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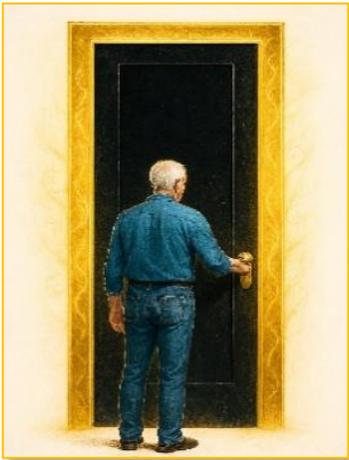
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All words spoken by Jesus Christ are in **red text**.

(Hyperlinks are surrounded by parenthesis and are underlined.)

## Introduction

“It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.” Hebrews 9:27



Throughout time all persons have experienced varying degrees of an uncontrollable upwelling of anxiety and stress because of an inevitable future unknown: what happens after we die, and is there something on the “other side” of death’s door. These life-draining emotions become stronger as we get older—especially when we have a terminal illness, or if facing a situation that may result in martyrdom for our faith.

The purpose of this lesson is to enhance our spiritual understanding in that we are not a body with a soul, but rather, we are a soul who lives in a body. In addition, living life is not about the health and comfort of our flesh, but rather, it’s about the status of our soul during the finite time our physical body supports the existence of our spiritual soul upon earth. But what’s even more important to understand...our soul will never die and will spend eternity in one of two places.

## The Purpose of Our Body

We are all born with a unique spiritual entity that lives within our body: our soul. In addition, our physical body is only a temporary dwelling place that our soul resides in. As such, our body is designed to:

- Enable our soul to function and move about within the physical world.
- Provide a means for our soul to grow and mature.
- Facilitate interaction and communication with other souls.
- Support procreation for new souls to populate the earth.
- Reflect the personality, emotions and spiritual status of our soul.
- Live a finite life span.

Take a few moments and consider how our physical body:

- Is comprised of multiple complex and interdependent systems that work together to sustain life.
- Is able to perform functions that transcend the mental and functional capabilities of the animal kingdom.
- Declares God’s works, His creative power, and His glory.
- Is miraculously interconnected with our soul.

## Characteristics of Our Soul

- The character of our soul is evidenced by our persona: what we say, what we do, and our emotions.
- It resembles (looks like) the physical body in which it inhabits.
- Our soul has a spiritual heart which:
  - Contains our innermost desires.
  - Makes decisions.
  - Can be hardened by sin and trauma, or cleansed and softened by the Holy Spirit.
- Our soul is the most important and valuable possession we have. There are no earthly things that compare—including power, wealth, fame, and possessions. **“For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?”** Mark 8:36
- Our soul will spend eternity experiencing either punishment or life. **“And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”** Matthew 25:46
  - (Additional scriptures on eternal punishment)
  - (Additional scriptures on eternal life)

For more information read “Body, Heart, Soul and Spirit” on [UniqueBibleStudies.com](http://UniqueBibleStudies.com).

## Body and Soul Conflicts

There are times when our body's desire for sin will conflict with the desires of our soul—which is especially true for those who yield the lordship of Jesus, and seek His righteousness. For example, our eyes may see something that causes our body to respond in an inappropriate manner. If we continue to look/consider, the lusts of our flesh will become stronger as we begin to mentally visualize sinning. This is when our soul—specifically the “heart” of our soul—will either give into the fleshly influence, or will regain control by causing our eyes and mind to turn away and begin to focus upon the benefits of pleasing God—which occurs because we Love Him, and because we know the consequences of sinning (exchanging truth for a lie and acting upon it) are too difficult to bear.

