

# **Death & Afterlife**

## Session 2: Dead and Buried

### **What Happens When We Die?**

#### **1. Soul/Body Separation**

Psalm 145:4, LXX

His spirit will depart, and he will return to his earth.

John 11:11-14

[Jesus] spoke, and then he said to them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awake him out of sleep."

The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover."

Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead...."

## 2. Intermediate (In-between) State

St. Mark of Ephesus, quoted in Fr. Puhalo's *The Soul, the Body, and Death* 21

How is it that the Lord in the parable of the virgins says that the virgin souls who went forth to meet the Bridegroom "slumbered and slept while the Bridegroom tarried," which means that they died, but that they did not enter the bridal chamber until the Bridegroom came from Heaven, awakening all the virgins as it were from sleep, and the ones He led along with Himself, while the others He shut out, which things clearly shall come to pass only on that day? Do you see therefore that...while we are bereft of our bodies, no one shall receive according to that which he has done through his body?...From all these things, therefore, it is evident that neither are the saints in perfect enjoyment of those good things and of the blessedness to come, nor have sinners already received condemnation and been sent to torment. And, indeed, since they are incomplete and, as it were, cut in half, being bereft of their bodies which they wait to receive incorrupt after the resurrection, how would they attain those rewards.

## 3. Foretaste

St. Aphrahat the Persian, Demonstration 8.19

[T]he servant for whom his lord is preparing stripes and bonds, while he is sleeping desires not to awake, for he knows that when the dawn shall come and he shall awake, his lord will scourge and bind him. But the good servant, to whom his lord had promised gifts, looks expectantly for the time when dawn shall come and he shall receive gifts from his lord. And even though he is soundly sleeping, in his dream he sees something like what his lord is about to give him, whatsoever he has promised him, and he rejoices in his dream, and exults, and is gladdened. As for the wicked, his sleep is not pleasant to him, for he imagines that lo! the dawn has come for him, and his heart is broken in his dream. But the righteous sleep, and their slumber is pleasant to them....Then in the watch of the dawn they awake with joy. But as for the wicked, their sleep lies heavy upon them, and they are like a man who is laid low by a great and deep fever, and tosses on his couch hither and thither, and he is terrified the whole night long, which lengthens itself out for him and he fears the dawn when his lord will condemn him.

**Paradise**

Luke 23:43

"Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

Wisdom of Solomon 3:1-4

But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God,  
and no torment will ever touch them.

In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died,  
and their departure was thought to be an affliction,  
and their going from us to be their destruction;  
but they are at peace.

For though in the sight of men they were punished,  
their hope is full of immortality.

Nikolaos P. Vassiliadis, *The Mystery of Death*

They all, we may say, follow lovingly our spiritual progress with lively interest and holy concern. They rejoice over our virtuous life; they are grieved over our falls; they celebrate our victories. And they are prepared to applaud us and to receive us with honors in the other life, in “the Father’s house.”

St Silouan the Athonite (in *St Silouan the Athonite* p.270)

In the Holy Spirit all heaven beholds the earth, and hears our prayers and carries them to God.

Hymn from Vespers for November 15

...God doth give the Martyrs’ souls the wondrous gift to see mystically, as it were in a looking-glass, that which happeneth here below.

### *Hades*

Psalm 88:16

in the depths of the Pit, in the regions dark and deep.

Job 10:22

the land of gloom and chaos, where light is as darkness

#### **4. Immediate Transition**

Luke 23:43

"Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

St Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain, *The New Ladder* (quoted in *Mystery of Death* 398)

The souls of both the righteous and the sinners, when they depart from the body, do not remain any longer upon earth and upon present things here, but directly go to the place where they are by God ordained to be.

St John of Sinai (quoted in *Mystery of Death* 398)

Upon separation, those who desired heavenly things go upward in part [i.e., to Paradise], while those again who desired earthly things go downward [i.e., to Hades]; no one of those who is separated remains any longer in the middle [i.e., on earth].

**No Purgatory**

## **No Tollhouses**

John 5:22

The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son

### **5. No Repentance after Death**

Luke 16:22-26

The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried; and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes, and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus in his bosom. And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy upon me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.'

St. Justin the Martyr, *On the Resurrection* 8

For as in the case of a yoke of oxen, if one or other is loosed from the yoke, neither of them can plough alone; so neither can soul or body alone effect anything, if they be unyoked from their communion.

