

SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS
LESSON 11

BUT WE SHALL ALL
BE CHANGED
IN A MOMENT
IN THE TWINKING OF AN EYE
AT THE LAST
TRUMPET

MAN'S IMMORTALITY

*Scripture Texts: John 5:28-29; Matthew 25:46; Ecclesiastes 12:7;
1 Corinthians 15:51; 1 Corinthians 15:58*

A misunderstanding of death is the cause of much misunderstanding of Bible statements. To die is not to cease to be. Man never comes to an end or goes out of existence. He only changes form from mortality to immortality and from corruptible to incorruptible.

There is to be a resurrection of all the dead at one time. All raised bodies and all living ones will then be changed and made immortal. These, united with their spirits, will be separated, the evil from the good, and sent to Heaven or to hell to dwell eternally.

MEMORY VERSE: *For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*

—2 Corinthians 5:1

Every Body to Be Resurrected

John 5:28-29 Some points are made so clear here as to leave no question. (1) All, both good and bad, are to be raised from the dead. No one will be missed. Bodies properly buried, lost, burned, eaten, scattered on land or sea or whatever, will be raised. **The sea gave up the dead . . . and death and hell delivered up the dead . . . (Revelation 20:13).** We see that all will survive physical death. (2) Both good and evil people are to be resurrected at the same time, the same hour, not separated by one thousand years. (3) There are two kinds of people to rise to two kinds of futures—**life** or **damnation**.

Both Destinies Are Forever

Matthew 25:46 In describing the Judgment and the separation of people into two groups, Jesus says they will go into **everlasting punishment** or **life eternal**. Both **everlasting** and **eternal** mean endless. These words are interchangeable. All mankind, good or evil, saved or unsaved, will go on forever in conscious existence. It would be neither **punishment** nor **life** if it were not conscious. The rich man of **Luke 16** was conscious in torment—he had all his senses— as also was Lazarus in Abraham's bosom.

Dust and Spirit Different

Ecclesiastes 12:7 Man was made of two things, dust of the ground and the breath of God. Dust composes the physical body; God's breath composes the spirit. These two are different—the body, mortal and the spirit, immortal. At death each must return to its source, the body to the earth, the spirit to God. The spirits will be judged and assigned to the proper abode according to their works. Once brought into existence, the spirit of man can never cease to be. It will go on and on forever somewhere. The spirit is the inner man, the real person.

In many heathen graves are found articles such as clothing, food, money, weapons, or images of something supposed to be needed by the dead. Why are evidences of a belief in existence after death found among all people? Does not this teach that there is in every person an inborn desire to keep living forever? The problems and afflictions of earth may at times overbalance for some the desire to stay here, but the instinct to live is still there.

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Bodies Changed

1 Corinthians 15:51-54 At the return of Christ there will be both dead bodies and living people here. **We shall not all sleep** (die), **but we shall all**—both living and dead—**be changed**. The dead bodies will be raised (**1 Thessalonians 4:14-18**). The living ones will be changed **in the twinkling of an eye** into new and immortal bodies.

For the wicked, those without Christ, this will be tragic. Immortality without salvation is the greatest tragedy. Immortality is the curse of hell. Sufferers there cannot cease to be. But for the saved, immortality is the greatest of blessings. **So shall we ever be with the Lord**. All risen, changed, immortal bodies will be reunited with their spirits.

For saints, this transformation will fully open the new life in Heaven with God. The free spirits clothed in houses **not made with hands, eternal in the heavens (2 Corinthians 5:1)**, with perfect faculties free from weakness or affliction, will be able to fully participate in the joys of the heavenly phase of God's Kingdom. All the glories of endless life will be rolled out before the saints then. What that life will be, we can only have a foretaste of here, but its fullness can only be experienced as eternal ages roll on. Then may be realized the meaning of: **He will swallow up death in victory (Isaiah 25:8)**.

Victory in Jesus

1 Corinthians 15:55-58 Death is very real and is an enemy. The Bible, as always, goes straight to the vital spot and points to the essential poison in death. Sin! Sin is death's sting, death's terror, death's cause. Sin is what makes death permanent, that is, that separates permanently from God. Find a cure for sin, and you have found the cure for death.

Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world (John 1:29). There is a no more perfect cure. God gives us **the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ**. Until Jesus comes again, all—both saint and sinner—must pass through physical death. But for the saint, all is LIFE thereafter.

Death is separation. When the spirit of a man leaves his body, it is physical death. When the spirit of a man is separated from God, it is spiritual death. Sinners are in that state in this world—spiritually dead. When God says, **the soul that sinneth, it shall die (Ezekiel 18:4)**, He means the sinning one is cut off from God, not that he ceases to exist. If he remains in sin, that separation or death continues eternally. If by repentance and faith he turns to Christ, he will be made spiritually alive, connected with God eternally.

JUST A THOUGHT

Be as kind as you can today because you may not be here tomorrow.

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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