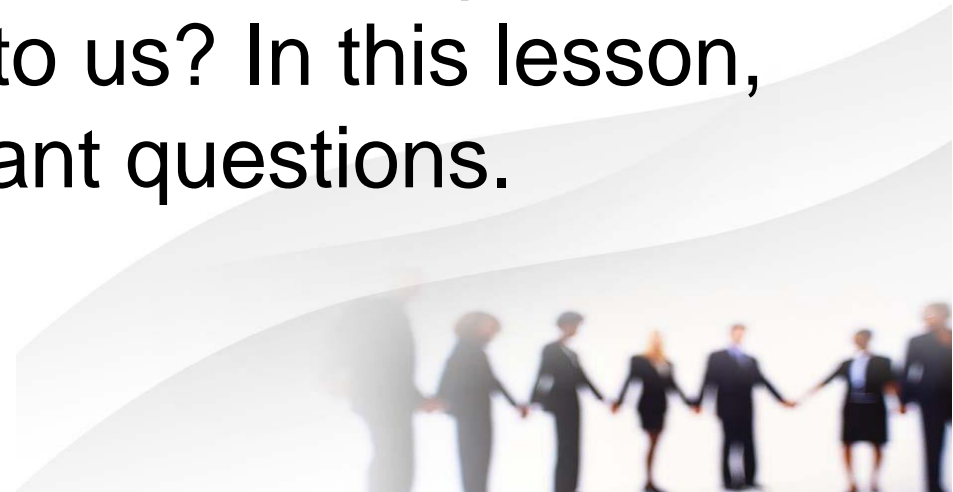


Lesson 17 – Where are the Dead?



Introduction: If, as some teach, the dead are already in heaven with Jesus, why are they resurrected at His second coming? Why did Jesus tell the disciples they would be with Him again when He returned instead of when they died (John 14:3)? Why does God forbid us to consult with our departed loved ones, if they are alive and can talk to us? In this lesson, we will learn the answers to these important questions.



1. What does God say about consulting spiritualists and the supposed spirits of the dead? Lev. 19:31

Lev. 19:31

- ³¹ Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God.

1 Timothy 4:1

- Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

[Note: God warns that in the last days some “will give heed to deceiving spirits” (1 Tim. 4:1). These spirits deceive us by coming to us in “familiar” form, such as the form of some departed loved one. That is one reason they are called “familiar” spirits. The Further-study verses are Lev. 20:27; Deut. 18:10-12; Rev. 22:15]



2. Where does the spirit go at death? Eccl. 12:7

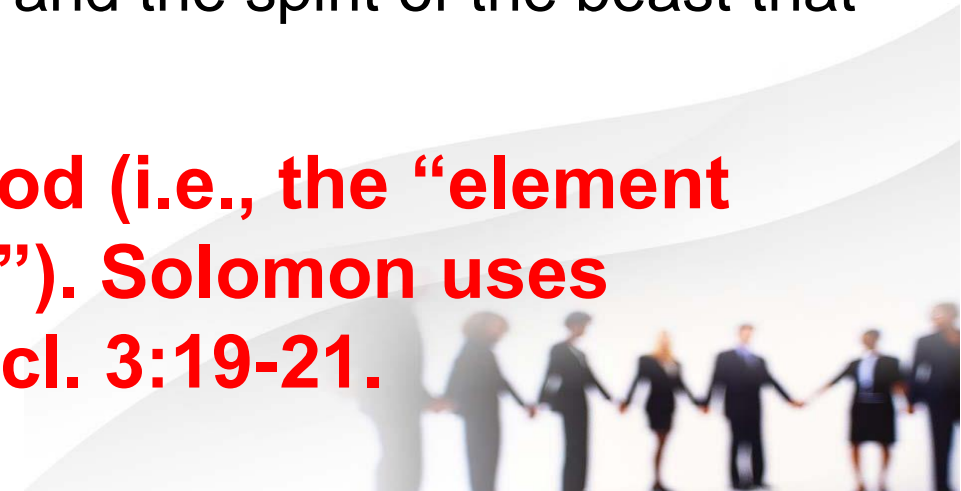
Eccl. 12:7

- ⁷ Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

Eccl. 3:19-21

- 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: for all is vanity.
- ²⁰ All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.
- ²¹ Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?

