

What Happens When I Die ?

Text : **Luke 16: 19-31**

INTRODUCTION :

A. Diversity is one of today's buzzwords.

1. White men from all over Europe came to America. and
 - a. They took a land by force that was not theirs.
 - b. As they expanded all across the land they drove out the indigenous people.
2. America was called "*The Great Melting Pot.*"
 - a. White people from many different places came together to form one culture.
 - b. Each ethnic group added some things to the culture, but basically blended in.
3. Many of those who now come do not want to assimilate.
 - a. They want what we have, but do not wish to be part of us.
 - b. Some are afraid to mix in because of lack of education or legal status.
4. We have relaxed our standard so we do not require assimilation.
 - a. We accommodate to others instead of requiring them to learn our language, etc.
 - b. We live side by side without becoming like each other.
5. We now protect and extol differences in the name of diversity.

B. Diversity aside, there are many things all people have in common.

* *This is the basic premise upon which the insurance industry depends.*

1. In spite of external differences, our basic physiology remains the same.
2. We all have the same basic needs ... food, clothing, shelter, water, air.
3. We all have the same foundational psychological needs :
 - a. To love and be loved (*Procreation is an instinctive need, but separate from love.*)
 - b. To be accepted by a group (*people are herd animals ... youth activities urgent*)
 - c. Security (especially females)
3. From the beginning of time man has been more alike than dissimilar.

C. Death links ALL mankind.

1. Genealogy in **Gen. 5** records many with very long lived, but all died.
2. **Gen. 2** ... The cause of death is sin. (cf. **I Cor 15:22- For as in Adam all die ..**)
3. Sin still results in death. **Jas 1: 15- When sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.**

4. *All sin so ALL die.*

Rom. 5: 12- Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned —

D. Though all die, people don't like to talk about death.

1. E.G. ... *My wife refused to talk about death or even to make a will.*

- a. Only 26% of adult Hispanic Americans have a Last Will and Testament.
 - b. Only 32% of African Americans have a will.
 - c. Only 52% of white Americans have a will.
2. Why do people avoid the subject ?
 - a. Unpleasant ?
 - b. Fear ?
 3. People fear death because it is an unknown.
 - a. It is human nature to fear the unknown.
 - b. People don't know anyone who has experienced death.

TRANSITION :

Christians have a Savior who has experienced death and the bible which was written by the only one Who can overrule death.

*Thus, our attitude should be different from those who do not know our Savior.

I. Life is a gift from God.

A. Life is arbitrarily and undeservedly given ... never earned or deserved.

1. Adam was just a pile of dirt before he was given life.
2. Having done nothing good or evil, some children are born alive, but others aren't.
3. The choice to give life is God's alone.

B. God is the source of all life.

1. Man cannot create life in any form.
2. When God gave Adam life, He gave of Himself.

John 5: 26- For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself;
3. It is God who gives each man his spirit.

Zech. 12: 1- Thus declares the Lord who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him,

4. When a man's life leaves him it goes back to its source, God.

Ecc. 12: 7- then the dust will return to the earth as it was,
and the spirit will return to God who gave it.

C. Therefore : Man's life is on loan from God.

1. It comes from God and it returns to God.
2. **But** it never stops belonging to God.

Ezek. 18.4- Behold, all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as
the soul of the son is Mine. The soul who sins will die. (cf- **Psa. 24**)

D. God alone decides when to give and when to retrieve His souls from man.

1. **Ecc. 8: 8-** No man has power to retain the spirit, or power over the day of death. (ESV)
2. God refused to allow Satan to take the life of Job. ... **Job 2: 6**
3. God added 15 yrs. to the life of King Hezekiah. ... **II Kings 20:6**
4. God took the lives of Ananias & Sapphira. ... **Acts 5: 1-10**

* *Since all life is God's, He may do with them as He pleases.* (**No consent form to sign**)

II. Death is not the end of man, just another phase ?

A. Life ends with a coma, not a period.

1. Once a person is born he never ceases to exist.
2. What we know as death is but a temporary condition.
3. That which made man "a living soul" came forth from the eternal God. **Gen. 2: 7**

B. Man was created in the image of God.

1. God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (**Col. 2:9 , Phil. 2: 5-8 , Matt. 3: 16 , 28: 19**)
2. Man is Body, Soul and Spirit. (**I Thes. 5: 23 , Heb. 4: 12 , James 2: 26**)
3. Unlike God, to be alive and fully man all three parts must be present and together.

C. Death is a separation of one part of man from the other two.

1. The word "death" means "separation."
2. E.G. ... **James 2: 26-** For just as the body without the spirit is dead,
so also faith without works is dead. (cf. - **Job 34: 13-15**)
3. **Gen. 35: 18-** It came about as her soul was departing (for she died), that
she named him Ben-oni; but his father called him Benjamin.
4. When the eternal spirit is separated from man it does not cease to exist.

- a. Jesus told thief on the cross “**Today you shall be with me in paradise.**” **Luke 23:43**
- b. Both of their bodies went to the grave that day. (*The thief's body stayed there.*)
- c. In our text ... Both the rich man and Lazarus were aware, but were dead.

