

# What Happens When People Die

Death is the separation of man's spirit or soul from his body. The Greek word for this is 'thanatos', meaning "the termination or end of man's earthly existence." The Bible teaches that there are two possible destinations for man's spirit to go to, hell/hades or heaven/paradise. Man cannot move back and forth from one to the other.

## Luke 16:19-31 (NIV)

- (19) "There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day.  
(20) At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores  
(21) and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.  
(22) "The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried.  
(23) In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side.  
(24) So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.'  
(25) "But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony.  
(26) And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.'  
(27) "He answered, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family,  
(28) for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.'  
(29) "Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.'  
(30) " 'No, father Abraham,' he said, 'but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.'  
(31) "He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.' "

The destination is eternal.

## Will Everyone Experience Death?

### Hebrews 9:27 (NIV)

- (27) Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment,

1.

### Genesis 5:21-24, 2 Kings 2:10-13, Hebrews 11:5

#### Genesis 5:21-24 (NIV)

- (21) When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah.  
(22) After he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked faithfully with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters.  
(23) Altogether, Enoch lived a total of 365 years.  
(24) Enoch walked faithfully with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.

#### 2 Kings 2:10-13 (NIV)

- (10) "You have asked a difficult thing," Elijah said, "yet if you see me when I am taken from you, it will be yours—otherwise, it will not."  
(11) As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind.  
(12) Elisha saw this and cried out, "My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!" And Elisha saw him no more. Then he took hold of his garment and tore it in two.  
(13) Elisha then picked up Elijah's cloak that had fallen from him and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan.

#### Hebrews 11:5 (NIV)

- (5) By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death: "He could not be found, because God had taken him away." For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God.

Were there exceptions?

What happened to Enoch and Elijah?

2.

### 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 (NIV)

- (16) For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.  
(17) After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

What will happen to those who are still alive at the time of Christ's return?

# What Does Death Mean for the Christian?

## Luke 16:19-31 (NIV)

- (19) “There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day.  
(20) At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores  
(21) and longing to eat what fell from the rich man’s table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.  
(22) “The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried.  
(23) In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side.  
(24) So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’  
(25) “But Abraham replied, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony.  
(26) And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.’  
(27) “He answered, ‘Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family,  
(28) for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.’  
(29) “Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.’  
(30) “ ‘No, father Abraham,’ he said, ‘but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’  
(31) “He said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’ ”

## Luke 16:22-23,16:25

### Luke 16:22-23 (NIV)

- (22) “The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried.  
(23) In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side.

### Luke 16:25 (NIV)

- (25) “But Abraham replied, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony.

What is Lazarus condition in heaven?

## Luke 23:39-43 (NIV)

- (39) One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: “Aren’t you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!”  
(40) But the other criminal rebuked him. “Don’t you fear God,” he said, “since you are under the same sentence?  
(41) We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.”  
(42) Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”  
(43) Jesus answered him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

Where did Jesus say they were going?

How long did the criminal have to believe before he could go to paradise?

## 2 Corinthians 5:1-8 (NIV)

- (1) For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.  
(2) Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling,  
(3) because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked.  
(4) For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.  
(5) Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.  
(6) Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord.  
(7) For we live by faith, not by sight.  
(8) We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

## 2 Corinthians 5:1,8

### 2 Corinthians 5:1 (NIV)

- (1) For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.

### 2 Corinthians 5:8 (NIV)

- (8) We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

What will we have in heaven?

## 2 Corinthians 5:2-3 (NIV)

- (2) Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling,  
(3) because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked.

Will we be spirits without bodies?

Read Luke 24:38-39

Luke 24:38-39 (NIV)

(38) He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds?"

(39) Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have."

## 2 Corinthians 5:4-5 (NIV)

(4) For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

(5) Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

What is the guarantee to this new life in heaven?

## John 14:2-6 (NIV)

(2) My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?

(3) And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

(4) You know the way to the place where I am going."

(5) Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

(6) Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Where is Jesus preparing a place for us?

How can we go there?

## 1 Corinthians 15:54-58, Hebrews 2:14-15

### 1 Corinthians 15:54-58 (NIV)

(54) When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."

(55) "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"

(56) The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

(57) But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

(58) Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

### Hebrews 2:14-15 (NIV)

(14) Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—

(15) and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

How can we have victory over sin and death?

## What Does Death Mean for Those Without Jesus?

### Luke 16:19-31 (NIV)

(19) "There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day.

(20) At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores

(21) and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

(22) "The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried.

(23) In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side.

(24) So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.'

(25) "But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony.'

(26) And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.'

(27) "He answered, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family,

(28) for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.'

(29) "Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.'

(30) "'No, father Abraham,' he said, 'but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.'

(31) "He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'

### Luke 16:22-25, 16:28

#### Luke 16:22-25 (NIV)

(22) "The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried.

(23) In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side.

(24) So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.'

(25) "But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony.'

#### Luke 16:28 (NIV)

(28) for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.'

Where did the rich man go? And how did he feel there?

## **Ask**

Do you have any more questions about death?

## **Application**

How can you share about death, heaven and hell with your friends or family?

## **Prayer Model**

Lord Jesus, thank you that you have prepared a place for us in Heaven. Lord, we pray our friends and family will come know you so that they too can spend eternity with you in heaven.

## **Key Verse**

**John 14:6**

“Jesus told him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.’”