2 Clement 8:3

For after we have left the world, we are no longer able there either to confess or to repent any more.

St John of Damascus, *Against the Manichaeans* (in *Mystery of Death* 534-35)

After death there is no change, no opportunity for repentance; not that God does not accept repentance, for He cannot deny His very nature, nor can He put away His compassion. But in fact the soul after death does not change.

The Octoechos, Tone 3, Tuesday Matins, 1<sup>st</sup> Kathisma

While thou still dwellest upon the earth, repent, my soul, for in the tomb the dust cannot offer praise or gain deliverance from sin. Cry out to Christ thy God: I have sinned, O Knower of men's hearts; but before Thou dost condemn me, have mercy upon me.

## Prayer of the Dead

Fr. Georges Forovsky, *Anatomy of the Problems of Faith* (Quoted in *Mystery of Death* 409)

Earthly death, the separation of the soul from the body, does not destroy the relationship of the believer with the Church; it does not alienate him from his familiar place and condition; it does not separate him from his other co-members in Christ.

Hebrews 11:39-12:1

And all these [the Old Testament righteous], though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect. Therefore, since **we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses**, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us

2 Maccabees 15:11-14

[Judas Maccabeus] cheered them all by relating a dream, a sort of vision, which was worthy of belief. What he saw was this: Onias, who had been high priest, a noble and good man, of modest bearing and gentle manner, one who spoke fittingly and had been trained from childhood in all that belongs to excellence, was praying with outstretched hands for the whole body of the Jews. Then likewise a man appeared, distinguished by his gray hair and dignity, and of marvelous majesty and authority. And Onias spoke, saying, "This is a man who loves the brethren and prays much for the people and the holy city, Jeremiah, the prophet of God."



Origen, *Encouragement to Martyrdom* (Quoted *Mystery of Death* 410)

If you die for Christ, you will benefit your children more with your martyrdom than if you remained near them. For, in the other life you will be able to love them in a way that will be of greater benefit to them and you will be able to pray for them in a much more prudent manner.

### **Prayer for the Dead**

2 Maccabees 12:39-45

On the next day, as by that time it had become necessary, Judas and his men went to take up the bodies of the fallen and to bring them back to lie with their kinsmen in the sepulchres of their fathers.

Then under the tunic of every one of the dead they found sacred tokens of the idols of Jamnia, which the law forbids the Jews to wear. And it became clear to all that this was why these men had fallen. So they all blessed the ways of the Lord, the righteous Judge, who reveals the things that are hidden; and they turned to prayer, beseeching that the sin which had been committed might be wholly blotted out. And the noble Judas exhorted the people to keep themselves free from sin, for they had seen with their own eyes what had happened because of the sin of those who had fallen. He also took up a collection, man by man, to the amount of two thousand drachmas of silver, and sent it to Jerusalem to provide for a sin offering. In doing this he acted very well and honorably, taking account of the resurrection. For if he were not expecting that those who had fallen would rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead. But if he was looking to the splendid reward that is laid up for those who fall asleep in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Therefore he made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin.

St Silouan the Athonite (in *St Silouan the Athonite* p.468)

I asked [an advanced monk], "Should I pray for the dead?" He sighed, and said, "Were it possible I would pray everyone out of hell, and only then would my soul be easy and rejoice."

As he spoke he made a gesture with his arms as if he were gathering up sheaves of [wheat] in a field, and the tears streamed from his eyes.

After that I no longer gave up praying for the dead...

1 Timothy 2:3-4

...God our Savior...desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

1 Peter 5:7

Cast all your anxieties on Him, for He cares about you.

St Epiphanius of Cyprus, *Panarion* 75 (Quoted in *Mystery of Death* 435)

The prayer for the departed is beneficial, even though it does not bring about all that it requests.

Saying 38 of St Macarius of Egypt, *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers*

Abba Macarius said, "Walking in the desert one day, I found the skull of a dead man, lying on the ground. As I was moving it with my stick, the skull spoke to me. I said to it, 'Who are you?' The skull replied, 'I was high priest of the idols and of the pagans who dwelt in this place; but you are Macarius, the Spirit-bearer. Whenever you take pity on those who are in torments, and pray for them, they feel a little respite.'