

The subject of death and dying is one that is often misunderstood. There is widespread confusion in the world and in the church regarding the true state of the dead. Many religious leaders and numerous well meaning people seek to comfort those who have experienced loss by assuring them that their loved one is now in heaven. They often say to grieving individuals and families that their deceased loved one is looking down upon them and that their spirit will forever be present with them. While many are seemingly "comforted" by these false assertions, the Bible provides true comfort, insight, and hope to those who are searching for answers and seeking to cope with the reality of death. Thank God that Jesus not only understands the true state of the dead, but He has already conquered death and will one day eradicate its icy grip from the universe! Let us open our Bible and study this important topic and discover What God Says About…"The State of the Dead."

SATAN'S FIRST RECORDED LIE

1. **How is the serpent described in Genesis 3:1?**

   "Now the serpent was _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" *Genesis 3:1*

2. **What lie did the serpent tell Eve?**

   [2]"And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: [3]But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. [4]And the serpent said unto the woman, _____ _____ _____ _____ _____." *Genesis 3:2-4*

   Note: *Satan lied to Eve in the Garden of Eden regarding the true state of the dead. He deceived her into believing that when she partook of the*

forbidden fruit, she would not die, but she would reach a higher state of being. The serpent led Eve to disregard God's authoritative Word and to accept and believe his word, based on his authority alone. Sadly, countless Christians and non-Christians alike are as readily deceived today as Eve was in the Garden of Eden regarding the true state of the dead.

THE DEAD KNOW NOT ANYTHING

3. What do the living know? How much do the dead know?

"For the living know _____ _____ _____ _____: but _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten." *Ecclesiastes 9:5*

4. What perishes or ceases when a person dies?

"Also _____ _____, and _____ _____, and _____ _____, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun." *Ecclesiastes 9:6*

***Note:** The Bible clearly teaches that when a person dies, they are no longer conscious in any form. In other words, they do not hold communion with God or with anyone on earth. They do not feel, love, or hate, nor do they visit friends or family. They do not participate in decision-making. They are totally unaware of their surroundings. According to the testimony of the scriptures, they are dead. They cease to exist.*

5. How does Job 14:21 indicate that a deceased man has no knowledge of his sons who come to honor him?

"His sons come to honour, and _____ _____ it _____; and they are brought low, but _____ _____ it _____ of them." *Job 14:21*

CREATION – LIFE

6. From what elements of the earth did God form man? What did God breathe into man's nostrils? What did man become?

"And the LORD God formed man of _____ _____ _____ _____ _____, and breathed into his nostrils _____ _____ _____ _____; and man became _____ _____ _____." *Genesis 2:7*

Note: *The dust of the ground (the body) plus the breath of life equals a living soul or being. The elements of the earth and the breath of life are both necessary in order for life to exist. Adam became a living person when God breathed life into his nostrils. God did not put an immortal soul in Adam when He created him. The Bible uses the word soul 1600 times, and it never refers to a soul as immortal. God alone possesses immortality (1 Timothy 6:15, 16).*

7. What did Job say was in him indicating that he was a living person? What did he say was in his nostrils?

"All the while _____ _____ is in me, and _____ _____ _____ _____ is in my nostrils." *Job 27:3*

Note: *According to Scripture, the breath and spirit are the same thing. James 2:26 indicates that the body without the spirit (or breath) is dead.*

CREATION IN REVERSE – DEATH

8. What happens when a person dies? What happens to their spirit or breath?

"Then shall _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____: and the spirit shall _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____." *Ecclesiastes 12:7*

Note: *The dust of the ground minus the breath of life or spirit equals a dead person. If either the elements of the earth or the breath of life are missing, life cannot exist. The person is dead.*

9. According to Ecclesiastes 3:19, what does every man and beast have that are identical?

"For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, _____ _____ _____ _____ _____; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity." *Ecclesiastes 3:19*

Note: *According to Ecclesiastes 3:19, there is no distinction between a man and a beast as it pertains to what occurs at death. Man does not have preeminence over beasts in this regard. Both receive breath from God in order to live, and the breath of both return to God when they die. While there is no distinction between human beings and beasts as it pertains to what occurs at death, man and beasts are not identical. Human beings were created in the image of God as free moral agents with the power of choice. We can exercise faith in God and receive salvation. Beasts operate from instinct. Clearly, human beings and beasts are not identical!*

