The State Of The Dead

Intro: What is life to you? Is it pleasure, wealth, gratify my own desires and lust. If so, what is it to die? Only by having a right attitude of death can we have a right attitude toward life. Thus in this lesson I want us to study the state of the dead in order to help us to have that right attitude toward death.

I. Life
A. In life there is a separation, more in God’s sight than ours possibly.
B. This separation is between the righteous and the unrighteous.
   1. There are but two classes of people.
   2. Mat. 12:30 “He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.”
   3. 2 Cor. 6:14-17 “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? 15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing and I will receive you,”

II. Death
A. Jam. 2:26 “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”
   1. Humans are made up of more than just flesh and blood.
   2. We have a body and spirit.
   3. When death comes the spirit is separated from the body.
B. Ecc. 12:7 “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.”
   1. At the time of this separation the body returns to the dust, the grave.
   2. The spirit goes to God.
C. At death there is the continuation of life. It is not the cessation of being.
   1. Jesus taught this; Mat. 22:31-32 “But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, 32 I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living”
   2. At creation, and now when we are born into this world; God places within man a living spirit, that never dies.
   3. That spirit continues to live and will continue to live through all eternity.
   4. That spirit will live eternally either in heaven or hell.

III. Hades
A. At death where does that spirit live?
   1. Paradise
      a. It is a place of blessing, happiness, joy, peace, communion with God.
      b. It is everything we might refer to heaven except it is without the body, which is in the grave.
   2. Tartarus
      a. It is a place of torment and great anguish.
      b. It is everything we might refer to as hell except it is without the body, which is in the grave.
B. This Paradise, Tartarus, and grave state is referred to in the New Testament as hades and in the Old Testament as sheol.
IV. ETERNITY

A. At the second coming of Christ we have the day of judgment.

1. The righteous spirits will come with Christ and will appear in the sky with Him.
   a. 1 Thess. 3:13 “To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.”
   b. 1 Thess. 4:14 “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.”

2. The body will be raised from the grave, 1 Cor. 15:

3. The body will be reunited with the spirit to be forever blessed.

4. The unrighteous bodies will also be reunited with their spirits to be forever tormented.

5. John 5:28-29 “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 29And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”

6. There will then be the passing of sentence or judgment.

B. Thus will begin eternity in either heaven or hell.

V. SCRIPTURES RELATING TO HADES.

A. Paradise

1. Luke 23:39-43 “And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. 40But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? 41And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. 42And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. 43And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.”

   a. The thief was saved.
      (1) Christ while here on earth had the power to forgive sins, upon whatever basis he desired.
      (2) He forgave the thief’s sins.

   b. How would he be with Christ in Paradise?
      (1) Their bodies would be put in the grave.
      (2) Their spirits would go into that realm called Paradise

2. Acts 2:27, 31 “Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.... 31He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.”

   a. Christ body was to be put in the grave; but it would not see corruption.
      (1) The body of the thief saw corruption, even as all others do.
      (2) Christ body did not see corruption because it should be raised from the dead.

   b. This resurrection would prove he was the Son of God and Savior of the world.

   c. The soul, spirit, of Jesus would pass into hades.
      (1) The thief was to be with Christ in Paradise.
      (2) Therefore Christ was in Paradise, but He was in hades, therefore Paradise is in hades.

3. Acts 7:59 “And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”

   a. While Stephen was being stoned he saw Jesus, in heaven, standing on the right hand of God. Acts. 7:55 “But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,”

   b. Stephen says, “receive my spirit.”
c. Stephen’s spirit was to be with Jesus; wherever Jesus was (which was in heaven) Stephen would be. This is in other places referred to as Paradise.

4. 2 Cor. 12:2-5 “I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. 3And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) 4How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. 5Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities.”

a. There are three heavens in the Bible.
   (1) The first heaven is where the birds fly, the clouds appear, the air we breath.
   (2) The second heaven is where the galaxies, the stars reside.
   (3) The third heaven is the dwelling place of God, and is also described as far beyond the heavens.

b. A man went into the third heaven, the dwelling place of God, and described this place as Paradise in verse 4.

5. 2 Cor. 5:1-11 “For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: 3If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. 4For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. 5Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. 6Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: 7(For we walk by faith, not by sight:) 8We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.”

   a. This discussion is of our home after we have departed this life in the body.
   b. We desire to leave this life in order that we might have a better life.

   c. 2 Cor. 5:6, 8 “Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: 8We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.”

      (1) While we are in this body we are absent from the Lord.
      (2) When this spirit of ours is separated from this body (death) then that spirit is at home, present, with the Lord.
      (3) Where is the Lord? At the right hand of God in heaven.

   d. What is this place?
      (1) It is paradise, because it is a temporary place and not eternal.
      (2) It is a place for the spirit but not for the body; while heaven is a place for the body as well as the spirit.

6. Phi. 1:23 “For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better.”

   a. Paul had a desire for death, to depart this life in order to be with Christ.
   b. It was needful for others that Paul remain in the body:
      (1) While in that body he would be glorifying Christ
      (2) Phi. 1:20-21 “According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. 21For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”

   c. Where would Paul be after he died?
      (1) With Christ.
(2) Christ is in heaven on God’s right hand; again described in the scriptures as Paradise.

d. This passage proves that the spirit does not sleep after death but is conscience.
   (1) Being with Christ (in death) was far better.
   (2) Comparison with glorifying (magnifying) Christ in his body, and serving Christ.
   (3) How could sleepless unconsciousness be far better than magnifying Christ in his body? It could not be.

7. Rev. 6:9-10; Rev. 7:15 “And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held; 10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?... 7:15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.”
   a. These are saints that had been beheaded for the cause of Christ.
   b. Where were they?
      (1) Before the throne of God.
      (2) Under the altar of God.
      (3) They were speaking to the Lord.
   c. Again shows us that death is not unconsciousness for these spoke.

8. These passages are sufficient to show us there is a Paradise where righteous souls go after death.

B. Tartarus.

1. Luke 16:19-31 “There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: 19 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, 20 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 21 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; 22 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 23 And 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. 24 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. 25 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that they would come from thence. 26 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father’s house: 27 For I have five brethren. If one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. 28 Abraha saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets: let them hear them. 29 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. 30 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”
   a. This is not a parable; but whether it is or not it would still teach the same thing.
   b. Lazarus, the righteous man, went into Abraham’s bosom where he was blessed; what is described in other places as Paradise.
   c. The rich man, the unrighteous, went into torment.
      (1) He was tormented immediately after his death.
      (2) His brothers were still alive.
      (3) There was a great gulf between them, even as there is that separation in this life between the righteous and unrighteous.

2. Mat. 11:21-24 “Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22 But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. 23 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty...
works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. 24 But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.”

a. Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum would be cast down to hell (literally, hades) until the day of judgment.

b. They would be tormented because they rejected Christ.

3. 2 Pet. 2:4 “For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;”

a. Angels that sinned cast into hell.

b. Hell is not γεέννα (geenna) but ταρταρόω (tartaréo) or tartarus.

b. They would be kept there until the judgment.

Conclusion: What is it to die? What does it mean to you? Does it mean paradise and heaven or does it mean tartarus and hell? It all depends on how we live in this life. Whether we live unto God or unto ourselves.