

Bethel Community Church Sermon Notes

WHERE DO I GO THE INSTANT THAT I DIE? [PP1]

Sunday 30th November 2003

We are going to talk about death today. A seemingly most unpleasant topic in Churches. One, however that we must be informed about. Knowledge of the life to come affects the life to be lived.

Here are life's 2 certainties. 1. You were born.
2. You will die.

Life is the conundrum that you have passed. Therefore what is the mystery of death?

Death [PP2]

Really only two perspectives:

Atheist: There is no God.

Death: A physical dysfunction of the body causing a cessation of existence.

You die and then nothing. What you see is all there is. There is only matter. [PP3]

The Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:32 says, "If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die."

Theist: There is a God. – For today's purposes – a Christian. Not all theists are Christians.

A Christian believes in two forms of death

1. **Physical Death** - **Separation of Body from Soul. 27g [PP4]**

Death is only a feature of a fallen world. Death is here because of the world's sin. Adam and Eve brought death into the world. God said to Adam in Genesis 3:19 (just before He drove them out of the Garden of Eden) "For you are dust and to dust you shall return".

Death is not the natural state of things and will not be the state of things in Heaven. Revelation 21:4, "and He will wipe every tear from their eyes; and there will be no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying or pain; the first things have passed away".

2. Spiritual Death - Separation of Soul from God [PP5]

Spiritual Death is the total and eternal separation of your soul from God, with no reprieve.

Each person (atheist or theist) faces physical and spiritual death, whether they accept that fact or not. Another absolute.

To help in understanding what we are about to cover I need to give you a snapshot of the end of this world from the Bible. (Mostly found in Revelation, Matthew 24 and 25 and Daniel) [PP6]

There will be seven years of tribulation at the end of which Christ will return. Christians will rule the earth with Christ for 1000 years during which Satan will be locked away from the world.

After 1000 years Satan will be freed gather to himself all of those in the world who reject God and there will be the final battle (Christ wins), Satan and his co-horts get thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone in Hell forever and then there is the Final Judgment of all mankind, the living and the dead. All humanity faces either an eternity in Heaven with God or eternity of punishment and separation from God in Hell.

Context for what comes next.

Reality 1

Death for those who have rejected God

Matthew 25:31-46 (ESV Church 1002 Compact 831)

Hell before Final Judgment [PP7]

Hell is the generic term for place of punishment and torment and total separation from God. Hell is from Greek word *Hades* (their pagan God of the underworld). It is the place where those who have rejected God go prior to the final judgment. It is a place of pain and torment.

Hell after Final Judgment

After the time of final judgment the eternal state of hell or punishment is referred to as Gehenna. Valley of Hinnom (South of Jerusalem). Altars to the God Molech. Sacrifice of children.

Luke 16:19-31 (ESV Church 1055 Compact 876)

Reality 2

Death for those who have accepted God's offer of forgiveness.

Well your future is Heaven at the final judgment, but what if I died today? [PP8]

Roman Catholic Church would say some go to Hell, some to Heaven, most to go to purgatory.

So is there purgatory where we are punished for sins until we are sufficiently purified for heaven?

Purgatory comes from pagan concept originally and latterly from a text in the Apocrypha called 2 Maccabees. This book is not part of God's canonical Bible (we will talk about the Apocryphal Books in the New Year).

Real problem. Romans 8:1 No condemnation for those in Christ Jesus (ESV Church 1137 Compact 944).

No purgatory.

What about soul sleep? No such thing. Sleep is a reference to death. See Lazarus in John 11.

What does the Bible say:

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| Luke 23:43 (ESV Church 1065 Compact 884) | - | Paradise |
| Phil. 1:23 (ESV Church 1180 Compact 980) | - | Depart and be with Christ |
| 1 Thess. 5:10 (ESV Church 1189 Compact 988) | - | Awake or asleep live with him |
| 2 Corinthians 5:8 (ESV Church 1163 Compact 966) | - | Being home with Christ |

Description of Home

“What does home say to you?” [PP9 – 10 seconds; PP10 – 10 seconds; PP 11]

I may not know everything about Heaven but I know what going home means.

Summary

If you are a person who accepts that Jesus **did** rise from the dead it is not too difficult for you to accept Him as the Son of God, and that the Bible is true.

The Bible tells us clearly that those who die having rejected God face immediate departure upon death to Hell (Hades) with pain and torment that goes with it. There is no escape. No remission. After the final judgment you are there for all eternity. No exceptions.

If you are a person who hears God's call to you to come home to Him, you repent of the life that you have lived following your own plans and ways and you trust in Him through Jesus Christ, then upon death you are transported immediately into the glorious presence of Christ Himself in Heaven. At the Final Judgment you will enter Heaven for all eternity and it will be more amazing and blissful that you had ever imagined.

In this life you will experience a small taste of what Heaven will be like as part of the Church.

Is that what I, Steve Jones, think? No, that is what the Bible teaches and has taught for the last 2000 years.

We have to consider death, to decide what kind of life we will live.

How about you? What kind of life will you live? What kind of death will you die?
[PP12]

Come home to God through repenting of your sins and putting your faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour of your life. [PP13]

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