

Important sayings or definitions by people:

Near death Experience scientific responses:

1)

Robert Veatch in *Death, Dying and the Biological Revolution*

What is Death?

General Definition:

Death means a complete change in the status of a living entity characterized by the irreversible loss of those characteristics that are essentially significant to it.

2)

What is essentially significant to life?

Robert Veatch suggest four possible criteria for defining death:

Death can be defined by the irreversible loss of:

- The flow of Vital fluids.
- The Soul from the Body
- The Capacity for Bodily Integration
- The Capacity for Social Interaction

Egypt and Mesopotamia:

1)

Incantations from Egyptian funerary texts

You come to life a second time ... You thrive on water, you breathe air,

You drink as your heart desires.

Your eyes are given you to see, your ears to hear what is spoken;

Your mouth speaks, your feet walk, your hands, your arms have motion.

Your flesh is firm, your muscles are smooth,

You delight in all your limbs;

You count your members: all there, sound,

There is no fault in what is yours. (c. 1550–1069 BCE)

2)

Example of a Pyramid text

Oho! Oho! Rise up, O Teti!

Take your head, collect your bones,

Gather your limbs,

shake the earth from your flesh!

Take your bread that rots not,

your beer that sours not,

Stand at the gates that bar the common people!

The gatekeeper comes out to you, he grasps your hand,

Takes you into heaven, to your father Geb.

He rejoices at your coming, gives you his hands,

Kisses you, caresses you,

Sets you before the spirits, the imperishable stars...

3)

Example of a coffin text

I shall sail rightly in my bark, I am lord of eternity in the crossing of the sky. I am not afraid in my limbs . . .

I shall see light-land, I shall dwell in it . . .

As for any person who knows this spell, he will be like Re in the eastern sky, like Osiris in the netherworld. He will go down to the circle of fire, without the flame touching him ever!

4)

Negative Confession

I have not sinned against men.

I have not defrauded the poor man of his goods.

I have caused no man to suffer.

I have allowed no man to go hungry.

I have made no man weep.

I have slain no man.

I have not given the order for any man to be slain.

I have not filched the offerings in the temples.

I have not cheated in measuring of grain.
I have not added to the weight of the balance.
I have not taken away the milk from the mouths of the babes.
I have not repulsed the god in his manifestations. I am pure.
I am pure. I am pure. I am pure.

5)

From the Epic of Gilgamesh – advice from a barmaid:

Gilgamesh, where do you roam?
You will not find the eternal life you seek.
When the gods created mankind,
They appointed death for mankind,
Kept eternal life in their own hands.
So, Gilgamesh, let your stomach be full,
Day and night enjoy yourself in every way,
Every day arrange for pleasures.
Day and night, dance and play,
Wear fresh clothes.
Keep your head washed, bathe in water,
Appreciate the child who holds your hand,
Let your wife enjoy herself in your lap.
This is the work [of the living]. (Dalley, 2000, p. 150)

Judaism:

1)

The Shema (Sh'ma Yis'ra'eil) Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise.

Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

2)

Exodus 19: 4-6

“Now therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples. Indeed the whole earth is mine, but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation.”

3)

Abrahamic Covenant

Genesis 12: 1-3

Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

4)

Genesis 2:7

Then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life [*nishmat hayyim*]; and the man became a living being [or living soul or living breath *nefesh hayyah*].

5)

Sheol in the Bible

As the cloud fades and vanishes, so those who go down to Sheol do not come up; they return no more to their houses, nor do their places know them anymore.

Job 7:9-10

. . . my soul is full of troubles and my life draws near to Sheol. I am counted among those who go down to the Pit; I am like those who have no help, like those forsaken among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, like those whom you remember no more, for they are cut off from your hand.

Ps. 88:3-5

... Sheol cannot thank you, death cannot praise you;

those who go down into the Pit cannot hope for your faithfulness. The living, the living, they thank you, as I do this day.

(Isa. 38:18-19)

Christianity:

1)

Jesus' answer to the Sadducees

. . . in the resurrection, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.

Matt. 22:30

2)

Relationship between sin and death in the New Testament

. . . the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 6:23

. . . just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned . . .

Romans 5:12

3)

Jesus and the destruction of sin and death

For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ.

I Cor. 15:21-22

. . . "The first man, Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

I Cor. 15:45

4)

The last enemy

For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

1 Cor. 15:25-26

5)

Revelation 21:3-4

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

“See, the home of God is among mortals.

He will dwell with them . . .

he will wipe every tear from their eyes.

Death will be no more;

mourning and crying and pain will be no more,

For the first things have passed away.”

6)

Paul on the resurrection

Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain.

1 Corinth. 15: 12-14

If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have died in Christ have perished. If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died.

1 Corinth. 15: 17-20

7)

Thoughts on Heaven and Hell by a modern Catholic theologian - Hans Kung

- New Testament images and statements are not to be taken literally
- Hell means exclusion from fellowship with God – separation from God.
- No eternity that we can conceive of is beyond the reach of God’s mercy.
- Heaven is not a place but a mode or way of being in the world – eternal life in God is always present
- Purgatory (purification) is an element in the encounter with God in death – the meeting of the imperfect with the perfect