

# DEATH, GRIEF, AND HOPE WORKSHOP

August 2023

Biblical Truth About Dying, Grieving,  
And our Hope of Life Everlasting

*"The Last Enemy to be Destroyed is Death"*



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**Workshop Goals:**

- To give doctrinal clarity on death and dying. Considering the cause, state, and destination of the dead.
- To give gospel encouragement of the hope in Christ. To appreciate his triumph over the grave and promise to all who trust in him for salvation.
- To understand the human need to grieve and how to do so well. To learn how to walk alongside the brokenhearted in seasons of sorrow and provide helpful comfort.

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## Teaching 1: The Reality of Death

### There is a Time for Every Matter Under Heaven

#### **Ecclesiastes 3:1 – 4**

**1** For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

**2** a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;

**3** a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;

**4** a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance

### Death Eventually Comes for Everyone

#### **Job 14:1 - 2, 5**

**1** “Man who is born of a woman is few of days and full of trouble.

**2** He comes out like a flower and withers; he flees like a shadow and continues not.

**5** Since his days are determined, and the number of his months is with you [God], and you have appointed his limits that he cannot pass

#### **Psalms 49:1 – 20**

**1** To the choirmaster. A Psalm of the Sons of Korah. Hear this, all peoples! Give ear, all inhabitants of the world,

**2** both low and high, rich and poor together!

**3** My mouth shall speak wisdom; the meditation of my heart shall be understanding.

**4** I will incline my ear to a proverb; I will solve my riddle to the music of the lyre.

**5** Why should I fear in times of trouble, when the iniquity of those who cheat me surrounds me,

**6** those who trust in their wealth and boast of the abundance of their riches?

**7** Truly no man can ransom another, or give to God the price of his life,

**8** for the ransom of their life is costly and can never suffice,

**9** that he should live on forever and never see the pit.

**10** For he sees that even the wise die; the fool and the stupid alike must perish and leave their wealth to others.

**11** Their graves are their homes forever, their dwelling places to all generations, though they called lands by their own names.

**12** Man in his pomp will not remain; he is like the beasts that perish.

**13** This is the path of those who have foolish confidence; yet after them people approve of their boasts. Selah

**14** Like sheep they are appointed for Sheol; death shall be their shepherd, and the upright shall rule over them in the morning. Their form shall be consumed in Sheol, with no place to dwell.

**15** But God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol, for he will receive me. Selah

## Death is an Enemy that Jesus Christ Came to Destroy

### **1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:20 – 26**

**20** But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

**21** For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.

**22** For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

**23** But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.

**24** Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power.

**25** For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.

**26** The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

### **Isaiah 25:8 - 9**

**8** He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken.

**9** It will be said on that day, "Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the LORD; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

### **Hebrews 2:14 – 15**

**14** Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,

**15** and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

### **John 10:10, 27 - 28**

**10** The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

**27** My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

**28** I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.

## The First Death and the Origin of Death

### **Genesis 2:7 – 9, 15 – 17**

**7** then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

**8** And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed.

**9** And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

- God formed man out of dust – and breathed life into him.
- God put man in the garden of Eden
- We're told of two trees:
  - The tree of life
  - The tree of the knowledge of good and evil

**15** The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.

**16** And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden,

**17** but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

- This is the first mention of dying in the Bible and the origin of all death...
- God gave one command not to be broken.
  - On the day they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Adam would die, and physical death would follow after

*\*For more information, see [Appendix 1 – Why didn't Adam and Eve Physically Die Right Away?](#)*

## Enter the Serpent, and the First Lie

### **Genesis 3:1 – 19**

**1** Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'"

- The first thing spoken by the serpent is a question of God's Word
- He is a murderer and a liar:
  - In **Revelation 12:9**, he is referred to as "*the great dragon... that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world...*"
  - In **John 8:44**, he is called "*a murderer from the beginning*" and it is said that he "*does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him.*"
    - He is both called "*a liar*" and "*the father of lies*" because he spoke the first lie, and every lie is against the truth and, therefore, is ultimately from him.
- He lies to Eve, and this causes her, her husband, and all of mankind to die and become subject to death.
  - In **Hebrews 2:14** and **15**, the devil is spoken of as the one who "*has the power of death*" and that he keeps mankind in "*lifelong slavery*" out of a "*fear of death.*"

**2** And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden,  
**3** but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’”

**4** But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die.

- This is the first lie in the Bible.
  - God was clear, “in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

**5** For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

**6** So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

**7** Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

**8** And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

- Immediately, we see the effects of sin and death entering into mankind.
  - They are hiding themselves from the presence of the LORD.

**9** But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?”

**10** And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.”

**11** He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?”

**12** The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.”

**13** Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

**14** The LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.

**15** I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

**16** To the woman he said, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.”

**17** And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;

**18** thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field.

**19** By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

- An eventual physical death is now a reality for every human.

**20** The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.

**21** And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

**22** Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—"

**23** therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken.

**24** He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

- Now, there is both a "time to be born" and a "time to die."
  - And both birth and death will be very difficult.
  - Man is now destined to be born out of much pain in childbirth and then eventually will physically die and return to the dust from which he was made.
- Man was removed from the Garden.
  - He ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
  - And God did not want to allow him to eat from the tree of life.
- God did not want mankind to live forever in an unredeemed and separated position from Him.
  - Sin and death had now entered into the world.

### The Consequence of Sin and Death Spread to All

**Romans 5:12** Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned

**1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:21 – 22a**

**21** For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.

**22** For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.



## The Nature of and the State of Death

What Happens to The Physical Body when a Person Dies?

**Genesis 2:7** then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

**Genesis 3:19b** you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

### **Ecclesiastes 3:19 – 20**

**19** For what happens to the children of man and what happens to the beasts is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and man has no advantage over the beasts, for all is vanity.

**20** All go to one place. All are from the dust, and to dust all return.

- God made man out of dust.
  - When his breath stops, death occurs. Now, he is no longer a living creature, and his physical body returns back to dust.
- So, the physical body decays and returns back to the basic elements of the earth, out of which it was originally made.

### **Psalm 146:3 – 4a**

**3** Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation.

**4a** When his breath departs, he returns to the earth

What Happens to the Soul and Consciousness when a Person Dies?

### **Psalm 13:2 – 4**

**1** To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David. How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?

**2** How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?

**3** Consider and answer me, O LORD my God; light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death,

**4** lest my enemy say, "I have prevailed over him," lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken.

- The figure used all through the Bible in regard to what happens to the soul after death
  - All the dead "sleep the sleep of death" and, one day, will awake in resurrection.

### **Psalm 17:13 – 15**

**13** Arise, O LORD! Confront him, subdue him! Deliver my soul from the wicked by your sword,

**14** from men by your hand, O LORD, from men of the world whose portion is in this life. You fill their womb with treasure; they are satisfied with children, and they leave their abundance to their infants.

**15** As for me, I shall behold your face in righteousness; when I awake, I shall be satisfied with your likeness.

- Sleep is a fitting analogy because the dead are dead. As in sleep, they are no longer conscious.
  - One day, all will awake in resurrection.

## Old Testament Usages of Sleep as an Analogy for Death

- **Psalm 6** describes those who are dead having no remembrance and unable to give praise:

### **Psalm 6:4 – 5**

**4** Turn, O LORD, deliver my life; save me for the sake of your steadfast love.

**5** For in death there is no remembrance of you; in Sheol who will give you praise?

- *Sheol* is the Hebrew word for the place of the dead in the state of death in the Old Testament
  - *Hades* is the Greek equivalent in the New Testament.
  - *\*For more information, see Appendix 4 – Sheol and Hades*
- **Psalm 88** shows that the dead cannot praise God or declare His lovingkindness and faithfulness. The grave is a land of forgetfulness:

### **Psalm 88:10 – 12**

**10** Do you work wonders for the dead? Do the departed rise up to praise you? Selah

**11** Is your steadfast love declared in the grave, or your faithfulness in Abaddon?

**12** Are your wonders known in the darkness, or your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?

- **Psalm 115** describes those who die as going down into silence:

**Psalm 115:17** The dead do not praise the LORD, nor do any who go down into silence.

- **Psalm 146** shows that the dead don't have any plans:

### **Psalm 146:3 – 4**

**3** Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation.

**4** When his breath departs, he returns to the earth; on that very day his plans perish.

- In light of death being a state of nothingness and dormancy, Solomon in **Ecclesiastes** encouraged God's people to do what they desire today. He urged to do it now while you're still alive because you won't be able to do anything while dead.

