

LENEXA EDIFIER

“and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:32)

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The Second Death

Chuck Bartlett

Death is a subject that many people would rather not talk about. This is especially true when it concerns self. Avoiding the topic will not prevent the inevitable, which is; *“And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment”* (Heb. 9:27). With each passing moment we are all getting older, meaning getting closer to our death. The only people that this does not apply to are those who are alive when Christ returns (I Thess. 4:17).

Before we can deal with the issue of the second death, we need to establish some important facts about the first death. When the writer of Ecclesiastes wrote about death, he stated *“Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.”* (12:7). This gives us some insight as to what does and doesn't happen when we take our last breath. Although a death will take place, not everything dies. We read in James 2:26, *“For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”* As we see, our spirit does not need our physical body to live while our body does need our spirit to live.

Knowing that there is life after death, we can begin to understand the idea of a second death. We are clearly not talking about a second physical death since the Hebrew writer stated plainly that we die once. Wherever it mentions in the Bible about another death, it must pertain to the soul of man. Not only that, there must also be a connection between this second death and judgment. This will be brought to light as we examine some Bible passages.

In the book of Revelation, we read these words in the 21st chapter, *“But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”* (vr. 8). There it is, the connection with judgment day and the second death. The spirit of man will not escape its death if found unfaithful.

It would be wrong to say that everyone will face a second death. Just because we cannot prevent the first death from happening, it doesn't mean we have no

control over our second death. Also, in Revelation chapter 2, we can read, *“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.”* (vr. 11). Spiritual death is nothing like physical death. With the former, the body returns to dust (Gen. 3:19) and the soul returns to God as the Ecclesiastes writer stated. However, let us not forget judgment. Again, the 20th chapter of Revelation reveals some more information. We learn, *“Then death and hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.”* (vrs. 14-15). This punishment is not like the first death. The physical pain associated with dying ceases when a person dies. When a person is cast into the lake of fire, the suffering is everlasting (Matt. 25:46).

Everyday people do what they can to supply nourishment to keep their physical bodies alive. But how much effort is given to prevent the second death? People work so hard to prevent what will eventually happen, yet exert little effort towards what doesn't have to happen. The one body is temporary; the other is eternal. This is why Jesus uttered, *“For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”* (Matt. 16:26).

You might have someone say at your funeral, “He had a good long life here on earth.” But, will you die in the Lord, prepared to spend eternity with Him? Think about it.

Walking with Wisdom:
Don't Be Enticed by Sinners
(Don Wright – brownstreetcoc.org)

“Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise” (Eph. 5:15).

It is said that misery loves company. So does sin. Sinners love to get others to partake in their sins. They

are often successful, especially with those who are unwise and gullible (**Pro. 14:15**). Solomon warns us about this. *“My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent”* (**Pro. 1:10**).

This is not a picture of one being deceived, but rather, of one giving into the desires of another. To consent is to yield or acquiesce. Why would anyone do something that he knows is wrong? The easy answer is that he is unwise, which might certainly be true. However, sometimes even the wise act unwisely. Solomon himself is an example of this. Never did a wise man ever act more unwisely than he did consistently. Read the book of Ecclesiastes.

Why do wise people fail to walk wisely? There are several reasons. A desire to be popular is one. Many unwise actions have been taken by those who give into peer pressure. The consumption of drugs and alcohol often begins with someone just trying to fit in with the crowd. Wanting to be popular is a strong motive to do something we know to be wrong. We must determine to walk wisely and not yield to such temptation. Moses said, *“You shall not follow a crowd to do evil...”* (**Ex. 23:2**). This is an admonition we should all follow.

Fearing man is another reason some consent to sinners. We have an example of this in the Bible. While Paul and Barnabas were at Antioch, Peter came down from Jerusalem (**Gal. 2:11**). They were all associating with their Gentile brethren until others came from James who, evidently, had a problem with associating with Gentiles who did not keep the law. At that point, some (including Peter and Barnabas), withdrew from the Gentiles. Paul exposed their hypocrisy (**Gal. 2: 11-14**).

We must determine to do right, no matter what others are doing, and not allow anyone to persuade us to violate the will of God, not even those closest to us. *“If your brother, the son of your mother, your son or your daughter, the wife of your bosom, or your friend who is as your own soul, secretly entices you... you shall not consent to him...”* (**Deut. 13: 6,8**).

We are surrounded by those who do not live according to the precepts of God. Some will do their best to get us to live like them instead of for the Lord. If we are wise, we will not consent. As you wind down for the night, think about these things.

