

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE DIE?

By Dr. Kent A. Field

What happens when we die? Where do we go immediately following our death. What happens to those in Christ when they pass from this life? What happens to those outside of Christ? If we are outside of Christ do we go straight to hell? If we are in Christ Jesus when we die do we go to heaven immediately? Is there some sort of "purgatory", as many religious people believe? Is there any Bible basis for such a belief? Many sincere, religious people believe that we do not go immediately to heaven or hell upon our departure from this life. They believe that we go to some sort of spiritual "holding tank." But what does the Bible say? Are we left without any clear teaching from God in this matter? What does the Bible say? What has God said about our hope beyond this life?

A number of important passages are listed here for your prayerful consideration. It is important to understand just what God wants us to learn from these passages. The points made by the passages listed should be quite obvious, however, a few very specific questions are asked which refer back to the verses listed. The answers to all the following questions can be easily found within the verses themselves. Take the time to compare the Bible answers to how you or others may have otherwise answered. It is very important that your answers to the questions come right out of the Bible alone. Remember, mere thoughts, opinions and feelings won't tell us what God has said.

1. Luke 16:19-31

1. Though some people feel that this account of Lazarus and the rich man is merely a parable, even if this were a parable to teach a spiritual truth doesn't a parable necessarily have to accurately represent the truth that Jesus is trying to teach?
2. Could you imagine Jesus using an impossible, or untrue illustration in a parable to teach a spiritual truth? _____
3. From verse 22, when the poor man died where was he carried away to? _____
4. From Luke 13:28,29 what does the expression mean "at" or "in" or "to" Abraham's bosom? _____
5. Doesn't this indicate that they would be reclining next to Abraham at the banquet table in the Kingdom of God, Heaven?
6. From Luke 13:28,29 together with Matthew 8:11, together with Luke 16:22 where did Jesus obviously believe Abraham was? Was he in heaven, in the kingdom of God, or in a purgatory - holding place? _____
7. From verse 23 and understanding that the word "Hades" denotes a condition of one being separated from their body, after being buried, the rich man spiritually still had eyes, and in what kind of place? _____

8. From verse 24 was the rich man being tormented in agony? _____
9. Was the rich man in a place of flame or fire? _____
10. From verse 26 is there any way of getting out of heaven or hell once we die? Has the eternal decision been made at the moment of our death for our eternal comfort in the kingdom of God with Abraham, or our eternal torment in the fires of hell? _____
11. From verse 27-31 we can see that this entire conversation has occurred before the last or final judgement day. From verse 28 how do we know this? _____
12. How many brothers of the rich man were yet alive on earth? _____

2. Acts 2:27 & 31

1. Though some believe that Hades is a place of torment after death (purgatory) of whom do both of these verses refer as being in Hades? _____
2. Can you see how the scriptures' use of the word "Hades" agrees with the Greek scholars' definition, meaning a condition of being disembodied? _____

3. 2 Cor. 12:2-4

1. According to Bible scholars the first heaven is where the sky and clouds are. The second heaven is where the stars and the other planets are. The third heaven is where God dwells.
2. From verse 2 where was such a man caught up to? _____
3. From verses 3 & 4 as the apostle Paul repeats his description, where does he say in verse 4 he was caught up into? _____
4. According to verses 2 & 4 where did the inspired apostle Paul say Paradise was located? _____
5. Can you then see how the Bible says that Paradise and heaven are one and the same thing? _____
6. In Rev. 22:1 & 2 we see a heavenly description where the throne of the Lamb of God is. From verse 2 on either side of the river was what tree? _____
7. From Rev 2:7 where is that tree of life located? _____
8. Though some may mistakenly believe that Paradise is some sort of a purgatorial holding place before one goes to heaven, what does the Bible say Paradise is equal to? _____

4. Hebrews 9:27

1. Some people believe that after we die we can be reincarnated. What does this verse say happens immediately following our death? _____
2. Some mistakenly believe that we are held in a spiritual holding tank until the time of judgement. When does this verse say that each of us is judged? _____

5. Luke 23:46

1. Some mistakenly believe that Jesus went to a place called Hades. Into whose hands did He commit His spirit at death? _____
2. Where does the Bible say that the Father always has been and always will be? Where is the Father's throne? _____
3. From John 20:17 some have said that Jesus did not yet ascend to the Father. Can you see now that this must be referring to His physical body? _____
4. Consider what the apostle Peter said concerning King David of Israel in Acts 2:34. This verse also makes it clear that the term ascend is with reference to the body and has no reference to the soul.

