

## Hebrews 6.1-3

### A Matter of Death and Life...

The resurrection of the dead is perhaps the deepest core of the Christian faith. It is in truth one of the deepest cores of all major (and most minor) religions. For it answers the question that is inescapable in this life. What happens when I die? This teaching is far from minor and far from simple, but it is accessible to all of us in one degree or another. From the least to the greatest we can all agree that death is coming and left to our own abilities to reason, it scares us all out of our wits! But the Bible is absolutely NOT silent on the matter, and we don't need to guess. The Bible teaches us what happens when we die, and it promises a resurrection of the dead.

#### I. THE REALITY OF DEATH

a. Its reason - a consequence for sin

#### Genesis 3

b. Rebellion against God. -

- i. One command was given - exercise dominion over creation (this would have included the serpent)
- ii. One responsibility was required - to lead and rule over creation as the steward of God. Adam had abdicated that responsibility already when he allowed Eve to take the lead in that conversation
- iii. One prohibition was enjoined - Do not eat of the tree...

c. Aspire to be God - root of all sin - vv 4-5

- i. the desire to master our own fate
- ii. The desire to rule over others
- iii. The desire to answer to no one

d. Corruption of nature - every part of us defiled

- i. Ruined in our spirit, that which communed with God
- ii. Ruined in our mind, our will, our thoughts, our desires

- iii. Ruined in our soul, that which is touching the eternal
- iv. Ruined in our flesh, aging, disease, sinful desires

e. Its curse

- i. Nature itself was placed under the curse - vv17-19
  - 1. Thorns and thistles
  - 2. Placed under the curse - vv17

**Romans 8.18-23**

- ii. Our relationships were corrupted - v16
- iii. Our task was made infinitely harder and worse, it was made joyless

f. Its necessity

- i. Removed from the proximity to the tree of life
- ii. Kept from the possibility of cheating death
- iii. No worse curse could be imagined than an endless life in a fallen world, with no

possibility of ending, no potential for final good or rest...

- iv. The reality of life is that there are far worse things than death... hell awaits those who die without the reconciliation found only in Christ Jesus.

g. Its promise –

- i. Inherent in our death is the passing from this life into another. We all know in our bones and in our souls that we do not end when the lights go out in this life. Men try with all their hearts to deny the testimony of their own nature...
- ii. It was the core heresy and sin of the Sadducees
- iii. It remains the core and the note of desperation in every atheist who walks the earth. Our very souls cry out that we are more than this life. That we are made for more, that we do not end when we depart. But in our

foolish pride and arrogance we deny and fight against this inner truth

- h. This, however is the core teaching of the church and cannot be compromised or passed over
  - i. For the believer, it destroys hope and happiness to deny this
  - ii. For the unbeliever, it casts off all restraint and makes men into monsters of self and ruin
  - iii. The promise of another life, after this one ends is written into our very nature...

i. Its fulfillment

- i. There is a mixed bag here.
- ii. Everyone will receive a resurrection.
- iii. Some will not like the new life they get.

## **II. THE TRUTH OF THE COST**

- a. Death is not merely a physical reality.
- b. Death includes a spiritual component.

- i. We are cut off from our God,
- ii. removed from His fellowship
- iii. and alienated from His family. Jesus, when speaking to the Pharisees called them sons of the devil.

### **John 8.44**

- iv. Death touched every part of our nature. Even if we could be restored to God, without some sort of transformation in our nature, we would not want to be restored to Him. Romans 3 reminds us that NO ONE seeks after God. We ALL want to be rid of Him if left to our own desires... remember that the root of all sin is a desire to be god... and part of that hunger is a desire to answer to no one.

c. Death requires payment.

### **Romans 6.23**

- i. It could not be merely wished away by anyone

- ii. Every man owes a debt of death because of his sin and his sin nature. Not just what we do, but part of what we actually ARE...

### Romans 3.23

- iii. Thus, death cannot be removed by merely fighting it on our terms or with our weapons. We fight against death with the wrong idea. Remember, death is a consequence. It does not occur in a vacuum, it is not merely a physical mechanism.
- iv. So all of our attempts to end death, to cure disease, to extend life... all are a futile attempt to reverse and remove something that cannot be removed or reversed with those tools.
- d. But death DOES have a cure. Its cure is the death and resurrection of Jesus. He died without owing a death, He had lived a perfect life and was not guilty of any sin. Death is a consequence. His was not born of man, through which the curse is passed, so was outside the reach of the curse. But, He DID take it upon Himself on our behalf,

dying in our place and paying the penalty which WE owed.

### III. THE TRUTH OF THE MOMENT –

touching eternity

- a. Death is a sacred moment, it is the time when we are closest to the truth of our entire existence.
- b. The shorter catechism asks the question, "what is the chief end of man?". The answer is "to glorify God and enjoy Him forever." This simple statement speaks also to why death is sacred. We are made for God. And when we die, we pass into His presence. Now, again, it is important to remember that our perspective on that truth is dependent on whether or not we are still outside of God's family. Whether we have been born again and made new.

#### **Romans 9.22-24**

- c. Paul reminds us that we must all be transformed before we can enter into the presence of God

## **1 Corinthians 15.50-54**

### **IV. THE HOPE OF THE WAIT**

The certainty of the resurrection

- a. The resurrection of the dead is a promise that will not fail, for if there is no resurrection of the dead, then our entire faith is founded on nothing.

## **1 Corinthians 15.12-19**

- b. Here is the hope that sustains us, Jesus Christ paid the penalty for our sin. He died as payment, but was raised up from the dead as a sign to us that God had accepted that payment. Because death is partly a physical consequence, it still invades every single one of us. We all will die unless Christ returns first, but death holds NO fear or sting for us for its power lay in the threat of the second death. And NO ONE who trusts in Jesus Christ will ever taste THAT death. So for us, we view death with a hopeful expectation. For

us, it is merely a door that leads to our home. It is merely a step that we all must take but that none will take alone. For our Savior has passed there before us and will take our hand at the hour of our death and take us into the presence of our mutual Father.