

THE STORY OF MAN'S DESTINY #5

THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH.

GEN. 2:16-17; GEN. 5:5; ROM. 5:12; ROM. 6:23; JAS. 1:15

INTRODUCTION.

In our studies of “The Story Of Man’s Destiny” thus far, we have considered: “In The Beginning”; “The Holocaust Of Sin”; and “Judgment Day”. In each of these we have seen that the “beast” of death has raised its ugly head time and again. “In The Beginning”, man was warned not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, lest he die. In “The Holocaust of Sin”, death and sin were inseparable. In “The Judgment Day”, death was the judgment or sentence that was levied against us because of sin.

In this message on: “The Wages of Sin Is Death”, we will explore the fact that death is the consequence, reward or pay day for sin and also we will analyze exactly what is death. Inevitably, the analysis of death will raise the question of the “nature and destiny” of man, i.e. what is man created of and where is he going at death? However, it will not be our intent with this lesson to deal with all of the areas and questions raised over this sometimes controversial issue. Rest assured that it will be the object of specific lessons to come in this series. Nevertheless, I am sure it will be necessary to make some observations and statements that will touch on all the issues involved. They deserve complete attention and will receive it in due course as we proceed further. So, if you have questions or thoughts about “heaven”, “hell”, “resurrection” and a host of other subjects, stay tuned. We look forward to the opportunity of dealing with each of them. For this lesson we will take a close look at “The Wages of Sin”.

ANALYSIS OF SCRIPTURE TEXTS.

We have noted 5 separate scripture selections as a basis for this lesson. Obviously, there are many more than this. But these offer us a very good place to begin this study. These along with many others will form the foundation for the subject at hand.

Gen. 2:16-17. These verses set the stage for the entire thought. They are at the beginning of things and right at the time where it all took place. For this reason, they offer us a great place to start. Adam was distinctly told that if he ate of the forbidden fruit, that there were serious consequences for it. He knew before hand what would happen if he disobeyed the word of the Lord. Death would be its sad results. There was absolutely no mention of any other form of consequence or punishment given to Adam. It would seem that this would be conclusive evidence as to exactly what the wages for sin would be. We have come to much different conclusions in our theology of today than that simple, factual story declares. Adam had no previous experience with death and apparently believed the serpents lie that he would not die as a result of eating the forbidden fruit. Doesn’t it make you wonder if today’s concept of sin’s punishment doesn’t have some direct connection with what the serpent told eve. He said that she would not die, but would actually be in a better situation than she currently was in. Sounds familiar doesn’t it? Adam probably “reasoned”, what could possibly be bad about something that offered such pleasing opportunities with the partaking. As always is the case, human reasoning above the will of God is fatal. And it is this same kind of human reasoning still today that leads us down the path of death when we are forever questioning “how things we crave can be a sin”? We always find out that “sin kills”.

Gen. 5:5. And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died. Much of today’s theology about the nature and destiny of man leaves you very confused about this death that Adam died. Some argue that the death spoken of in Gen. 2:16-17, was only a spiritual death. This argument seems to be based on the notion that the wages of sin was only “spiritual” death, thereby leaving room for some other form of punishment at the actual end of life itself. This cannot

be the case since such an argument is self defeating within its own bounds. When Adam disobeyed God, by eating the forbidden fruit, his relationship with God was immediately broken. He was cut off from his former divine relationship, dead in his trespass and sins. This “spiritual” death, occasioned by his sin, did not fulfill the total scope of the consequence of his disobedience. Natural death was the direct result of spiritual death and followed with all certainty. Otherwise, there is no answer in the Bible or history as to why we all die. Adam lived 930 years and he died. From the time of his disobedience until his death, the process of aging and physical deterioration was ongoing and irreversible. This process was set in motion in his whole human system as the result of the very act of his transgression. The 12th chapter of Ecclesiastes gives a graphic description of the deterioration and dissolution of the human body and mind in a way that we all can easily relate to. Thus, Adam died, and, as Gen. 3:19, says: “dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return”.

Rom. 5:12. Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin: and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. This verse clearly confirms the thought of the previous 2 verses that death came into the world by sin. God never designed or created death when he made the world and man as his care taker. He simply explained to Adam that if he violated certain laws of life which he had given, it would result in death. Adam made death his choice. It resulted from an act of sin, not from a divine dispensation.