### **Ecclesiastes 9:4 – 7, 10**

**4** But he who is joined with all the living has hope, for a living dog is better than a dead lion.

**5** For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten.

**6** Their love and their hate and their envy have already perished, and forever they have no more share in all that is done under the sun.

**7** Go, eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart, for God has already approved what you do.

**10** Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might, for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going.

- Also, Job knew these truths that the dead don't come back. They can't return to haunt houses. Once a man goes down to the grave, he remains there dead and completely inactive. They don't come back up until resurrection.

**Job 7:9 – 10**

**9** As the cloud fades and vanishes, so he who goes down to Sheol does not come up;

**10** he returns no more to his house, nor does his place know him anymore.

\* For more information, see Appendix 2 – Buried Righteous Kings and Unrighteous Kings

- In death, much like in sleep, there is no consciousness.
  - There is no awareness of the passage of time in the grave.
- When we fall asleep at night, we awake in the morning. So, it will be for all who have died.
  - They sleep right now, and one day, they will be awakened.
    - They have closed their eyes, and they will open them again.

**Daniel 12:2** And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

New Testament Usages of Sleep as an Analogy for Death

- When Lazarus died, Jesus spoke of him as sleeping and that he would wake him up.
  - Incidentally, the English word cemetery comes from the Greek *koimeterion*, which means “a sleeping place.”

**John 11:11 - 14**

**11** After saying these things, he said to them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him.”

**12** The disciples said to him, “Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover.”

**13** Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep.

**14** Then Jesus told them plainly, “Lazarus has died,

- Even though, just before he was stoned to death, Stephen saw the heavens open and Jesus standing in solidarity with him on the Father's right hand, when he died, he did not ascend to heaven, but “he fell asleep.”

**Acts 7:54 - 60**

**54** Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him.

**55** But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

**56** And he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”

**57** But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him.

**58** Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul.

**59** And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”

**60** And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

- King David is both dead and buried. He fell asleep, and his body saw corruption.

**Act 2:29** “Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.

**Acts 13:36** For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep and was laid with his fathers and saw corruption,

- Paul mentions Christians who believed and witnessed Christ’s appearing in his resurrected body as now, “fallen asleep.”

**1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:6** Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep.

- Paul says that without the resurrection, those who have fallen asleep trusting in Christ are perished.

**1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:18 – 20**

**18** Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.

**19** If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

- “Perished” would mean that they have become nonexistent and lost forever.
  - *\*For more information, see Appendix 3 – Promises to Not Perish and Never Die?*
- Christ is referred to as “the first fruits (of the harvest) of those who have fallen asleep.”
  - This means that even his death was a time of sleeping for three days and three nights in the grave, and he was awakened in resurrection.

**20** But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

- Jesus Christ is the first to have fallen asleep and been raised from the dead,
  - but through him, God will bring all the other Christians who’ve believed in him to awaken out of their graves as well.

**1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4:13 -15**

**14** For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

**15** For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

- On that day of Christ’s return, all Christians will be raised and transformed to be like him.
  - All of the dead in Christ will be awakened from their sleep.
- As for the rest of the dead, they will be raised from their sleep on the last day, at the great white throne judgment.
  - Those with their names found in the book of life will be invited into the everlasting kingdom, and those whose names are not will be thrown into the lake of fire and suffer the second death.
  - *\*For more information, see Appendix 5 - What is Hell and the Lake of Fire?*

## The Last Enemy to be Destroyed is Death

### **Revelation 1:13 – 18**

**13** and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest.

**14** The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire,

**15** his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters.

**16** In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

**17** When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last,

**18** and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.

- One day, Christ will come to gather his church.
  - The dead (sleeping) in Christ and those who are alive will be raised and changed to have a glorious new body like him.
- As for the rest of humanity that is sleeping in their graves,
  - All the remaining dead will be raised on this last day, known as the great white throne judgment.

### **Revelation 20:11 – 15**

**11** Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them.

**12** And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.

- This event is also referred to as the "resurrection of both the just and the unjust," as Paul said in Acts 24:
  - Acts 24:15** having a hope in God, which these men themselves accept, that there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust.

**13** And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done.

**14** Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

**15** And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

*\*For more information on this, see Appendix 6 - What (and who) the Lake of Fire is For*

**Revelation 21:1 – 5**

**1** Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

**2** And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

**3** And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.

**4** He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

**5** And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

**Revelation 22:1 - 5**

**1** Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb

**2** through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

**3** No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him.

**4** They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.

**5** And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

- The tree of life has returned, and mankind is no longer forbidden from it.
  - Waters of life flow from the throne through the middle of the street of the city.
- There is no longer anything accursed.
  - There is no more mourning.
  - There is no more crying.
  - There is no more pain.
  - There is no more night.
  - There is no more death.

## Teaching 2: Grieving Well

### Hope Does Not Cancel Grief

#### **1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4:13, 18**

**13** But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.

- Paul doesn't say he didn't want us to "not grieve,"
  - but he wanted us to be informed of our hope so we don't "grieve as others do who have no hope."
- So, though we have hope, Christian grieving is real, and it is right.
  - Do not allow guilt for grieving to be an added burden on your heart while you are walking through a season of grief.

**18** Therefore encourage (comfort) one another with these words.

- Why would comfort be needed?
  - Because **hope does not cancel grief.**
- Grieving is not an indication of a lack of hope,
  - It's an indication of a need for comfort.
  - However, there is a way to grieve well, and there is a way to grieve poorly.

### Grief Is the Necessary Transition from What Was to What Will Be

The Bible regards grief as an essential thing and is, in fact, full of men and women grieving:

- When Jacob heard the news regarding Joseph, he said, "I will go down into the grave mourning my son."
- When David heard the news regarding his son Absalom, he wept and exclaimed, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! If only I died instead of you"
- Mary and Martha, were both upset with Jesus Christ when their brother Lazarus died, with tears and anger, told him, "If you had been here, our brother would not have died."
- Joshua and the children of Israel wept after the death of Moses for thirty days.

Hundreds of years before the birth of our Lord, **Isaiah**, in **chapter 53**, introduced Jesus as "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."

- He wept at the grave of Lazarus.
- He mourned over Jerusalem.
- In his last hours, we see his great heaviness about the prospect of his own death.

## Grief is not a “One Size Fits All,” and it’s not as Simple as “Being Really Sad.”

- We are each unique and wired differently.
  - The specifics of the relationship, the age of the individual who died, the circumstances surrounding the loss, and other factors play a part in the intensity and nature of one’s grief.
- What is the same for everyone is that grief is necessary to come to terms with a profound loss.
  - Grief is indicative that the individual who died mattered.
- Grief isn’t just a simple bill of sadness; it is a whole powder keg of emotions and physical needs:
  - At first, there can be a numbness, as the loss’s realness hasn’t yet set in.
    - At times, our head knows, but our heart needs to catch up.
  - There can be feelings of despair and nihilism.
    - *What’s the point of going forward without them?*
  - There can be crushing fear.
    - *How could I go forward without them?*
  - There can be sharp anger.
    - Anger at self. Anger at the deceased. Anger at God.
  - There can be profound guilt and regret.
    - *I should have, I could have, I would have...*
    - Or the guilt that I’m not feeling sad 24/7 and, therefore, I’m somehow dishonoring the deceased.
  - There can be jealousy as you witness other families whose lives are intact.
    - *It’s so hard being with other married couples or around children the age my child would have been...*
  - There can be terrible longing and loneliness.
    - Feelings, especially in the quiet when you wish you could touch, talk, and share with your loved one.
  - There can be a deep sense of relief and release.
    - This can be disorienting but common, especially if the deceased was suffering.
  - There can be a stirring of strife and resentment.
    - All of your family is grieving often at these times, old wounds get reopened.
- And all of your emotions can swing from reckless and flighty to grave and overly serious in seconds.
  - The physical needs of hunger or exhaustion or sickness can come on suddenly.
- Many of these things may vary from person to person, but one thing is shared:
  - Grief is a life-shaking sorrow over loss.
- Bereavement tears your life to shreds and it MUST be processed.
  - You cannot ignore it; you cannot skip it; you cannot pass it by.
- There is a French expression: *“Il faut donner du temps au temps”*.
  - A literal translation would be “you must give time to time” or “allow time to time.”
  - Essentially, it means that some things cannot be hurried – grief is one of those things.



