

of people to that death, and how they prepared the body for burial, but not much is said about the soul of the one who died. With that said, we do know enough of what happens after death to make us want to be prepared for death

Consider *The First Stage* of the believer after death. If one has trusted in Christ, they will be “*present with the Lord.*” That is what II Corinthians 5:8 says—“*We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.*” Can there be any more comforting words than “*present with the Lord.*”? As pleasurable as this world may be from time to time, it is nothing compared to being “*present with the Lord.*” As much as I love my family, they hold no match to being “*present with the Lord.*” And those are the good things. Think about the things that we do not like such as the troubles and trials that we face. There will be no more of them when we are “*present with the Lord.*” Can you imagine having no more pain and sickness when they are so prevalent in this life? Even the enemies that we may have made because we have tried to serve the Lord will no longer be around to discourage us. Dear friend, they are gone when we are “*present with the Lord.*”

So often, when a believer dies, we focus on how much we miss them and the loss that we have. I know there is a loss and we will miss them, but as believers, we should go beyond our loss, and think about their gain—“*present with the Lord.*” We will continue with this thought next month.

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Are You Ready for Death? (Part 5)

I Samuel 20:3

Not only do we see that death is prophesied by Scripture and portrayed in Scripture, but also death is Proclaimed by Scripture. Hebrews 9:27 says, “*And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.*” The word appointed means to be laid away; to be laid by; reserved; or awaiting. It is in the present tense indicating something which is continually true. Many men have debated the truth of the Word of God down through the centuries. Many today doubt whether the Bible is true. But of this verse there can be no debate and no doubt. Scripture proclaims that death is coming to everyone. God had told Adam and Eve that they would die if they ate of the fruit. As we discussed it earlier, they ate it and died—spiritually immediately and physically eventually. At the close of last month, we saw Scripture portray in several instances how death came to everyone. In Genesis 5, every man, except Enoch, has the same three words at the end of their section of verses—“*and he died.*”

Now in Hebrews 9:27, the subject of death comes up again. Lest someone should think that they can cheat death by some means, God had the writer of Hebrews say that death is “*appointed unto men.*” You will notice that there is no qualifying word limiting death. It does not say “the rich man” or “the poor man.” It does not say “the white man” or “the black man.” It does not even say “the old man.” There are no limitations placed upon who is facing death. Everyone who is alive now has the appointment of death facing them. The word men is used in a general sense to describe all of mankind both men and women. Some may like to think that they can escape death, but no one will.

We often joke about people who are late for appointments and mention that they will not be late for their funeral. That is more true than we like to admit. Some may be late for things while they are living, but when the moment of death comes, they will die. There is no escaping or delaying that moment. We do not like to think about death, but we must be prepared for it. I have mentioned this all throughout this message because it is the very core thought of this message. We must be ready!

We are not told when our appointment will be. Some would like to know, but God never tells anyone. If we were to know when we were going to die, we might put off being ready to die until the very last moment. Regardless of how better or

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worse we might think it would be to know when we will die, it does not matter. We do not know, and God is not going to tell us. But there is an appointment that we will face. Are you ready for your appointment for death?

I do not mean to be dreary nor am I wanting to extend a thought for no reason. But I cannot escape the truth of this matter—death is proclaimed by Scripture. We hear of the accounts that I mentioned earlier in the message, and we think that it will not happen to us. But it could, and if it did, are you ready for that appointed hour of death. Think again about the meaning of the word appointed. It means to be laid away. Death is laid away for you. I cannot help but think of the “lay away” areas in stores. Someone will want an item but cannot pay for it all at one time. They will pay a little down and then pay a little bit until the item is paid for. Then it will be theirs. Any time that the full price is paid, the item can be taken from the store.

Here is how the analogy applies to death. Death is the result of sin (Romans 5:12; 6:23). In fact, in Romans 6:23 money terminology is used—“*the wages of sin is death.*” Adam and Eve paid the down payment for the end result of sin, and they received the result—death. But it did not stop with them. We inherited their “lay away.” We will die as a result of sin either directly or indirectly. (I say directly in the sense of some disease caused by sin such as adultery or fornication causing a venereal disease, or drinking alcohol causing cirrhosis of the liver or death in an auto accident, etc. Indirectly would refer to death resulting from the demise of the body through sickness that is not directly tied to a particular sin, etc.) We are born with the proclamation certain for all us—we will die. The down payment has been made and day by day we are adding to it. For some it may take longer, but one day, because of sin, the full payment will have been made. We will wake up one day, and it will be our last. We will receive our “lay away” because we have paid for it. One day we will die. We must be ready.

Another meaning of the word appointed is reserved. We can clearly understand that. We like to make reservations for a motel when we are going out of town. When we arrive at our destination, we go in and the room is waiting for us because we reserved it. Likewise, the same is true of death. We do not like to think about it, but that is why God put it in the Bible. We have a reservation waiting for us one day. We do not know when or where it will be, but one day we will come to a place, and it will be the last place that we will go. It may be at home, or it may be another place. It does not matter where, and we will not know

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where, but our reservation will be waiting—death will come. We must be ready.

Dear friend, death is proclaimed by Scripture. As I mentioned earlier, the verb is in the present tense indicating something which is continually true. The subject of death is not one that we can dismiss because we know it is true. It is all around us. But most of us put it off as something that is true, but not something that we have to be ready for. As we saw earlier in the message, David realized that death was personal. We ourselves—each individual—must be ready for death because it can happen at any moment.

The remainder of Hebrews 9 continues the thought that began in verse 27. In fact verse 27 is the lead-in to verse 28. Verse 27 tells us why Christ came. It is because we all have the appointment of death. Christ came and died in our place, so that we will not have to die the second death. We may still face physical death, but if we trust in Christ, we will not face the second death which is eternal damnation in the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:14-15; 21:8). As awful as death is, it can be defeated, if we trust in Christ as our Savior.

That brings us to the third portion of our message—**The Consequences of Death**. Even though many live their lives as if there are no consequences, it does not change the truth. There are consequences to our actions. If one jumps up, he will come down. If one cheats and steals, he will be caught, and he will be punished. There are many other analogies that could be used, but the truth remains that there are consequences.

The Bible reveals the consequences of death for both the saved and the sinner. While both face physical death, the similarity ends there. What happens after death is very different for the saved as opposed to the sinner. In describing the consequences of death for the saved and the sinner, each will involve three stages. As we will see, for the saved all is bliss and joy, while the sinner faces undescrivable agony and judgment. The difference between the two is not how they lived their life, but what they did with Christ. The saved person accepted Christ as their Savior. The sinner rejected Christ. The acceptance or rejection of Christ determines the consequences of death.

We begin with the consequences of death For the Saved. There are just a few glimpses into what happens when a person dies. Much of the Bible is spent describing the lives of people. When that person dies, it may describe the reaction

and Exalting the Name of Jesus Christ, Until He Comes Again!