

DEATH: THE LAST FRONTIER

PROTESTANT REFORMATION PUBLICATIONS

Who has not reflected upon death?

Who has not wondered what awaits us when this life, as we know it, ceases?

Most likely you have come to certain conclusions, though they may be tentative. After all, who among us can be dogmatic on this mysterious subject, you might ask?

Who among us has died and come back from the dead?

If one were to take a mini-survey among family and friends, one would discover several possible answers to the question, **What awaits us when we die?**

1. We will be welcomed into a place of peace, comfort, love and hope, where our deceased family and friends reside.
2. We will cease to exist at death, feeling neither pain nor pleasure.
3. We will be welcomed into the presence of God, along with all mankind, where we will become angels forever.
4. We will be reincarnated into another body for the purpose of living our next life in a better, more positive, caring manner.
5. We will become one with God, who is all in all.
6. We will purge our remaining sins in the fires of Purgatory for an unknown period of time before entering Heaven.

Unless the person queried is a Bible-believing Christian, these are typical answers one might hear. But the Bible, which is the testimony of God Almighty, differs dramatically from the answers given above.

Jesus Christ the only One qualified to know for certain what awaits us at death

"I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."

The testimony of Jesus Christ, Rev.1:18.

"I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" The testimony of Jesus Christ, John 11:25-26.

Common sense dictates that if one is to learn the truth on any subject one should seek answers from those who are learned in that subject. Accredited colleges and universities require that those who teach their student body are properly educated with the appropriate advanced degrees necessary to prove expertise in their particular fields. Frequently, these professors are vastly experienced, having attained superior knowledge and understanding after years of plying their skills. This then begs the question,

Why is Jesus Christ the only One qualified to know for certain what awaits us at death?

There are several reasons.

- (1) He is the only One who has died, been buried for three days, and arisen from the dead, never to die again. (1 Cor. 15:1-20).
- (2) He is God, who, with His Father and Holy Spirit, have created all things. (Genesis 1:1-3; John 1:1-3; Col. 1:16).
- (3) As God come in the flesh, He should certainly know, beyond a shadow of a doubt, what awaits us at death. (John 16:30).
- (4) God cannot lie. (Num. 23:19; Heb. 6:18). Therefore, Jesus cannot lie. (John 18:37).

What does Jesus Christ say about death?

Does the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ, the God-man, agree with our 6 possible answers cited beforehand? No, it does not. In fact, His testimony regarding death often makes people upset and angry. This is because His version of life after death is not meant to please and win favor of men. Rather, His purpose was to warn men of the danger of dying separated from God, their sins not forgiven. Not one of the previous answers addressed the issue of personal sin for which one is accountable before God at the Day of Judgment.

"And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." (Mark 9:43).

In this one statement we learn there is a real place of torment called *Hell*, where those whose sins have not been forgiven will reside in a conscious state, forever.

"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." (Matt. 25:46).

Jesus declares there are those who will be punished eternally for their sins, while there are others who will have the reward of eternal life.

How does one escape punishment in Hell and enter eternal life?

"He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." (1 John 5:12).

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John 3:36).

It is not by being a good enough person, but by the grace of God you are saved through faith in Jesus Christ and His righteousness

"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:20-23).

The Bible declares, and our own conscience admits, that we have all sinned in varying degrees. The true God who created all things cannot allow one sin in His presence. He is a holy and righteous God who will not let sin escape without just, deserved punishment. For this purpose, He has created a place of torment called the *Lake of Fire*. All who are not trusting in Christ's sinless sacrifice to expiate sins in their behalf will be forever tormented, day and night, having no rest, weeping and gnashing their teeth. However, those who do trust in Christ as their righteousness will have eternal rest, never to hunger and thirst, nor shall they sorrow ever again.

Will you not consider the truthful testimony of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as reason for your trusting in Him alone for forgiveness of your sins?

One more thing: true faith requires holy living

If escaping the just punishment of Hell is reason enough to trust in Jesus, then know this: You must also bear the fruit which comes from true repentance. The fruit of a true Christian is no less than love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. In other words, faith without the accompanying fruits of the Spirit is false and will not be accepted by God. One cannot love his old life of sin and love Christ. "No man can serve two masters."

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