

Doctrine of Death

Introduction.

On October 15, 2000 my father, Stanford William Murrell died. On the way to his funeral, which was held October 20, 2000 in McComb, Mississippi, I was able to listen to an audiotape based on the writings of Elizabeth K. Ross. Dr. Ross impressed the world several years ago with her detailed studies on death and dying. She wrote a book by that title. According to Dr. Ross most people go through five phases when they discover they are going to die.

- | | |
|-------------|-------------|
| • Phase I | Denial |
| • Phase II | Anger |
| • Phase III | Bargaining |
| • Phase IV | Resignation |
| • Phase V | Acceptance |

What Dr. Ross also discovered is how ill prepared American's are to die. As a society we do not talk about it, think about it, or prepare for it. And when the hour comes to bury a love one emotions are suppressed in a stoic manner instead of allowing the heart to express itself with loud cries and shrieks if necessary. Because of this it might be profitable to briefly consider The Doctrine of Death.

1. Death is spoken of in a variety of ways in the scripture. It is referred to as

- | | |
|---|--|
| • giving up the ghost | Gen 25:8; 35:29; Lam 1:19; Acts 5:10 |
| • the King of Terrors | Job 18:14 |
| • a change | Job 14:14 |
| • going to thy father's | Gen 15:15; 25:8;35:29 |
| • putting off this tabernacle | 2 Pet 1:14 |
| • requiring the soul | Luke 12:20 |
| • going the way whence there is no return | Job 16:22 |
| • being gathered to our people | Gen 49:33 |
| • going down into silence | Psa 115:17 |
| • returning to dust | Gen 3:19 Psa 104:29 |
| • being cut down | Job 14:2 |
| • fleeing as a shadow | Job 14:2 |
| • departing | Phil 1:23 |
| • sleep | Deut 31:16; Job 7:21; 14:12; Jer 51:39; Dan 12:2; John 11:11; Acts 7:60; 13:26; 1 Cor 15:6; 1 Thess 4:14 |

2. Some people have been or will be exempt from the act of dying.

- Enoch Gen 5:24; Heb 11:5
- Elijah 2 Kings 2
- The saints at the second coming of Christ 1 Corinthians 15

3. Some people have been raised from the dead.

- The son of the widow of Zarephath 1 Kings 17:17-23
- The Shunammite's son 2 Kings 4:32-37
- The young man laid in Elisha's tomb 2 Kings 13:21
- The widow's son Luke 7:12-15
- The daughter of Jarius Luke 8:49-55
- Lazarus John 11:43,44
- Dorcas Acts 9:37-40
- Eutychus Acts 20:9-12

4. There are no deaths in heaven.

- *Revelation 21:4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.*

5. For a variety of reasons death has been desired by the greatest of saints.

- Moses Leadership burdens Num 11:15
- Elijah Depression 1 Kings 19:4
- Job Sufferings Job 6:8-11; 7:1-3, 15,16
- Jonah Pettiness Jonah 4:8
- Simeon Life fulfilled Luke 2:29
- Paul Anticipating the glory 2 Cor 5:2,8; Phil 1:20-23

6. Physical preparation for death included the following rituals.

- A washing of the body Acts 9:37
- An anointing of the body with oils Matthew 26:12
- Wrapping the body in linen Matthew 27::59
- Burning of incense 2 Chronicles 16:14
2 Chronicles 21:19
Jeremiah 34:5

7. Sometimes the question of cremation arises. For centuries the Catholic Church opposed cremation and regarded it as a great sin. There are several Biblical examples of cremations.

- **The Philistines.** *Joshua 7:25 And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? The LORD shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones.*
- **King Saul and his sons.** *1 Samuel 31:12 All the valiant men arose, and went all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Bethshan, and came to Jabesh, and burnt them there.*
- **False prophets.** *2 Kings 23:20 And he [King Josiah] slew all the priests of the high places that were there upon the altars, and burned men's bones upon them, and returned to Jerusalem.*
- **The kings of Edom.** *Amos 2:1 Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Moab, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; **because** he burned the bones of the king of Edom into lime:*
- **The men of Judah.** *Amos 6:10 And a man's uncle shall take him up, and he that burneth him, to bring out the bones out of the house, and shall say unto him that is by the sides of the house, Is there yet any with thee? And he shall say, No. Then shall he say, Hold thy tongue: for we may not make mention of the name of the LORD.*

Special Note.

It seems that the cremations were performed as a form of contempt (Josh 7:25), because the body was badly mutilated (1 Sam 31:12), or because of expediency (Amos 6:10). The passage in Amos 2:1 seems to indicate that the Lord does not totally approve of the act of cremation.

- *Joshua 7:25 And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the LORD shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones.*
- *1 Samuel 31:12 All the valiant men arose, and went all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth-shan, and came to Jabesh, and burnt them there.*
- *Amos 6:10 And a man's uncle shall take him up, and he that burneth him, to bring out the bones out of the house, and shall say unto him that is by the sides of the house, Is there yet any with thee? and he shall say, No. Then shall he say, Hold thy tongue: for we may not make mention of the name of the LORD.*
- *Amos 2:1 Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Moab, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because he burned the bones of the king of Edom into lime:*

8. A premature death may take place as a form of divine judgment.
 - Death came suddenly upon the Antediluvians
 - The Sodomites
 - King Saul

9. Death is symbolized in scriptures.
 - By the pale horse
 - King of Terrors

10. Because life is short, death is certain, and eternity is real the Bible commands men to prepare for death.

11. To help instruct the heart the death of several of the saints has been recorded.
 - The death of Isaac
 - The death of Jacob
 - The death of Moses
 - The death of David
 - The death of Zechariah
 - The death of Jesus
 - The death of Stephen
 - The death of Paul

12. In contrast to the death of the righteous is the death of the wicked.
 - The death of Dives *Luke 16:19 There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: 20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, 21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; 23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. 25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. 26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. 27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: 28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. 29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. 30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. 31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.*

13. The death of the wicked is called The Second Death

- *Revelation 20:6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.*
- *Revelation 20:14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.*

14. There are a number of different types of deaths mentioned in Scripture.

- Physical death. *Hebrews 9:27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.*
- Spiritual death. *Ephesians 2:1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins. Colossians 2:3 In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*
- Operational death. *James 2:17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.*
- Death to self. *Matthew 16:24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.*
- The death of the Old Man. *Romans 7:9 For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.*
- Sexual death. *Hebrews 11:12 Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.*
- The Second Death. *Revelation 20:6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. ..14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.*

15. The origin of death is associated with The Fall of man and the effects of natural depravity.

- *Romans 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:*

16. There are many ways to prepare for death.

- **Pray for divine discernment**

Psalms 39:4 LORD, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am.

Psalm 90:12 So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

- **Work diligently**

Ecclesiastes 9:10 Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.

- **Serve the Lord**

John 9:4 I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

Romans 14:8 For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

- **Live humbly**

James 4:15 For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.

- **Remember that to die is gain**

Philippians 1:21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.