

# A PLACE CALLED HEAVEN

Answering 10 Questions About Your Eternal Home

## DO CHRISTIANS IMMEDIATELY GO TO HEAVEN WHEN THEY DIE? 2 Corinthians 5:6-8

DR. ROBERT JEFFRESS | OCTOBER 2, 2016

**INTRODUCTION:** What happens to Christians and non-Christians one second after they die? Do they cease to exist or go into an extended period of sleep awaiting some future judgment? Today we are going to examine what the Bible teaches about the immediate experience of both believers and unbelievers at the moment of their death.

- I. The Inevitability Of Death (Ecclesiastes 9:2-3)
  - A. The Reason for Death (Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23)

Ecclesiastes 9:2-3 “<sup>2</sup>It is the same for all. There is one fate for the righteous and for the wicked; for the good, for the clean, and for the unclean; for the man who offers a sacrifice and for the one who does not sacrifice. As the good man is, so is the sinner; as the swearer is, so is the one who is afraid to swear. <sup>3</sup>This is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that there is one fate for all men. Furthermore, the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil, and insanity is in their hearts throughout their lives. Afterwards they go to the dead.”

Romans 3:23 “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

- B. The Terror of Death (Job 18:14; Psalm 55:4)

Job 18:14 “He is torn from the security of his tent, and they march him before the king of terrors.”

Psalm 55:4 “My heart is in anguish within me, and the terrors of death have fallen upon me.”

Hebrews 2:15 “and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.”

II. Where Do Christians Go When They Die? (Luke 23:43; Philippians 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:6-8)

Revelation 20:14-15 “<sup>14</sup> And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. <sup>15</sup> And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”

A. The Immediacy of Our Entrance Into God’s Presence  
(Luke 23:43; Philippians 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:6-8)

Luke 23:43 “And he [Jesus] said to him [thief], ‘Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.’”

Acts 7:59 “And they went on stoning Stephen as he called upon the Lord and said, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!’”

Philippians 1:23 “But I [Paul] am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better;”

2 Corinthians 5:6-8 “<sup>6</sup> Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord— <sup>7</sup> for we walk by faith, not by sight— <sup>8</sup> we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.”

B. Our Physical State When We Enter God’s Presence  
(1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52)

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 “<sup>16</sup> For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. <sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord. <sup>18</sup> Therefore comfort one another with these words.”

1 Corinthians 15:51-52 “<sup>51</sup> Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, <sup>52</sup> in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.”

C. Where Did the Old Testament Saints Go When They Died?

1. How were people saved in the Old Testament? (Genesis 15:6)

Genesis 15:6 “Then he [Abram] believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.”

2. The concept of “sheol” and “hades” (Luke 16:19-26)

Luke 16:19-26 “<sup>19</sup> Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day. <sup>20</sup> And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, <sup>21</sup> and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man’s table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores. <sup>22</sup> Now it came about that the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham’s bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. <sup>23</sup> And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away, and Lazarus in his bosom. <sup>24</sup> And he cried out and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue; for I am in agony in this flame.’ <sup>25</sup> But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. <sup>26</sup> And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, in order that those who wish to come over from here to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from there to us.’”

Luke 23:43 “And he [Jesus] said to him [thief], ‘Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.’”

Genesis 5:24 “And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.”

Hebrews 11:5 “By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death; AND HE WAS NOT FOUND BECAUSE GOD TOOK HIM UP; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God.”

2 Kings 2:1, 11 “<sup>1</sup> And it came about when the LORD was about to take up Elijah by a whirlwind to heaven, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. <sup>11</sup> Then it came about as they were going along and talking, that behold, there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire which separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind to heaven.”

Psalm 16:10-11 “<sup>10</sup>For Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Sheol; neither wilt Thou allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay. <sup>11</sup>Thou wilt make known to me the path of life; in Thy presence is fullness of joy; in Thy right hand there are pleasures forever.”

Psalm 23:6 “Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.”

Ecclesiastes 12:7 “The dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.”

III. Where Do Unbelievers Go When They Die?

A. Unbelievers' Temporary Destination: **Hades**

Luke 16:23a-24 “<sup>23</sup>And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment... <sup>24</sup>And he cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue; for I am in agony in this flame.'”

B. Unbeliever's Final Destination: **The Lake of Fire**

Revelation 20:11-15 “<sup>11</sup>And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. <sup>12</sup>And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. <sup>13</sup>And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. <sup>14</sup>And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. <sup>15</sup>And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”

C. The Common Experience in Both “Hades” and “The Lake of Fire”: **Torment**

Luke 16:24 “And he cried out and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue; for I am in agony in this flame.’”

Luke 16:20-21 “<sup>20</sup> And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, <sup>21</sup>and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man’s table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores.”

Luke 16:26 “And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, in order that those who wish to come over from here to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from there to us.”

2 Peter 2:9 “The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment.”

Luke 16:31 “If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone [like Lazarus] rises from the dead.”

IV. A Forever Choice: Heaven or Hell?

Conclusion