

# Fulfilled Prophecies

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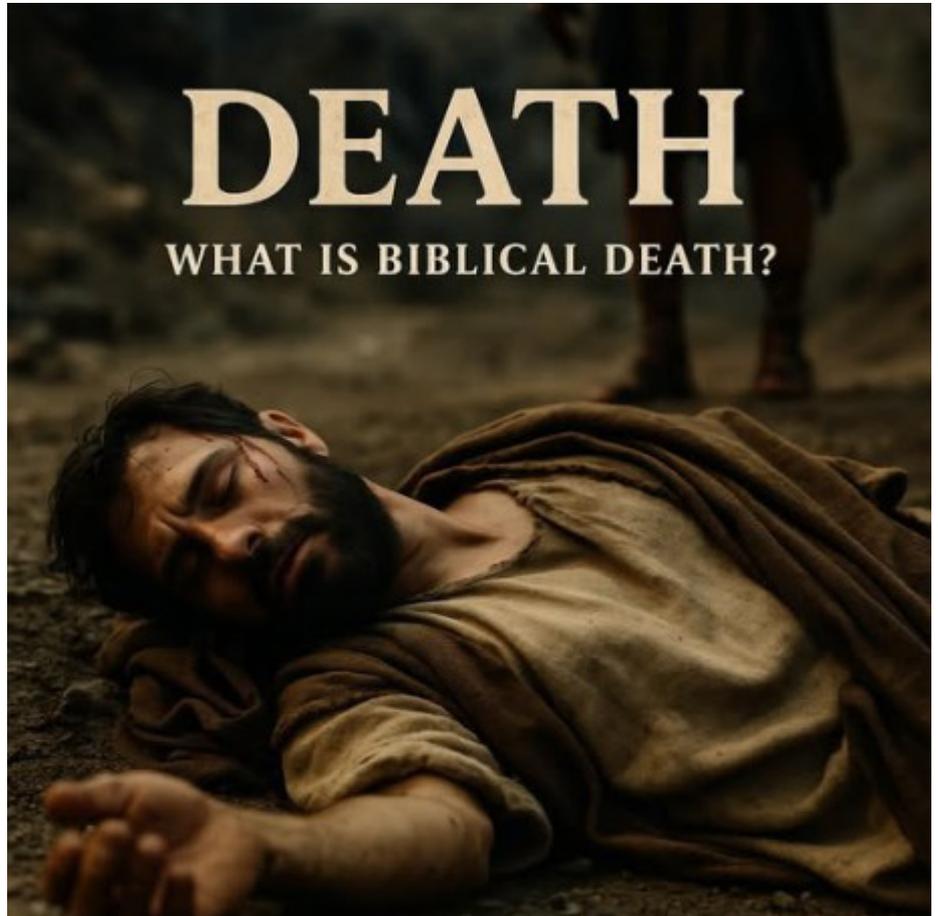
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## Death - What is Biblical Death



By Dan Maines

### Death - What is Biblical Death?

1 Corinthians 15:21

For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead.

† In Adam, humanity entered spiritual death, separation from God. Romans 5:12 and Ephesians 2:1-5 describe this condition plainly, we were dead in trespasses, yet God makes us alive together with Christ.

† Spiritual death is separation, not the end of existence. Isaiah

59:2 shows that iniquity separates from God, explaining why Adam could live physically while being spiritually dead.

† The gospel addresses this death at its root, restoring fellowship with God now, not merely at some distant time.

## **Adam and the day of death**

Genesis 2:7

Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being.

Genesis 2:15-17

From any tree of 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 will surely die.

† Adam and Eve became living beings by God's breath, yet on the day they sinned they died spiritually. Their eyes were opened, they hid from God's presence, and they were expelled from the garden, all marks of spiritual separation though their bodies continued for centuries.

† This explains why Scripture can speak of people as physically alive yet spiritually dead, and why salvation is described as being made alive with Christ.

## **How do we become alive?**

John 11:25-26

I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?

† Jesus defines real life in Himself. The believer who dies physically still lives, and the one who lives and believes in Him will never die spiritually.

† John 5:24 confirms the same promise, the one who hears and

believes has eternal life, has passed out of death into life. This is a present possession for the believer.

## **Victory over death**

1 Corinthians 15:54-57

But when this perishable puts on the imperishable, and this mortal puts on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the Law, but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

† Death's sting is sin, and sin's power was the Law. In Christ's finished work, the Law that condemned was brought to its appointed end for righteousness to everyone who believes, Romans 10:4, and the old covenant was becoming obsolete and ready to vanish away, Hebrews 8:13.

† From the fulfilled perspective, the resurrection was a real, covenantal, once-for-all transition that vindicated Christ and His people. The dead were raised as promised, 1 Corinthians 15, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, and Death and Hades were judged, Revelation 20:13-14.