## Be Honest with Yourself and Others – You are Grieving!

- Job didn't seek to "swipe away" or "shove down" his grief.
  - He also didn't endeavor to return immediately to his everyday life routines as if nothing had happened.

### **Job 1:20 - 21**

**20** Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped.

**21** And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD."

- This is incredibly different from how most of us respond to bereavement, Christians included.
  - In Western culture, we're often uncomfortable with grief, doing our best to avoid the reality that death and decay are evidence that this world is wasting away.
- Sobs of grief and pain are not unbelief.
  - Job knows nothing of a flippant, insensitive, superficial "Praise God anyhow" response to suffering.
- The magnificence of his worship is because it was in grief, not because it replaced his grief.
  - Let your tears flow freely when your calamity comes and bring your brokenness before your God.
- Let the rest of us see you cry and take the queue from you to cry with you. (**Romans 12:15**)

## Grieving is a Process

- It takes time and work to process that your loved one's death really happened.
  - It takes time and work to get through the pain of the loss.
  - It takes time and work to learn to live without your loved one.
  - There are no set timetables!
- Grieving comes in waves.
  - The sheer weight of the loss is too much to handle in one moment.
- It is common to feel like you are doing apparently great and beginning a return to normalcy,
  - and another wave washes over you, and you suddenly collapse into tears.
- Then you feel fine again, another wave hits, and you suddenly are not...
  - It may seem confusing, but this is normal; grief comes unannounced.
- The death of your loved one is too big to accept all at once, so accept it a little at a time.

## There are Wrong Ways to Grieve

- A common phrase from popular psychology to the mourning:
  - *"There's no wrong way to grieve."*
- Grief can cause us to lose sight of what is real and most eternally valuable.
  - We can grieve wrongly and cause much damage:
    - By striving to appear strong and seeming only to think and speak positively.
    - By filling our lives with whatever will help mask or dull the pain.
      - There are dangerous and self-destructive behaviors that can enter in during a season of grief.
    - By believing in grief, we are excused from worshiping God.
      - *(we'll start living for him again once we feel better or the grief has faded).*
    - By dishonoring God by allowing our grief to give way to unbelief and bitterness
    - By relying on resolving our hurt apart from God and His people
    - By denying ourselves the freedom to grieve
- We who suffer innocently are not immune to responding sinfully to our pain.
  - We sin in our grief when we use it as an excuse not to love God or those around us.
- Pain does not justify sin.
  - Christ is the justifier of sinners.
- In Christ, there is a *greater* comfort available to the heartbroken,
  - than becoming slaves to our own emotions.
- Be honest about your emotions, and be attentive to your strong feelings of grief.
  - But do not bow to them.
- Let your feelings follow your faith.
  - Use your faith to express your feelings!
    - First and chiefly to God
    - Also, to those around you who are seeking to help you.
- Go upward and outward to God with your grief.
  - Apply in the dark what you've learned in the light.

## Grieve in Hope

- Hopeless grief says *I have lost the only thing that made life worth living.*
  - Hopeful grief magnifies the surpassing worth of Christ and has eyes on the eternal promises.
- We must never let the sound of our own weeping drown out the comfort of God's Word.
  - Don't misunderstand. Hopeful grief is still grief. It's not robotic.
- The hope of resurrection doesn't eliminate tears, but it does redeem them.
  - In hope, we know that our affliction is momentary, while our glory is eternal (**2 Corinthians 4:17–18**).
  - In hope, we frame what we don't know and don't understand within what we do know and we do understand. (**1 Corinthians 13:12**)
  - In hope, we trust that God is providential and working all things "together for good" (**Romans 8:28**)
  - In hope, we understand that we are living in a land between present faith and future glory. Even in trials we can rejoice as they serve to test the "genuineness of your faith" and refine us for praises "and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (**1 Peter 1:7**)
  - In hope, we worship God in our grief and declare him worthy of our trust, even in our deepest sorrows (**Psalms 42:11**)
  - In hope, we trust that "Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning" (**Psalms 30:5**).
    - We lament for now, but we will rejoice forever!

### **Lamentations 3:15 – 26**

**15** He has filled me with bitterness; he has sated me with wormwood.

**16** He has made my teeth grind on gravel, and made me cower in ashes;

**17** my soul is bereft of peace; I have forgotten what happiness is;

**18** so I say, "My endurance has perished; so has my hope from the LORD."

**19** Remember my affliction and my wanderings, the wormwood and the gall!

**20** My soul continually remembers it and is bowed down within me.

**21** But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope:

**22** The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end;

**23** they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

**24** "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him."

**25** The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him.

**26** It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.

- When a fresh wave of grief comes:
  - Let the tears come, and cry out to God in your pain
  - Then, remind yourself of the hope of the gospel.
    - Even in acute pain, be like Job, "*For I know that my Redeemer lives*" (**Job 19:25**).
- Our grief is necessary to help us acknowledge that things are not as they should be in this life.
  - Our hope in the gospel reminds us that our grief no longer tells the whole story.
- *For more information, see Appendix 8 - Let the World Watch Christians Grieve Well as a Witness of the Gospel*

## The Solitary Aspect of Grief

- Who really knows what is going on in the heart of a sufferer?
  - That is what Solomon means when he says,

**Proverbs 14:10** The heart knows its own bitterness.

- Thought we all know what it is to suffer anguish and sorrow,
  - We don't fully understand each other in these seasons.
- As much as we should endeavor to, we must also understand that we cannot fully explain or entirely share our grief with others.
  - Their sympathies are lifegiving and healing, but they cannot fully grasp your grief.
- In all suffering, there is an inescapable human solitariness. – this is important to acknowledge
  - However, in all suffering, there is also an every present Father, Who does fully grasp and understand and shares your grief.

**Psalms 139:4** Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it altogether.

**Psalms 34:18** The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.

- Remember, there is no one but you who truly knows the sufferings of your heart.
  - Onlookers may have no clue that anything at all is amiss.
- They may forget your loss when they see you, while they talk to you, and work alongside you.
  - Don't despise them for this.
- Externally to them, there may seem to be nothing suggesting the great heartache you carry.
  - They may even presume, "*she's all better now!*"
- Understand, it's your solitude. It's your grief. It's your heart.
  - Fortunately, God is your God.
- God has bound you to Himself in love forever. (**Romans 8:39**)
  - And He is the searcher of human hearts.
- He knows you through and through.
  - And he knows you far better than you know yourself.
- The human heart is an open book to Him, and every word is clear.
  - No sorrow, no mourning, no bitterness if grief is hidden from Him.
- God is not detached from your pain.
  - His people are the recipients of an eternal, uncompromising, and unfathomable love and sympathy.

**Isaiah 63:9** In all their affliction he was afflicted...

## People Will Say Unhelpful Things to You

- Adding insult to your injury
  - Remember Elkanah and Eli to Hannah? (See, **1 Samuel 1**)
- Be prepared: Well-intended people will say the worst things to you.
  - They will not always get it right when they are trying to help.
  - This will be true even of those who know and love you best. (Even your pastors!)
- There is a limit to their understanding. And it shows.
  - They don't always act and speak wisely or sensitively.
  - Their counsel may widely miss the mark.
- You can feel hurt or offended when no hurt or offense was intended.
  - They just didn't really know what to say or how to be helpful.
  - Endeavor to communicate this as best you can and kindly as you can.
- Bear in mind that your heart is largely a closed book to them,
  - and that the little they can read may not be very legible.
  - But they mean well, and let that be the thing that matters most.
- Because not all individuals will mean well...
  - The mocking of enemies is especially cruel in seasons of pain.
  - The devil will use their harmful words to try to capitalize on your grief.

**Psalm 42:3b** while they say to me all the day long, "Where is your God?"

Let all unhelpful words teach you patience and how to cling closer to God's words.