- “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” Matthew 5:27-28
- “For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.” Romans 7:20
- “When desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin...brings forth death.” James 1:1

Those who desire to overcome will find that the influence of our flesh is increasingly diminished each time our faith and heart-felt desire to obey God takes control. “Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.” 2 Corinthians 4:16

But what's even more, our bodies are also a dwelling place for the Holy Spirit. “Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.” 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 The Holy Spirit—the third person of the Trinity—dwells within us, provides us with guidance, comfort, and strength. As such, it is important to:

- Take care of our physical health (nutrition, exercise, rest, etc.)
- Make decisions that constrain our fleshly desires, abstain from sin, and align with the biblical teachings.
- Purposefully yield to the Holy Spirit and allow Him to use our bodies by:
  - Utilizing God-given physical talents, skills and capabilities for His glory.
  - Becoming a vessel through which He can share His agape love towards others.

## Characteristics of Death:

Three things occur upon physical death:

- Body systems cease functioning.
- The soul leaves the body.
- Decomposition begins.



The soul is released from its physical dwelling. There are some who have experienced this phenomenon—called a near-death experience (NDE). Some have reported floating above their body. Some were able to accurately describe the medical activity that was performed on them during their clinical death. There are different unsubstantiated medical theories as to why NDEs occur...but to the faithful, NDEs simply reinforce we are a soul who inhabits a temporary body. ([NDE Website](#))

Decomposition releases the chemical elements of our body so that they can return to the dust of the earth.

- “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 being. For dust you are, and to dust you shall return.” Gen. 2:7, 3:19
- “Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.” Ecc. 12:7

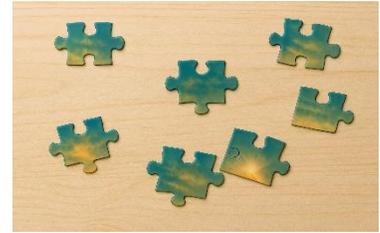
Click ([Wikipedia](#)) for more information about the earthly chemical elements within our body.

**Important Note:**

The Bible is absolutely clear about the following:

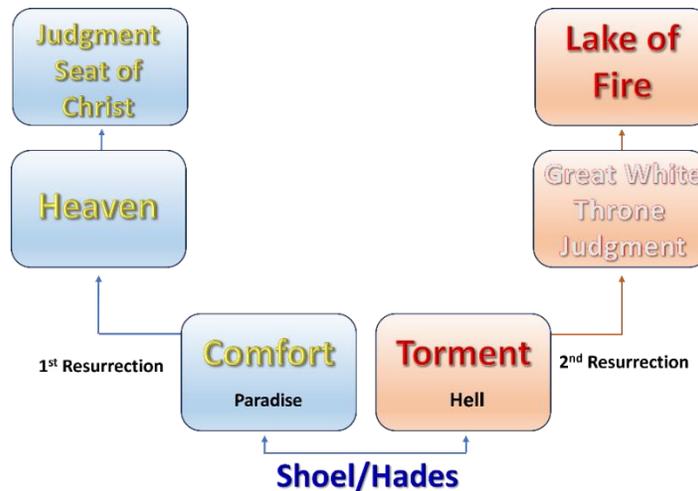
1. We will die. (Hebrews 9:27)
2. Our soul will spend eternity in either Heaven or the lake of fire. (Daniel 12:2)

However, there are a few topics within the Bible that are not absolutely specific (which is God’s intent). This topic is an example because there are some biblical scriptures that provide a slight glimpse into the possible existence of an intermediary “holding place” between our death and our final destination of Heaven or the lake of fire. These “glimpses” are similar to only having a few pieces of a puzzle which gives a little insight into the bigger picture. My intent in the following pages is to enhance spiritual insight by prayerfully and logically referencing scriptures (putting together the “pieces of the puzzle”) that may reveal a holding area between death and our eternal spiritual state. Therefore, it is important for you to use your God-given attributes of discernment, skepticism, and analytical thinking as you read the content below...and form your own opinion.



In truth...it is not important whether or not there is an intermediary place...because what is important is that we focus upon the ultimate prize: an eternity with our Lord. Besides, at some time in the future we will all personally experience what occurs on the other side, and will know the absolute truth.

This graphic depicts what happens after we die. Starting at the bottom, we will discuss the left side, then the right.



