

THE GRAVE

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER YOUR FINAL BREATH

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU DIE?

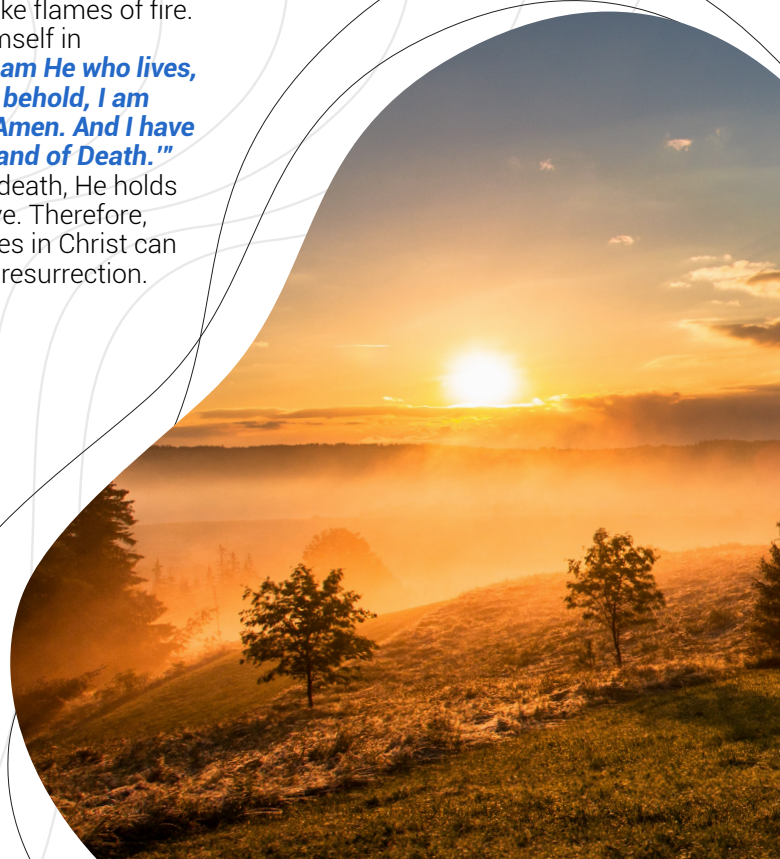
Have you experienced the loss of a family member or a loved one? Have you ever found yourself questioning what happens when you die? We often hear stories of people who have had death experiences; they recall seeing bright lights, visions of Heaven, and even having out-of-body experiences.

The Bible provides us with a clear answer on what really happens after death. **Ephesians 5:11:** *"Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them."* We do not have to fear the unknown, instead we must look to the Word of God to provide us with all the evidence we need surrounding the subject of death. Many people hold different opinions about this topic. However, most Christians believe that after a person dies, their soul goes to Heaven or Hell. Some may also believe in purgatory. Are the dead asleep and waiting for the resurrection, or are they in Heaven already? Can the soul—in Heaven—speak, hear and see? These are some of the questions that have been confusing us for centuries.

The Bible not only reveals to us what happens after we die; it gives us the tools we need to face death with hope and confidence. The first chapter of the book of Revelation introduces Jesus, dressed in a glowing white robe. His eyes are like flames of fire. Jesus identifies Himself in

Revelation 1:18: *"I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death."*

As Jesus defeated death, He holds the keys to the grave. Therefore, any believer who dies in Christ can look forward to the resurrection.



IS THE SOUL IMMORTAL?

Greek philosophy teaches that the soul is immortal, placing emphasis on the belief that the soul can live separately from the body and that it has a life of its own; so that even after we have died, we are able to think, feel and communicate with those on Earth and in Heaven. In contrast, the Bible teaches that human beings are made up of physical, mental and spiritual components that cannot be separated, even after death.

In order to understand the Biblical teaching regarding the immortality of the soul, we must first consider the events of creation. **Genesis 2:7:** *"And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."*

There are three key points to take away from this verse: God formed man from dust, God breathed life into him, and man became a living soul. It is important to recognise that in this verse, there is no mention of placing an immortal soul into Adam, instead God gives us the formula for the human being:

**DUST
+ SPIRIT**

**= A LIVING
SOUL**

A "living soul" refers to a living person. In other words, God created a living person when he breathed life into Adam. We do not have a soul, we are souls. **Ezekiel 18:4:** *"Behold, all souls are Mine. . . The soul who sins shall die."* Therefore, when the Bible mentions the death of a living soul, it is referring to the death of a person. The Hebrew word for spirit is *rauach* which means "breath." When the Bible refers to spirit and breath, it holds the same meaning.

Death is creation, only in reverse. **Ecclesiastes 12:7:** *"Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it."* **God preserves the identity of a person who has died in His mind alone. Their spirit is returned to God in the form of His power.** Therefore, when a person dies, their heart stops beating and their soul does not continue to live.

DEATH IS SLEEP

Is there consciousness in death? **Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6:** *"For the living know that they will die; but the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten. Also, their love, their hatred, and their envy have now perished; nevermore will they have a share in anything done under the sun."*

This passage makes it clear that the dead know nothing. Consider the Biblical account of Lazarus found in **John 11:11-25**. The disciples assumed Lazarus was sick and sleeping. However, Jesus was referring to his death, not sleep as we know it. The Bible does not mention that Lazarus had any memory during the period of his death. If Lazarus was in Heaven, wouldn't an account of his experiences be written for us to know what we have to look forward to?

God promises us that there will be no more pain and crying in Heaven. If we were able to witness from Heaven the problems that our loved ones are facing after death, wouldn't this bring more pain rather than joy? God in His mercy does not allow us to watch helplessly as our loved ones continue their lives on Earth. **Job 14:21:** *"His sons come to honor, and he does not know it; they are brought low, and he does not perceive it."* **We will not be conscious after death; our next conscious moment will be when Jesus comes.**



DEATH AND SPIRITUALISM

Satan's fallen angels appear as messengers from the spirit world impersonating dead friends and relatives in order to communicate with those who are seeking guidance from them. Many people find comfort in knowing that their loved ones are enjoying Heaven; and without realizing, they listen to evil spirits and devils. **1 Timothy 4:1, 2:** *"Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron."* Evil angels will sometimes give warnings and foretell the future, appearing to be reliable, in order that their false teachings are accepted.

Revelation 18:2: *"... Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!"* Babylon, also known as Christianity in a fallen state, is in confusion due to false doctrines entering into their churches. Christianity falls because Satan gains access to churches through this false teaching that the dead are alive. Messages from spirits who pose as the dead, are welcomed as wise counsel to the churches. **Revelation 18:23:** *"... by your sorcery all the nations were deceived."* These angels, claiming to be spirits of the dead, will influence the nations of the world and lead them into the end-time events.

We should seek our information from God's Word only. Those whose faith is not built on the Word of God will be deceived. **Revelation 3:10:** *"... the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth."* Satan can only deceive those who give in to his temptations. Those who are seeking a knowledge of Bible Truth – endeavouring to purify their souls through obedience – will find refuge in God's Word. Jesus would rather send every angel out of Heaven to protect His people than leave one soul that trusts in Him to be overcome by Satan.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?

Have you made a decision to follow Jesus? No matter where you are or what you have done, He will rescue you. He is available to you always. Just ask Him.

NEED PRAYER?

HAVE QUESTIONS?

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