**Psalm 94:19** When the cares of my heart are many, your consolations cheer my soul.

## Suffering Can Teach us to Sympathize.

- It is said of our Lord, in **Hebrews 2:9**, that he was made "perfect through suffering."
  - In coming in flesh and blood, feeling our pains, our griefs, and in dying our death, he is able to sympathize with us through suffering.

**Hebrews 2:18** For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

- Why does God allow us to walk through the hard seasons of suffering?
  - Part of the answer is to teach us how to show sympathy to our fellow believers.
  - As we suffer and grieve well with Him, He comforts us and teaches and trains us to grow more fit to do the same for others.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 1:3 – 4**

**3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,

**4** who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

## Allow Death to Highlight the Matters of Eternity

- Death processed properly should cause the next world to seem much more real and necessary.
  - We are only here for a remarkably short time, but then we will see Christ and be made like him (**1 John 3:1-3**).
  - The gospel plan is all about bringing creation to the last two chapters of the Bible.
- David knew that for his lost infant son, death was a one-way street:
  - *'I shall go to him, but he will not return to me'* (**2nd Samuel 12:23**)
- But also, death will not have the last say; the Messiah will.
  - In the meantime, we will all know struggles in deep waters. Still, somehow God is using all of this to prepare us for an eternal weight of glory (**2nd Corinthians 4:17**) and to bring us all to a reality where there shall be no pain or suffering or death but only joy forevermore (**Revelation 21:4**).

## Other Practical Advice for Seasons of Grief

- As much as possible, be aware of your physical health and needs.
  - You still need sleep.
  - You still need to eat.
  - You still need to socialize. (Isolation is dangerous, **Proverbs 18:1**)
  - You still need to pursue your faith.
- As much as possible, be aware of matters where you could lose self-control.
  - Especially keep a watch on your use of alcohol.
- As much as possible, avoid making any unnecessary, life-altering decisions or changes.
  - One radical life-altering event at a time is enough.
  - You potentially are not looking at matters with the most objective clarity right now.
- As much as possible, delegate shareable burdens with others
  - There are un-shareable burdens that you need to take to God.
  - Pray that old Irish prayer: *"God grant me wisdom to know the difference!"*

## Grieve with God – and Learn How to Speak to Your Heart

- When the sorrow of life seemed to mock his dependence on God, the Psalmist wrote,

**Psalm 42:3** My tears have been my food day and night, while they say to me all the day long, "Where is your God?"

- His agonized emotions and enemies were speaking to him, suggesting that God had abandoned him.
  - He challenged that voice rather than believe it.
  - He confronted what was being said to him and within him.
- The Psalmist poured out his complaint to God,
  - but he also intentionally spoke to his own soul in a questioning and instructive tone:

**Psalm 42:5 – 6a** Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.

- We are often encouraged to “listen to our hearts.”
  - But the Psalmist’s heart was speaking foolishly.
- So, rather than listening to his own desperate thoughts, he spoke truth to his thoughts.
  - Rather than trusting his feelings and worshipping his feelings, he challenged them with truth.
    - While praying to God, he preached hope to himself.
- In the midst of grief’s chaotic thoughts and emotions,
  - learn how to speak gospel hope and eternal truth to your broken heart.
- Some helpful things to say to your hurting heart:
  - Heart, I will trust God with the timing of my loved one’s death.
  - Heart, I will trust God with the way my loved one died.
  - Heart, I will trust God that my loved one now sleeps.
  - Heart, I will trust God with the unknowns about my future.
  - Heart, I will trust God with my many unanswered questions. One day, my faith will become sight, and I will know as I am known.
  - Heart, I will trust God to heal my hurt, fill my emptiness, and restore joy to my life.
  - Heart, I will trust God to speak to me through his Word.
  - Heart, I will not withdraw from my faith or my church family.
  - Heart, I will not blame God or blame the deceased.
  - Heart, I will not lose hope.

## Teaching 3: How to Comfort the Brokenhearted

### Grief Is Personal – But There Are Personal Ways to Sympathize with the Grieving

- **Romans 12:15** tells us, “Weep with those who weep.”
  - Not do everything to quiet them and stop their crying. CRY WITH THEM.
  - The day is coming when God himself will dry every tear from every eye, but until then, it’s ok to cry sometimes; in fact, we need to.
- **Galatians 6:2** tells us to “bear one another’s burdens.”
- **1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4:18** tells us to “encourage one another” with words of hope.

### Share in the Formal Lament

#### **Act 7:59 – 8:2**

**59** And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”

**60** And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

**8:1** And Saul approved of his execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

**2** Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him.

- Memorial Services/Funerals are important; make sure you go – they will remember that you were there.
  - They may be tempted to think: *Does anyone else know how much they mattered?*
  - You may be tempted to think: *Well, I wouldn’t want to add to – I know so many other people are coming, or maybe they would prefer a small service.*

### Share in the Informal Lament

- Remember, this lasts long after the service, and when everyone who traveled from out of town has now gone home.
  - Continue to sit with them in their sadness and sympathize.
- Job’s three friends were immensely helpful in sitting with Job in his sadness for seven days and seven nights:

#### **Job 2:11 – 13**

**11** Now when Job’s three friends heard of all this evil that had come upon him, they came each from his own place, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. They made an appointment together to come to show him sympathy and comfort him.

**12** And when they saw him from a distance, they did not recognize him. And they raised their voices and wept, and they tore their robes and sprinkled dust on their heads toward heaven.

**13** And they sat with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his suffering was very great.

- Unfortunately, they become immediately unhelpful the moment they started talking...



## Unhelpful Things to Say to a Grieving Person

- You may not know what to say,
  - Be wise then to say very little.

**Proverbs 10:19** When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent.

- They aren't looking for you to be their psychologist or therapist. Do not see them as a "project," and try to "fix them."
  - They are looking for sympathetic and supportive company.
- Don't say things like, "*don't cry; it's all going to be ok.*"
  - Even if well intended, this comes across as diminutive and condescending to their felt pain.
- Don't say, "*I know how you feel.*"
  - Push yourself to join in and be sensitive to their emotions, but don't presume to know their grief. Grief belongs to the griever.
- Don't try to encourage them by looking at their life beyond the grief and saying foolish things like, "*you'll get over this,*" or "*you are young,*" or "*you can remarry,*" or "*you can always have another child*" or "*everyone's parents die.*"
  - This is deeply unhelpful.
- Don't try to logistically plan beyond their grief by asking them, "*are you going to change your job,*" or "*are you going to sell the house,*" or "*did he/she have life insurance?*"
  - Most grieving people are living in the moment and are endeavoring initially to take one day at a time. If and when they are ready and want to discuss those things with you, let them lead by bringing it up.
- Don't just generally say, "*if you need anything, let me know,*" and then wait till they reach out.
  - They are so overwhelmed they likely have no idea what they need.
  - The last thing they want is to have to coordinate something else or make another decision.
  - Be more practical and thoughtful in engaging and offering help.
- Follow their lead to speak "small talk" or shift to "grief talk."
  - They won't want to talk until they want to talk.
    - When they want to talk *first*, just be a good listener. They may not be looking for your input but just want to be able to communicate something.
  - Follow their lead. Small talk can frustrate them if they aren't in the mood for it.
    - At other times, it can be comforting to get them thinking about something else.
- If they want to talk about the deceased, then they want to talk about the deceased.
  - At these times, share your memories and what you so loved about the individual.
  - Other times, they don't want to talk about it, so don't bring their grief up.
    - It can also change suddenly. Follow their lead.

