

# The Old-Time Evangelistic News

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Are You Ready for Death? (Part 1)

I Samuel 20:3

The subject that we are dealing with in this message is not one that many people like to talk about. We are all aware of the matter, but we will talk about anything else before we talk about death. This is true of the unsaved as well as the saved. But death is not something that we can ignore completely. We may not talk about it, but we cannot totally escape it. It is all around us. You can drive down the road, and it will not be long before you see a cemetery. Along that same road, you will see little memorials that have been placed to remember someone who died along that stretch of the road. If you watch the news, you will hear the report of someone who died in an accident, a storm, a robbery, or in some other, usually tragic, way. Rarely, if ever, will the news not report about the death of someone. Pick up the newspaper and you will find the record of those that have recently died. Death is all around us. We must recognize the fact that though we may try to ignore it, we cannot escape it. We must be ready for death.

The Lord impressed this message upon my heart as I was listening to our pastor preach during a service at our home church. In the course of the message, he read I Samuel 20:3. I had heard and read the verse many times, but at that moment the Lord directed me to develop a message. I did not at the time realize how true the message would become to me. I finished the message and a week or so later, my mother died unexpectedly. I knew in theory how close death could be. Now I know for certain how close death really is. My grandparents had died in years past, but being a generation removed, it did not really sink in. When my mother died, I saw how real death was. Aside from my own wife and children, no one could be closer than my parents. Now my mother had died. Death became not just

-2-

some vague reality, but truly certain and unpredictable.

As I was pondering this subject of death, I began to wonder about the causes of death. Of course, the basic reason people die is because of sin, and we will discuss that as the message unfolds. But I was thinking of the ways in which sin manifests itself, and its effect upon the body. Every death certificate has a “cause of death” line upon it. It gives the medical reason that someone died. I came across some information that will cause us to truly think about death. I also was wondering about the ages of people when they die because death is no respecter of age, and the young die as well as the old. Finally, I wondered how much Scripture has to say about death. These three thoughts form the introduction to our message. Pay close attention to each of these. I will list the information and then make some comment about them.

The first category that we will consider lists the top ten leading causes of death. Think about the following information.

- I. Top Ten Leading Causes of Death—United States (2006)
  1. Heart Disease: 631,636
  2. Cancer: 559,888
  3. Stroke: 137,119
  4. Chronic lower respiratory diseases: 124,583
  5. Accidents: 121,599
  6. Diabetes: 72,449
  7. Alzheimer’s disease: 72,432
  8. Influenza and Pneumonia: 56,326
  9. Kidney Disease: 45,344
  10. Blood Poisoning: 34,234

Upon close observance of this list, we can see that the diseases that we fear the most are listed. Most of the money that is spent on medical needs in this country are spent trying to combat and overcome these diseases. It would be interesting to compare this list to the causes of death 100 years or more ago. I cannot say for certain,

but I would think that it would be different. Many diseases that were once feared and caused many deaths are now either eliminated or occur rarely. The Lord has allowed doctors and scientists to develop medicines to help fight certain diseases. Smallpox, measles, mumps, scarlet fever, and other diseases of yesteryear are now unheard of. We have won the fight, so to speak, against these diseases. But once one disease is defeated, another one arises. I mention this so that we can understand that we will never defeat all disease. It is a product of sin. As long as man remains sinful, disease will remain. It may be possible that a cure for cancer will be found in my lifetime. If that were to happen, it would be a joyous event. I would not be disappointed if that were to happen. But if a cure for cancer were available, people would still die. Death is a result of sin. No matter what medical science may come up with in the battle against disease, they will never conquer all diseases.

Most of us know someone either in our family or church that have died of one of the above diseases. It is not pleasant to dwell on these facts, but we must face reality—death will come. We may escape it for a while, but we will face death. You will notice that #5 on the list is not even a disease. It is “Accidents.” We all know or have heard of someone who died in an accident. Rarely a day goes by in most large cities that someone does not die in a car accident. We do not like to think about it, and usually do not, but the next time we get in a car could be the last time. It is not pleasant to think about, but we could be completely healthy, and yet die in a car accident. The “accident” category also involves those that die in plane crashes, hunting accidents, and many other things. You do not have to be sick to die. Are you ready for death?

The second category involves the ages of when people die. Ponder this information.

## II. Number of Deaths in Age Groups—United States (2006)

–2,426,264 total deaths

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| 1. Under 1 year—28,527 | 2. 1-4years—4,631 |
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| 3. 5-14 years—6,149    | 8. 55-64 years—281,401  |
| 4. 15-24 years—34,887  | 9. 65-74 years—390,093  |
| 5. 25-34 years—42,952  | 10. 75-84 years—667,338 |
| 6. 35-44 years—83,043  | 11. 85 and over—701,992 |
| 7. 45-54 years—185,031 |                         |

The numbers that are listed in this particular category reveal a stark reality—it does not matter how young you are, you can still die. Every age group is listed. Obviously, some have higher numbers than others. The older you are, the more likely it is that you are going to die. But as you look through these divisions, no age is excluded. There are several thousand that died in 2006 before their first birthday. That is not a pleasant thought, and no one likes to think about it, but the reality is that sometimes babies will die. I am sure that if you did enough research, you could find a listing that would break down each category into the particular age of all those that died. If we did so, you would find someone your age that died in 2006. That is the year of this study that I found, but it would be true of any year that could be studied. People die at any age. Many of those that died in the younger age groups, probably died in accidents. But not all of them. Many children and young adults die of disease. We are not guaranteed tomorrow. Death may come knocking at your door. Are you ready for death?

The final introductory thought that we will consider is how death is dealt with in Scripture. It is not glossed over, but is mentioned repeatedly. As we will see, the subject of death is mentioned over 800 times.

## III. Death in Scripture

1. Die—302 times
2. Dying—6 times
3. Died—190 times
4. Death—351 times
5. Deaths—4 times

In five various forms of the words die and death, Scripture discusses death. It mentions the lives of many people, but it also records the deaths of many of those same people. Some lived long lives and others lived short lives, but their end result was the same—they all died. Some did some great things for the Lord and others did some terrible things against the Lord, but they had one thing in common—they died. Some were very wealthy and others were very poor. But the wealth of the rich could not prevent their death. They died and were buried just like the poor.

In the course of this message, we will confront what we want to ignore and dismiss. We must confront it because of what lies beyond this life—Heaven or Hell. Death will come to believer and unbeliever alike, but after death there is a great difference. We must ask ourselves, “Are we (Am I) Ready for Death?”