

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE DIE?

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STUDY GUIDE

LESSON 10

BUILT UPON THE ROCK
BIBLE STUDY SET

ESTABLISHING YOUR FAITH ON A FIRM
FOUNDATION. (MATTHEW 7:24)

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10. What Happens When We Die?

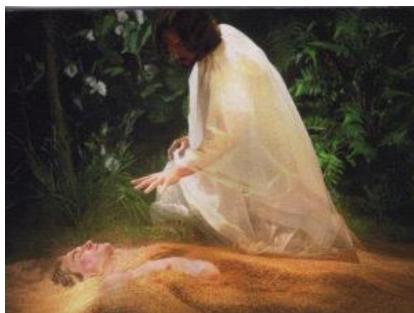
What happens at death just might be one of the most misunderstood subjects today. For many, death is shrouded in mystery and evokes dread, uncertainty, and hopelessness. Others believe that their deceased loved ones are not dead at all, but instead live with them or in other realms. Millions are confused about the relationship between the body, spirit, and soul. How much does it matter? You might be very surprised as we explore this topic. What you believe about the dead will have a profound impact on what happens to you in the near future. There's no room for guessing! This Study will tell you exactly what God says on this subject. Get ready for a real eye-opener!

1. How did humans get here in the first place?

"And the LORD God formed man [of] the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils

the breath of life; and man became a living soul." (Genesis 2:7)

Answer: God made us from dust in the beginning.



2. What happens when a person dies?

"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." (Ecclesiastes 12:7)

Answer: The body turns to dust again, and the spirit goes back to God, who gave it. The spirit of every person who dies—whether saved or unsaved—returns to God at death.

3. What is the "spirit" that returns to God at death?

"For the body without the spirit is dead" (James 2:26).

"The spirit of God is in my nostrils" (Job 27:3).

Answer: The spirit that returns to God at death is the breath of life.

Nowhere in all of God's book does the "spirit" have any life, wisdom, or feeling after a person dies. It is the "breath of life" and nothing more.



4. What is a "soul"?

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

Answer: A soul is a living being. A soul is always a combination of two things: body plus breath. A soul cannot exist unless body and breath are combined. God's Word teaches that we are souls—not that we have souls.

5. Do souls die?

"The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20).

"Every living soul died in the sea" (Revelation 16:3).

Answer: According to God's Word, souls do die! We are souls, and souls die. Man is mortal (Job 4:17).

Only God is immortal (1 Timothy 6:15, 16). The concept of an undying, immortal soul is not found in the Bible, which teaches that souls are subject to death.



6. Do good people go to heaven when they die?

"All that are in the graves shall hear his voice and come forth" (John 5:28, 29).

"David ... is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ... For David is not ascended into the heavens" (Acts 2:29, 34).

"If I wait, the grave is mine house" (Job 17:13).

Answer: No. People do not go to heaven or to hell at death. They don't go anywhere—but they wait in their graves for the resurrection. Many Christians today are of the belief that men like King David and Job are in heaven. But the Bible says they have yet to "ascended into the heavens" (Acts 2:34). The Bible talks much about the resurrection of the righteous at the second coming. (1 Thess 4:17) Why would God take people to heaven now, and then send them back to the grave only to be resurrected at the second coming again?

7. How much does one know or comprehend after death?

"For the living know that they shall die: but **the dead know not any thing**, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any [thing] that is done under the sun." (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6)

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do [it] with thy might; for [there is] no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." (Ecclesiastes 9:10)

"The dead praise not the LORD, neither any that go down into silence." (Psalms 115:17)



Answer: God says that the dead know absolutely nothing! Though millions think it is possible, the dead cannot communicate with the living.

8. But can't the dead communicate with the living, and aren't they aware of what the living are doing?

"So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens [be] no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep... His sons come to honour, and he knoweth [it] not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth [it] not of them." (Job 14:12,21)

"Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any [thing] that is done under the sun." (Ecclesiastes 9:6)

Answer: No. The dead cannot contact the living, nor do they know what the living are doing. They are dead. Their thoughts have perished (Psalm 146:4 KJV).

9. Jesus called the unconscious state of the dead "sleep" in John 11:11–14. How long will they sleep?

"So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens [be] no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep." (Job 14:12)

"But the day of the Lord will come ... in which the heavens will pass away" (2 Peter 3:10).



Answer: The dead will sleep until the great day of the Lord at the end of the world. In death humans are totally unconscious with no activity or knowledge of any kind.

10. What happens to the righteous dead at the second coming of Christ?

"And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward [is] with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." (Revelation 22:12)

"For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout. ... And the dead in Christ shall rise first. ... And so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17).