## Helpful Things to Do for a Grieving Person

- Resolve to step up your commitments to pray for them.
- Continued statements/texts and notes like “I’m sorry for your loss,” or “I love you,” or “I’m praying for you,” or “I’m always here for you” can be more helpful than you realize.
- Help them to be mindful of immediate physical needs for their health and well-being.
  - They will have very low energy in grief. Help them to lighten their schedule.
  - Make sure they are eating.
  - Make sure they are staying hydrated.
  - Make sure they are getting rest.
  - A shower or a brief walk can do wonders!
- Many decisions will need to be made for service arrangements.
  - As possible, help to take off their plate phone calls and coordination and decisions.
- Don't ask broad questions in coming alongside to help and taking things off their plate.
  - Give them thought-through options:
    - *“I’m going to make your lunch. Would you prefer chicken or pasta?”*
    - *“I’m going to do your laundry. Would you like the blue or green tie for the service?”*
  - Give them concrete offers of help:
    - *“I’ll mow your lawn on Thursday.”*
    - *“I’ll call so and so for you.”*
- Keep in touch, even if they don’t respond – the thought still matters.
- Help them treasure their memories.
  - There may be meaningful actions or keepsakes that they want you to share.
- Understand that in grief, people do and say some strange things.
  - Be supportive, understanding, and non-judgmental.
  - Be very forgiving. They may be harsh or offensive. Remember, this isn’t their best day.
- Every “first” is extremely difficult.
  - The first day returning to work, the first holidays without them, etc...
  - Be thoughtful to provide comfort for them as they pass through these moments.
- Don’t forget birthdays, anniversaries, or the date of the death.
  - For the rest of their life, those dates will resurface their grief.
  - As time passes, there will be a creeping fear that their loved one has been forgotten.
  - Reach out to them on these significant days to show them you remember.
    - We remember our dead.
  - With each new day and every milestone passed,
    - we are one day closer to when they will awake in glory.

## Appendix 1 – Why didn't Adam and Eve Physically Die Right Away?

If Adam was promised, "in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die," then why did he physically live much longer than that?

**Genesis 5:5** Thus all the days that Adam lived were 930 years, and he died.

- To understand this, we must go back to the original promise and read carefully as to what was actually said would be the consequences of his sin.

**Genesis 2:16 - 17**

**16** And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, **17** but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

- The Hebrew for "you shall surely die", is literally, die-die. It is the words (*muwth-muwth*) with two different verb tenses (dying and die), which could be translated as "dying you shall die."
  - So, God is saying, on that day you disobey, you can be sure of the consequence of your disobedience. In that day, one thing is promised: you shall die.

King Solomon used the same Hebrew phrasing in a warning against Shimei:

**1<sup>st</sup> Kings 2:36 - 37**

**36** Then the king sent and summoned Shimei and said to him, "Build yourself a house in Jerusalem and dwell there, and do not go out from there to any place whatever.

**37** For on the day you go out and cross the brook Kidron, know for certain that you shall die(*muwth-muwth*). Your blood shall be on your own head."

- Solomon did not promise his death to be on that exact same day, but if Shimei ever left Jerusalem, his days would be numbered from that point onward.
  - We might phrase it, "*The day you leave Jerusalem, you are a dead man.*"

**38** And Shimei said to the king, "What you say is good; as my lord the king has said, so will your servant do." So Shimei lived in Jerusalem many days.

**39** But it happened at the end of three years that two of Shimei's servants ran away to Achish, son of Maacah, king of Gath. And when it was told Shimei, "Behold, your servants are in Gath,"

**40** Shimei arose and saddled a donkey and went to Gath to Achish to seek his servants. Shimei went and brought his servants from Gath.

**41** And when Solomon was told that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath and returned,

- Note for Shimei to leave Jerusalem, go to Gath, find his servants, and bring them back would have taken more than one day.

**42** the king sent and summoned Shimei and said to him, "Did I not make you swear by the LORD and solemnly warn you, saying, 'Know for certain that on the day you go out and go to any place whatever, you shall die'(*muwth-muwth*).? And you said to me, 'What you say is good; I will obey.'

**43** Why then have you not kept your oath to the LORD and the commandment with which I commanded you?"

**44** The king also said to Shimei, "You know in your own heart all the harm that you did to David my

father. So the LORD will bring back your harm on your own head.

**45** But King Solomon shall be blessed, and the throne of David shall be established before the LORD forever.”

**46** Then the king commanded Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and he went out and struck him down, and he died. So the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon.

- Both Adam and Shimei’s disobedient actions on the day they committed them gave them their death sentences —they would surely die due to their actions.
  - God in **Genesis 2:17** was not claiming that Adam and Eve would physically die on the same day as when they ate, but that from that point forward, a sure death would follow.
- So Biblically, this on that day – dying you shall die (*muwth-muwth*) communicates a promise of a sure physical death from that point onward.
  - Shimei could have lived in Jerusalem for the rest of his natural days.
  - Adam could have lived in the garden with God in perpetuity.
- But the day they disobeyed the one command given to them, one thing was sure.
  - They were dead men, and their physical death was now coming.

Additionally, sin’s entrance into Adam caused him to become separated from God. Biblically, this severed relationship from the Creator and in an unredeemed state of sin is also called “death.”

**Romans 5:12b** ...sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned...

**Romans 5:15b** ...many died through one man's trespass...

**Rom 5:16b** ...the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation...

**Rom 5:17b** ...because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man...

**Rom 5:18b** ...one trespass led to condemnation for all men...

**Rom 5:19b** ...by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners...

**Rom 5:21b** ...sin reigned in death...

**1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:21 – 22a**

**21** For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.

**22a** For as in Adam all die

**Ephesians 2:1** And you were dead in the trespasses and sins

**Ephesians 2:5** even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ— by grace you have been saved

The restored relationship with God through the redemptive work of Christ is referred to as “life.”

**Romans 5:16c** ...the free gift following many trespasses brought justification.

**Rom 5:17c** ...the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

**Rom 5:18c** ...so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.

**Rom 5:19c** ...so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

**Rom 5:20c** ...grace abounded all the more,

**Rom 5:21c** ...grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**1st Corinthians 15:45c** ...the last Adam became a lifegiving spirit.

**Ephesians 2:5c** made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved

**Joh 10:10b** ...I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

**John 17:3** And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

**1<sup>st</sup> John 5:12** Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

## Appendix 2 – Buried Righteous Kings and Unrighteous Kings

**1<sup>st</sup> Kings 2:10** Then David slept with his fathers and was buried in the city of David.

**1<sup>st</sup> Kings 11:43** And Solomon slept with his fathers and was buried in the city of David his father. And Rehoboam his son reigned in his place.

**1<sup>st</sup> Kings 14:20** And the time that Jeroboam reigned was twenty-two years. And he slept with his fathers, and Nadab his son reigned in his place.

**1<sup>st</sup> Kings 14:31** And Rehoboam slept with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of David. His mother's name was Naamah the Ammonite. And Abijam his son reigned in his place.

**1<sup>st</sup> Kings 15:8** And Abijam slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David. And Asa his son reigned in his place.

**1<sup>st</sup> Kings 15:24** And Asa slept with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father, and Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his place.

**1<sup>st</sup> Kings 16:6** And Baasha slept with his fathers and was buried at Tirzah, and Elah his son reigned in his place.

**1<sup>st</sup> Kings 16:28** And Omri slept with his fathers and was buried in Samaria, and Ahab his son reigned in his place.

**1<sup>st</sup> Kings 22:40** So Ahab slept with his fathers, and Ahaziah his son reigned in his place.

**1<sup>st</sup> Kings 22:50** And Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father, and Jehoram his son reigned in his place.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Kings 8:24** So Joram slept with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of David, and Ahaziah his son reigned in his place.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Kings 10:35** So Jehu slept with his fathers, and they buried him in Samaria. And Jehoahaz his son reigned in his place.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Kings 13:9** So Jehoahaz slept with his fathers, and they buried him in Samaria, and Joash his son reigned in his place.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Kings 13:13** So Joash slept with his fathers, and Jeroboam sat on his throne. And Joash was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Kings 14:16** And Jehoash slept with his fathers and was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel, and Jeroboam his son reigned in his place.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Kings 14:29** And Jeroboam slept with his fathers, the kings of Israel, and Zechariah his son reigned in his place.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Kings 15:7** And Azariah slept with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David, and Jotham his son reigned in his place.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Kings 15:22** And Menahem slept with his fathers, and Pekahiah his son reigned in his place.

**2nd Kings 15:38** Jotham slept with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father, and Ahaz his son reigned in his place.

**2nd Kings 16:20** And Ahaz slept with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of David, and Hezekiah his son reigned in his place.

**2nd Kings 20:21** And Hezekiah slept with his fathers, and Manasseh his son reigned in his place.

**2nd Kings 21:18** And Manasseh slept with his fathers and was buried in the garden of his house, in the garden of Uzza, and Amon his son reigned in his place.

