

Physical Death

- When God first created the universe, there was no death. According to Romans 5:12, how did death enter the world? (see Gen. 3:17-19, 22-23; 2:16)
- What does Paul call death in 1 Corinthians 15:26? What does this tell us about it?
- What do 1 Corinthians 15:22-23 & 51-55 tell us about death?

Intermediate State: This has to do with what happens to those who die before Christ's return during the period between when they die and when the resurrection occurs.

Final State: This has to do with what happens to people after the resurrection and for the rest of eternity.

Our understanding of death and the intermediate state is at least partially dependant on how we understand our human make-up. There are three main views:

1. **Monism** says that body and soul comprise one inseparable unit. This means that the idea of an intermediate state in which the soul exists without the body as it awaits the resurrection is impossible. Therefore, those who hold to this view believe that both the body and soul rest in the grave as they await the resurrection. This is the view held by Seventh Day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses. In support of this they point to the numerous references to those who have died as 'sleeping' (Psalm 7:5; 90:5; Matt. 9:24; John 11:11; Acts 7:60; 13:36; 1 Cor. 11:30; 15:6, 18, 51; etc)

- What does 2 Corinthians 5:6, 8 tell us about the death of a Christian?
- How does Philippians 1:23-24 describe what happens when a Christian dies?
- How do these verses relate to Monism?

As for the belief that those who die remain in an unconscious state until they are raised at the resurrection, “sleep” was actually a popular euphemism for death used in the first century (and before) by both Christians and non-Christians. Its use is more cultural than theological. Its origin was probably the fact that a dead body just lies there, looking as though it is sleeping.

- In Luke 16:22-30, how does Jesus describe the state of both the rich man & Lazarus after they died?

 - In Revelation 6:9-11, John was given a vision in which he saw martyrs in heaven after they had been slain. How does he describe them?
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
2. **Trichotomy** holds that man is made up of three separate parts—body, soul, and spirit. This is primarily based on 1 Thessalonians 5:23 and Hebrews 4:12. According to this view, the body is the material part of man, and the immaterial component can be divided into two parts, soul and spirit. The soul is the psychological element that thinks and feels. Animals also have souls, but humans have spirits, which set them apart from the animals. This is the spiritual element that enables them to directly relate to God.

 3. **Dichotomy** believes that man has two separate parts—body and soul/spirit. According to this view, soul and spirit are used interchangeably and refer to the immaterial part of man. Scriptural support for this view is found in the fact that the biblical words translated soul (*Hebrew—nephesh* and *Greek—psyche*) are sometimes used interchangeably with the words for spirit (*Hebrew—ruach* and *Greek—pneuma*).
- What do you notice about how Mary uses both terms in Luke 1:46-47?

 - In Hebrews 12:23 what are those who have died referred to as?

 - Compare this to Revelation 6:9 and 20:4. What are they referred to as in these two passages?

 - How does Genesis 35:18 describe Rachel’s death?

 - What two parts does Matthew 10:28 describe humans as consisting of?

- Now compare this to 1 Corinthians 7:34 and 2 Corinthians 7:1. What two parts do these two passages describe humans as consisting of?

Trichotomists believe that the soul does the thinking, feeling, and decision making and the spirit does the worshiping and praying. However, the scriptures also describe the spirit as thinking and feeling (Mark 2:8; 1 Cor. 2:11; John 13:21; Prov. 17:22). In the same way, they describe the soul as worshiping and praying (Psalm 25:1; 62:1; 103:1; 146:1; 1 Sam. 1:15).

- If the scriptures make no distinction between soul and spirit, why are they listed side by side in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 and Hebrews 4:12?

In the same way, Mark 12:30 names four parts without requiring a fourfold division. Furthermore, as we have already seen, there are several verses that only list a twofold division (Matt. 10:28; 1 Cor. 7:34; 2 Cor. 7:1).

Dichotomy has been the dominant view throughout church history and continues to be the most common view among modern evangelicals. However, the early Greek or Alexandrian Fathers, such as Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Gregory of Nyssa, were Trichotomists, as are some evangelicals today. Monism is not normally embraced by evangelicals and is primarily found in unorthodox sects like the Seventh Day Advents and Jehovah's Witnesses.

The Bible says that death occurs when the spirit or soul departs from the body. Several scriptures teach this.

- How does Genesis 35:18 describe Rachel's death?
- According to James 2:26 what is it that makes a body dead?
- How does Psalm 146:4 describe death?
- According to Ecclesiastes 12:7, what happens to a believer when he dies?
- What did Jesus do when He died according to John 19:30?
- Based on Stephen's prayer in Acts 7:59, what did he expect to happen when he died?

- What happened when Jesus raised Jairus' daughter from the dead, according to Luke 8:55? What does this imply about what had happened when she died?
- In 2 Corinthians 5:6, how does Paul describe the Christian's condition during this life?
- According to 2 Corinthians 5:8, how does this change when a Christian dies? Which is better? How do you know?
- In Philippians 1:23-24, how does Paul describe the contrast between our current state and what will happen when we die? According to these verses, which is better? How much better?
- What assurance did Jesus give to the thief who was dying on the cross next to him in Luke 23:43? What does this tell us about death?
- According to Luke 16:22-30, what happened to the rich man and Lazarus the moment they both died?

A very commonly held error is that we will receive our new bodies as soon as we get to heaven. Believers will remain with the Lord in that disembodied state until the resurrection. At that time their bodies will be raised, transformed, and reunited with their spirits for eternity.

- What does 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 tell us about the resurrection and what will follow it?
- How does 1 Corinthians 15:51-53 describe the resurrection?
- What do vv. 42-49 tell us about the resurrection bodies that we will receive on that day?

- How does Philippians 3:20-21 describe our resurrection bodies?
- How does 1 John 3:2-3 describe what we will be like?

The only difference between the intermediate state (the period between death and the resurrection) and the final state (after the resurrection) is that those in the first are disembodied spirits, while those in the final state will have resurrected bodies.

- Compare 2 Corinthians 5:4 to 2 Peter 1:13-14. What is Paul referring to as “this tent”?
- According to 2 Corinthians 5:2-5, which is best, the intermediate state or the final state?