

Elder Vernon Johnson

Numbers

Five

Deaths

There are five different types of deaths taught in the word of God. These five deaths are death of the body; death in trespasses and sins; second or eternal death; death to fellowship; and death to sin.

First, the death of the body is one of the punishments that God declared against sin: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." The number five is often associated with corporeal death as we see in Genesis chapter 5 in the obituary column of the bible. Adam and many of his descendants are mentioned five times in that chapter and after the fifth mention of their names, we are told, "and he died." Similarly, we read of some who were smitten under the fifth rib, which caused their death:

1. 2 Sam. 2:23 "Howbeit he refused to turn aside: wherefore Abner with the hinder end of the spear smote him under the fifth rib, that the spear came out behind him; and he fell down there, and died in the same place: and it came to pass, that as many as came to the place where Asahel fell down and died stood still."

2. 2 Sam 3:27 "And when Abner was returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside in the gate to speak with him quietly, and smote him there under the fifth rib, that he died, for the blood of Asahel his brother."

3. 2 Sam 4:6 "And they came thither into the midst of the house, as though they would have fetched wheat; and they smote him under the fifth rib: and Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped."

4. 2 Sam 20:10 "But Amasa took no heed to the sword that was in Joab's hand: so he smote him therewith in the fifth rib, and shed out his bowels to the ground, and struck him not again; and he died. So Joab and Abishai his brother pursued after Sheba the son of Bichri."

Second, death in trespasses and sins, describes a condition of fallen man before he is born of the Spirit of God. This condition resulted from the fall of man in Adam in the Garden of Eden. Eph. 2:1-3 reads, "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."

Rom. 3:9-17 gives a detail description of the nature of fallen man, who is dead in trespasses and sins: What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes."

The second death is described in Rev. chapter 20:14 "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." The second death is that eternal punishment of the non-elect (those whose names are not written in the book of life). There is a lake of eternal torment awaiting the non-elect because of sin.

Fourth is the death to fellowship. This principle is illustrated in Luke chapter 15 in the account of the prodigal son: 21 "And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. 22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: 23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: 24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry."

Obviously, the body of the son was not dead, but the son was dead to the fellowship of the Father while he was wasting his substance with riotous living. Additionally, we read in 1 Tim. 5:6 "But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth."

Fifth is to be dead to sin: Rom. 6:2 "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" We are not dead to sinning as our lives plainly testify. Yet we are

dead to sin in that Christ died on the cross to redeem us from the condemning affects of sin. Through the sacrificial atonement of Christ, we are dead to the condemning effects of sin. As Rom. 8:33, 34 tells us, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

In conclusion, five types of death are taught in the scriptures.