

What Happens At Death? James 4:13-17

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

Since no one lives forever on this earth, what will _____ to us when we die? We'll explore the Bible for what happens when we _____. The Bible says, "The _____ things belong to the LORD our God, but the things _____ belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law" (Deuteronomy 29:29). God doesn't answer every question that we can ask, but God does give us everything that we _____ to know, everything that pertains to life and godliness. If you wish to live with God eternally, the most important thing you can do is to _____ God's Word.

No one likes to _____ about death or even _____ about it, and yet death is a topic we can't _____. Hebrews 9:27 says, "it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment." From our earliest days, we have heard about judgment, heaven, and hell. We know something exists _____ this life, but we don't always know everything we want to know. Movies and television stimulate our imagination, but they only provide somebody's _____ about what lies beyond. We want to _____ what God says will happen when we die. That's why we go to God's inspired Word for _____.

Life is _____, and death is _____. Even if you're young and healthy, you can't _____ reality. Your death will either open the _____ to the most wonderful experience you've ever enjoyed or the worst experience anyone could have. God wants to _____ you, and the Bible gives us the information that we need to find that blessing.

Our reading today comes from the letter of James 4:13-17.

The word "death" occurs over _____ times in the Old Testament and _____ times in the New Testament. Death signifies _____. Physical death separates the _____ from the _____. Spiritual death separates people from _____ and His blessing. We grieve when we lose our _____ ones, because we know that we can't be with them ever again in this life. The good news is that while death is a separation, it's not the _____ of our existence.

When David and Bathsheba's first child died, David said, "I will _____ to him, but he will not _____ to me" (2 Samuel 12:23). We all will one day die. The angels will come for us, and they'll take our spirits to another place.

This Bible describes death, "For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also _____ apart from _____ is dead" (James 2:26). Notice that it says the body is dead, but we're _____ than a body. We're body and spirit. The body dies but the spirit _____ exists. Ecclesiastes 12:7 says, "the dust returns to the _____ as it was, and the spirit returns to _____ who gave it." When we die, our spirits return to God who made us. God is the Father of spirits

according to Hebrews 12:9. Your spirit is not physical or material, and it's not subject to death.

On the cross, Jesus told the thief, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in _____" (Luke 23:43). The Lord clearly says that we'll _____ and be conscious beyond this life. The Lord expected to see the thief in Paradise. There's an _____ spirit that survives death and is conscious. Life here and now is not _____ there is.

It is appointed for us once to die, then comes _____. Death holds _____ for us, no doubt about it. The unknown, especially judgment, is frightening. We worry whether our afterlife will be _____. The Lord Jesus said, "Enter by the _____ gate. For the gate is wide and the way is _____ that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is _____ that leads to life, and those who find it are few" (Matthew 7:13-14). Whenever you read a passage like Matthew 7, it _____ many who think nearly everybody is going to be saved and only a few of the worst will be lost. But that's not what Jesus says.

We must consider the afterlife. How we _____ here will determine where we will _____ eternity. What are we saved by? We're saved by the shed _____ of Jesus Christ. What are we saved from? We're saved from the _____ of sin. Jesus warned us, "If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it's better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell" (Matthew 5:29-30).

Read the glimpse of what happens after death the Lord Jesus gives in Luke 16:19-31.

Many think that this story is a _____ and for that reason shouldn't be taken seriously; but Jesus is never trivial. When Jesus uses a _____ of speech like a parable, He does so to emphasize a point, not to trivialize it.

However one takes this story, there are _____ very different destinies awaiting after death. One destiny is filled with _____ and the other with _____. Lazarus and the rich man both _____ where they were. Both could have conversations and could reason. Both could _____ the lives that they lived back on earth.

Sometimes the Bible speaks of death as "_____." This is likely because the body after death _____ to be sleeping. However, this does not mean that our spirits are unconscious or in some _____. Moses and Elijah, though they had been _____ for many centuries, had a conversation with the Lord Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-5). Death happens to the body, but death does not make our spirits unconscious.

The lives that we live here, and whether we are right with the Lord, will determine our _____ destiny. This illustration story of Lazarus and the rich man opens our _____ to what happens when our spirits leave this world. After we die, the angels will come for us and they'll take us to a place that God has assigned for us. This may be a place of comfort or it may be a place of torment.