**2nd Kings 24:6** So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers, and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his place.

## Appendix 3 – Gospel Promises to Not Perish or Never Die?

**John 3:16** “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

**Perish** in **John 3:16** is *apollymi*, meaning: to destroy, to put out of the way entirely, abolish, or to lose – it often (but not always) refers Biblically to the final destruction of the second death in the lake of fire after the final judgment for whoever's name is not written in the book of life.

### **John 11:25 – 26**

**25** Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live,

**26** and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?”

**Die** in **John 11:25** and **26** is *apothnēskō*, which is the very generic word for natural death.

So, let's read the text and consider what Jesus meant:

### **John 11:21 – 27**

**21** Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.

**22** But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you.”

Martha's brother Lazarus has just recently died (*apothnēskō*, the word used all through this text) and she is sure that if Jesus was there that this wouldn't have happened. However, consider her faith, she is sure that if Jesus asks from God, her brother will come back to life.

**23** Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”

This is true in more than one sense! In the short run and the long run.

**24** Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.”

God bless her great faith! She was confident of the resurrection on the last day, but she is mourning her brother today. In her heart, it is as if, “Yes, Lord, I know my brother will rise again on the last day, but I miss him now, and I'm mourning the days and years to come until that resurrection that we won't get to share with him. I know he's sleeping, but here I am now, awake and alone...”

**25** Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live,

**26** and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?”

He does not say, “I am the one who gives resurrection and life,” which of course, he does, but this statement is more emphatic and direct: Jesus replied, “I am the resurrection, and the life.” Meaning, “I am the source, the cause, the fountain of the resurrection.”

But also, Jesus said something here that seems contradictory, he said “though he die... shall never die.” This is, of course, on purpose. Jesus is speaking to someone in bereavement, and these words speak to all who are in the grief of losing a loved one. If indeed “though he died...” for the believer in Christ, there



is assurance that they, in truth, will again live and (in that day) “never die.” Why? How? Because he is the “resurrection and the life.”

Jesus does not mean that the believer will not die physically. Lazarus was dead; even after being raised, he would die again, and billions of Jesus’ followers have died since. However, Jesus is speaking in terms of eternity. Though we die, after the resurrection, we will never die.

To break this down in the verse:

**25b** Whoever believes in me, though he die (When? In this natural life), yet shall he live (When? In the resurrection!)

**26b** and everyone who lives (When? After being raised in the resurrection by him who is *the* resurrection and *the* life) and believes in me shall never die (When? In the resurrection!).

Without Christ, we have no hope and are without God in the world. With Christ, resurrection, and life are certain. For us today, because our Savior lives, because his grave is empty forever, with hope we face tomorrow. This is so sure that when loved ones fall asleep, like Martha, like Mary, there are tears, there is grief, these things need to be processed but the one thing there isn’t, is question marks. I find it significant that he does not ask “do you understand this?” but “do you believe this?”

**27** She said to him, “Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.”

Martha’s response here could be better translated as, “I have believed.” It is in the perfect tense in the Greek. It is an expression of a settled conviction, not the emotional response of a moment. Through the tears, she’s fighting for her faith in her Lord, and in a few moments, she’s about to witness a further affirmation that Jesus really is “the Christ, the Son of God” and that what she has believed is true, he is “the resurrection and the life.”

## Appendix 4 – Sheol and Hades

In the Old Testament Hebrew, the word for the grave (or the place where the dead rest) is the Hebrew word *sheol* (pronounced sheh-ole'), and there is no usage of "hell." In the ESV translation, to help avoid confusion, you will see the Hebrew word "*Sheol*" preserved.

For example, David spoke of his assurance of hope that he would not be left in *Sheol* because the LORD's holy one (Jesus Christ) wouldn't be dead long enough to see corruption (three days and three nights).

### **Psalm 16:9 – 10**

**9** Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure.

**10** For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.

The word for the physical sepulcher where a dead body is laid is *qebûrâh*. For example, no one knows where Moses was buried.

### **Deuteronomy 34:5 - 6**

**5** So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD,

**6** and he buried him in the valley in the land of Moab opposite Beth-peor; but no one knows the place of his burial(*qebûrâh*) to this day.

The Septuagint is the Old Testament translated into Greek. It was written 2000 years before the New Testament. It gives us a great idea of how Greek words were used at that time and how they line up with Hebrew Words. In the Septuagint Greek, the translators used the Greek word *hades* (pronounced hah'-dace) for every Hebrew instance of *sheol*.

### **The Hebrew word *sheol* = The Greek word *hades***

The ESV translation has preserved this equivalence between Sheol and Hades, by showing the Greek word in New Testament citations of the Old Testament. See when Peter, on the day of Pentecost, quotes David in **Psalm 16** for an example:

### **Acts 2:25 – 27**

**25** For David says concerning him, "I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken;

**26** therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope.

**27** For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption.

### **Who is in Sheol?**

The wicked, in their deaths, return to Sheol.

**Psalm 9:17** The wicked shall return to Sheol, all the nations that forget God.

However, the Scriptures show many godly men and women going to the same place as well:

#### **Jacob and Joseph**

**Genesis 37:34 - 35**

**34** Then Jacob tore his garments and put sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his son many days.

**35** All his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted and said, “No, I shall go down to Sheol to my son, mourning.” Thus his father wept for him.

#### **Hezekiah**

**Isaiah 38:9 – 10**

**9** A writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, after he had been sick and had recovered from his sickness:

**10** I said, In the middle of my days I must depart; I am consigned to the gates of Sheol for the rest of my years.

#### **Job**

**Job 17:13 – 16**

**13** If I hope for Sheol as my house, if I make my bed in darkness,

**14** if I say to the pit, ‘You are my father,’ and to the worm, ‘My mother,’ or ‘My sister,’

**15** where then is my hope? Who will see my hope?

**16** Will it go down to the bars of Sheol? Shall we descend together into the dust?”

**Other men mentioned in *sheol*:** Abraham, Samuel, David, Jonah, several Psalmists...

Lastly, we should consider **Psalm 89**:

**Psalm 89:48** What man can live and never see death? Who can deliver his soul from the power of Sheol? *Selah*

Both of these truths are couched in rhetorical questions. What man lives and doesn’t die? All men since Adam have died, including our Lord Jesus Christ. What man can deliver himself from *Sheol*? No man can. All men die and go to the grave[*sheol*].

## **Who is in Hades?**

Now let's consider how the Greek word *Hades* (pronounced "Hay-Dees") is used in the New Testament. In **Matthew 11** is the first usage of *hades*:

### **Matthew 11: 21 – 24**

**21** "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

**22** But I tell you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you.

**23** And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to Hades. For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

**24** But I tell you that it will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom than for you."

Jesus Christ is pronouncing judgments against these wicked cities for not repenting when he, the Christ himself, was there doing the mighty works of God among them. When he gets to the sentence against Capernaum, he mentions that though they've exalted themselves "to heaven" that city will "be brought down to *Hades*." To the Greeks, Hades was the God of the underworld, and the name eventually came to describe the home of the dead as well. The word is used eleven times in the New Testament, in **Matthew, Luke, Acts, 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians, and Revelation.**

Contrary to Gentile superstitions, there is no netherworld where dead souls live again after death. As we've clearly seen, when a man or woman dies, they are not still alive but dead. All men will be resurrected and awakened one day, but until then, they sleep dormant. When giving the revelation of the Scriptures to the holy men who wrote the New Testament, God used this preexisting Greek word *hades* to parallel the Hebrew word *sheol*. Both words describe the place that all the dead go to. When we die, we all go dead into a grave. Including Jesus Christ himself when he died:

**Matthew 16:18b** on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell[*hades*] shall not prevail against it.

Jesus Christ is the solid rock upon which his church is built. Gates do one of two things: keep things out or retain them. Here, the gates of hell[*hades*] denote the grave's power to retain the dead. The gates of the grave could not overpower Christ. He rose again, and because he did, the grave will not overpower or be able to retain his church. Just as David proclaimed, we also can believingly proclaim:

### **Psalms 16:9b – 10**

**9b** my flesh also dwells secure.

**10** For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.

If we as Christians should die before the Lord returns, then our assurance is the same as David's. Our flesh will rest in sleep with the sure hope that one day, Christ will wake us up. We won't be left forgotten and abandoned in the grave [*sheol* or *hades*]. Because our Lord got up from the grave, so will we. Those great promises that God made to death and the grave in **Isaiah** and **Hosea** are then quoted again in **1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians**:

### **1st Corinthians 15: 51 – 57**

**51** Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

Not everyone will have died and fallen asleep when Christ returns to gather his church. Some will still be alive and awake. If you are reading this today, you could be among those individuals who never die but just go from life to life. Regardless, whether we be alive or dead, awake or asleep, we all will be changed to have a new spiritual body like his.

