

The Deaths of Man

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Cats supposedly have nine lives. Men may die more than once. In fact, man may experience as many as four deaths.

Those who are living in sin are said to be **dead in sin**. There are two groups who may be dead in sin. Those who are intelligent enough to be responsible for their own actions, but who have not become Christians are one group. Paul describes the Ephesians before they obeyed the Gospel as “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph 2:1). This simply indicates that they were separated, alienated from God because of their sins and were thus under condemnation of God because God abhors sin. Those who have become Christians, but who have quit serving Christ are the other group. The whole church at Sardis was dead (Rev. 3:1). Christians who live in pleasure are dead while they live (1 Tim. 5:6). Such people are spiritually dead, though physically alive and will be eternally separated from God if they are not converted (Jam. 5:19–20).

Because of Jesus’ sacrifice, men can **die to sin**. Speaking as a Christian to fellow-Christians, Paul asked, “We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein?” (Rom. 6:2). In our obedience to the Gospel, we die unto sins that we might live unto righteousness (1 Pet. 2:24). At this death, men are to be buried in baptism, from which they are to be resurrected to “newness of life” because they are a new creation in Christ (Rom. 6:3–4; 2 Cor. 5:17). One dies to sin when he is “made free from sin” through obeying the doctrine of Christ (Rom. 6:17–18). Without this death, one is lost eternally.

Since man began to sin, the sentence of **physical death** has been over him. This is a death about which we have no choice, for “it is appointed unto man once to die” (Heb. 9:27). Rich and poor, good and evil, rulers and servants all alike must die physically. This death brings sorrow because it severs earthly ties with loved ones. However, through Christ there is hope and promise of a glorious resurrection (1 Cor. 15:54–57).

The worst of all deaths, because it is irremediable, is the **death of the soul**. Jesus warned men of it (Mat. 10:28). John described it as “the second death” (Rev. 20:14–15). This death means eternal separation from God and is the fate of those who “obey not the Gospel” (1 The. 1:7–9). Each of us must determine whether we will suffer this death (Rev. 2:11).

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