Sheol/Hades

Sheol (Old Testament Hebrew) and Hades (New Testament Greek) are terms for a temporary “holding” place where all souls go after a physical death. In addition, Sheol and Hades is divided into a place of comfort (Paradise) and a place of torment (Hell)—which are a prelude to what will be experienced after the soul’s resurrection.

The Place of Comfort conveys rest, contentment, peace, and a paradise for the righteous. Some refer to the place of comfort as “Abraham’s Bosom” because of the reference in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus.

The reference to Paradise is derived from the name used by Jesus. Just before He died, Jesus told the thief on the cross, “**Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.**” Luke 23:43 Based upon His words, many believe this is where Jesus was during the three days between His death and His resurrection. After His resurrection, He presented Himself alive to more than 500 people during a 40 day period. Thereafter He ascended to the Father. (1 Cor. 15:3-6; Acts 1:3; Luke 24:50-51; Acts 1:9-1)

1st Resurrection: Those who are dead in Christ shall rise first, followed by those who alive in Christ.

Heaven is where we will abide with our Savior and Lord for eternity, and where there are no adequate words to describe what we will experience.

The Judgment Seat of Christ is for the purpose of rewarding Christians for their works done for Jesus. “For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.” 1 Corinthians 3:11-15

So here is another question we often consider...Will we be able to see friends and family after death?  
([Click to view a video that answers this question.](#))

The Place of Torment conveys no rest, no contentment, no peace, and punishment—a hell for the unrighteous. The rich man asked for water to cool his tongue, and of torment from the heat from flames. ([Luke 16:19-31](#)) In addition, it seems as if the angels who joined Satan in the rebellion against God may also reside in the place of torment. “God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment.” 2 Peter 2:4 This judgment will occur during the Great White Throne Judgment.

The Second Resurrection will occur when all human life upon earth no longer exists.

The Great White Throne Judgment is where the unrighteous will be judged according to their deeds. This judgment will occur after the Tribulation, after the millennium reign of Jesus Christ, and after all that remain in Shoel/Hades are resurrected. ([Revelation 20:7-15](#))

The Lake of Fire is not in Shoel/Hades, and is not hell—for it is the final and eternal destination for Satan and his minions, the beast, the false prophet, death, Shoel/Hades—and most important—anyone not found written in the Book of Life. ([Revelation 20:7-15](#))

### **The Rich Man and Lazarus**

Every parable spoken by Jesus was intended to expand our spiritual awareness—including the parable of the Rich man and Lazarus—which visually depicts two temporary “holding areas” after death.

“There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. Then 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.’ But Abraham said, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.’ Then he said, ‘I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father’s house, for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.’ Abraham said to him, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.’ And he said, ‘No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ But he said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.’” Luke 16:19-31

Here are some interesting and revealing points regarding the words of Jesus above:

- Each person went to one of two places: a place of comfort or a place of torment.
  - The place of comfort was not Heaven.
  - The place of torment was not the lake of fire.
  - These two places may be temporary “holding areas” until the first and second resurrection occurs.
- No mention was made as to what Lazarus did (nor what the rich man did) in life to be assigned to their “place.” However, Jesus said, **“Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”** Matthew 23:23-24
- There is a great and unpassable barrier between the place of comfort and torment. However, it seems that it’s possible to see what’s on the other side of the barrier.
- Our soul looks like—or has the characteristics of—our physical body. The rich man was able to recognize Lazarus.
- Our soul possess our memory. The rich man recognized Lazarus and remembered his family members.
- We are able to communicate. The rich man and Abraham spoke to one another. This is also evidenced in [\(Rev. 6:9-11\)](#) when the martyred asked God how long before He judges those upon earth.
- We are able to feel pain. The rich man was tormented by the heat of the flame.
- We experience emotions. The rich man was deeply concerned for his relatives. Emotions are also expressed by the martyr’s request to God in Rev. 6:9-11 above.
- Salvation is a free will decision based upon the desires of our heart. Those who prefer sin will not believe—even if one rises from the dead and warns them of their pending doom if they do not change. Those who prefer sin will seek and believe delusional lies that rationalize their sin and their rejection of God’s truths. For this is the darkened condition of the heart of those who reject Jesus. **“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.”** 2 Timothy 4:3
- The consequences of the lives that the rich man and Lazarus lived—based upon the decisions they made—were final and irrevocable (binding, irreversible, unchangeable) upon their death.

