

FOUR DEATHS

INTRODUCTION: Our lesson is devoted to the subject of "death". Often, we try to keep our minds off this morbid subject. We feel uncomfortable talking about death. However, it is not wise to refuse to think about death for then we will be unprepared for death. (Ps. 90:10,12) We have an appointment with death that we cannot break. (Heb. 9:27) Solomon wrote, "For the living know that they shall die...". (Eccl. 9:5) The Psalmist asked this sober question, "What man is he that shall live and not see death...?" (Ps. 89:48) We see the evidence of death all around us and we know, that unless Jesus comes again during our lifetime, we shall one day "walk through the valley of the shadow of death". (Ps. 23:4)

Brother Cecil Willis was diagnosed to have a terminal illness. Many people expressed their heart-felt sympathy to him. He said that they shouldn't feel sorry for him because all of us are terminal. Some of us don't know yet what will take our lives from our bodies.

We often take too narrow view of death. Death always involves a separation. Most people only think of death as a separation of the spirit from the body. (Jam. 2:26) However, the Bible mentions four different deaths. It is possible for you to experience all four deaths. From a spiritual viewpoint, every accountable person in this audience has already died once. If you are a Christian, you have already died twice.

I. SPIRITUAL DEATH MEANS BEING DEAD IN SIN

- A. We can be dead spiritually, but alive physically (I Tim. 5:6)
 - 1. The prodigal son was dead spiritually while he lived in sin (Lk. 15:24,32)
 - 2. Adam and Eve died spiritually when they ate the forbidden fruit (Gen. 2:17)
 - a. Adam lived many years after he ate the forbidden fruit (Gen. 5:5)
 - b. The death God spoke of must have been a spiritual one
- B. Sin is the cause of spiritual death (Rom. 6:23; Jam. 1:14,15; Eph. 2:1,5)
- C. This death is a separation from God (Isa. 59:1,2)
- D. Infants are not born in sin (Ezek. 18:20)
 - 1. Psalm 51:5 has reference to being brought forth into a world of sin (Acts 2:8)
 - 2. Infants are not guilty of committing sin (Lk. 18:15-18)
 - 3. If infants possessed sin, they would need to be baptized; however, there is no example of infant baptism in the New Testament

II. SPIRITUAL LIFE MEANS BEING DEAD TO SIN

- A. We do not have to stay dead spiritually; we can be made alive again! We should greatly rejoice in this truth!
 - 1. Christ, with His gospel, has made it possible for us to live again spiritually! (Jn.5:24)
 - 2. Through Christ we are reconciled with God and made spiritually alive again (II Cor. 5:17-21)
 - 3. The Ephesian and Colossian brethren had died in sin, but were made to live again (Eph. 2:1-5; Col. 2:13)
- B. Everyone, who is a Christian, has died twice (Rom. 6:1,2,11)
- C. What does it mean to be dead "to sin"?
 - 1. It does not mean that we cannot sin (Rom. 6:12-14)
 - 2. It means that we have separated ourselves from sin (Rom. 6:7)
 - 3. We are to crucify the body of sin by putting to death our desire for anything sinful (Rom. 6:6; 8:13; Col. 3:5-10; Gal. 5:24)
- D. When does the second death take place?

1. It takes place when we are baptized (Rom. 6:3-5,17,18)
2. We are joined to Christ who is the source of spiritual life (Jn. 15:1-6; Rom. 6:23; 7:4)
3. Since we are separated from sin, we are no longer to live in it (Rom. 6:2)
4. Do you really appreciate the greatest gift that has ever been offered to mankind?
5. Have you put to death all the sinful desires that are in you?

III. THE THIRD DEATH IS PHYSICAL DEATH

- A. The only ones who will escape this death are those who are alive when Christ comes again (Heb. 9:27; I Thess. 4:16-18)
- B. This death is a separation of the body and spirit (Jam. 2:26)
- C. This death can be either a blessing or a curse
 1. It is a curse for those who are disobedient to God for it brings to an end their opportunities to be reconciled with God (Lk. 16:19-31)
 2. It is a blessing for the righteous (Ph. 1:21-23; Rev. 14:13)
- D. Often, when someone has suffered grievously before dying, somebody will say, "It is a blessing that he (or she) died for he (or she) is better off now!" This statement may, **or may not**, be true! It depends whether the deceased died in, or out, of Christ! (Rom. 8:1; Rev. 14:13)

IV. THE LAST DEATH IS REFERRED TO AS THE "SECOND DEATH" (Rev. 20:14,15; 21:8)

- A. This death is to be feared above all deaths!
- B. This death means eternal separation from God. "Death is the opposite of life; it never denotes non-existence. As spiritual life is 'conscious existence in communion with God,' so spiritual death is 'conscious existence in separation from God.'" (*W.E. Vine, p. 276*)
- C. There are three classes of people that will be cast into "the lake of fire". Those who:
 1. Do not know God (II Thess. 1:7-9)
 2. Do not obey God (II Thess. 1:7-9)
 3. Have become Christians, but turned aside from the way of truth to live in sin (Jam. 5:19,20)
- D. Many people are far too concerned about physical death and not nearly concerned enough about the "second death"!
- E. Because God is rich in mercy and grace, He has provided for us eternal life in His Son! (Eph. 2:4,5:1 Jn. 5:11,12)
- F. Christ died for our sins that we may not die in sin (I Cor. 15:3)
- G. We should be eternally grateful that we do not have to experience the horrible, painful, eternal "second death"!

CONCLUSION: Have you been baptized for the remission of your sins? If you have not, then you are spiritually dead. If you should die physically in this condition, you would be cast into "the lake of fire". (Go over chart.) If you are a Christian, then your life should show that you are, indeed, separated from sin and have died to it.