**52** in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.

**53** For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.

**54** When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

On that day, this promise of **Isaiah 25** will be fulfilled. The enemy of death will be gobbled up by victory!

**55** O death[Hades], where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"

**56** The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

But who died for sin? Who fulfilled the law? The next verse answers...

**57** But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Since the very beginning, God has always given hope. For the Christian, our victory in Christ assures a great future. Even if we die before he returns for us, we still can't be separated from the perfection of Christ's work. If we breathe our last, we will have fallen asleep but remain kept in Christ. We may close our eyes, but we will open them again.

After the last judgment, death and Hades (the state of death) will be destroyed.

**Revelation 20:12 – 14**

**12** And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.

**13** And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done.

**14** Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

Death and the Hades have been the source of many tears for many years. From this point forward, there will be no more tears and no more death:

**Revelation 21:4** He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

## Appendix 5 - What is Hell and the Lake of Fire?

When you ask a person to describe “hell” or the “lake of fire,” you may get a wide variety of answers and descriptions. Most will draw on a vague concept of a place in the spiritual realm where unrepentant sinners are assigned eternal punishment after death. It entails graphic images of torment, torture, and terror by burning brimstone, pointy pitchforks, and a forever flaming fire. They may even quote a verse like this one:

**Matthew 10:28** And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

To rightly appreciate what the Word of God says about hell, we will need to look at the original Greek and Hebrew. Then, we will look at their Biblical usages and let the Word itself teach us what the grave and hell are.

We still need to consider all the usages of hell associated with fire, torment, and a lake that is always burning. To do that, we need to look at another Greek word. The common word translated as “hell” in English is the Greek word *gehenna* (pronounced gay-hen-nah). Its first occurrence in the New Testament is in **Matthew 5**:

**Matthew 5:22** But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell(*gehenna*) of fire.

*Gehenna* is used twelve times in **Matthew, Mark** and **James**. It is always associated with fire. According to Thayer's Greek Lexicon, this word referred to a literal place often referenced in the Old Testament called “*Ge-Hinnom*” or “*the valley of Hinnom*.” This was a valley where the idol-worshipping children of Israel would sacrifice their children to the false God Moloch. Moloch's abhorrent and wicked worship required burning your children alive with fire as an offering.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 28:1 – 3**

**1** Ahaz was twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. And he did not do what was right in the eyes of the LORD, as his father David had done,  
**2** but he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel. He even made metal images for the Baals,  
**3** and he made offerings in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom and burned his sons as an offering, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD drove out before the people of Israel.

The evil King Ahaz burnt his children in the valley of Hinnom (New Testament *Gehenna*), and as we see in **chapter 33**, so did Manasseh:

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 33: 1 – 6**

**1** Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem.  
**2** And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD drove out before the people of Israel.  
**3** For he rebuilt the high places that his father Hezekiah had broken down, and he erected altars to the Baals, and made Asheroth, and worshiped all the host of heaven and served them.

**4** And he built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, “In Jerusalem shall my name be forever.”

**5** And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD.

**6** And he burned his sons as an offering in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, and used fortune-telling and omens and sorcery, and dealt with mediums and with necromancers. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking him to anger.

God mentions in **Jerimiah 7** how unthinkable this practice was. He said he never commanded it, and it never would have come into His great heart as the true God:

**Jerimiah 7: 30 – 31**

**30** “For the sons of Judah have done evil in my sight, declares the LORD. They have set their detestable things in the house that is called by my name, to defile it.

**31** And they have built the high places of Topheth, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command, nor did it come into my mind.

By Jesus Christ’s time, outside the south gate of Jerusalem, the filth and dead animals of the city were cast out and burned. The fire continually burned there to destroy trash, refuse, and consume the bodies of animals and criminals. The references to this place of fires always burning are used consistently in the New Testament as a fit symbol of the wicked and their future destruction in the Lake of Fire.

Jesus Christ uses it in **Matthew 23** to warn the evil scribes and Pharisees as the place of their coming destruction if they didn’t repent of their wickedness:

**Matthew 23: 15, 29 - 33**

**15** Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell[gehenna] as yourselves.

**29** “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous,

**30** saying, ‘If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’

**31** Thus you witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.

**32** Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers.

**33** You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell[gehenna]?

He also used *gehenna* in **Mark 9**, warning all to repent and get rid of things in their life that caused sin:

**Mark 9: 43 – 48**

**43** And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell [gehenna], to the unquenchable fire.

(verse 44, is skipped in the ESV)

**45** And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell[gehenna].

(verse 46, is skipped in the ESV)

- 47** And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell[gehenna],  
**48** 'where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.'

Isaiah also spoke of this judgment place where the rebels against God will go, and their dead bodies will be eaten by worms that do not die and a fire that doesn't go out.

**Isaiah 66:22 - 24**

**22** "For as the new heavens and the new earth that I make shall remain before me, says the LORD, so shall your offspring and your name remain.

**23** From new moon to new moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship before me, declares the LORD.

**24** "And they shall go out and look on the dead bodies of the men who have rebelled against me. For their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh."

James also used gehenna to compare how little evil words can start a forest fire that doesn't stop burning and causing hurt:

**James 3:5 – 6**

**5** So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire!

**6** And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell[gehenna].

So, considering these usages, let's go back to our frightening verse of fire and brimstone in **Matthew 10:**

**Matthew 10:5 – 7**

**5** These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans,

**6** but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

**7** And proclaim as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'

Jesus Christ, in this context, is giving his twelve apostles instructions of how they should conduct themselves as sent out at this time to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Their message was to preach that the kingdom of heaven is at hand. He then tells them how they'll be received and comforts them, knowing that just judgment will be brought.

**Matthew 10:22 – 28**

**22** and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

**23** When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

**24** "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master.

**25** It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household.

**26** "So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known.



**27** What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops.

**28** And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. [*geenna*].

**Verse 28** is the verse to consider in light of all we have seen regarding *gehenna* and the Biblical usages of death and *Hades*. While the common Christian theology may explain that the one who has the authority to destroy the soul and body in hell is the devil, this cannot be. Jesus Christ wouldn't tell his men to fear (stand in awe of) the devil.

"Hell" Scripturally, isn't a place of eternal torture and torment belonging to Satan. He's telling them not to fear (stand in awe) of wicked men who could only kill the body, but God who will justly destroy both the body and souls of wicked men in the coming lake of fire at the white throne judgment.

What confidence this would give to the twelve! They could then be bold enough to endure and preach on the housetops. When persecuted, they wouldn't need to fear evil men. God will deal with all men justly. Men can only destroy the body in this life. God can and will destroy both the bodies and the souls of unrepentant men in the lake of fire with the second death.

## Appendix 6 - What and Who the Lake of Fire is For

### **Revelation 20:11 – 15**

**11** Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them.

**12** And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.

As Christians, we have been saved from the coming wrath and judgment. We've already been washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. (**1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 6:11**). We will be dressed in his righteousness alone and faultless to stand before the throne. Our names are already written in the book. But, at this time, all other men who slept in the grave will be awakened and judged before the throne of God.

**13** And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done.

**14** Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

**15** And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

This text goes so quickly and almost reads like a note in the margins, but consider the vast implications of all of this. Those who have been awakened from death will be judged. Those not found in the Book of Life will be cast into the lake of fire to suffer a second death. But also, after everyone left is judged, and all the unworthy ones die a second time, death and Hades [the state of death, the grave itself] shall be thrown into the lake of fire and destroyed.

