

# You Pick It: I'll Preach It

(2 Timothy 3:16-17)

- Introduction:
1. Tonight's lesson will examine a medley of several questions that were turned in; dealing generally with the state of the dead.
  2. It is our aim to answer them biblically and concisely, and to encourage you to open your Bible and see if my answers are correct.
  3. (Acts 17:11-12).

## I. Question One: Can The Dead See What's Happening On Earth?

- A. What we know about the afterlife is limited by what has been revealed to us.
- B. Beyond that is conjecture, which leads to division.
- C. Let's not go beyond what is written (1 Corinthians 4:6).
- D. I do know that the dead have remembrance.
  1. (Luke 16:27-28).
  2. (Revelation 6:10).
- E. Before I would affirm that the dead have ongoing knowledge of what is happening on earth, I would need Scripture affirming it, but to my knowledge, I have none.

## II. Question Two: Are The Dead Sleeping?

- A. There are passages that describe those who are dead as being "asleep."
  1. (Matthew 27:52).
  2. (1 Corinthians 15:51).
  3. (1 Thessalonians 4:14).
- B. However, these passages are describing death in terms of how it appears.
  1. It is descriptive of the body, not the soul.
- C. How do I know that?
  1. Moses and Elijah weren't in a state of sleep (Matthew 17:3).
  2. The rich man and Abraham weren't in a state of sleep (Luke 16:19-31).
  3. The martyred saints weren't in a state of sleep (Revelation 6:9-11; 20:4).
  4. Of what value would Paul's desire be if he were asleep (Philippians 1:23).
- D. While the dead may appear to us to be "asleep," the Bible teaches us that they are conscious in a spirit realm.

## III. Question Three: Can The Dead Come Back To Earth?

- A. The answer to that question is a qualified, "yes" and "no."
- B. We have several records of the dead coming back to the earth.
  1. Samuel (1 Samuel 28:3-25).
  2. Moses & Elijah (Matthew 17:3).
  3. But note: These instances were of God's doing, not the whim of living men or the dead.
- C. Jesus informs us that the dead may not return (Luke 16:27-31).

- D. I've heard many testimonies of people who claim to have received visitations from the spirit world, but consider this:
  - 1. Should we believe the testimony of Scripture, or the testimony of man (Romans 3:4)?
  - 2. If God wouldn't let a man return for the purpose of saving souls, then why would we think he'd let a man return to tell us where he placed the second set of keys to his car?

#### IV. What Happens To Us When We Die?

- A. Again, the only way we can possibly answer this is if God has pulled back the curtain and allowed us a look.
  - B. This is precisely what he did (Luke 16:19-31).
  - C. The Bible teaches us that there will be a day of judgment that will occur after death (Hebrews 9:27).
    - 1. This is a "day" singular.
    - 2. This is a day that has been appointed (Acts 17:31).
    - 3. This day occurs when Jesus returns (2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Matthew 25:31-32).
  - D. While we know our bodies are buried and will decay when we die (1 Corinthians 15:35-49), what becomes of our spirit between death and the judgment that will occur when Jesus returns?
  - E. The spirits of the dead go to Hades (Luke 16:23) to await the judgment.
    - 1. Part of this realm is called Paradise (Luke 23:43).
    - 2. The other parts is a place of torment (Luke 16:23; 2 Peter 2:9).
    - 3. Here, the righteous are comforted, and the wicked are tormented while they await the day of judgment.
- Conclusion:
- 1. What we can conclude from all of this is that now is the time to prepare yourself for death (2 Corinthians 6:1-2).
  - 2. And we have learned that if we wait too long, we can destroy ourselves.
  - 3. In view of that, if you need to be reconciled to God, why don't you do so now?