

What Happens When I Die

Luke 16.19-31

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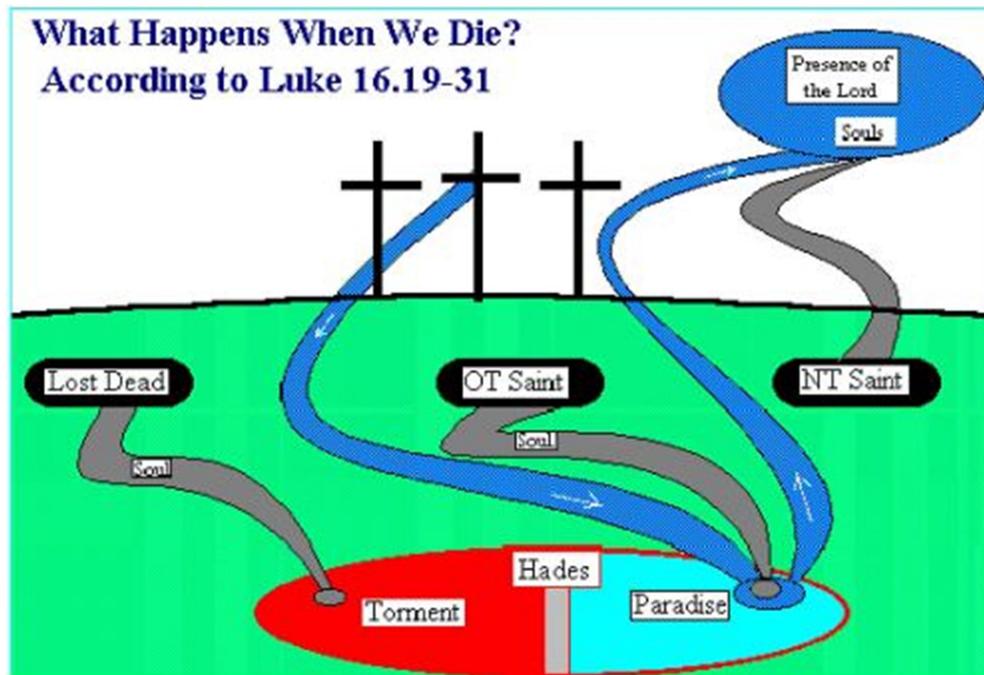
Contrary to popular belief Death is not the ultimate end. According to the Bible, God's Revelation, Death is a separation; in a physical sense it is the separation of the soul and spirit from the body, in a spiritual sense it is the separation of one from the blessings and fellowship of God. The question is **not**, "Will you live forever?" But instead it is "Where will you spend eternity?" As the Bible states:

"It is appointed unto man once to die, and after this the judgment" (Heb 9.27).

So just what does happen when one dies?

This question should be answered from two perspectives. That of the lost and unredeemed, and that of the saved, born-again, or redeemed.

Luke 16.19-31 *There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: 20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, 21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; 23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. 25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. 26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. 27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: 28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. 29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. 30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. 31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.*



What happens to the lost?

First, let's be clear, a lost individual is a person that refuses to accept that Jesus Christ was God in Human flesh that came to save them from their sins, and rose physically from the dead to give them eternal life if they would only accept Him as their personal Lord and Savior.

At the moment that a lost person dies, according to God's Word, they close their mortal eyes in death and open their eternal eyes in Hades. This is a real place that holds the souls of condemned individuals. The Bible presents a number of facts concerning this place:

- It is a conscious place (vs 23).
- It is a place of recollection, the rich man remembered (vs 25).
- It is a place of torments (vs 24).
- It is a place of immediate access - the lost find themselves there immediately upon their physical deaths (vs 23).

At this point I have good news and bad news for the lost. The good news is that Hades is a temporary place. A lost soul will remain in the torments of Hades up until the end of the millennium and then, according to Revelation 20.11-15, their body will be resurrected, their soul returning to it, and they will stand before the Great White Throne for judgment. The bad news is that once they have been judged they will be cast into the Lake of Fire, now physical and spiritual, where the worm dieth not (Mark 9.44-48), to remain in the literal wrath of God forever, and ever.

While there are many that would be quick to proclaim that God would not throw anyone into such a terrible place, the truth is that God is not the one that causes anyone to go to hell. For the bible tells us that God has provided a way for everyone to go to heaven, through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. However, God has placed the responsibility to choose upon you, if you choose to reject Jesus then you have sealed your own fate, you have cast yourself into eternal torments.

What happens to born-again believers when they die?

In the Revelation presented by Jesus in Luke 16 we see what occurred before Jesus died on Calvary's Cross, I am convinced that the events are slightly different for the New Testament Believer. I'll explain both for you now.

Before Calvary

The souls of the Old Testament Saints, or Believers, went to Hades also. Now, you must understand that before Calvary there were two sections of Hades; the torments section, and the Paradise section. It was also referred to as Abrahams Bosom in Scripture. Paradise was a real, spiritual place where the souls of the Old Testament Believers went. It was also a temporary place of remembrance and comfort.

After His death on Calvary's Cross Jesus went to Paradise (Luke 23.43), and took those Saints to be with Him; He led captivity captive (Eph 4.8-10). Those Old Testament Saints are now in the presence of Jesus Christ.

After Calvary

Now, when a born-again believer dies their body is laid to rest here on earth while their soul is carried, and I like this truth, by the angels into the presence of our Lord and Savior (Luke 16.22). As we are told clearly in Scripture, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord (2 Cor 5.8).

That is were we will be until the rapture of the Church (1 Thes 4.13-18; 1 Cor 15.51-58), when we will be given our bodies again. Only then our bodies will be resurrected and will take on the likeness of Jesus resurrected body (1 John 3.2). Jesus body was physical (Luke 24.39), yet glorified.

Yet, this is all for the born-again believer. Are you born-again? If not, won't you accept Jesus today?