**1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:26** The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

After this, there is no more death. The last people to have ever died will have died a second time, and then there is no more death. We've known and seen death our whole lives, but, at that time, there will be no more injustice, no more evil, no more left rebelling against the perfect will of our God, no more unrighteousness, no more enemies: death, the last one will have been destroyed...

**Revelation 21:4** And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

## Appendix 7 – Did Paul Suggest It’s Better to Die and Be with Christ?

A section of Scripture that has been confusing for some, is said by the Apostle Paul in **Philippians 1**.

### **Philippians 1:21 – 23**

**21** For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

If “to die is gain,” then was Paul somehow suggesting that death is *not* an enemy, as he wrote in **1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:26**? Is Paul suggesting that dying is better than living?

**22** If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell.

**23** I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.

Is Paul suggesting that dying is a departure into the immediate presence of Christ? Is he implying that this would be *without* a body? Is this a model of thinking about death that every Christian should adopt as we desire to mature? To answer these questions, let’s first consider some unique aspects of the ministry of the Apostle Paul.

### **#1 Paul knew pressure and suffering for the sake of the gospel that most will never know.**

This was promised by Christ himself to Ananias after he first met him on the road to Damascus:

### **Acts 9:15 – 16**

**15** But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.

**16** For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.”

Paul knew this and embraced this unique aspect of his apostolic ministry:

### **1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 4:9 – 13**

**9** For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men.

**10** We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute.

**11** To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless,

**12** and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure;

**13** when slandered, we entreat. We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things.

In more ways than one, Paul considered himself a dead man walking. Instead of despairing over this, Paul saw it as a cause to rejoice to share in Christ’s suffering and be sacrificed for the faith of others.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 4:8 -14**

**8** We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair;

**9** persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed;

**10** always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies.

**11** For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

Paul considered himself a man who already died and was being delivered to die daily. He saw this as a gain so that the life of Jesus would be displayed in his mortal (subject to death) body.

**12** So death is at work in us, but life in you.

**13** Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, "I believed, and so I spoke," we also believe, and so we also speak,

**14** knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence.

Paul expected to be raised along with the believers who believed in Paul's gospel. He is saying that at that time, he would be raised with them and brought *with them* into the presence of Jesus. He also said this was the expectation of hope in **1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4**.

**1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4:17** Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

At the time of Christ's return to gather the church, all Christians, both asleep and still alive, will be caught up together. From that point forward, we will always be with the Lord, but *not* before. No man is in heaven right now except the man Jesus Christ. No Christian is in his presence yet, but we all (Paul included) will be one day.

## **#2 His desire to depart is *not* referring to him dying and immediately coming into the presence of Christ**

### **Philippians 1:20 - 26**

**20** as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death.

**21** For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

How is it seen as a gain for Paul? In that, his sufferings would be over, and Christ would be honored in his death.

**22** If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell.

**23** I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.

This word depart is the Greek word *analuō*, which means to "unloose, untie, release, or return." In what way would Paul be unloosed and released from being "pressed between" living or dying? At the return of Jesus Christ. Incidentally, the only other usage of this Greek word is in **Luke 12** as "he returns" or "comes home."

**Luke 12:35 – 37**

**35** “Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning,

**36** and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home(*analuō*) from the wedding feast, so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks.

**37** Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them.

When the Lord returns and brings us home, it will be far better than living or dying here on earth any longer, especially in view of Paul’s persecution and hardships.

**#3 Paul continues to express later in Philippians how eagerly he awaited the Resurrection.**

**Philippians 3:8 – 11**

**8** Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ

**9** and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—

**10** that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,

**11** that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

This “*by any means possible*” (*ei pōs*) in **verse 11**, means “*if somehow*.” It is used four times in the scriptures, often used regarding intent to travel to a destination by any means possible.

**Act 27:12** And because the harbor was not suitable to spend the winter in, the majority decided to put out to sea from there, on the chance that somehow they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete, facing both southwest and northwest, and spend the winter there.

**Romans 1:10** always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you.

**Romans 11:14** in order somehow to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them.

The “I may attain” (*katantaō*) in **verse 11**, means to “come to or arrive at.” Paul has the resurrection in mind. The “resurrection of the dead” (*exanastasis nekros*), means the “out-resurrection from among the dead.” This refers to the raising of those who sleep in Christ from among the dead people on the day he returns to gather the church.

Christ will return to gather together his church unto himself in the clouds. Whether they are awake or sleeping (have died), all in Christ shall rise to live together with him eternally. Paul is not concerned with being worthy enough to earn attendance but eagerly looks forward to being there “by any means.” The two means by which he could “arrive” would either be by living long enough to be still alive during the gathering together or by being one who sleeps in Christ and will awake at that time. Either way, Paul’s intended and assured destination is with Christ.

**Philippians 1:23 – 26**

**23** I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far

better.

**24** But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account.

**25** Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith,

**26** so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.

Paul will stay in the flesh and alive because he knew it would be more necessary for the progress and joy in the faith of others. However, all the while, his eyes are lifted upward and straining forward for that day.

#### **Philippians 3:12 – 14**

**12** Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.

**13** Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead,

**14** I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Paul is looking forward to honoring Christ in his body by life or death, with the ultimate desire of being in his presence when Christ returns and transforms his body.

#### **Philippians 3:20 – 21**

**20** But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

**21** who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

### **#4 Paul Taught that the Christian Hope is not to be Without a Body**

It was common among those of a Greco-Roman background to think of the next step of human progression to be without a body. Their pagan ideal was to become an ethereal spirit being without a body. However, Paul expressed in 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians that the Christians' hope is not to become "naked" (a soul/spirit without a body), but to be further clothed upon and given a transformed body like the Lord Jesus Christ.

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:1 – 4**

**1** For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

- He refers to his physical human body as a "tent" and an "earthly home."
  - He refers to the new spiritual body as "a house not made with hands" or "a heavenly dwelling."

**2** For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling,

**3** if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked.

- The hope and goal is not to be "naked" and without being clothed with a body.

**4** For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed,

but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

**5** He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

**6** So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord,

- This is similar phrasing to what he said in **Philippians 1:23** *I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.*
  - He is not speaking of or decaling some “intermediate stage” without a body, but present with the Lord.
  - He is speaking of his great desire to be no longer away from the Lord, on this earth.
  - He is greatly desiring, not to become unclothed, or be found “naked” without a body, but to be “further clothed” with the new spiritual body, our “heavenly dwelling” – and most significantly, be with the Lord.

**7** for we walk by faith, not by sight.

**8** Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

**9** So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him.

**10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

## Appendix 8 - Let the World Watch Christians Grieve Well as a Witness of the Gospel

The world sneers at Christians. It refuses to believe that our gospel is genuine.

In every age there are professed believers who abandon the faith as soon as they are called to suffer. They are glad enough to express confidence in God as long as life sails along smoothly, but when they are called to lose instead of gain, to weep instead of laugh, to face poverty instead of prosperity, they quickly turn aside and fall away.

### **Matthew 13:20 – 21**

**20** As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy,

**21** yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away.

No wonder, then, that many unbelievers become convinced that the Christian faith is unequal to the great challenges of life and death. Even many sincere believers wonder whether their faith is sufficient for times of deep sorrow, whether it could withstand a dreadful shock. If you waver, be assured, in Christ we have found the rock that can withstand every storm and wave. In times of great sorrow, there will also be particular grace to help you and strengthen you and provide a powerful witness to a watching world.

God has important purposes and is doing important work in our season of suffering. We can be confident that one of these purposes is for us to stand strong in the faith. Unbelievers and Christians alike need the assurance that our faith does not depend upon God delivering us out of every hardship. Our love for God should not depend upon circumstances or life events that never contradict our personal desires. God's people should be as true to him with little as with much, with broken hearts as with whole, with empty hands as with full.

The Christian's way to mourn and deal with death should be radically different from anything the world has to offer. If we simply go through the same motions, with the same ceremony, and the same music and the same empty platitudes, we miss a prime opportunity to proclaim in our death and dying that "death has been defeated and has no ultimate hold on us." So let those among us who weep tears of sorrow still rise to worship. Let us trust him in the green pastures as much as we trust him when he leads through dark valleys.

Let the world see our gospel is genuine, because we don't grieve like them without a hope.