## Sleep

The word “sleep” is used multiple times in the Bible. The word sleep is a visually descriptive and relatable term because we all sleep, wake up and arise from our sleep. However, from a spiritual perspective, the word sleep is a metaphorical term that conveys death as a temporary state from which one will “awaken and arise” in one of two resurrections. However, it’s important to note the soul is not asleep—for as depicted in the Rich Man and Lazarus, the soul is awake and functioning after death.

Here are additional examples of the term “sleep” spoken by Jesus:

- A man by the name of Lazarus—a different Lazarus whom Jesus knew and loved—became very sick. Jesus was summoned to heal him, but before Jesus arrived Lazarus died and was buried. Jesus said, **“Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up.”** [\(John 11:1-44\)](#)
- Jesus was also asked to raise a dead girl. Jesus said, **“The girl is not dead, but sleeping.”** He then awoke her from death. [\(Matthew 9:18-19, 23-26; Mark 5:21-24, 35-43; Luke 8:40-42, 49-56\)](#)

[\(Click for more scriptural references to sleep in the Bible.\)](#)

## Resurrection

Resurrection may be defined as a transformative act of awakening and rising from death's sleep.

The following scriptures describe the resurrection of those who are asleep.

- "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt." Daniel 12:2
- "I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust." Acts 24:15
- "But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep." 1 Corinthians 15:20

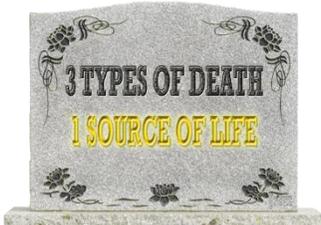
There will be at least two separate resurrections...because if there is a first there must be a second or more.

- 1<sup>st</sup> Resurrection:
  - Those who placed their faith in Jesus will be raised to everlasting life.
  - "Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection." Revelation 20:6
  - "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" John 11:25-26
  - "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation." John 5:28-29
  - "And you will be blessed...at the resurrection of the just." Luke 14:14
  - "But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that **we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.** For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. **And the dead in Christ will rise first. 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. Therefore comfort one another with these words." 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17
- Last Resurrection:
  - This resurrection:
    - Will occur after the 1,000 year Millennial Reign of Jesus Christ.
    - Is for all who did not take part in the 1<sup>st</sup> resurrection for the purpose of receiving their final judgment (called the Great White Throne Judgment).
  - "Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire." Rev. 20:11-15





I pray this lesson provides you with an improved understanding of what will occur after your physical body dies. However, there is much more to learn. Because we are a soul that lives in a body, living life is not about fulfilling the demands of our flesh. But rather, it's all about the status of our soul during the finite time our body is alive.



The One who died and paid the price for our sins...declared to all who would listen and obey...DO NOT DIE IN YOUR SINS! **"Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins."** John 8 24

There are two more important types of death than physical. Read "3 Types of Death and 1 Source of Life" on [UniqueBibleStudies.com](http://UniqueBibleStudies.com).



Jesus also declared, **"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."** John 3:3

Read "What is a Born-Again Christian?" on [UniqueBibleStudies.com](http://UniqueBibleStudies.com)

**"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."** John 3:16-17

Where you spend eternity is your free will choice...because that's how God designed it. Those who turn towards His Son, Jesus, do so because of their response to God's love and a compelling desire within their heart and soul. As such, I pray you make the right choice as to whom you will serve.

Tears form in my eyes when I consider meeting and hugging you on the other side...as we jump with elated joy and sing loving praises to our Savior...because He made it all possible.

All for His Glory!  
Harold D. Thomas