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# BIBLE TALK

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Welcome to "Bible Talk." This week the question is: *According to the Bible, what happens to a man when he dies?*

## CONCERNING DEATH

First, the Bible teaches that death is an appointment which all men must keep:

### **Hebrews 9:27**

<sup>27</sup> ... it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment,

When a man dies, he does not cease to exist. His soul does not become unconscious, nor does his soul sleep. Biblically speaking, death is the separation of the body and spirit:

### **James 2:26**

<sup>26</sup> ... the body without the spirit is dead, ...

When this great separation has occurred, the body decays and returns to the dust, but the spirit of man continues to maintain a conscious existence:

### **Ecclesiastes 12:7**

<sup>7</sup> Then the dust will return to the earth as it was,  
*And the spirit will return to God who gave it.*

## THE INTERMEDIATE STATE

After the spirit of man returns to God, the man is now placed in an intermediate state to await the return and final resurrection of Jesus. Jesus once gave a remarkable story to illustrate to His disciples the importance of obeying God:

### **Luke 16:19-26**

<sup>19</sup> "There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day.

<sup>20</sup> But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate,  
<sup>21</sup> desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

<sup>22</sup> So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried.

<sup>23</sup> And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

<sup>24</sup> "Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.'

<sup>25</sup> But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented.

<sup>26</sup> And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.'

According to the Bible, at death men enter immediately into either paradise, or torments. Remember, Jesus told the thief on the cross, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). At the very moment of death Lazarus was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom and was finally at rest. And at the very moment of death the wicked rich man lift us his eyes in Hades -- in torments of fire. This story of Jesus tells us several things:

- There is consciousness after death.
- There is conscious comfort for the righteous and conscious torment for the wicked.
- There is a great gulf fixed between both places. The destiny of man is sealed at the point of death. The comforted Lazarus did not have to worry about being cast into torments any more, but the tormented rich man could never hope for comfort any more.

These men, and every man, shall stay where they are at awaiting the second coming of Jesus:

### **John 5:28-29**

<sup>28</sup> Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice

<sup>29</sup> and come forth — those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

On this great resurrection day, when every single person comes forth from the grave, there shall be a massive assembly of all humanity. Every single person who has ever lived shall be gathered before the throne of Jesus to be judged for the things they did on earth:

### **Matthew 25:31-45**

<sup>31</sup> "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.

<sup>32</sup> All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.

<sup>33</sup> And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.

<sup>34</sup> Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

<sup>35</sup> for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in;

<sup>36</sup> I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'

<sup>37</sup> "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink?

<sup>38</sup> When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You?

<sup>39</sup> Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?'

<sup>40</sup> And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'

<sup>41</sup> "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:

<sup>42</sup> for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink;

<sup>43</sup> I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.'

<sup>44</sup> "Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?'

<sup>45</sup> Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.'

## A COMMON QUESTION

Now, let us consider a common question often asked by men concerning the Judgment Day of Christ.

**Q:** If men are comforted, or tormented immediately upon their death, what is the purpose for the Judgment Day of Christ?

**A:** The final Judgment Day of Christ seems to have several purposes according to the Bible:

- It is a time when the wicked discover why they are being tormented and why they will continue to be tormented. This is what happened according to the passage in Matthew 25.
- The Judgment Day will be the day wicked men receive their final sentencing. They will be sent to everlasting Gehenah Hell.
- The Judgment Day will also be a day of victory for the righteous. It will be a time when God's people are vindicated and when they receive their final reward.

To illustrate, notice the following story in the Book of Joshua:

### **Joshua 10:22-26**

<sup>22</sup> Then Joshua said, "Open the mouth of the cave, and bring out those five kings to me from the cave."

<sup>23</sup> And they did so, and brought out those five kings to him from the cave: the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon.

<sup>24</sup> So it was, when they brought out those kings to Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said to the captains of the men of war who went with him, "Come near, put your feet on the necks of these kings." And they drew near and put their feet on their necks.

<sup>25</sup> Then Joshua said to them, "Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed; be strong and of good courage, for thus the LORD will do to all your enemies against whom you fight."

<sup>26</sup> And afterward Joshua struck them and killed them, and hanged them on five trees; and they were hanging on the trees until evening.

Notice carefully that these wicked kings were kept prisoners in a cave awaiting their final judgment from Joshua. This illustrates wicked men who are in torments awaiting the final Judgment Day of Christ.

When these kings were brought out, Joshua had the leaders of Israel come near and place their feet on the necks of their enemies. They were vindicated. It was a day of victory. This illustrates the victory that the righteous will experience on the Judgment Day of Christ. It will be evident to everyone that the righteous are victorious.

Finally, Joshua gave these wicked kings something far worse than imprisonment in a cave -- he killed them with the sword. This illustrates, that although wicked men are immediately imprisoned and punished to some degree in Hades, there is something far worse for them when they are brought forth on Judgment Day.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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