

Everlasting Gospel Bible Studies

Lesson 15

ABODE OF THE DEAD



The shocking news was broken at 7:00 p.m.: America was at war.

On the eve of December 7, 1941, thousands of families across the nation confronted a sobering reality: their young men would soon face death defending their country in World War II. Pearl Harbor brought a chilling loss and a renewed interest in the mystery of death.

At every crisis in man's history, an intense and private anguish has torn the hearts of those who have no hope beyond the grave. How precious in such times is the Christian's hope! How happy are those who have found Jesus before it became too late to repent! But what specifically is the Christian's hope in death? How can we find courage from the Bible to face life's end?

A. WHAT IS THE SOUL?

1. **What did God do to transform man's body into a living soul?**
Genesis 2:7

NOTE: Dust + Breath = Living Soul. The common elements of the earth, plus God's gift of the spark of life, make up the living being we call the soul.

2. **Without the gift of eternal life from Jesus, what will become of every soul who has sinned? Ezekiel 18:4**

NOTE: The Bible consistently teaches of two deaths. The first is common to all creatures of earth, and is what we see when the life



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departs from the living soul.

~ NOTES ~

3. What happens when man becomes a dead soul? Ecclesiastes 12:7

NOTE: The word spirit in Ecclesiastes 12:7 is translated from the Hebrew word roach, which may also be rendered breath. The parallel is clear in Job 27:3: "All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils." When God takes back the breath of life (the spirit), the soul ceases to live.

B. WHAT IS DEATH?

4. When a man dies, what happens to his emotions? Ecclesiastes 9:5-6

5. What happens to his thoughts? Psalm 146:3-4

6. What did Jesus call the unconscious state of the soul? John 11:11-14; See Psalm 13:3.

7. Does man go to heaven when he sleeps the sleep of death, or does he remain in the grave? Acts 2:29, 34; Daniel 12:2

NOTE: If David has not ascended into heaven, whatever became of the thief on the cross? Did not Jesus promise that he would be in paradise the very day he was crucified? Look at Luke 23:42-43.

17. What comfort did Jesus give to His disciples when they faced persecution and martyrdom? Matthew 10:28; Ephesians 5:14

NOTE: Satan may inspire wicked men to kill faithful Christians, but we may take comfort in that the death of the body is only the sleep of the soul. God alone has the keys of hell and death (Revelation 1:18); God alone has the power to resurrect; God alone deserves our worshipful fear.

SUMMARY

When a man dies, his thoughts perish. He is not aware of anything happening around him. In the Bible, this unconscious state of the soul is described as a sleep. Man remains in that sleep until the resurrection. Job 14:10-15. At the Second Coming, those who have died with Christ as their personal Saviour will be resurrected to inherit eternal life. When the wicked are resurrected, they will be completely destroyed. There will be nothing left in the universe to remind us of the curse of sin. Those He has died to save will then enjoy uninterrupted communion with Jesus.

PERSONAL COMMITMENT

By the grace of God, I will study His Word, putting no confidence in the ideas of man (Jeremiah 17:5), to help me understand the truths that will protect me against Satan's deceptions.

Signed: _____

The punctuation in our Bibles was supplied by the translators but is not found in the original writings. To be consistent with what the Bible teaches on this subject, the comma in this passage should have been placed after the word today, causing it to read "Verily I say unto thee today, thou shalt be with me in paradise." The fact that the thief did not go to heaven that day becomes even more evident when we see that Jesus Himself did not go to heaven until after His resurrection. John 20:17

C. WHAT IS HELL?

The English word *hell* in the Old Testament is translated from the Hebrew word *sheol*. Sheol is rendered as hell 31 times, but as grave or pit 32 times. To the Old Testament writers it simply meant the grave. The New Testament authors were Hebrews writing in the Greek language, which had no word corresponding exactly to the Hebrew meaning, so they use *hades*, *tartaroo*, and *gehenna*. Hades was the pagan mythological underworld of the dead, and Tartaroo its most inaccessible place. Gehenna meant the valley of Hinnom, a place where pagans had made human sacrifices.

8. How is the "hell" of Revelation 20:13-15 different from the lake of fire (in the same text) that destroys the wicked? Ezekiel 32:27

NOTE: The dead were gathered from wherever they were, in the sea or in the grave. The wicked were committed to the fire, followed by death and the grave. I Corinthians 15:26

9. What is the nature of this fire? Deuteronomy 4:24; Hebrews 12:29

10. What will be left after the fire? Malachi 4:1, 3; Isaiah 47:14

NOTE: Ashes are all that will be briefly left to remind us of the plague of sin. God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezekiel 18:23). The thought of eternal suffering did not originate with God. In fact, Satan's first lie to the human race was to tell Eve that she wouldn't die. Genesis 3:4. This lie was perpetuated through pagan religions. It was introduced into the Jewish system by the Greeks, hundreds of years before Christ. A few members of the early Christian church incorporated the idea of the immortal soul into their doctrine to make it easier to convert pagans. By the eleventh century the deception was nearly universal, but the truth has never been extinguished.

11. What did God say about the recurrence of suffering? Nahum 1:9

NOTE: We have seen that the idea of immortal souls suffering in an ever-burning hell supervised by Satan was never God's idea. As the instigator of sin, Satan will receive his just sentence. The lake of fire has been prepared for him and his angels that they be destroyed in it, not that they rule over it.

12. What word did Jude use to describe the fire that destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah? Jude 7

NOTE: Frequently we must examine our first thought as to the meaning of a word, against its use elsewhere in the Bible. The eternal fire of Jude 7 destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, then went out; but the destruction was eternal. Similarly, the everlasting fire of Matthew 18:8 and 25:41 will consume completely what is to be burned; just as the everlasting punishment of Matthew 25:46 is explained in 2 Thessalonians 1:9 as "punished with everlasting destruction."

13. How will the heat caused by the lake of fire affect the surface of the earth? 2 Peter 3:10

NOTE: In 2 Peter 3:7 we are assured that the destruction of the earth takes place at the same time as the destruction of the wicked.

14. After the universe has been freed from sin, sinners and their sinful creations, what has God promised specifically will never again exist? Revelation 21:4

D. RESURRECTION AND REWARD

15. When do the righteous dead awake out of their sleep? 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52

NOTE: Martha, the sister of Lazarus, correctly understood this plain teaching of Scripture. When Jesus told her that she would see her brother alive again, she responded "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." John 11:24. Although the verses cited given above had not yet been written, the Jewish people knew this truth from the Old Testament. See Job 14:10-15 for a beautiful summary of the sleep of death and God's call to resurrection.

16. When the righteous are awakened from death, what will become of our mortal bodies? 1 Corinthians 15:53-54; Philippians 3:20-21