

DOTA 128 TEACHING 32
GOD'S WORK: A DISCIPLE CAN TALK ABOUT
GOD'S WORK THROUGH HIS DEATH AND HIS RESURRECTION

Copyright Dota T = teacher 1 S = teacher 2

(T) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this teaching series you may learn to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. This is the third day that two teachers explain God's work. We already completed God's work through the law. Today we will explain God's work through our death and our resurrection. As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme. Today's teaching is: A DISCIPLE KNOWS GOD'S WORK THROUGH HIS DEATH AND HIS RESURRECTION.

(S) **POINT 1. WHY IS THERE DEATH IN THE UNIVERSE?**

The Bible says that when God created the first man and woman, he gave them a command to manage the earth in a responsible way. He also said, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die" (Gen 2:16-17). However, the man and the woman disobeyed God and as a result, God punished them with death. God said, "By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return" (Gen 3:19). The Bible says that all people in the world have sinned and that the wages of sin is death (Rom 3:23; 6:23). There is death in the universe, because all people sinned against God and against one another. The Bible says that *death* is the result of sin.

The word *death* in the Bible has three meanings: a spiritual, physical and eternal meaning.

First. Spiritual death. *Spiritual death* is the death of the human spirit. It is *separation from the life of God*, just like a fresh cut flower is separated from the plant. Every human being is created with a human spirit. One of its functions is the ability to know God and fellowship with God. As long as people are not born-again by the Holy Spirit, they are spiritually dead (Eph 2:1). They don't know God and cannot fellowship with God.

Second. Physical death. *Physical death* is the death of the human body. It is separation from the body and separation from the life on earth. According to Psalm 49:10,17, it is separation from possessions and accomplishments and separation from beloved family and friends. When people die physically, their body decays to dust in the grave or is reduced to dust by cremation. According to Ecclesiastes 9:6,10, they will never again return to this world and will never again have a part in anything that happens on this world.

Third. Eternal death. According to Revelation 20:14-15, *eternal death* is the eternal suffering of the spirit and body in hell. Eternal death is eternal separation from the loving presence and care of God.

(T) **POINT 2. WHAT DID GOD DO TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF DEATH?**

Science cannot solve the problem of spiritual, physical or eternal death! No religion or magic can solve the problem of death. The Bible says that only God can solve the problem of death. Because God is holy and righteous, he must punish sin with spiritual, physical and eternal death. In his great mercy and love for people, God gave himself in Jesus Christ to die on the cross in our place. God solved the problem of death through the death of Jesus Christ. What did Jesus Christ accomplish through his death on the cross?

First. Christ is the only perfect sacrifice for our sins. Throughout history people brought animal sacrifices to God. The animals were not perfect and also died unwillingly. Therefore these sacrifices could not save people from their sins. However, according to Hebrews 7:26-27, Jesus Christ was sinless and willingly offered himself to die in our place!

Second. Christ experienced the terror of death in our place. According to Acts 2:22-24, Christ suffered "the agony of death" and according to Hebrews 2:9, Christ "tasted death" for everyone. He experienced the agony and terror "to be forsaken by God" (Mat 27:46). However, everyone who believes in Jesus Christ will no more experience the agony, bitterness and terror, which death has for all people, because Jesus Christ experienced this agony, bitterness and terror in their place!

(S) **POINT 3. HOW DO PEOPLE REGARD DEATH TODAY?**

First. Non-Christians live constantly in the fear of death. In Hebrews 2:15 we read that all throughout their lives, "unbelievers are held in slavery by their fear of death." People, who do not know about God's solution in Jesus Christ, experience death as "anguish, terror, fear, trembling, horror and restlessness" (Psalm 55:4-6). They think of death as "a pit of destruction" (Isa 38:17). Many people fear death so much, that they do not even want to think about it. However, if you do not face the issue of death now, how can you face death when it is going to happen to you in the future?

Second. Christians live constantly in the hope of resurrection. A Christian knows that death is the result of sin in the world. A Christian knows that according to Ecclesiastes 12:7, when he dies physically, his body will return to the dust of the earth, but his spirit will return to God. A Christian knows and accepts the reality of physical death, but he also knows and believes the reality of life after death! A Christian does not fear death anymore,

because death has been conquered and eternal life will have the final victory. A Christian does not fear death anymore, because he knows that when he dies, he will go straight into the presence of God! The Bible says that the angels will carry a dead believer to the side of Abraham in heaven (Luk 16:22). Christ says that a dead believer will immediately be with him in paradise (Luk 23:43). Paul says that a dead believer will depart from this earth and immediately be with Jesus Christ (Phil 1:23). Death is a separation from the physical body that decays in the grave, but it is a homecoming of the spirit with the Lord (2 Cor 5:8). Death is like falling asleep, that is, being unconscious with regard to this earth with all its misery and suffering, but it also is living consciously in the presence of Jesus Christ (1 Thes 4:13-14). The Bible says that death is a gain and better by far than life on earth (Phil 1:21,23). The death of Christians is precious in the sight of the Lord (Ps 116:15). Romans 8:35-39 says that physical death can never separate the Christian from God or God's love for him!

