

The Reality of the Afterlife

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: John 5:28-29

Death is a sad reality of life, but what happens after death? Last year we spent a lesson answering this question. This lesson is the first of a three-part series in which we will go into the topic a little deeper. Many people wonder about this, so it could provide an opportunity to talk to them about spiritual matters. In this first lesson, we are going to talk about the reality of the afterlife.

The Certainty of Death

- It is appointed for men to die once (Hebrews 9:27) – unless we are alive when the Lord returns (1 Thessalonians 4:17), we will experience this; at judgment, we will face either eternal punishment or eternal life (Matthew 25:46)
- Death is a consequence of Adam's sin (Genesis 3:22-24) – mankind lost access to the tree of life
- Death is certain, but life is uncertain (James 4:13-14) – we do not know when death will come

The Difference between Man and Animals

- There is a similarity between humans and animals (Ecclesiastes 3:19-20)
- An important difference is that man has an eternal spirit (Ecclesiastes 3:21) – made in God's image (Genesis 1:26-27)
- Another difference – man has a sense of a higher calling or purpose (Ecclesiastes 3:11; Acts 17:26-27)

Theory: At Death We Cease to Exist

- Many believe that we will cease to exist at death – atheists who do not believe in spiritual things think this; Jehovah's Witnesses (and others) believe the wicked cease to exist at death
- Religious people who believe this will sometimes cite the wise man's statement about the dead (Ecclesiastes 9:5) – the theme of Ecclesiastes is life "under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:3; 2:17; 9:6); at death, our time "under the sun" is over; but our spirits will live on (Ecclesiastes 12:7)

Reality: What Happens When We Die

- The Bible describes a place where our spirits go at death – Hades (Luke 16:22-23); two distinct sections of paradise (Luke 16:22, 25) and torment (Luke 16:23-24, 27-28); at death our fate is sealed (Luke 16:26)

- Hades will not last eternally (Revelation 20:12-14) – it will be destroyed when death is destroyed; therefore, it exists until the final judgment (John 5:28-29)

Conclusion

- Death is certain – but that is not the end of our existence
- When we die, our spirits will go to Hades to await the final judgment
- We need to use our lives now to prepare for this