6. 2 Cor. 5:6-8

1. Do you believe as Hebrews 1 and Acts 2 so clearly teach that Jesus is now the reigning King of kings and Lord of lords from a heavenly throne? _____
2. Do you believe that Jesus is now in heaven? _____
3. According to verse 6 of this passage when we are at home in the body what are we with respect to the Lord? _____
4. Putting it another way, from verse 6 when we are absent from the Lord we are in what condition? _____
5. From verse 8 if we are absent from our body then where will we be? _____ Or to put it another way, when we die and our soul leaves our body where will we go? _____

7. Romans 8:1

1. While it is clear that we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ to be rewarded or recompensed for the deeds that we have done in the body, whether good or evil, what is the spiritual outcome for those who are in Christ Jesus? _____
2. According to Hebrews 9:27 which we've already studied, when does this judgement occur? _____

8. Philippians 1:21-24

1. Did Paul see any benefit in dying? What would be so beneficial in Paul's death according to verse 23? _____
2. Where did Paul believe he would go immediately upon his death? _____ Who did he know he would be with immediately upon his death? _____
3. Do you believe that Jesus is now reigning as King of kings and Lord of lords from heaven or do you believe He is in some spiritual holding tank (purgatory)? _____

9. 1 Thes. 3:12,13

1. From verse 12 and 13 what was used by God as a motivation for faithfulness to our God and Father? _____
2. From verse 13 understanding that saints are Christians, when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from Heaven at His final coming, who will be coming with Him? _____

10. 1 Thes. 4:13 - 5:3

1. Understanding that the term "asleep" denotes death, who will God bring with Jesus at His final coming, according to verse 14? _____
2. From verse 16, where will the Lord be bringing them from - where will Jesus be coming from? _____
3. Does it say anywhere in the text here or anywhere else in the Bible that Jesus will have to stop off at some spiritual holding tank to pick up the saints on His return to Earth at the final day? _____
4. Doesn't the Bible clearly state that Jesus will be descending from heaven bringing with Him all those that had died in Christ, all His saints, without having to stop off at some sort of a purgatory? _____

11. Luke 23:42-43

1. Do you remember from the passages we've already discussed what paradise refers to as it is used in the New Testament?
2. Where did Jesus say the thief on the cross would go upon his death?
3. On what day did Jesus say the thief on the cross would go with Him to paradise?

12. John 5:28-29

1. Will there be a great day of resurrection according to this passage and 1Ths. 4:13-18?
2. According to verse 28,29 who will hear His voice and come forth?
3. What awaits those after the resurrection who did good deeds?
4. What awaits those after the resurrection who did evil deeds?

13. Acts 24:15

1. Can we certainly await a great resurrection day? According to verse 15, who will be raised? and .

14. 2 Thes 1:7-9

1. According to verse 7, the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from what place?
2. According to verse 8, which two groups of people will be the recipients of Jesus' fiery retribution? and .

15. 1 Thes 5:9-11

1. According to these verses we are to encourage one another and build one another up through what belief (see verse 10)?
2. Knowing that Jesus is now in heaven and will be coming from heaven, where does verse 10 say they are who have fallen asleep (died) in Jesus?

16. 1 Cor. 15:50-55

1. From verse 50 would a person be correct in believing that this flesh and blood body could inherit the kingdom of God?
2. Understanding that the term sleep in the New Testament often refers to death, will we all be dead at the second coming of Jesus (see v. 51)?
3. According to verse 51, does the Bible teach that we all must be changed or transformed in order to go to heaven after the resurrection?
4. From 52-54 how long will it take for our mortal bodies to be resurrected and transformed into immortal, imperishable bodies?

17. Phil 3:20-21

1. According to verse 20, where is the Christian's citizenship?
2. From where do we eagerly wait for our Savior, Jesus Christ?
3. According to verse 21, what will Jesus do at His coming to our body?
4. According to verse 21, how will it be possible for Jesus to resurrect our old dead bodies and transform and change us into

- imperishable, immortal bodies? _____
5. From v.21, are we to understand that the Bible teaches that our bodies will be transformed into conformity with the body of Jesus' glory? _____
18. **1 John 3:2**
1. According to v2, do we know what we will be like in our resurrected or glorified bodies? _____
 2. What will we be like at the resurrection when we come back from heaven to be reunited with our resurrected and glorified bodies? Who will we be like? _____
 3. According to v2, how do we know this? _____
19. **Matt 25:31-46**
1. When Jesus comes again, will all the nations be gathered before Him to be judged? _____
 2. According to v34, at the resurrection day, as well as those that have been on earth at the time of Jesus' coming and have been found faithful, what awaits those faithful in Christ Jesus? _____
 2. According to v41, where do those outside of Christ go at the great resurrection day? _____
 3. In v46, is Jesus' description of Hell only a momentary punishment or is the torment of Hell eternal? What kind of punishment awaits those outside of Christ? _____
 4. From v46, what kind of life awaits those who are righteous in Christ? _____
20. **2 Cor. 5:10**
1. Though Romans 8:1 clearly states that "there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus", according to this verse who must appear before the judgement seat of Christ in order to be recompensed for their deeds? _____
 2. Will the Christian be held accountable for the deeds that he has done in the body, whether good or evil? _____
21. **Romans 14:9-12**
1. Though there are some who believe that when one dies they are obliterated or sleep in nothingness, verse 9 says that Jesus is the Lord both of the dead and who else? _____
 2. From v10-12 isn't it clear that we must all appear before the judgement seat of God? _____
 3. What are our righteous deeds like in the sight of God? (see Isa.64:6). _____
 4. From Isa. 64:6 of scripture can our deeds of goodness be depended on to deliver us from judgement? _____
22. **2 Pet 2:4&9**
1. According to verse 4, did God spare angels when they sinned? _____
 2. Where did God cast those angels who sinned against Him? _____
 3. Though it is obvious that God already judged those angels who sinned against Him when He cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, what does v4 say those angels are yet awaiting? _____

