

WHAT GOD'S WORD SAYS ABOUT...

FIRST RESURRECTION AND THE SECOND DEATH

The simple meaning of death is “separation.” In God’s word there are two kinds of death. One death is physical: “The body without the spirit is dead” (James 2:26). “Then the dust [physical body] will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it” (Eccl. 12:7). The second death explained in God’s word is when one is spiritually dead and separated from God by their sin.

In the Garden of Eden “The Lord God commanded the man [Adam] saying, ‘From any tree in the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for IN THE DAY that you eat from it you shall surely die’ (Gen. 2:16-17). In the very day Adam and Eve partook of the forbidden tree, they died immediately in the spirit. Adam went on to live in the flesh to the age of 930 years (Gen. 5:5). God said, “Behold, all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine. The soul who sins will die” (Eccl. 18:4). God also said, “Your iniquities [lawlessness or sin] have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear (Isa. 59:2). So when we understand that we have sinned against God and His commandments, we die immediately in the spirit. “And you were dead in your trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1). Paul wrote that a widow who “gives herself to wanton pleasure is dead even while she LIVES” (1 Timothy 5:6). According to this scripture one could be very much alive in the flesh, but spiritually dead.

The apostle John wrote, “Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him (Rev. 20:6). We are made holy by our obedience to Him through baptism, which is the first resurrection. Paul wrote, “Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in a newness of life. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him...For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He

lives He lives to God. Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 6:3-11).

The first resurrection Paul spoke about could only be accomplished by being buried with Him in water baptism. Paul explained that because of our obedience to Him in baptism we “were also raised up with Him through faith In the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. When you were dead [spiritually speaking] in your transgressions [sins] and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive [first resurrection] together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions” (Col. 2:12-13). The Hebrew writer called this the, “church of the first born who are enrolled in heaven” (Heb. 12:23). Notice also in Rev 20:6 those who have “a part in the first resurrection the second death has no power.” The second death is spiritual death, which is separation from God eternally. Also included in this verse we find those who are partakers of the first resurrection are [present tense] “priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him.” If one has been a part of the first resurrection, the apostle Peter said

that we are “a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God.” He also called these people “A chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession” (1 Peter 2:5, 9).

The apostle John wrote, “Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it...And I saw the dead, the great and the small standing before the throne, and the books were opened...and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, which were according to their deeds. And the sea [peoples, multitudes, nations, tongues – Rev. 17:15] gave up the dead [those who have died in the flesh, the first death] which were in it, and death and Hades [those who died in the flesh in the Old Testament] gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death [eternal separation from God], the lake of fire. And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life [those who were disobedient to God’s word], he was thrown into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:11-15).