

Chap. XXXII. - of the State of Men after Death, and of the Resurrection of the Dead

1. After death, the bodies of men decay and return to dust, but their souls, which neither die nor sleep, having an immortal existence, return immediately to God, who gave them. The souls of the righteous are then made perfect in holiness and received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory as they wait for the full redemption of their bodies. The souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness as they are kept for the judgment of the great day. Scripture recognizes no other place except these two for the souls which have been separated from their bodies.

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I. God's Role in Death: Death Is Ordained by God

A. God Ordains the Sentence of Death: Death Is Inevitable

Heb. 9:27; Rom. 14:10; 2 Tim. 4:8; Jude 20–21; Ps. 89:48; Job 30:23; 1 Pet. 1:24, 25
Eccl. 7:1–4

B. God Ordains the Details of Death: Death Is Specific

Job 12:10; Job 14:5; Job 1:21; Eccl. 8:8; Ps. 139:16

C. God Ordains the Decision for Death: Death Is God's Prerogative

2 Sam. 1:1–16; Num. 35:22–28 (Deut 19:4-6); WLC Q. 136; Mk. 8:36, 37

II. Our Response to Death:

A. We Should Prepare for Death Mk. 8:36, 37; Jn. 3:18

B. We Can Accept Death with Peace Heidelberg Catechism #1; Ps. 46:10

C. We Experience Death with Grief

1. Biblical Examples of Grieving Gen. 50:1–14; Jn. 11:33, 35

2. Biblical Reasons for Grieving

a. We Grieve Because Death Is Foreign Gen. 3:19; Rom. 5:12; Rom. 6:23

b. We Grieve Because Death Is the Enemy 1 Cor. 15:25–26; Deut 30:15; Prov. 2; 8:36

3. Biblical Hope in Grieving

1 Thess. 4:13, 14; 1 Jn. 3:2–3; Rev. 21:4; Rom. 14:8; Rom. 8:38, 39

QUOTES:

“I want my funeral service to be joyful. I don’t want people to be sad because I believe with every ounce of conviction in my body that death is but a homecoming, and that we’ll be in the presence of God. It’s the culmination of life. It’s a celebration.”
Charles Colson

“Nothing can make up for the absence of someone whom we love, and it would be wrong to try to find a substitute. We must simply hold out and see it through. That sounds very hard at first, but at the same time it is a great consolation, for the gap, as long as it remains unfilled, preserves the bonds between us. It is nonsense to say that God fills the gap; he does not fill it, but on the contrary, he keeps it empty and so helps us to keep alive our former communion with each other, even at the cost of pain.”
Dietrich Bonhoeffer in Letters from Prison

“No person is more conscious, more aware, and more alert than when he passes thru the veil from this world into the next. Far from falling asleep, we are awakened to glory in all of its significance. For the believer, death does not have the last word.”
R C Sproul

“Although we must still meet death, let us nevertheless be calm and serene in living and dying, when we have Christ going before us. If anyone cannot set his mind at rest by disregarding death, that man should know that he has not yet gone far enough in the faith of Christ.”
John Calvin

"One hour with our God will make up for it all."
Charles Spurgeon

"If God had told me some time ago that He was about to make me as happy as I could be in this world, and then had told me that He should begin by crippling me in arm or limb and removing me from all my usual sources of enjoyment, I should have thought it a very strange mode of accomplishing His purpose. And yet, how is His wisdom manifest even in this! For if you should see a man shut up in a closed room, idolizing a set of lamps and rejoicing in their light, and you wished to make him truly happy, you would begin by blowing out all his lamps, and then throw open the shutters to let in the light of Heaven."
Samuel Rutherford

“I was in Florida, and it seemed to me like a madhouse. It is a pagan land. The reason it is a pagan land is that the pretense is maintained that we don’t die. [It’s] The only place that you can’t see there is a cemetery, and yet it is the only really booming industry of the place. It is extraordinary because this is part of the madness of the 20th century. To speak of death has become a bad taste subject.”
Elton Trueblood

First question of the Heidelberg Catechism: What is your only comfort in life and death?

A: That I am not my own, but belong with body and soul, both in life and in death, to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ. He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood, and has set me free from all the power of the devil. He also preserves me in such a way that without the will of my heavenly Father not a hair can fall from my head; indeed, all things must work together for my salvation. Therefore, by his Holy Spirit he also assures me of eternal life and makes me heartily willing and ready from now on to live for him.