4. From v9, when the unrighteous die are they sleeping in perga-tory or are they being punished, waiting for the judgement day?
5. Can you now see then that if the unrighteous and ungodly are already being held under punishment waiting for the day of judge-ment, they have already been judged? Therefore that great day of judgement is a day of sentencing, the resurrection day, the day when all the world will be judged.

23. 1 Pet 4:5

1. According to v5, who stands ready to be our judge? _____
2. Who does Jesus stand ready to judge? _____

24. Matt 7:21-23

1. From v21-23 who will enter into the kingdom of heaven? _____
2. From v. 22 and following will there be a day when people cry out with their excuses and explanations: of how they believe they have done God's will? _____
3. From v23 what will Jesus say to them who have not done the will of the Father? _____

Yes, it is clear that there will be a great declarative judgment day in which all the nations of the world will be gathered before the throne of Christ, that is the great Resurrection Day, but it is also just as obvious that each soul upon their death is judged for the things that they have done in the body, whether good or evil. A judgment has been made at the very moment a person dies, which will determine whether they will go into eternal paradise or eternal torment. Though they have not yet been reunited with their resurrected and glorified body, they will already have begun enjoying the pleasures of Paradise in God's heaven with Jesus, or they have begun to experience the torments and agony of an eternal fiery punishment. On the resurrection day, on the day that all those that are in their tombs shall hear His voice and come forth, the resurrected evil will be returned to suffer an eternity in hell along with all the rest of those upon the earth who do not know God and who have not obeyed the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. On that same day the resurrected righteous who have returned with Jesus from heaven to reclaim their bodies and be part of Jesus' final victory over the last enemy, death, shall be glorified in the twinkling of an eye and return with Jesus to heaven to spend an eternity in Paradise with God and Christ. "Wherefore, comfort one another with these things".

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE DIE ??????

1. Luke 16:19ff - The account of Lazarus and rich man(Heaven&Hell)
2. Matt.8:11;Isa.51:1,2 - Proof Abraham considered to be in Heaven already.
3. Acts 2:27,31 - Jesus was in Hades, a condition of being disembodied.
4. 2 Cor. 12:2-4 - Paradise actually equals 3rd Heaven where God dwells.
5. Rev.2:7 - Paradise of God equals restored state of Eden's garden.
6. Heb.9:27 - After death comes the judgement(when we die!).
7. John 20:17 - "did not ascend" was referring to His body!
8. Acts 2:34 - Another proof that ascension is referring to the body!
9. Luke 23:46 - Jesus's spirit was in the Father's hands at death!
10. 2 Cor.5:6-8 - Absent from body=present with the Lord, and present with the body= absent from the Lord!
11. Rom.8:1 - There is no condemnation for Christians. Therefore, the judgement for them is only declarative(resurrection day).
12. Phil.1:21-24 - Paul knew that when he died he would immediately go to be with Jesus.
13. 1 Thss.3:12,13 - When Jesus comes He'll bring His saints with Him, and it didn't say that He'd stop off somewhere to pick them up on the way! They were already with Him!
14. 1 Thss.4:13-5:3 - Dead in Christ were already with Him! What will happen on the resurrection day!
15. Luke 23:42,43 - Thief was told,"Today you'll be with Me in Paradise!"
16. John 5:28,29 - BOTH the good and the evil will be raised.
17. Acts 24:15 - BOTH the just and the unjust shall be raised!
18. 2 Thss.1:7-9 - Jesus will be coming in flaming fire taking vengeance.
19. 1 Thss.5:9-11 - Whether our body is alive or asleep we LIVE with Jesus!
20. 1 Cor. 15:1-58(v.s 50-55) - What will be at the resurrection.
21. Phil.3:21 - Our body will be raised and then transformed to be like Jesus'.
It is by God's power that He will be able to raise this flesh!
22. 1 John 3:2 - We do not know what we will be like, only that we will be as He is, for we shall see Him.
23. Matt.23:30-32 - Judgement is coming
24. 2 Cor.5:10 - We ALL must appear before the judgement seat of Christ!
25. Rom.14:9-11 - Every knee will bow and every tongue confess Jesus as Lord - one way or the other!
26. Isa. 64:6 - Our goodness is just not good enough!
27. 2 Pt.2:9 - The Lord knows how to reserve for punishment.
28. 1 Pt.4:5 - Jesus judges the living and the dead!
29. Matt.7:21-23 - Not everyone who says Lord!, but who does God's Will!!!

LIFE, DEATH, AND JUDGEMENT