† Before this victory, saints who died were described as in Sheol or Hades, Luke 16:22, Psalm 16:10 as cited in Acts 2:27. Christ opened the way to the Father's presence, Luke 23:43, Hebrews 9:24-28.

† Paradise is now with God, and believers don't return to Hades. At physical death we're with the Lord.

## **What happens to believers when we die?**

2 Corinthians 5:8

We are of good courage, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.

Philippians 1:23

Having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better.

† Scripture anchors our hope in immediate presence with Christ at death. There's no delay in some shadow-land for the believer.

† Where there is no death's dominion, there's no need to await another resurrection to receive life. We already possess eternal life in Christ, John 17:3.

## **Union with Christ's death and life**

Romans 6:3-4

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, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too may walk in newness of life.

† Baptism isn't just a symbol of washing but a sign of participation in Christ's death. We're united with Him in what He accomplished, sharing in the death that ended the old covenant order and brought a new creation.

† To be buried with Him is to have our old self counted as finished. This is covenantal language, describing our shift from the realm of sin and law to the realm of grace.

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ, and it's no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

† Paul speaks of a present reality. Our identity is no longer found in the old man but in Christ living through us. The believer's daily life is the outworking of Christ's own life, not a

self-improvement project.

Romans 6:5-8

For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin, for the one who has died is freed from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him.

† Union with Christ means the death of the old man and freedom from sin's mastery. This isn't a promise postponed to some future age but a present liberation.

† The likeness of His resurrection is the new life of the Spirit now, not merely a bodily event later.

Romans 7:4

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you also were put to death in regard to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might belong to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.

† Through Christ's body we died to the covenant of the Law. Our belonging has changed—we're now joined to the risen Lord. Fruitfulness is the result of this new union, not the cause of it.

Galatians 3:27

For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

† To be clothed with Christ is to share His righteousness and His identity. It's the fulfillment of the promise of a new covenant people where there is neither Jew nor Greek, but all are one in Him.

## Colossians 2:12-13

Having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And when you were dead in your wrongdoings and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our wrongdoings.

† Paul ties forgiveness, resurrection life, and baptism into one event. Through faith we share His death and resurrection and are already made alive.

† This is the heart of fulfilled life: no waiting for another age, we're forgiven and alive with Christ now.

## **So, do we still need a future resurrection to gain life?**

† We affirm what the apostles taught. Christ was raised, 1 Corinthians 15:12-19, and in Him the promised resurrection and judgment arrived on schedule for that generation, Matthew 16:27-28, Matthew 24:34.

† We have eternal life now, John 3:36, John 5:24. We can't ever die spiritually, John 11:26. Therefore, we don't await life, we live from it. At death, we go immediately to be with Christ, 2 Corinthians 5:8, Philippians 1:23.

† As believers, we've put on immortality in Christ. Physical death is the shedding of the mortal body, not a loss of life. We continue in God's presence.

## **How this applies to us today**

† Assurance, You don't live under the threat of spiritual death. Your life is hidden with Christ in God, Colossians 3:3.

† Freedom, The Law's condemning power is gone in Christ, so guilt and fear don't rule you, Romans 8:1-2.

† Presence, You already share resurrection life. Prayer, worship, and mission flow from union with the risen Lord.

† Hope, When a believer dies, it's departure to be with Christ.

We grieve with hope, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14.

## Historical Witnesses

† Josephus (AD 37–100) records that many Jews of his day believed the righteous would immediately enter a blessed state while the wicked suffered apart from God (Antiquities 18.1.3).

† Philo of Alexandria (c. 20 BC–AD 50) wrote of the soul's immortality and of the righteous entering the presence of God beyond the body (On the Creation 135–139).

† Clement of Rome (c. AD 96) spoke of those who have finished their course and entered into the place promised them by the Lord (1 Clement 5).

† Ignatius of Antioch (c. AD 110) affirmed that when he died he'll be with Christ, not waiting in a distant future age (Letter to the Romans 5–7).

† Polycarp (c. AD 155) encouraged believers that those who die are with the Lord awaiting the final appearing already vindicated (Martyrdom of Polycarp 14).

**† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †**

## Source Index

† Genesis 2:7, 15-17; Isaiah 59:2; John 5:24; 11:25-26; 17:3; Romans 5:12; 6:3-8; 7:4; 8:1-2; 10:4; Galatians 2:20; 3:27; Ephesians 2:1-6; Colossians 2:12-13; 3:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:12-19, 21, 54-57; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17; 2 Corinthians 5:6-8; Philippians 1:21-23; Hebrews 8:13; 9:24-28; Luke 16:19-31; 23:43; Matthew 16:27-28; 24:34; Revelation 20:13-14

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