Today’s “theology” gives us a long list of expressions about death that are totally foreign to reality and are not once found in all scripture. Some examples are as follows: “death is a friend”; “death is the gate to glory”; “death, graduation to glory”; “death is a door to a better life”; “death is a celebration”; “death is an angel”; “death is a home-going”, and other such expressions. These do only one thing: they glorify and sanitize and beautify death as a vehicle that makes eternal life begin. Perish the thought! These are not scriptural expressions; they only represent a misinformed theology. Death is an enemy (I Cor. 15:26); it is the plague of the entire human family and the woe upon us all. It is the exact opposite of life or anything that pertains to life. Death came by sin for that all have sinned. If you reflect back to our lesson on “The Holocaust of Sin”, you see that death is the sad, brutal, merciless results of this holocaust.

Jesus Christ is the only source and giver of eternal life and death is not his process to get us there. Think about it: to say that death is the “door to a better life”, denies and rebukes everything Christ did. He overcame death ----- by a resurrection. A resurrection is our door, process and hope of eternal life. Death brings us absolutely nothing but heart ache, trouble and an end to life.

Rom. 6:23. For the wages of sin is death ----- . This should sum it all up for us. If your life’s work is sin, then your pay day is death. The final, complete and total wages for sin is death. Death does not usher you into some glory world; death ushers you into final corruptibility and dust. No matter what the sin is, its result is death. The grave yards of the world are silent witness to it; hospitals and the medical profession attest to it; generation after generation confirms it; the death certificate makes it legal; broken homes feel it’s pain, and each of us know that we shall die and not live and that no man has power over the grave to deliver his soul in the day of death.

All Christendom declares the very fundamental truth that Jesus Christ came to the world to save all who believe on him. So ask yourself this question: “How did he do it”? Your answer, I am sure, is that he “died” for our sins. He paid the price for your sins and mine. He paid the only price that there is to pay for our sins. If there is another price or a greater price (like living forever in torment of fire) then Jesus Christ did not pay it for you and you have not been redeemed. In fact, if “living forever somewhere in the torture of a literal fire is the price of sin, then Christianity is a hoax, and there is no such thing as redemption, salvation, deliverance or eternal life. The wages of sin is death! Not just spiritual death as “theology” would have us believe. But physical, grave yard death. We die because of sin; we can have eternal life only by returning to the righteousness we can have in Christ. As Rom. 6:23, concludes: “But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

James 1:15, reads: Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. The finished product of sin is death. Sin with all of its ugliness, depravity and

ruin upon the human family has only one mission: to bring us to death. No matter how well you wrap death and no matter what may be said over a deceased person, when you look into the face of a dead person, you are viewing the victory of sin in the world. There is only one thing that can change the look of a lifeless, inanimate, corrupting picture of death and that is a resurrection when Jesus comes again. Embalming fluids, spices, mausoleums or pyramids have no lasting effect on the finished product of sin.

Adam and Eve allowed their lusts to influence their thinking and their choices and gave in to the inward cravings set aflame by their passionate desires. This led to their yielding to the temptation offered by their own lusts. When lust conceived (when they obeyed its tempting influence) it brought forth sin (disobedience). The finished work of this sin in their lives brought forth death. When you cross the finish line of sin, you are not handed a trophy with the applause of all your friends and fans. Instead you are given a shroud, casket, tears, heart break and loss. Whoever it was that started this mockery of a notion that “death was a gate to glory”, must have been a direct descendent of the serpent in the garden.

There are two things that have been the blight and plague of every generation of Adam. Those two things are sin and death. Sin has never provided a good day; a good life; a good government; or any hope for anyone. Likewise also, death has never brought peace, happiness or hope. Only Jesus, through his death, burial and resurrection has provided a better day, a better life and a better hope for us. That hope is conditioned upon our faith in Jesus and his finished work at calvary. We receive it conditionally by faith during this life and then in reality by way of a resurrection when he shall return. Without this, death reigns.

LET THE RECORD SPEAK.

There is such an overwhelming volume of evidence and information regarding death that it is impossible to bring it all to bear on the subject at hand. A mere representative selection will be all that space will permit, and, indeed, should suffice to satisfy our needs. The truth of the matter is that we should need only very little convincing, since the realities of life and death are everywhere openly manifest. The following testimonials are offered to confirm those realities.

Ecc. 8:8 tells us that: “there is no discharge in that war”. No one has an exemption. Everyone must pay this price, and inevitably will.

Ps. 49:10. For he seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and brutish person perish. All classes are included and death affects the rich like it does the poor and the good like it does the bad. All go back to the dust.

Ps. 49:14. Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them (like it does a sheep). We lose our breath and we die. So also does the sheep.