Those Who Follow Their Own Spirit

Kyle Pope

Ezekiel 13:13 offers a serious warning that is as powerful today as it was when it was first spoken. It proclaims, *“And the word of the Lord came to me saying, ‘Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel who prophesy, and say to those who prophesy out of their own heart, ‘Hear the word of the Lord!’” Thus says the Lord God: ‘Woe to the foolish prophets, who follow their own spirit and have seen nothing!’”* Note two elements of this warning to these false prophets: (1) they *“prophesy out of their own heart,”* and (2) they *“follow their own spirit.”*

Have you ever formed a religious concept in your head, that seems so clear, so true, and so logical—but the source of that concept is not Scripture? The intensity of the thought can be almost overwhelming, as you start to feel as if you *understand* the mind of God—but once again, the source of that idea is not the word of God. Your aim is not to be presumptuous, or to exalt yourself, but the view seems so convincing to you that you feel as if you just *know* it must be so—regardless of the fact that it is not established by the revelation of God.

The question you must ask if you have ever been faced with such a strong feeling is, *How do you know?* How can man know anything about God? The Bible does teach us that there are some things about God that are indicated by the natural world. **Romans 1:20** teaches that in some sense God’s, *“invisible attributes ...even His eternal power and Godhead”* can be *“understood by the things that are made.”* That tells us that nature can teach the soul open to it that *there is a God!* Only a Being of eternal existence would be capable of starting the complex and intricate systems of time and space that regulate the current universe. Only a Divine Being outside of the limits of time and space could act as the *Prime Mover* to start all that we can see around us. *What about His thoughts?* Simply because we can discern His existence from nature, does that tell us anything about His thoughts?

Someone might say, “the sky is blue—so blue must be His favorite color!” Another viewing the sunset might draw a different conclusion, and argue, “No, the sky is orange and red so these must be His favorite colors.” One person might see the tenderness of a mother hen and say, “God must be tender and compassionate,” while another person watching a predator catch and eat its prey concludes, “The Creator is cruel and heartless!” The fact is that any conclusions we draw about God’s thoughts from nature are destined to be speculative, highly subjective, and ultimately unverifiable because we have no way to determine when something in nature is a direct reflection of God’s desire, attitude, and disposition and when it is

simply an inconsequential consequence of His creation.

In Paul's first letter to the Corinthians he offers us some powerful insight into this matter. Through the Holy Spirit, he asks the question, "*For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of a man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God*" (1 Cor. 2:11). Paul compares our knowledge of God to our knowledge of others. I can never know the mind of another person as fully as that person's own spirit knows him. No one can know me as fully as I, that is my spirit, knows me. In the same way, we can never fully know the "*things of God,*" specifically His thoughts, apart from the revelation of His Spirit. So, *how can we know the things of God's Spirit?*

Before Jesus ascended into heaven, He promised His apostles that He would send them the Holy Spirit. As a part of this promise He told them two things the Holy Spirit would do: (1) He would guide them "*into all truth*" (John 16:13) and (2) He would bring to the memory of the apostles "*all things that I,*" that is Jesus, "*said to you*" (John 14:26). Many in the religious world seek to apply these promises to all believers, but if that was true every believer must possess at all times the perfect knowledge of "*all things.*" Clearly, believers who are alive today did not walk with Jesus, so the Holy Spirit cannot *remind* us of what we never heard. *Is there another way to understand this?*

Two passages give us the answer. 1 Peter 1:20-21 declares, "*...No prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, [or "origin" from many footnotes] for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.*" The next, 2 Timothy 3:15-16 states, "*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God [this term means literally "God-breathed"] and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man, of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*" This tells us that Scripture is the product of the Spirit. This tells us that Scripture is complete. So, we can know God's thoughts through His words in Scripture.

Now then, let's go back to the passage in Ezekiel. It is easy for man to think that his own intuition is correct whether or not his views are grounded upon the clear teaching of God's word or not. We must test all things seeking "book, chapter, and verse" for all that we do and say. This approach to Bible study is often criticized today. Even some brethren reject it as "old fashioned" or "legalistic." The fact is that it was this approach to faith that led to the American efforts toward restoring the New Testament church in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It was this resolution to, "Speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where the Bible is silent," that led many men and women from all religious backgrounds to reject the chaos of the

religious world and seek unity within the authority of Scripture. This respect for God's word is what can guard against the scores of apostasies that can come from simply speaking *out of our own heart!*

We must recognize that apart from nature's indication to us of God's presence, the only way we can know anything about God is through what He has said. We must understand that looking at (and harmonizing) God's words does not deny His power, but esteems it! Let's recall Isaiah 66:2, "*...On this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word.*" We cannot know God's will by following our own spirit. We can try, but in doing so, we can be sure of one thing, we have "*seen nothing!*"

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God has denied men of every age any privilege of altering His word.

"You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you." (Deuteronomy 4:2)

Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house, and do not give him a greeting; for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds. (2 John 1:9-11)

I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book. (Revelation 22:18-19)

Psa. 1:1 *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.*

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