organization from His leaders. Mature Christians are organized and orderly.

- **A bishop then must be blameless . . . of good behavior . . .**
1 Timothy 3:2

Good behavior is translated *respectable, prudent, and live wisely* in other translations:

Kosmios: well arranged, orderly

Kosmos: harmonious arrangement, order, constitution, or government

Komizo: to care for, to provide for, to tend

Our God is a God of order, and when He touches something, He brings order to it. He expects our "new life in the spirit" to reflect that touch and influence of divine order. Sin brings chaos and decay. The hand of God upon our life must demonstrate this sense of organization. To that end, God expects order from us even in matters of our death.

- **Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.** **Amos 4:12**

There is a preparation to be made when death is expected.

- **In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came unto him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live.** **Isaiah 38:1 (cf. 2 Ki 20:1)**

We are commanded to die with our house in order. Never allow death to leave you, your house, or your loved ones in disarray. Sadly, most Christians live chaotic and undisciplined lives and so they die just the same—chaotic and undisciplined. This is a poor testimony.

- **And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his ass, and arose, and gat him home to his house, to his city, and put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father.**
2 Samuel 17:23

Though Ahithophel committed suicide, he was at least conscientious of his estate and the void he would leave at his death. It appears he was just as deliberate and purposed in setting his household in order as he was in his suicide.

WHY CHRISTIANS DIE IN DISARRAY

The death of a loved one is painful enough, but to die and leave your house in disarray makes a painful event unnecessarily stressful for those you leave behind. There are a couple of reasons why Christians refuse to prepare for their death:

- 1. Fear Of Mortality**
- 2. Superstition**
- 3. Ignorance**
- 4. Laziness**

Fear Of Mortality

It is normal for pagans to fear their mortality, but not Christians.

- **And deliver them who through of fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.**
Hebrews 2:15

The fear of death is bondage. You are going to die. Loved ones will mourn you, honor you, lay your body to rest, and then divide your goods. And life will go on. Because of fear we refuse to talk about death, let alone plan for it. There is a whole psychology behind this fear. Jesus cut through all of it and said, “I am the resurrection and the life.”

NASA has its astronauts sit down with their families before space missions and figuratively stare death in the face. They have a set of questions they ask before every mission: What are your plans? Insurance? Debt? College fund? Everything is set in order before the flight so the family on earth can be at ease in the worst-case scenario. It’s time to face the fear of death.

Superstition

The second reason many believers don’t prepare for death is because of Christian superstition. Our doctrine of “positive confession” often loses touch with reality and the

Bible. Superstition has grown up like a vine in our doctrine and taught us that if we talked about or planned for our own demise that it might hasten it or worse: make it happen. Or perhaps we think, "If I don't talk about it maybe it won't ever happen." LUNACY!!! The Bible commands us to prepare for death. Remember:

- The patriarchs saw their deaths coming and pronounced blessings (see *Lesson 4: How to Die*).
- Jesus spoke of his own death constantly. He had to prepare his disciples for His departure.
- Peter and Paul both spoke of their own death in their epistles.
- If you don't face your death, you can't pass the spiritual baton.

Ignorance

The third reason we don't prepare for our death is ignorance. Ignorance will be resolved with this lesson. What follows are some things that must be considered in setting your house in order. I believe these things are a must if you are married, have dependents, have health issues, or are over 40. Most animals can perceive their death is at hand and will go off and prepare. Shouldn't humans be half as wise?

Laziness

The final reason for dying with your house in disarray is laziness. Once you have been informed, the only remaining reason for a disorganized death is laziness. Getting your house in order takes work. Often retirees fall into the slumber of retirement and wake up dead. Retirement from a career does not give you permission from God to retire from life. Wake up, O sluggard, and get your house in order. The day of your departure draweth nigh.

GETTING YOUR HOUSE IN ORDER

The following are some common-sense guidelines to getting your house in order:

Budget

For those with a pulse: Begin by living your entire life on a budget, getting out of debt, and living debt free. Live beneath your means. Add bonuses and raises to savings, not always expanding your cost of living. You should aim to have a savings account and then investments. This will take organization and discipline. (See our podschool.org lessons on *Financial Stewardship*).

Health

For those with a pulse: Our modern knowledge and medical science combined with the Fruit of Self-Control should cause every American Christian to live among the top healthy minority of our society. Teach your children how to live and eat healthy. I have heard it said, "Stay away from the pig food." Lifelong Christians should not live on the sick and obese list of society. Don't diet. Make a lifestyle change. Get a primary care physician, have an annual physical, and obey the doctor's orders. This will take organization and discipline.

Will/Testament

If you are married or have children, you should have a will and a living will/power of attorney. This will help things tremendously when you pass away or should you become incapacitated. God left us a will and New Testament; we should be like Him. This takes a little bit of time but very little money. It must be legally sound to be admissible in court and honored by the authorities involved. In the meantime, it's easy to sit down with your spouse and develop a list of:

- Bank accounts and passwords
- Email addresses and passwords
- Credit card information and passwords
- Investments and passwords
- A list of outstanding debt and debt-holders
- Etc.

All this information should be kept somewhere safe; either on a phone app, a safe flash drive, an email sent to a loved one and never deleted, in a portable fire safe, or all of the above. Whoever manages the money should share the "how" and the passwords with their spouse. The key here is to not leave anyone in the dark or make their job any more difficult than your passing already is. Discuss this information from time to time and keep all data updated.

Prepaid Funeral Arrangements

Death is expensive. Funerals are expensive. As of 2018, the average American funeral was approximately \$8,000.00. Cremation is a little cheaper option, but still pricey. Prepaid funerals take an enormous burden off your family in time of sorrow. I would recommend planning and pre-paying for your own funeral if you are over 60 or 65. Most funeral homes offer help-guides, information packets, and pre-plan forms upon request. You should discuss and plan the following:

- If you want to be buried or cremated.
 - What is to be done with your ashes?
 - Where you want to be buried; what town, cemetery, by whose remains?
 - Public cemetery
 - Mausoleum
 - Private family estate
 - Etc.
- Your wishes for the funeral service:
 - Where will it be held?
 - Who will officiate?
 - What will be the order of service?
 - Etc.

Remember:

- Abraham bought a field and grave in advance (**Genesis 23:13-19, 25:10**).
- Jesus believed in pre-planned/prepaid burials. Joseph of Arimathaea had just purchased a new tomb in which he laid the Lord's body. Jesus borrowed it for three days (**Matthew 27:57-60**).

Inheritance

Upon your death, if anything remains in your estate after your debts are paid (and assuming your funeral is prepaid), this could become an inheritance for your survivors. We should aim to be biblical and leave an inheritance to our grandchildren.

- **A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children . . .**
Proverbs 13:22a

I would recommend that you consider giving things away when you retire from your career. Dr. Sumrall once wisely observed, "You spend the first third of your life getting. The next third of your life using. Then the last third of your life giving it all away." The world says, "Get all you can. Can all you get. Then sit on the can." Thin your possessions little by little so your children are not burdened with an estate sale. Give some inheritance and heirlooms away while you're alive so you can watch your loved ones enjoy them. And above all else, don't die a hoarder.

Get your house in order!!