

Medically, death is defined in three ways: (a) the absence of clinically detectable vital signs; (b) the absence of brain wave activity; (c) the irreversible loss of vital functions (the setting in of rigor mortis). The current definition of legal death is the absence, for either 24 or 48 hours, of any brain wave activity. The third sense is the one being used here (the irreversible loss of vital functions).

- (2) Spiritual death is the cessation of spiritual life, the cessation of godly activity in the soul/spirit. This includes cessation of vital relationship to God, and cessation of activity characterized by holiness and righteousness. Spiritual death does not mean the cessation of all activity in the soul/spirit, for the spiritually dead soul/spirit is involved in ungodly activity and is active in trespasses and sins.

Activity of the soul/spirit in sin is not called spiritual life in Scripture; it is called spiritual death. Spiritual life involves activity in righteousness; spiritual death involves, not cessation of all activity, but activity in unrighteousness. In this sense, spiritual death is unlike physical death.

- b. Physical death is the dissolution of the union of the material body and the non-material soul/spirit
- (1) This dissolution is unnatural and abnormal, alien to human beings. It is a rending apart of components which belong together. It is a result of mankind's fall into sin.
- (2) This dissolution does not necessarily involve a spatial separation of the body and the soul/spirit; it requires only a dissolution of the union.
- (3) This dissolution does involve the passing of the soul/spirit from one state or condition or dimension or realm into another.
- c. Physical death does not mean the cessation of the soul/spirit's existence

Following physical death, the soul/spirit does not cease to exist; it is not absorbed into a larger or more ultimate reality; does not fall into a deep, unconscious slumber; does not pass into a state of absolute inactivity; does not pass to an astral plane; does not enter another body in order to begin a new existence; does not wander about the world making unexpected appearances, frightening bad people, encouraging good persons, throwing dishes or moving furniture, or haunting houses and old castles; and does not act as a familiar spirit to witches or mediums, revealing the future, comforting the bereaved, convincing the scoffers, and helping the mediums to make a living and to write books about their success in contacting the dear departed spirits. Rather, the Bible teaches that the soul/spirit, following physical death, continues in a conscious,