10. According to Ecclesiastes 3:20, what occurs when both man and beast die?

"All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and _____ _____ _____ _____ _____." *Ecclesiastes 3:20*

11. What word is used in Ecclesiastes 3:21 to denote the breath of both man and beast?

"Who knoweth the _____ of man that goeth upward, and the _____ of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?" *Ecclesiastes 3:21*

Note: *The Hebrew word for "spirit" in Ecclesiastes 3:21 is ruach, which means breath. Undoubtedly, both human beings and beasts receive breath or life from God. In this passage, the Bible is indicating that the breath of both man and beast go to the same place when they die. According to Scripture, the breath returns to God when death occurs (Ecclesiastes 12:7). It is important to note that many falsely teach that when a human being dies their spirit lives on in a disembodied conscious state. However, it is rare, if at all, that anyone teaches that when a beast dies their spirit lives on in a disembodied conscious state. According to Scripture, the breath of both man and beast return to the same place—to God, the giver and sustainer of life.*

12. How much living flesh, outside of the ark, died as a result of the flood? Specifically, which flesh died? Where was the breath of life contained before they died?

[21]"And _____ _____ _____ that moved upon the earth, both of _____, and of _____, and of _____, and of _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____, and _____ _____. [22]All in whose _____ was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died." *Genesis 7:21, 22*

Note: *Genesis 7:21 and 22 makes it clear that both man and all flesh that moved upon the earth, outside of the ark, died during the flood. These scriptures also indicate that the breath of life was in their nostrils before they died. When both man and all flesh that moves upon the earth dies, the breath of life returns to God, and they return to the dust from which they were formed. At death, creation in reverse occurs for both man and beast.*

13. According to Genesis 3:19, where does man return when he dies? How does this verse describe man? Upon what state does a man return when he dies?

"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return _____ _____ _____; for out of it wast thou taken: for _____ thou art, and _____ _____ _____ _____ _____." *Genesis 3:19*

WHAT IS THE SOUL?

14. According to Ezekiel 18:4, how many souls are the Lord's? What will ultimately happen to the soul that sins?

"Behold, _____ _____ _____ _____; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, _____ _____ _____." *Ezekiel 18:4*

Note: *Clearly, souls are people. The Scriptures know nothing of a disembodied conscious soul or spirit that lives on after a person dies. Ezekiel 18:20 also indicates that the "soul that sinneth, it shall die."*

15. According to Jesus, we shouldn't fear people who cannot do what? Name two things that God is able to destroy in hell?

"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to _____ _____ _____: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both _____ and _____ in hell." *Matthew 10:28*

Note: *The Greek word for soul is psuche, and it means breath, life, or soul. All three terms essentially have the same meaning and can be applied when the Greek word psuche is used. While it is true that the translation of psuche in Matthew 10:28 is soul, it must be understood that Jesus is not teaching or endorsing the pagan doctrine of an immortal soul! Jesus is saying that we should not fear those who kill the body, but can do nothing more than this (see Luke 12:4 and 5, the parallel passage of Matthew 10:28). In other words, men may destroy the whole physical body of a person, but they cannot destroy or take away the eternal life of a person. Jesus is saying, we should fear God who is able to destroy the whole physical body as well as destroy or take away the eternal life in hell's fire. The Bible does not teach that a separate conscious entity exists apart from the body. According to Scripture, souls are people (see Acts 2:41).*

THE EXPERIENCE OF RACHEL

16. Who experienced hard labour while giving birth to her son?

[16]"And they journeyed from Bethel; and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath: and _____ travailed, and she had hard labour. [17]And it came to pass, when she was in hard labour, that the midwife said unto her, Fear not; thou shalt have this son also." *Genesis 35:16, 17*

17. According to Genesis 35:18, what was departing just before Rachel died?

[18]"And it came to pass, as _____ _____ was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin. [19]And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem." *Genesis 35:18, 19*

Note: *Based on what we've learned about the breath, spirit, and soul thus far, it is evident that the breath of life was departing from Rachel as she was dying. When she died, the breath of life returned to God, and she deceased. She was no longer a living soul or living human being.*

DEATH IS A SLEEP

18. In what way does David refer to death?

"Consider and hear me, O LORD my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I _____ the _____ of _____." *Psalm 13:3*

19. Why was Jesus going to visit the home of Lazarus who died four days earlier?

"These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, _____ ____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____." *John 11:11*

20. How did the disciples understand Christ's words regarding going to awaken Lazarus from sleep? To what did Jesus speak of regarding Lazarus?