(T) **POINT 4. WHAT HAPPENS TO THE SOUL AT DEATH?**

First. What is the nature of man? The Bible consistently regards the nature of man as consisting of only two parts, a material element called *the body* and an immaterial or invisible element called *the soul or the spirit*. The breath of life or the animating principle in man is represented by *soul* in Matthew 16:25-26 and by *spirit* in Luke 8:55. In relationship to the body and life on earth the invisible element in man is called *soul*. In relationship to God it is called *spirit*.

(S) Second. Does the soul survive death? In Exodus 3:6 God said to Moses, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." According to Jesus in Matthew 22:32, "God is not the God of the dead but of the living." When Abraham, Isaac and Jacob died, they did not go out of existence. Although their bodies are still in the grave and destined to be resurrected, they are definitely alive and with God!

(T) Third. Is man immortal? According to 1 Timothy 6:16, God "alone is immortal", that is, possesses "deathlessness". However, according to 1 Corinthians 15:42,50, in the resurrection, the perishable body will be raised "imperishable". This means that at the resurrection, man will receive immortality, that is, endless existence of a perfect life, in everlasting blessedness and in the presence of God. In the Bible only Christians, who have eternal life in Christ and are destined to glorify God forever in soul and body are called *immortal*.

(S) Fourth. Do the wicked and the righteous all go to the same place at death? The Bible uses the Hebrew word *Sheol* and the Greek word *Hades* to describe three different aspects of death. Sheol or Hades is the state or place into which a person descends, whether literally or figuratively. The context of each passage must decide what is meant. The words sometimes mean *the grave* (Gen 44:29,31; Acts 2:22-31). All people, both the righteous and the wicked, descend to this place as to their bodies only, because their souls definitely go to different places. The words sometimes mean *the state of death or disembodied existence*, that is, the state of separation between the body and the soul (1 Sam 2:6; Rev 1:18). At death, everybody's soul is separated from his body. However, no passage in the Bible teaches that the souls of all people actually go to the same place at death! Finally, in some passages the words mean *hell*, that is, *the place of eternal punishment* (Deut 32:22; Luk 16:23). In these cases, only wicked people go to hell, because righteous people go to heaven.

(T) Fifth. Does the soul remain unconscious during death? In John 11:11 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13, the Bible speaks of death as *a falling asleep*. This does not mean that the soul of a dead person is unconscious of everything until the resurrection. Ecclesiastes 9:5-12 says, "The dead know nothing. ... Never again will they have a part in anything that happens under the sun. ... In the grave, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom." Thus *while the body lies in the grave, the soul is totally unconscious of what happens on earth*. However, Ecclesiastes 12:7 teaches that when man dies, his body returns to the dust it came from and his spirit returns to God who gave it. And in Philippians 2:23 we read that Paul says, "I desire to depart and be with Christ." But in Luke 16:22-28 we read that when the evil rich man died and was buried, he opened his eyes in hell and experienced torment and anguish. Thus, *while the body lies in the grave, the soul is very conscious of what happens in heaven or in hell!*

(S) **POINT 5. WHAT HAPPENS TO CHRISTIANS BETWEEN DEATH AND RESURRECTION?**

First. After death, do Christians first go to purgatory or do they immediately go to heaven? Some people believe that when Christians die, they first have to go to *purgatory*, a place of fire, anguish and suffering, where they are temporarily punished for their *pardonable* sins on earth and where their souls are gradually purified and made ready for heaven. This is a false teaching! The Bible teaches that when Christians die, they *immediately* go to heaven. Heaven is described as *paradise* (Lk 23:43), as *the Father's house with many rooms* (Jn 14:2), as the place of *glory* (Ps 73:24-25), as *a being with Christ* (Phil 1:23) and as *being at home with the Lord* (2 Cor 5:8). According to 2 Corinthians 5:8, *being away from the body is being at home with the Lord* and according to Philippians 1:23, *to depart from living in the body is to be with Christ*. According to the Bible, there is no such place as purgatory! When Christians die, they immediately go to heaven, because Jesus Christ has already paid for all their sins, has already justified them 100% and has promised that they would be holy like he is when they see him. That is why Christians purify themselves here and now on earth (1 Jn 3:1-3)!

