

SAKE VAN LEWE EN DOOD 3

Wat is die dood? Is daar 'n definisie van die dood? Kan 'n mens dit beskryf as daar nie juis iemand is wat terugkom uit die dood om te sê hoe dit was nie? Party het dit al beskryf as "the supreme puzzle of poets". Party sê bloot dis die einde van lewe. Ander sê weer dood is die oorstap in 'n nuwe lewe.

Party verkies om na die dood te kyk vanuit 'n filosofiese en ateïstiese hoek, soos Richard Dawkins wat êrens geskryf het: We are going to die, and that makes us the lucky ones. Most people are never going to die because they are never going to be born... We privileged few, who won the lottery of birth against all odds, how dare we whine at our inevitable return to that prior state from which the vast majority have never stirred?

Dan is daar diegene wat nie filosofer oor die dood nie, want hulle het werklik iets van die dood ervaar. Ek lees êrens van iemand wat deur 'n moeilike operasie gegaan het, meer as twee maal sy eie totale volume bloed verloor het en by die rant van die dood omgedraai het en ná sy ervaring gesê: I came to the inescapable conclusion, that every breath I was breathing and every beat of my heart was a gift not to be taken lightly. Because, no matter who you are, now matter your wealth or status, Death can grab you in the next second, a blink of the eye. Whoosh ... and you are gone.

Daar is nie 'n onderwerp onder die son waaroor daar soveel vrae gevra word soos oor die dood nie. Daar is ook nie tema in die geloof waaroor daar tegelykertyd soveel vrees en soveel hoop bestaan nie. Die Ierse digter WB Yeats het gesê: "Not dread nor hope attend a dying animal; A man awaits his end, Dreading and hoping all." Iemand anders het êrens geskryf: "Of all the feelings in the hearts of men, fear of death is the most tenacious." Ek dink nie geloof is 'n waarborg dat jy NIE die dood sal vrees nie, of dat jy NIE onsteld in die aangesig van die dood sal wees nie. Jesaja 25:7 sê die dood is 'n uitgebreide sluier (Eng. "veil") wat alle mense omsluit. Job 18:14 noem die dood die koning van alle verskrikkinge. 1 Kor 15 noem dit die laaste vyand wat verslaan moet word.

Maar 1 Kor 15 sê ook vir ons dat Y'shua deur sy opstanding die angel van die dood weggeneem het. Deur sy opstanding en die belofte van die ewige lewe wat aan die geloof in Y'shua gekoppel word, kan gelowiges nou op 'n nuwe manier na die dood kyk. Die dood het nie meer die finale sê nie. Rom 8 sê selfs die dood kan ons nie van die groot liefde van Yahweh skei nie. Vir hulle wat hulle verwagting in Yahweh gestel het en wat sy Woord glo en wat die boodskap van Y'shua met blydschap aanneem, is daar nie net die sluier van die dood nie. Daar is ook die onthulling van lewe na die dood. Daar is nie net vrees en onsekerheid nie. Daar is ook hoop en verwagting. Daar is lig wat agter die wasigheid van die dood begin deurbreek. Daar is 'n sensasie van die kettings van die dood wat losgemaak word en die wanhopigheid wat plek maak vir 'n nuwe soort HOOP - die hoop om 'n onbeskryflike erfdeel uit die hand van Yahweh te ontvang (Efes 1:18); 'n hoop wat nie op die onsekerheid van rykdom of aardse genot gebaseer is nie (1 Tim 6:17) en 'n hoop wat Heb 6:19 beskryf as 'n anker van die siel wat veilig en vas is.

Maar ten spyte van hierdie hoop, worstel baie gelowiges nog steeds met vrae oor die dood - vrae wat ons maar net weer uitbring by die groot vraag wat ons reg aan die begin gevra het: Wat is die dood regtig? Kom ons probeer om nader aan 'n antwoord te kom deur in die Woord te gaan soek na antwoorde op sommige van hierdie vrae.

We shall take a look at 3 well-known, but important questions and together with each question we shall listen to a number of people (including figures from the Bible) who have asked the same question and have come up with an answer, by studying Scriptures and listening to what Yahweh is saying, as objectively as possible. Some people may object and say: Why not give us your own opinion? Why do we have to listen to the opinions of others? I fully agree that

listening to the opinions of men can be devastating when it comes to matters of belief. But then I also have to add: What I am looking for above all, is truth, not people tapping me on the back, saying: How clever and how original you are! So therefore, in matters as important as this, we should have no hesitation in listening carefully to what other truth-seekers have found. And once we have listened, we should test their findings against what Scriptures are clearly proclaiming.

Is the soul of man immortal?

Archbishop William Temple (1931) called for a re-examination the traditional doctrine of the immortality of the soul. He said: "The core of the doctrine (of the future life) is this: Man is not immortal by nature or of right; but there is offered to him resurrection from the dead and life eternal, if he will receive it from Yahweh and on God's terms... It is a doctrine, not of Immortality, but of Resurrection... There is a very strong case for thinking out the whole subject again, in as complete independence as possible ..." Murray Harris (Raised Immortal, 1985): "The words immortal or incorruptible never occur [in the Bible] in connection with 'soul' or 'spirit'. In every case where they apply to humans (Romans 2:7, 1 Corinthians 15:42, 50, 52-54), the reference is to a future state. The concept of the 'immortality of the soul' is not in accordance of the New Testament teaching and therefore deserves no place in our terminology."

Did the thief who died with Y'shua, go directly to heaven?

The story of the thief who died with Y'shua seems to suggest that both Y'shua and the thief will be in paradise, that very day of their deaths on the hill of Golgotha. One can understand why many people are confused about this text. In order for the text to be true, both Y'shua and the thief would have to end up in heaven, that very day. Otherwise, Y'shua would be lying! Does the rest of Scriptures support such a scenario? Let's look at John chapter 20, a story that occurs on resurrection Sunday, when Mary Magdalene finds the Y'shua's empty tomb. She talks with Him, thinking He is the gardener. When she realizes that He is Y'shua and that He has risen from the dead, she moves to embrace him. His response in verse 17 tells us something important about death and the afterlife. The verse reads: "Y'shua said to her, 'Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, "I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My Elohim and your Elohim."'

Do believers go to heaven when they die, or do they go to sleep? Here we may simply listen to the clear language of Scriptures:

Job 7:21 And why do You not pardon my transgression, and take away my crookedness? For now I lie down (Heb: "sleep") in the dust, and You shall seek me, but I am not."

Job 14:12 Man shall lie down and not rise. Till the heavens are no more, they awake not, nor are aroused from their sleep.

Dan 12:2 Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth wake up, some to everlasting life, and some to reproaches, everlasting abhorrence.

Joh 5:28-29 Do not marvel at this, because the hour is coming in which all those in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth – those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have practised evil matters, to a resurrection of judgment.

Act 2:29, 34 Men and brothers, let me speak boldly to you of the ancestor Dawid that he died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day... For Dawidd did not ascend into the heavens.

1Co 15:51-52 See, I speak a secret to you: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.