[12]"Then said his disciples, Lord, ____ ____ _____, ____ _____ _____ _____. [13]Howbeit Jesus spake of _____ _____: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep." *John 11:12, 13*

Note: *When speaking of the state of Lazarus, Jesus was speaking of the "sleep of death." The disciples misunderstood Jesus and thought that He was speaking of natural sleep. Jesus reveals that the first death is a sleep.*

21. What did Jesus plainly tell the disciples regarding Lazarus?

"Then said Jesus unto them plainly, _____ _____ _____." *John 11:14*

THE DEAD ARE NOT IN HEAVEN

22. Who went out to meet Jesus when he arrived in the town of Bethany? How did Martha understand Lazarus' condition?

[20]"Then _____, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house. [21]Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, _____ _____ had not _____. [22]But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee." *John 11:20-22*

23. What hope did Jesus give to Martha regarding Lazarus? When did Martha believe Lazarus would be resurrected?

[23]"Jesus saith unto her, _____ _____ _____ _____ _____. [24]Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____." *John 11:23, 24*

Note: *Martha knew the truth regarding the state of the dead and also the resurrection of the righteous that will occur at the second coming. She was not confused about these subjects and neither should we be confused. Jesus eventually called Lazarus back to life. In verse 43, Jesus said "Lazarus, come forth." He did not say Lazarus come down from heaven! The Bible says in verse 44, "And he that was dead came forth." The dead will rise from the earth at the resurrection. They will not descend from heaven.*

24. According to Acts 2:29, where is the patriarch David?

"Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is _____ _____ and _____, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day." *Acts 2:29*

25. David is not ascended into what heavenly realm?

[34]"For David is not ascended _____ _____ _____: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, [35]Until I make thy foes thy footstool." *Acts 2:34, 35*

Note: *God referred to David as a man after his own heart (1 Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22). If anyone would have ascended to heaven at death, surely it would have been David, if that were possible. According to Scripture, David is not in heaven. He remains in the grave.*

ABSENT FROM THE BODY

26. According to the apostle Paul, what is the opposite of being at home in the body?

[6]"Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are _____ _____ _____ _____: [7](For we walk by faith, not by sight:)" *2 Corinthians 5:6, 7*

Note: *According to the apostle Paul, "the body" represents our earthly tabernacle or house (2 Corinthians 5:1). In other words, living on earth in our present mortal condition equates to being at home in the mortal body. As a result, we are absent from the Lord, but when Jesus returns, we will be clothed with our eternal house—immortal condition or state of being. According to 1 Timothy 6:15 and 16, God alone has immortality. Furthermore, immortality is made possible through the gospel (2 Timothy 1:10) and is received at the second coming of Christ when the resurrection occurs (1 Corinthians 15:51-55). According to Paul, we walk by faith, not by sight. In other words, our change will take place when Jesus returns. No one receives immortality at death!*

27. According to Paul, Christians would rather be absent from the body so they can have what wonderful privilege?

[8]"We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be _____ _____ _____ _____. [9]Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him." *2 Corinthians 5:8*, 9

Note: *We would rather be absent from "the body" in this wicked world and live in the presence of Jesus clothed with immortality. According to Scripture, this will not occur until Jesus returns (1 Corinthians 15:51-55).*

28. What does Paul instruct the church to do in order to provide hope and comfort, especially for the grieving?

[16]"For 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: [17]Then 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. [18]Wherefore _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____." *1 Thessalonians 4:16-18*

SUMMARY

There is widespread confusion regarding the state of the dead. Many seek to comfort the grieving by assuring them that their deceased loved one is in heaven looking down upon them. This false belief stems from Satan's first recorded lie in which he told Eve, "Ye shall not surely die," if she partook of the forbidden fruit. Sadly, this deception is echoed from many pulpits throughout Christendom today. Dead people have no knowledge of anything that is done under the sun. They are not in heaven. They are sleeping in the grave until Christ awakes them in the resurrection.

29. Dear friend, are you willing to accept that death is a sleep that lasts until the resurrection? _____

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