

Death



As common an occurrence as death is, there is little in common among humanity as to its definition, purpose, and results.

Death among men first occurs shortly after man's creation. The first recorded death of a human is the death of Abel (Genesis 4:8). However, death was PROMISED earlier. The marginal translation of Genesis 2:17 says, "Dying, thou shalt die." Thus this original statement of the curse includes not only the actual termination of life, but also the process of dying which leads up to it.

Death was a penalty for the original disobedience. We have all inherited it from our first parents. (The termination of being—the end of existence and I Corinthians 15:21, 22) To define it simply, it is unconsciousness.

Most religions do not believe this simple explanation. They have invented all kinds of fanciful theories about how the body dies, but that some inextinguishable thing, the "soul," keeps on existing. The Bible, however, does not support these theories. To the contrary, it states that souls die (Ezekiel 18:4. See also [SOUL](#) and [IMMORTALITY](#).) The term "immortal soul" never occurs in the Bible. Man's insistence on redefining death is based on our unfortunate willingness to believe Satan's first lie, "Thou shalt not surely die" instead of God's plain truth. (Genesis 3:4)

Thus death is, indeed, a terrible thing in that it ends our existence. BUT—and this is a big, wonderful "but" — God intends to AWAKEN and RESTORE (or resurrect) the dead. (See [RESURRECTIONS](#) and [RESTITUTION](#).) THIS is the true Jewish and Christian answer to the problem of death!

Because death includes the dying process, we are considered "dead" while we yet are walking around. Thus Jesus could say, "Let the dead bury their dead." (Luke 9:60)

Jesus defined death as sleep because he wanted us to understand both that it is an unconsciousness and that there would eventually be an awakening from it. (Luke 8:49-53; John 11:11-14) Jesus taught us to anticipate this for all. (John 5:28)

There have been a number of instances recorded in Scripture where the dead have been raised. For example see I Kings 17; II Kings 4; Mark 5; Acts 9; Luke 7; and John 11. What is MOST SIGNIFICANT about these records is that NOT ONE of these people told what it was like! We KNOW that that was the question on minds of all who knew them! But they had nothing to tell because they had experienced NOTHING! (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10)

The Bible also speaks of a "second death." (Revelation 2:11 and 20:6) This is because we have inherited our first death or dying from our father, Adam. Jesus will destroy this inherited death during the thousand years of his earthly kingdom. (I Corinthians 15:21-26) During that time, however, it will be possible for some to die a second time through willful disobedience on their own part (Acts 3:23). There will be no awakening from this second death. It will be eternal. But that death which we have inherited will be removed due to the ransom sacrifice of Jesus. (See [RANSOM](#).)

Thus "death" (walking around in a dying condition) and "hell" (the oblivion which is reached at the moment of full death) will be destroyed (Revelation 20:14)—they also symbolically going into second death, meaning that they will never be revived.

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So, WHY did God choose death as the punishment for disobedience? The answer is quite simple. Ultimately God intends to have a perfect, peaceful universe. This will depend upon all intelligent beings' obeying His dictates. He wants it to be known before that time that the way to insure that peace and prosperity is to ELIMINATE any and all things which would challenge it. Death is the perfect solution. But before letting us be subject to eternal death (second death), He wants us to have experienced fully the results of sin and death so that we may choose wisely, from experience, in the end. (See [WHY EVIL IS PERMITTED](#).)

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