"We shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye ... and the dead shall be raised incorruptible. ... For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (1 Corinthians 15:51–53).

Answer: They will be rewarded. They will be raised, given immortal bodies, and caught up to meet the Lord in the air. There would be no purpose in a resurrection if people were taken to heaven at death.

11. What was the devil's first lie on Earth?

"The serpent said to the woman, 'Ye shall not surely die' " (Genesis 3:4).

"That **old serpent**, called **the Devil** and **Satan**" (Revelation 12:9).

Answer: You will not die.

12. Why did the devil lie to Eve about death? Could this subject be more important than we think?

Answer: The devil's lie that we will not die is one of the pillars of his teachings. For thousands of years, he has worked powerful, deceptive miracles to trick people into thinking they are receiving messages from the spirits of the dead. (Examples: Magicians of Egypt—Exodus 7:11; Woman of Endor—1 Samuel 28:3–25; Sorcerers—Daniel 2:2; A slave girl—Acts 16:16–18.)

A Solemn Warning

Even today, Satan is again using sorcery—as he did in the prophet Daniel's day—to



deceive the world (Revelation 18:23).

Sorcery is a supernatural agency that claims to receive its power and wisdom from the spirits of the dead.

Posing as Jesus' Disciples

Posing as godly loved ones who have died, saintly clergymen who are now dead, Bible prophets, or even the apostles of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:13), Satan and his angels will deceive billions. Those who believe the dead are alive, in any form, will likely be

deceived.

13. Do devils really work miracles?

"For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles" (Revelation 16:14).

"For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if [it were] possible, they shall deceive the very elect." (Matthew 24:24)



Answer: Yes indeed! Devils work incredibly convincing miracles (Revelation 13:13, 14). Satan will appear as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14) and, even professing to be Christ Himself (Matthew 24:23, 24). The universal feeling will be that Christ and His angels are leading out in a fantastic worldwide revival. The entire emphasis will seem so spiritual and be so supernatural that only God's elect will not be deceived.

14. Why will God's people not be deceived?

"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." (Acts 17:11)

"If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20).

Answer: God's people will know from their study of His book that the dead are dead, not alive. They will know that a "spirit" claiming to be a deceased loved one is really a demon! God's people will reject all teachers and miracle workers who claim to receive special "light" or work miracles by contacting the spirits of the dead. And God's people will likewise reject as dangerous and false all teachings that claim the dead are alive in any form, anywhere.



15. Back in Moses' day, what did God command should be done to people who taught that the dead were alive?

"A man also or woman that hath *a familiar spirit*, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood [shall be] upon them." (Leviticus 20:27)

"There shall not be found among you ... a consulter *with familiar spirits*, or a wizard, or *a necromancer*." (Deuteronomy 18:10, 11)

Answer: God insisted that mediums and others with "familiar spirits" (who claimed to be able to contact the dead) should be stoned to death. This shows how God regards the false teaching that the dead are alive.

A necromancer is actually one who claims to talk to departed spirits. The Bible strictly forbids these things.

16. Will the righteous people who are raised in the resurrection ever die again?

"But they which are accounted worthy to obtain that age, and the resurrection from the dead ... neither can they die anymore" (Luke 20:35, 36).

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



Answer: No! Death, sorrow, crying, and tragedy will never enter into God's new kingdom. "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." (1 Corinthians 15:54)

17. Belief in reincarnation is expanding rapidly today. Is this teaching biblical?

"For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any [thing] that is done under the sun." (Ecclesiastes 9:5,6).



Answer: Almost half the people on earth believe in reincarnation, a teaching that the soul never dies but is instead continually reborn in a different kind of body with each succeeding generation. This teaching, however, is contrary to Scripture.

The Bible Says

After death a person: returns to dust (Psalms 104:29), knows nothing (Ecclesiastes 9:5), possesses no mental powers (Psalms 146:4), has nothing to do with anything on earth (Ecclesiastes 9:6), does not live (2 Kings 20:1),

waits in the grave (Job 17:13), and continues not (Job 14:1, 2).

Satan's Invention

We learned in questions 11 and 12 that Satan invented the teaching that the dead are alive. Reincarnation, channeling, communication with spirits, spirit worship, and the "undying soul" are all inventions of Satan and revolve around the first lie "thou shalt not surely die" (Gen 3:4), with one aim to convince people that when you die you are not really dead. When people believe that the dead are alive, "spirits of devils, working miracles" (Revelation 16:14) and posing as spirits of the dead will be able to deceive and lead them astray virtually 100 percent of the time (Matthew 24:24).