Ps. 49:19. He shall go to the generation of his fathers; they shall never see light. That is the way death is; so final. If it wasn't for the hope of a resurrection through Christ, all hope would be gone forever.

Ps. 49:20. Man ---- is like the beasts that perish. This doesn't mean that man is beastly. It means that as one dieth so does the other. Both man and beast die because their heart stops and blood with life giving oxygen, stops circulating in our body. We die in the same manner and we both go back to the dust.

Ecc. 3:19. For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast.

Ecc. 3:20. All go unto one place; all are of the dust and all turn to dust again.

Ecc. 9:5. For the living know that they shall die: but the dead *know not anything, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten.*

Jer. 21:8. Behold, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death. It is a choice we make.

Eze. 18:4 & 20. Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die. For the soul that sinneth it shall die.....

Eze. 33:11. I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked.

Jn. 3:16. For God so loved the world, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Rom. 5:12. Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so, death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

Rom. 6:23. For the wages of sin is death.

QUESTIONS ABOUT DEATH.

1.WHAT IS DEATH?

- Death is the end of life: the cessation of being.
- Death is the stopping of the heart beat; the stopping of breathing; the elimination of blood flow.
- Even though many things described as an accident or disease may be the causative factors of death, yet death comes when the heart stops beating to create the flow of blood with the oxygen it contains.
- Death is the shutting down of every vital organ of the body.
- Death is the ceasing of every function, every sense, every movement, every thought, every desire, every expression and every activity.
- Death is a setting in motion of corrupting, decaying and returning to dust.
- Death is the finality of mortal life, where it ceases to be unless there is a resurrection awaiting it by faith in Christ.
- Death is our greatest enemy.
- Death and the grave are mans' long home as spoken of in Ecc. 12:5 and Job 17:3.
- Death is the consequences of Adam's sin.
- Death is the silence of corruption.
- Death is the terminator of the best made plans; the greatest talent; the prime of life; the zenith of power and the moments of joy.
- Death is the common denominator of all men, rich or poor, good or bad.

2. WHAT HAPPENS AT DEATH?

- Breath, air, oxygen, spirit stops circulating throughout the body.
- This breath is very often translated as "spirit" in the Bible because it refers to the life element.
- Nothing eternal or invisible (other than oxygen) leaves the body at death.
- When death occurs, rigor mortis sets in and the process of decay begins.
- There is nothing immortal about us or in us. We are entirely mortal and corruptible.
- Nothing about us ascends into the presence of God at death (unless you want to say that breath does). Jn. 3:13 states that no man hath ascended to heaven. It says about David, that he hath not ascended to heaven. (Acts 2:34). How can we avoid or ignore these very clear statements. Our only hope of eternal life is a resurrection when Jesus returns, not the ascension to heaven of some "immortal soul or spirit", for there is no such thing.
- When we die, we return to the dust and our breath (spirit, life element) returns to God who gave it.
- when we die, all or our senses: sight, smell, taste, touch and hearing, along with the function of mentality and the nervous system, ends completely.
- The brain, the voice, speech, thought, expression, desire, adrenaline, emotion, psyche all, completely terminate at death. If you don't possess these, along with the senses, then there is nothing to register any communication or sensation in any form.
- At death there is no continued capacity or function to know, discern, sense, enjoy, be cognizant, input or output possible.
- The best way to describe what happens at death is to say: "you are dead!!!"

3. WHERE DO YOU GO AT DEATH?

- To the dust from which you came.
- To the grave.
- To mans long home, the grave. (Ecc. 12:5; Job 17:3).
- To corruption.

-- To silence, lifelessness.
-- We do not go to a place called "heaven", regardless as to what "heaven" is or may ultimately be, we do not go there at death.
-- All of the theology about going to another world at death (going to heaven when you die) is based entirely on the theory of the immortality of the "soul or spirit". There is not one single instance in the Bible that ever applies immortality to man in any form until after the resurrection.
-- The Bible never speaks of the survival of the soul, but of the death of the soul.
-- If we go to our eternal reward at death, then the return of the Lord and the resurrection are meaningless. Either we believe in the resurrection (when Jesus comes) or going to our eternal reward without body, senses, communication, emotion, or understanding at death; not both. I believe the Bible teaches a resurrection when Jesus returns to earth again. You can't have it both ways.
-- Unless theology can find and scripturally prove that the soul is immortal, then there is nothing about us to go anywhere but to dust. God made us of dust and the only thing he added was breath, air, oxygen. The only thing that leaves your body at death is this air, breath, or oxygen (sometimes translated spirit, but never described as being immortal).

THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH.

Nothing more and nothing less. Death is not life. (That would be an oxy-moron statement). Popular theology twists every direct, absolute and firm statement about death to mean something else in order to accommodate an impossible and unscriptural interpretation of death. First, theology tries to prove that death really does not mean "dead", but simply refers to some other form of life. Then it tries to use "scientific" data that they say suggests that no form of matter is ever really destroyed, just alive in another form. So, which would you prefer: a life that is fully alive and well, or a life that has been "destroyed" in an airplane crash? Are we so incapable of applying real language that we cannot fathom the difference between life and death even ascribing a greater existence to death?

There are the "testimonials" and books of so-called, near death or out-of-body experiences. This is where someone got in some accident and for "90" seconds had this hallucinatory experience of such "peace, joy and rapture" until they happen to regain their consciousness. Some doctors even talk about patients in a state of trance or coma, and ascribe to it a state of "being dead for a short time" and then recovering. Poor souls: they had to come back to this miserable life and continue their pain and disease. I don't doubt that in some conditions the apparitions of the mind functions so as to give a person some sensation of fantasy or "dream world blessing". But that is all it is: an apparition of the mind at best, or a hallucination. No amount of medical testimony can alter even one verse of scripture that says: "the dead know not anything", Ecc. 9:5.

Then there are such books as were written by Mary Baxter, claiming God gave her a vision of heaven and hell so she could experience these phenomenon first hand and tell us about them. If you believe this kind of fiction, then I sure would like to sell you some water front property in the Florida everglades. They have these self-contrived fantasies and they describe it as a vision from God. God never gives any communication that is not in complete conformity with the whole of his word. Any person that has to depend upon their supposed "vision" to confirm God's truth has it all backwards. Instead you turn to God's word to discern if your so-called vision conforms to it, otherwise you discard it. I take the position that there is more than enough clear information about the subject in God's word to verify its complete interpretation. No vision or miracle of any sort, whether or not you can explain its occurrence, is ever any substitute for revealed truth. My position about such stories is that not only do I doubt that they conform to truth I completely deny that they do. These are mental theatrics without Biblical evidence of support. It really is very simple: just look up the word immortal or immortality in the Bible and see for yourself that they are never applied to man until after a resurrection.

I have in my possession, a book by C.S. Lovett, entitled: "Death: Graduation to Glory". In it he says, that: "death is the greatest human experience there is". Is there anyone reading this who really believes that? Another book entitled: "Do We Live After Death." This one is full of experiences

people tell of dying and coming back to life to talk about it. So what? There have been many people who have had their heart to stop beating completely and by some means they were brought back to life. I wear a defibrillator so that if my heart stops beating, it will give my heart an electric shock to try to start it again. But this does not mean at all that while my heart may be stopped that something about me goes into some blissful trance and sees all kinds of eternal wonders. Lazarus died and was dead for 4 days. Jesus did not call him down from the sky. He called him "forth" from the grave where he was buried. He never told us about any transition to a "glory world".

Then someone wants to know about the rich man and Lazarus and all that happened to them after death. That really is an interesting question. First it seems to be the corner stone for the doctrine of life after death for modern theology. How many times have you heard preachers use this story to teach that Lazarus went to "heaven" when he died? Why not go read it again right now and you will find that the word "heaven" is never mentioned. Then some would respond that Lazarus was carried to "Abraham's bosom" and that is a figure meaning heaven. And I say that if you are going to make figurative language out of this then you must do the same for the rest of story. Not only that, but you cannot possibly give a proper interpretation to this part of the story without also interpreting the rest of the story, including all of the parts, people, things, etc., it describes. If you can't do that, then you have no way to verify that you have any of it right. And it is doubtful that you have ever heard a preacher explain all of the figures in the story because they will not fit the modern interpretation of it. But stay tuned, in due course, we will come to this story and will look at every detail of it and what it is really saying to us. And don't forget this: nothing in this parable can change the mountain of evidence in the Bible about the wages of sin being death and that we go back to dust at death and that no man hath ascended to heaven. It isn't that there are contradictions in the Bible; just contradictions in men's interpretation of the Bible.

The wages of sin is death. By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin. The soul that sinneth it shall die. Adam lived 930 years and he died. And when lust conceives it brings forth sin and when sin is finished it brings forth death. In death the memory of them is forgotten. They are like the beasts that perish. There is no knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave wither thou goest.

(Only) he that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise (only) him up at the last day!