[Note: The spirit is the breath of life from God (i.e., the “element of life,” the “spark of life,” or the “life force”). Solomon uses “breath” and “spirit” interchangeably in Eccl. 3:19-21. Job 27:3; Gen. 2:7]



3. Is this spirit that returns to God, conscious? Eccl. 9:5 [Ps. 146:4; Ps 115:17]

Eccl. 9:5

- ⁵ For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten.
- ⁶ Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.

Psalms 146:4

- ⁴ His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.

[Answer: No, his thoughts are perish.]



4. What did Jesus call death? John 11:11-14

John 11:11-14

- ¹¹ These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.
- ¹² Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.
- ¹³ Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep.
- ¹⁴ Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.

1 Cor. 15:51, 52

- ⁵¹ Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,
- ⁵² In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

[Note: Paul also called death a sleep. See 1 Cor. 15:51, 52; 1 Thess. 4:15-17; 1 Cor. 15:16-18; 11:30]



5. What did David call death? Ps. 13:3

Psalms 13:3

- ³ Consider and hear me, O LORD my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death;

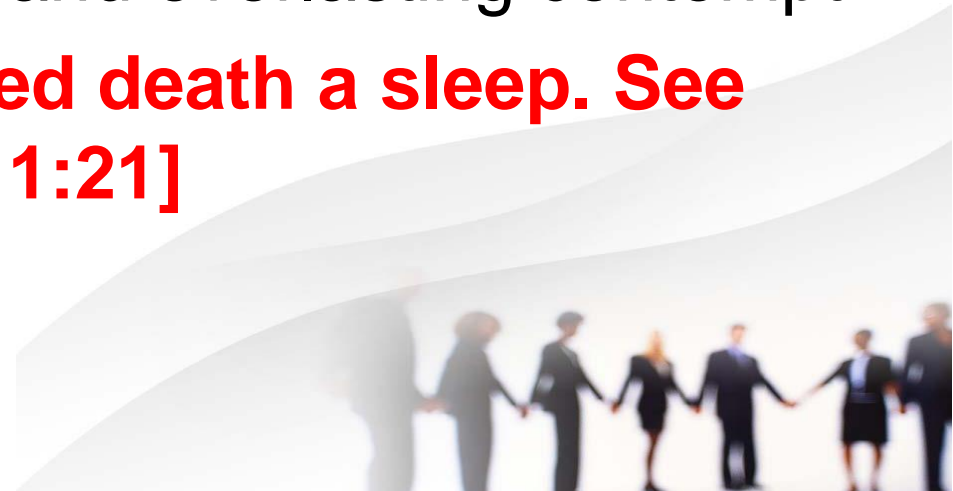
Job 14:12

- ¹² So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.

Daniel 12:2

- ² And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

[Note: Other Old Testament writers also called death a sleep. See Job 14:12; Jer. 51:39, 57; Dan. 12:2; 1 Kings 1:21]



6. Is there any memory in this sleep of death? Ps. 6:5 [Isa. 38:18; Eccl 9:5, 6]

Psalms 6:5

- ⁵ For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?

Isaiah 38:18

- ¹⁸ For the grave cannot praise thee, death can not celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth.

Eccl. 9:5, 6

- ⁵ For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten.
- ⁶ Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.



7. Did David go to heaven when he died? Acts 2:29, 34 [Acts 13:36]

Acts 2:29, 34

²⁹ Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.

³⁴ For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

Acts 13:36

³⁶ For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption:

Answer: No, he was laid in a tomb unto his fathers.



8. Where will the dead be when Jesus resurrects them at His second coming?

John 5:28, 29 [Job 14:12-15]

John 5:28, 29

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

Job 14: 12-15

- ¹² So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.
- ¹³ O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!
- ¹⁴ If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.
- ¹⁵ Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.



9. When do the dead go to heaven or to hell? Matt. 25:31-34, 41 [Matt. 16:27; John 14:2, 3; Rev. 22:12]

Matthew 25:31-34

- ³¹ When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:
- ³² And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:
- ³³ And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.
- ³⁴ Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

John 14:2, 3

- ² In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.
- ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

Revelation 22:12

- ¹² And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.