18. Are you thankful for the Bible, which tells us the truth on this sensitive subject of death?

Answer:

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

1. Didn't the thief on the cross go to paradise with Christ the day He died?

No. In fact, on Sunday morning Jesus said to Mary, “For I am not yet ascended to My Father” (John 20:17). This shows that Christ did not go to heaven at death. It’s important to note that the punctuation we see in the Bible today is not original, but added centuries later by translators. The comma in Luke 23:43 would be better placed after the word “today” rather than before, so that the passage reads, “Assuredly, I say to you today, you will be with Me in Paradise.” Another way to put this verse that makes sense in the immediate context is: “I’m telling you today—when it seems that I can save no one, when I Myself am being crucified as a criminal—I give you the assurance today that you will be with me in Paradise.” Christ’s kingdom of glory will be set up at His second coming (Matthew 25:31), and the righteous of all ages will enter it at that time (1 Thessalonians 4:15–17) and not at death.

2. Doesn’t the Bible speak of the “undying,” “immortal” soul?

No. The undying, immortal soul is not mentioned in the Bible. The word “immortal” is found only once in the Bible, and it is in reference to God (1 Timothy 1:17).



3. At death the body returns to dust and the spirit (or breath) returns to God. But where does the soul go?

It goes nowhere. Instead, it simply ceases to exist. Two things must be combined to make a soul: body and breath. When the breath departs, the soul ceases to exist because it is a combination of two things. When you turn off a light, where does the light go? It doesn’t go anywhere. It just ceases to exist. Two things must combine to make a light: a bulb and electricity. Without the combination, a light is impossible. So with the soul; unless body and breath are combined, there can be no soul. There is no such thing as a “disembodied soul” or a “disembodied spirit”.

4. Does the word “soul” ever mean anything other than a living being?

Yes. It may mean also (1) life itself, or (2) the mind, or intellect. No matter which meaning is intended, the soul is still a combination of two things (body and breath), and it ceases to exist at death.

5. Can you explain John 11:26: “Whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die”?

This refers not to the first death, which all people die (Hebrews 9:27), but to the second death, which only the wicked die and from which there is no resurrection (Revelation 2:11; 21:8).

6. Matthew 10:28 says, “fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul:” Doesn’t this prove that the soul is undying?

No. It proves the opposite. The last half of the same verse proves that souls do die. It says, "Rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." The word "soul" here means life and refers to eternal life, which is a gift (Romans 6:23) that will be given to the righteous at the last day (John 6:54). No one can take away the eternal life that God bestows. (See also Luke 12:4, 5.)

7. Doesn't 1 Peter 4:6 say the gospel was preached to dead people?

No. It says the gospel "was" preached to those who "are" dead. They are dead now, but the gospel "was" preached to them while they were yet living.

QUIZ QUESTIONS

1. **The Bible speaks of death as (1)**
☐ A sleep.
☐ A change to a different form of life.
☐ An inexplicable mystery.
2. **The "spirit" that returns to God at death is (1)**
☐ The soul.
☐ The breath of life.
3. **A person who dies goes to (1)**
☐ Heaven or hell.
☐ The grave.
☐ Purgatory.
4. **A soul is (1)**
☐ A person's spiritual nature.
☐ The undying part of a person.
☐ A living being.
5. **Do souls die? (1)**
☐ Yes.
☐ No.
6. **When are the righteous rewarded? (1)**
☐ In this life.
☐ At death.
☐ At the second coming of Christ.
7. **Why does Satan try to deceive people by telling them the dead are not dead? (1)**
☐ So they will believe his miracles and be deceived and lost.
☐ Because he feels sorry for them.
8. **Individuals who "communicate" with the dead are actually talking with (1)**
☐ Immortal souls.
☐ Holy angels.
☐ Evil spirits impersonating the deceased.
9. **In Moses' day God commanded that all who taught that the dead are alive be (1)**
☐ Made priests.
☐ Honored for their wisdom.
☐ Killed.

10. **How can a person be sure he is safe and right? (1)**
_____ Ask God for a special sign from heaven.
_____ Do what the preacher or minister says to do.
_____ Study the Bible prayerfully and carefully and follow it.
11. **When a person dies (1)**
_____ His spirit, or soul, remains alive.
_____ He is able to observe the living and contact them.
_____ He is dead in every way--the body dies, the soul ceases to exist, and no contact with the living is possible.
12. **Are miracles proof that something is of God? (1)**
_____ Yes. Only God can work miracles.
_____ No. The devil also works great miracles.
13. **I am grateful for the Bible, which tells us the truth on this sensitive subject.**
_____ Yes.
_____ No.

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