

Death

The lexical definition of "dead" in the Bible means **separation**. It never means "non-existence." Even after we die, spiritually we're still alive. Physical death, from God's point of view, is the separation of our soul from our physical body.

Calvinism analogizes the spiritual condition of a lost person to the physical world by using an anachronistic (and 21st century) definition of death to explain their belief in Total Depravity.

In the Bible, death never, ever, ever means non-existence...it always, always, always means separation. A person separated from God, when he comes under the conviction of the Holy Spirit, can respond to God if you define death as separation. But if you define death as non-existence, as Calvinists do, then a lost person cannot respond to God at all, even under the conviction of the Holy Spirit. This is why, according to Calvinism, a person has to be regenerated before they can believe. What they believe makes sense if death indeed means non-existence...but death in the Bible does not mean that.

If you take the state of people before they come to Christ, who are spiritually dead, and compare that to physical death, it is like comparing apples and oranges.

Death in the OT:

- *māwet* - Death is the consequences and the punishment of sin. It originated with sin. A grand theme of the OT is God's holiness, which **separates** Him from all that is in harmony with His character. Death, then, in the OT means ultimate **separation** from God due to sin. [Theological Wordbook of the OT]

Death in the NT:

- *thanatos* - that **separation** (whether natural or violent) of the soul from the body by which the life on earth is ended [Greek-English Lexicon of the NT]

Physical death

Gen 35:18: And it came about, as her soul was departing (for she died), that she named him Ben-oni; but his father called him Benjamin.

- The death of Rachel...
- She died, but her soul "departed" (was separated from her body; it didn't cease to exist)

Eccl 12:7: then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.

- Upon death, the human spirit does not stop existing...it returns back to the Creator

Matt 27:50-51:

50 And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and **gave up His spirit**.

51 And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth shook and the rocks were split.

- When Jesus died, did He stop existing? No! His soul (spirit) was temporarily separated from His physical body.

Luke 23:46: And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, **"Father, INTO YOUR HANDS I ENTRUST MY SPIRIT."** And having said this, He died.

- When Jesus died, His spirit was separated from His body and went back into the hands of the Father

Acts 7:59: They *went on* stoning Stephen as he called on *the Lord* and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!"

- Stephen understood that upon the death of his physical body, his spirit would be separated from it and go to heaven

Dan 12:2: And many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace *and* everlasting contempt.

- Every single human being, when they die, remains alive and alert and will one day be resurrected to stand in judgment before God

Matt 25:46: **These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."**

- Dead people will always exist somewhere...they will never not exist

2 Cor 5:8: but we are of good courage and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.

- Believers who die to immediately into the presence of the Lord

Phil 1:21-23:

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

22 But if *I am* to live *on* in the flesh, this *will mean* fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose.

23 But I am hard-pressed from both *directions*, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for *that* is very much better;

- Paul never anticipated not existing after his death...he knew he would continue to exist in heaven

Other Examples

Gen 2:17: but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for **on the day** that you eat from it you will certainly **die**."

- Death in the context ("on the day") could not have meant physical death because Adam did not physically die that day...he lived for 930 years
- What death means is that "on that day" you will spiritually "die" (be separated from God). Physical death would come later (much later), but "on that day" when he ate the fruit, death was referring to spiritual separation from God.

Gen 3:8: Now they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

- After the Fall, Adam and Eve were still able to respond to God
- Their problem after they "died" was not non-existence, it was separation from God

Is 59:1-2:

1 Behold, the LORD'S hand is not so short That it cannot save; Nor is His ear so dull That it cannot hear.

2 But your wrongdoings have caused a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden *His* face from you so that He does not hear.

Calvinism uses biblical words, but the problem is with their non-biblical definition of those words. The idea of Total Depravity is a biblical concept, but Calvinism uses it as a synonym for inability. Secondly, regarding "death" in the Bible, they give it the definition of non-existence rather than separation.

In Eph 2:1, Calvinism's definition of "dead" means a complete inability to respond to God. However, the proper interpretation is of a spiritual nature...unbelievers are spiritually "dead" meaning they are separated from God because of sin. But a person separated from God can respond to God by His grace and through the convicting of the Holy Spirit. A spiritual man who does not exist can't respond to God.