



Stay Alive

with Jesus

Lesson 5:

Where are you after you die?

Louis XIV of France looked out his palace window one day and saw a building he hadn't noticed before. "What is that building?" he asked a courtier. "The church of St Denis," the man replied, "all your royal ancestors lie buried there."

When the king realised that this would be his final resting place, he ordered another palace built that would hide the church from his view.

Nobody likes to think about death, but you can't hide from it any more than Louis XIV could. In previous lessons, you studied about the second coming of Jesus and the glorious eternity you'll spend with Him. Signs of His coming are everywhere and you feel He'll return very soon.

But what if you die before He comes, what happens to you then? Centuries ago, a man named Job raised a similar question. He asked "If a man die, shall he live again?" (Job 14:14)

What is the answer to Job's question? John 5:25-29

When does the resurrection of the righteous take place? 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17

The Bible makes it clear that the righteous dead will be raised when Christ comes again; then, together with the righteous living, all will be taken to heaven to be with the Lord at the same time.

But what happens between the time of death and the resurrection? Does the spirit or soul go to heaven or some other place while the body stays in the grave? Or is the whole person in the grave? To understand what happens at death, we need to look at the components God used to create people in the beginning.

How does Genesis 2:7 describe human creation?

Dust and air is what God used to create the first human being! You could write it as a formula and it would look like this:

Dust + Breath = Living Being / Soul

The word for "living being" and "soul" is the same in the Bible. Read Genesis 2:7 in the King James version and also in a New International Version and you'll see the word translated both ways.

Chemists who have analysed the human body tell us that the body is 80% oxygen and 10% hydrogen. The rest is composed of elements such as carbon, calcium, phosphorus, potassium, etc. We are a combination of dust and air! But what happens to "living beings" when they die?

BODY

What happens to the body at death? Ecclesiastes 3:19-20; Genesis 3:19

BREATH (SPIRIT)

When people die, what happens to their breath? To answer this question, you need to understand a little bit about the meaning of the word "breath" in the Bible. It is used interchangeably with the word "spirit." So you could ask the question this way: what happens to the spirit when people die? Ecclesiastes 12:7

According to the original usage of the words "breath" and "spirit" in the Bible you could just as easily read this text in Ecclesiastes like this: "the breath will return to God who gave it." If "breath" and "spirit" are synonymous, the creation formula would be written:

Dust + Breath (Spirit) = Living Being

LIVING BEING (SOUL)

As we have already seen, the words "living being" in Genesis 2:7 are also translated "living soul." The word "soul" in the Bible means the total entity of a person. Or, as our formula reads, Dust + Breath (Spirit) = Living Being (Soul). You can see that the soul is simply the sum of

the other two. Take away one part, such as the breath, and what do you have?

Dust - Breath (Spirit) = No Living Soul

This is precisely what the Bible teaches. When the breath of life is taken away, life ceases to exist. "The Hebrew and Greek words from which we translate our English words soul and spirit are found some 1,700 times in the Bible... In not one of the 1,700 appearances of these original words for soul and spirit is either of them said to be immortal, never dying, imperishable, indestructible, everlasting, eternal, or in possession of immortality. Nor are the dead represented to be capable of a conscious existence apart from the body."

(Arthur G Lickey, God Speaks to Modern Man. Washington DC: Review and Herald Publishing Assn, 1952, p 489)

Instead of telling us that the spirit or soul lives on after death, the Bible describes death in different terms. What does it say? Ecclesiastes 9:5-6,10

Psalm 146:4

DEATH: LIKE SLEEP?

The Bible is clear on the fact that dead people don't know anything, that it makes more than 50 comparisons to death being like unconscious sleep. Jesus used this comparison in John 11:1-45. What did He say about Lazarus? John 11:11-14

Jesus called Lazarus from the grave and He'll call all the righteous from their graves. When will this take place? 1 Corinthians 15:22-23

BUT WHY DO PEOPLE DIE?

- Because Adam and Eve sinned. (Genesis 3:1-6)
- Sin is separation from God. (Isaiah 59:2)
- God only has immortality. (1 Timothy 1:17) "Immortal" means "imperishable; everlasting, exempt from liability to die."
- People die because they are separated by sin from God who is the only source of eternal life.

If, according to the Bible, death is like unconscious sleep, where did the idea originate the life continues after death? Genesis 3:4

But what did God say? Genesis 2:16-17

God said "you shall surely die." Satan said the opposite: "you shall not surely die." Satan has sprung many false ideas about death. "Your spirit lives on" ... "your soul goes to heaven"... "you'll be reincarnated"... "you'll go to the spirit world." These are all expressions based on the lie that "you shall not surely die." The practice of channelling and all attempts to get in touch with people who have died, are based on Satan's first lie.

What does God say about people trying to make contact with the dead? Isaiah 8:19-20

God wants to protect us from evil forces. It is Satan's cruel hoax to disguise himself as someone from the dead and thus communicate his messages. God doesn't want us to hear Satan's messages, so He has told us plainly that dead people don't talk. "The dead know not anything."

Yet God has provided a way out of the grave. What is it? John 11:25

Jesus is the way out of the grave! His resurrection is tangible proof that you, too, can live again, if you have accepted Him as your Saviour.

ASK YOURSELF

Have I accepted Jesus as my Saviour and the giver of eternal life?
