

LIFE AFTER DEATH

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Lessons: Luke 8:41-56; Heaven and Hell 330, 331

As we read in the Gospel of Luke, Jairus was a ruler in the synagogue. But he was not like the Scribes and Pharisees who hated the Lord. Nor did he doubt the power of the Lord to perform wonderful miracles. He proved this by coming to seek the Lord's help when his only daughter fell very sick and was at the point of death. When he found the Lord he fell at His feet and begged Him to come and lay His hands upon his daughter to heal her from sickness.

The Lord began to go with Jairus to his home. Then, along the way, He stopped to perform another miracle. A woman touched His garment and was healed from her sickness, because she too believed in the power of the Lord. However, while the Lord was speaking to this woman, a message came from the home of Jairus that his daughter was dead. The Lord then went on and found many people weeping and crying in Jairus's home.

Everyone believed that Jairus's daughter was dead, for that was how she appeared. But the Lord told them, "Do not weep; she is not dead, but sleeping." Now why did the Lord say she only slept? What can we learn from these words, these words that the people gathered in Jairus's house *laughed* at?

The Lord came on earth to help us, not only by controlling the hells that were becoming too powerful, but also to teach about the way to heaven. At the time, few people believed there was a life after this one on earth. So the Lord went around teaching the truth that the spirit of man does not die.

The body dies—yes. But the real person inside the body lives to eternity in the next world. And those who love the Lord, and are charitable to their neighbor because the Lord commanded it, will live to eternity in heaven.

Now, the people at the house of Jairus thought that once the body stopped living, the person was dead forever. And so the Lord was trying to teach them that the real person only sleeps for a short time when the body dies. When our spirit no longer dwells in this world, because the natural body becomes sick or too old to function any longer, it goes to sleep only to wake up within a few days in the spiritual world. We are exactly the same person when we wake up. We feel the same, act the same, love the same things—everything is the same except we now feel our "spiritual" bodies instead of our natural bodies.

The Lord tried to teach this to the people. He went into the room of Jairus's daughter, leaned over and, while taking her hand, said "Little girl, arise." The Lord has control over life and death because He is the giver of life. He permitted the young girl's spirit to awaken, not in the other world, but back in this world in her natural body. And so she arose from her bed. Her parents were overjoyed, though not yet able to quite believe what they had seen.

Let us pay careful attention to what the Lord was teaching by this miracle. Everyone born on this earth eventually leaves the earthly body behind, awakening in the spiritual world. The kindest angels are watching over them when they are awakened by the Lord there. They will have spiritual bodies as angels have, much finer than any in this world.

All that the Lord asks of us is to prepare well for that life to come: to study His Word and learn about that life; to practice hard the life that angels lead; and to be ever grateful to the Lord for creating us to receive this blessing of eternal life in heaven.