D. Thou the soul of man remains aware, it is not “alive.” (James 2: 26)

III. When a person dies, his souls is taken by God.

A. There are many false claims about the souls of those who have died.

- 1. Soul sleep.
- 2. Linger near the body for a few days.
- 3. Stay and haunt the living if they have unresolved issues.

B. The souls do not wait on a light to appear and then walk into it.

- 1. **Text :** **Vs. 22 ..** Angels carry off the souls of the deceased. (Cf.- **Heb. 1: 14**)
- 2. No soul would voluntarily go into a place of torment.
- 3. Demons had to be “cast” out and did not leave w/o a struggle.
 - a. **Matt. 8: 31** ... They negotiated to be put into swine, not left bodiless.
 - b. **Mark 9: 26** ... They hurt (*convulsed*) the boy before coming out.

C. When God takes a soul, He is simply taking what belongs to Him.

- 1. He can have it brought to Him.
- 2. He can discard it.
- 3. Satan tries to convince man that God will never discard any.

**** Remember the garden. Satan convinced Eve that she would “not die”, but ...**

IV. At the moment of death, the souls are segregated, saved from lost.

A. Read Text : **Vs. 22-23** ... Both men died, but were in opposite places.

- 1. The text makes it clear the resurrection and final judgment had not occurred.
- 2. **Read Text :** **Vs. 27-28** ... The rich man's brothers were still on the earth.
- 3. In the final judgment, all the dead will be raised.
 - a. **John 5: 25-32** (*EVERY knee will bow before the Christ. Rom. 14: 11*)
 - b. **Thus,** there would be no need to send a messenger back to the living.

B. The separation is permanent and unalterable.

1. **Read Text :** **Vs. 26** ... There is a great gulf separating Heaven, Hell and earth.
2. After the final judgment, earth will no longer exist. **II Pet. 3: 10**

C. Second chance doctrines are comforting, but totally false.

1. Purgatory is taught NO WHERE in scriptures. (*It's a way for priests to get money.*)
2. One can avail grace and mercy now, **but** those who don't accept it face justice.
3. **Heb. 9: 27- And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, (Life is the trial, death seals the verdict, judgment sentencing)**

D. There are separate places for souls before the resurrection.

1. **"Hades"** and **"Sheol"** are generic terms for the realm of the dead.
2. Within **"Hades"** or **"Sheol"** there are two different dwelling places.
3. The wicked go to a place of **"torment."** **Vs. 23**
 - a. He felt great pain. **"Anguish"**
 - b. He was in flames.
 - c. He was aware that Lazarus was not in torment.
 - d. He begged for mercy, but got none.
 - f. He did not claim to be innocent or undeserving.
 - g. He wanted to help others, but it was too late. (*What about our loved ones?*)
4. **"Hell"** is a translation of the word **"gheh·en·nah."**
 - a. Of *"geenna,"* Strong says, "This was originally the valley of Hinnom, south of Jerusalem, where the filth and dead animals of the city were cast out and burned; a fit symbol of the wicked and their future destruction."
 - b. To the Jew this dump site was the most vile place on earth.
 - c. A practicing Jew would not go there.
 - d. This communicated a discarding of a soul as defiled, worthless and unholy.
 - e. There was always fire smoldering and dead animals rotting.
5. Like Lazarus, the Christian goes to **"Paradise."**
 - a. Our text does not say whether Lazarus could see the rich man. (???)
 - b. Souls in Paradise are aware of some things on the earth.

Rev. 6: 9-11 **When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained;**
10 and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O

Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" ¹¹ And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also.

- c. Heaven is referred to as "The Paradise of God." **Rev. 2: 7** (Cf. **II Cor. 12:4**)

V. All death will be reversed. (*The grave is like the butterfly's cocoon.*)

A. When Jesus returns, He will bring with Him the souls in Paradise.

1. **I Thess. 4: 13-18**
2. With their spirits returned to their bodies, those dead in Christ will again be alive.
3. They will return to Paradise in their new resurrected bodies ... alive and whole.
4. We will never die again. "so we shall always be with the Lord." **I Thess. 4: 17b**
5. This is a great comfort to the Christian. **I Thess. 4: 18**

B. There is neither comfort nor consolation for those outside Christ.

1. When Jesus returns "Every Knee" will bow before Him. (incl. **ALL** unbelievers)
 - a. Judgment day is the day of sentencing.
 - b. *Life was the trial , death sealed the verdict and judgment administers sentence.*
2. **John 5: 25-32** All will live again, but not all will live with God.
3. Jesus will reject those who did not accept the pardon He offered.
 - a. **II Thess. 1: 7b-10a** ... when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, ⁸ dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹ These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, ¹⁰ when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed ... (*take His home, discard the rest*)

CONCLUSION :

- A. Now is the time of choice ? Death is a transition from one realm to the next.
- B. We all live but one heartbeat away from the judgment seat of God.
- C. When you bow your knee before the Savior will it be in joy to receive Paradise, or will He discard you into Gehenna away from His presence and His blessings?

Lesson Text :**Luke 16: 19-31**

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