10. When did the thief on the cross look forward to being with Jesus? Did Jesus assure Him of salvation that very day? Luke 23:42, 43

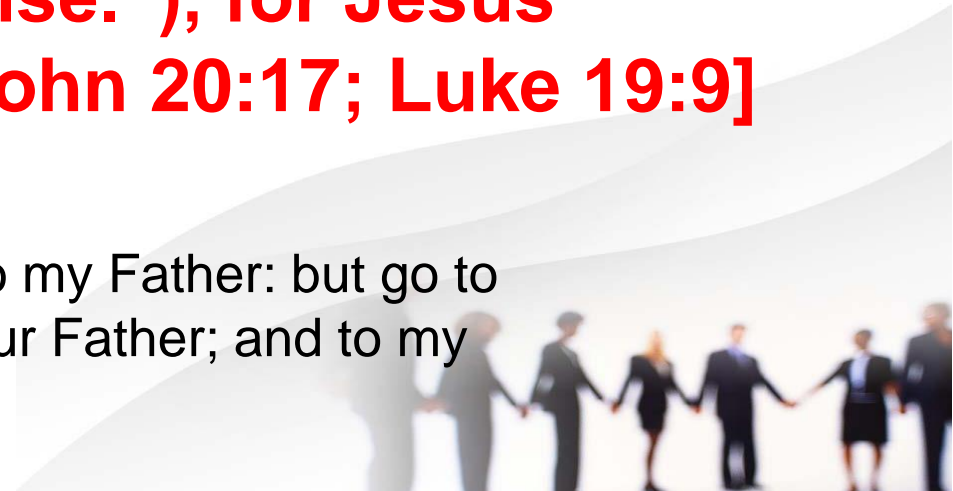
Luke 23:42, 43

- ⁴² And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.
- ⁴³ And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.

[Note: The punctuation in the Bible was supplied by the translators, for there was no punctuation in the original Greek. The comma should go after the word “today” (“Assuredly I say unto you today, you will be with Me in Paradise.”), for Jesus Himself did not go to heaven that day. See John 20:17; Luke 19:9]

John 20:17

¹⁷ Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.



11. Jesus often illustrated truth with parables which, like prophecies, use symbols. Yet some have rejected the very truth Jesus so plainly taught about death by taking literally some of the symbols in the parable of the “Rich man and Lazarus” (Luke 16). What did Jesus say would happen to those who try to understand parables without “having” (or knowing) what the rest of the Bible says on a subject? Matt. 13:10-13 [1 Cor. 2:12-14; 2 Tim. 2:15; Luke 16:19-31]

Matthew 13:10-13

- ¹⁰ And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?
- ¹¹ He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.
- ¹² For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.
- ¹³ Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.



12. What was the devil's first lie? Gen. 3:3, 4 [Question: Who do you think told the truth, Satan or God? Today Satan is still perpetuating his original lie, and he is doing so through religion and by misapplying and twisting Scripture, as he did with Jesus in Matthew 4:5, 6. 2 Cor. 11:13-15; 2 Thess. 2:9-12]

Genesis 3:3, 4

- ³ But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.
- ⁴ And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

2 Thess. 2:9-12

- ⁹ Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,
- ¹⁰ And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.
- ¹¹ And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:
- ¹² That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.



13. With what promise did Paul tell us to “comfort one another” when death occurs? 1 Thess. 4:15-18 [1 Cor. 15:51-55; 1 John 5:11, 12; Rev. 1:18; John 6:39, 40]

1 Thess. 4:15-18

- ¹⁵ For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.
- ¹⁶ For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:
- ¹⁷ Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.
- ¹⁸ Wherefore comfort one another with these words.



- **Notes on the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31):** God has written the Bible in such a way that we must compare Scripture with Scripture to understand it (Isa. 28:9, 10; I Cor. 2:13, 14; 2 Thess. 2:11, 12). If this parable provided the only information the Bible gives on death, we would have to conclude that the dead go directly to heaven or hell, but it is not. This story comes in the middle of a group of parables and is itself a parable, for it uses figurative language throughout—i.e., Lazarus went to “Abraham’s bosom”; those in Hades and Heaven can see and talk to each other; and a drop of water suffices to cool one’s tongue in hell. In this parable Jesus used common Jewish and Greek ideas (as evidenced in Josephus’ works) to teach that (1) the rich have no advantage for salvation, (2) this life provides our only chance for salvation, and (3) the Scriptures are all sufficient for salvation. Jesus was not teaching a new doctrine on death, or He would be contradicting what He Himself repeatedly taught in other places.



- **Commitment:** Isn't God's way really the best? Instead of floating around somewhere after death, a person sleeps until he is bodily resurrected as Jesus was. And, since he is unconscious, the resurrection is the next instant to him! Instead of a dying baby going to a strange place alone, the next thing he knows is his mother's smiling kiss! The parents will take up the raising of their departed child right where it left off! Will you accept Jesus' assurance that we will all go to heaven together, at the same time, after the resurrection?