(T) Second. What is the condition of Christian souls in heaven? What do they do? During the interim period between death and resurrection of Christians, their bodies are in the grave, while their spirits or souls are in heaven. Their spirits or souls are very conscious and active in heaven. According to Revelation 14:13, they will rest from the earthly life's competition, toil, problems, worries, sickness, suffering, pain, fear, anguish, sin and sorrow. According to John 14:2 and 17:24, they will be in the presence of Christ and see his glory, that is, behold and experience his love and mercy, his holiness, righteousness, kindness, wisdom, etc. According to 1 Corinthians 13:9-12, imperfection will have disappeared and they will know everything fully. According to Psalm 16:11, they will be filled with joy and with eternal pleasures in God's presence. According to Revelation 4:10-11 and 5:12-14, they will praise and worship God with new songs. According to Revelation 6:9-11 and 7:9-17, they will serve God day and night. According to Matthew 25:21 faithful Christians will be put in charge of many things. Like the angels, who also have no bodies, Christians will serve God in a great variety of meaningful work. According to Revelation 2:26 and 3:21, because they are with Christ, Christians will be involved in everything that Christ is doing as he rules and judges the earth.

(S) Third. Is direct contact between the dead and the living possible? According to Ecclesiastes 9:5-10, while the body lies in the grave, the soul or spirit is either in God's presence or in hell. The souls or spirits of dead people are *totally unconscious of what happens on earth*. They have no knowledge of people or events on earth, they have no wisdom to give advice to the living people, and they cannot make any decisions or do anything good or bad on earth! The event related in 1 Samuel 28:8-14, where king Saul visits a medium and thinks that he hears the dead prophet Samuel speaking, is more probable a counterfeit voice of a demon. Saul did not see Samuel and even the medium did not say she saw Samuel. Instead, she only saw *a spirit coming out of the ground that looked like an old man wearing a robe*. People who believe that the spirits of dead people can be contacted or can have influence on this world are deceived by demons. In John 8:44 Christ warns that the devil is a liar and *the father of all lies*. Satan's demons are liars! In 2 Corinthians 11:14 Paul warns Christians that the demons are experts in *disguising and counterfeiting*. In 1 Timothy 4:1-2 he warns that demons deceive people and *lure them away from the truth* of the Christian faith. In Deuteronomy 18:9-13 and Leviticus 19:31 and 20:6,27 God forbids all contact with spiritists, mediums, fortune-tellers and sorcerers. They are people who say that they can contact the spirits of dead people, but they are liars and contact demons instead! The spirits of living people can never contact the spirits of dead people. And the spirits of dead people can never contact the spirits of living people. The spirits of dead people can have no good or evil influence on earth!

According to some people, *the saints* can intercede for Christians who still live on earth. The saints are regarded as the spirits of particular famous Christians, who have already died. They venerate these so-called *saints* and crave their intercession. However, the Bible clearly teaches that the spirits of the departed saints are *asleep* with respect to the reality on earth. According to Job 14:21, the spirits of the departed dead do not know whether their children on earth are getting rich or remain very poor. And according to Isaiah 63:16, neither Abraham nor Jacob is able to see or hear what is happening on earth to their descendants!

(T) Fourth. Will Christians be able to recognise one another in heaven? According to Luke 16:9, the *friends* that Christians have made through their material gifts on earth will welcome them into the eternal dwellings of heaven. According to Luke 16:19-31, there is recognition and communication in heaven. Matthew 8:11 describes the joy of heaven with the symbolical picture of a banquet. Therefore, the expectation of seeing one another again and having joyful fellowship with one another in heaven is completely biblical as long as it remains subordinate to fellowship with Christ.

But will Christians be able to remember those loved family members and friends on earth that did not become Christians? According to Matthew 12:46-50, all kinds of relationships on earth that were not in Christ will lose their meaning in heaven. We may therefore expect that once we get into heaven, we will not remember anything about our former family members and friends who were not Christians.

(S) POINT 6. WHAT HAPPENS TO CHRISTIANS AFTER THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD? At the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, he will resurrect and completely renew our dead bodies! In Philippians 3:20-21 and 1 Corinthians 15:42-44, the Bible says that the dead bodies of Christians will be transformed so that they will become like Christ's glorious resurrected body! The renewed bodies of Christians will be *incorruptible*, that is, never grow old, sick or weak. Their bodies will be *glorious*, that is, share in the divine characteristics like love, holiness, righteousness, power and wisdom of God. Their bodies will be *immortal*, that is, they will exist forever in a perfect life, in everlasting blessedness and in the presence of God! Finally, their bodies will be *spiritual*, that is, renewed and completely governed by the Holy Spirit.

(T) ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK

First. What do you believe about death and resurrection? Make sure that what you believe is based on the Bible and not on fanciful speculation or false teaching.

Second. See the workbooks "Go and make disciples" and Internet on www. Etc.

Third. Listen on short wave radio every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY to "Discipleship training on the air".