Scripture uses the word “Hades” to describe that _____ where disembodied spirits of dead people go. Some scholars say that “Hades” means “unseen”; while others say it means “all-receiving.” Hades, whether it’s one or the other, shouldn’t be _____ with the idea of Hell. Hades is a _____ place, and our spirits will reside there until the Judgment Day; it’s temporary; but hell comes after the Judgment and it’s _____. No one will enter heaven or hell _____ after the resurrection and after the Judgment. Hades is the place where our spirits, where the spirits of dead people _____. In the resurrection, those spirits will _____ to earth and be joined to new, imperishable bodies. Death is the separation of the body and spirit. Resurrection takes place when our spirits are _____ with a changed, imperishable body. I’ll have more to say about this in a few weeks.

While Hades usually refers to that place of torment, the word can also be applied to the _____ realm, which has both a place of torment and a place of comfort. In Acts 2:27 the apostle Peter quotes David’s _____ in Psalm 16:10 about the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He noted that while Jesus’ soul was not abandoned to Hades, that his _____ did not suffer decay. When Jesus died, his soul went to Paradise, according to His statement to the thief on the cross in Luke 23:43; He said “Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.”

The word Paradise is used three times in Scripture and each time refers to the heavenly _____ where the righteous go after death. Second Corinthians 12:2-4 equates Paradise to the third heaven; that is, the place where God _____. Jesus went to that unseen place of righteous spirits and where God dwells. In Revelation 2:7, the Paradise of God is where the _____ of life is. If Jesus’ soul was not abandoned to Hades but He went to Paradise, then Hades must contain a place where righteous _____ are comforted.

The apostle Paul _____ us to understand that we will have an existence in spirit form after we die and until the resurrection. He says the righteous will go to be _____ the Lord Jesus. “Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord—for we walk by faith, not by sight—we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord. Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be _____ to Him” (2 Corinthians 5:6-9). When the righteous die, they go to be with the Lord.

Read what Paul said in Philippians 1:21-23. Paul said he would go and be “with Christ” when he died and that would be very much _____. This is the Christian _____ that we have, to live with our Lord Jesus forever and ever.

Through the years whenever I’ve preached funerals, I’ve often cited Romans 14:7-9. The Bible says, “For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s. For to this _____ Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the _____ and of the _____.” We may die physically, but not even death can separate us from the _____ of our Lord Jesus. When Christians die, they go to be with Him that very

day. But when evil people die, the angels take them to a place of torment.

This is why we must be _____ spiritually. No one else can do that for you. The Bible says, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil” (2 Corinthians 5:10). The saved person goes to judgment with the blood of Jesus and has his name recorded in the book of life. He can _____ the afterlife with confidence that he has an eternal home with the Lord. The unbeliever and the impenitent person have _____ such hope. He must face God on his own.

God does not want any person to be _____, no not a single one—He wants everyone to be _____. God would not have sent His son, Jesus, to die on a cross, if He were looking to _____ people. But God will not _____ people to do what is right or to repent.

God has prepared the _____ for your salvation in the gift of His beloved Son, Jesus. By His _____ you are saved. But grace as a _____ must be received by faith and obedience. We don’t _____ our salvation, but God has determined that those who receive His gift are those who _____ his conditions.

The Bible says, “Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who _____ Him the source of eternal salvation” (Hebrews 5:8-9). Your gift of eternal life is _____ for you if you believe, repent, and are baptized. My friend, have you prepared? Death is something that all of us will face one day, and it may come _____ than we think. So I ask you, are you prepared? Are you prepared?

I bought life insurance to _____ my wife and to _____ for my family after I’m gone. Many people buy a plot, choose the casket, and arrange the service _____ before the time. How foolish it is to be so well prepared for death _____, but fail to prepare spiritually for the _____. I don’t want to be like the five foolish virgins who _____ to buy the oil needed for their lamps. They ran to the dealers to buy oil; and while they were gone, the bridegroom came. The door was _____, and they were not allowed in (Matthew 25:1-14). They weren’t prepared, and we must prepare!

Don’t waste your opportunity in this life to get right with God; once life is over, there’s no _____ chance. Why not start a _____ and different direction for your soul’s sake? Jesus said, “Behold, I stand at the door and _____. If anyone _____ my voice and _____ the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me” (Revelation 3:20).

You can _____ your car, your house, your health, or your life and still go to heaven; but if you lose your _____, you’ve lost everything. Make the most important commitment that you’ll ever make, that of giving yourself to the Lord by _____ the gospel. Believe in the Lord Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. Repent of every _____. Confess publicly the name of Jesus, and be _____ in water in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. When you’re baptized, the Bible says in Acts 22:16 that your sins will be _____ away. The Lord will add you to His _____, and you’ll be a son of God with eternal life.