



**Old Testament Reading: Psalm 16:1-11**  
**New Testament Reading: Philippians 3:1-21**

**The Pillar and Ground of Truth**  
**“Our Hope of a Heavenly Home”**  
**2 Corinthians 5:1-10**

**Wayne J. Edwards**

The number one question on the mind of every person regardless of age, is what happens to us when we die.

- Who among us has not asked that question as we stared at the lifeless bodies of our loved ones?
- Christians want to know what happens to their fellow believers who die before the rapture of the Church.
- Christians who have more years behind them than in front of them want to know what life in heaven will be like.
  - Will we just sit on our clouds and strum our harps, or will there be meaningful and purposeful work for us to do?
  - The Bible says great rewards await those who long for their heavenly home.

**Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness...**

- **For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**
- **For they shall be comforted.**

- **For they shall see God.**
- **For they shall be called the sons of God.**
- **Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great *is* your reward in heaven.**

Several books have been written by those who claimed to have had near-death experiences, including being transported into the realm of heaven.

- The motive behind the books may have been honorable, i.e., if people knew heaven exists, perhaps they would become more concerned about their eternal destiny.
- However, in the parable of the Rich man and Lazarus, Jesus said it was right the opposite – ***“even if someone rises from the dead, they will not believe in Him!”***
- Similar accounts of visits to heaven have been told by those who believe in Buddha or the other false gods. So, such out-of-body experiences are not limited to Christians.
- Many of those accounts have had to be retracted, and their books pulled from the shelves because their testimonies were untrue.
- The Apostle Paul said he was ***“caught up to the third heaven,”*** and the Apostle John was ***“in the spirit on the Lord’s Day”*** when he received his revelation from the Lord Jesus.
- However, the foundational truth regarding the reality of heaven is not based on anecdotal experiences but rather upon the divinely inspired, infallible and inerrant Word of God.

In 2 Corinthians 4:7 – 5:1, the Apostle Paul used four words to describe our temporal bodies.

- 4:7 – **“earthen vessels”** – ordinary clay that disintegrates over time.
  - So the power of the gospel would not rest with any man, including the Apostle Paul.
  - So the life of Jesus can be manifested in the lives of those who are fully submitted unto Him.
- 4:16 – **“outward man”** – an outer shell which will be shed.
- 5:1 – **“earthly house”** – that which is designed only for this earth only – it was not designed for life in heaven.
- 5:1 – **“house”** – the visible that shelters the invisible.

***“Knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus and will present us with you. 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 4:14-16**

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1. **Every Man’s Eventual Enemy – 2 Corinthians 5:1 – *“For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed.”***

According to Genesis 1:26, God made man in His own image, which means He made man to live forever physically and spiritually.

- When Adam and Eve sinned against God, there was a:
  - **Spiritual death** – an immediate separation between them and God that they were very aware of.
  - **Physical death** – the disintegration of their physical bodies began.
    - Even though Adam lived to be 930 years old, he eventually died, and over the years, the life-expectancy decreased to 40-years.
    - Today, the life expectancy is 61 years for males and 67 years for females.
- Death is regarded as the eventual enemy of every person – none of us will escape it. Hebrews 9:27
- Death is also our friend, because it delivers us from the corruption of this life, and for the Christian, into an incorruptible eternity.
- When a Christian dies their physical body returns to the earth to await its resurrection, but their soul goes into the presence of the Lord, where they are conscious of their whereabouts, and they worship Him in the beauty of His holiness. 2 Corinthians 5:8
  - When an unbeliever dies, their physical bodies also return to the earth to await its resurrection, but their soul enters into Sheol, where they are also conscious of their whereabouts and why they are there, and they begin a life of eternal sorrow, having rejected Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord. Sheol is Hebrew for Hades – the dark region of the dead.
- Jesus made this clear in the parable of the Rich man and Lazarus.
  - **Lazarus** – a beggar – died and was carried into the bosom of Abraham – the place of paradise.
  - **The Rich Man** died and was carried into the torments of Sheol or Hades.
  - While the rich man could see the eternal blessings being poured out upon Lazarus, there is no indication that Lazarus could see the Rich Man’s eternal suffering.

**“Heaven is not a land of questions, but a land of answers, for you shall see the face of God!”**

**C.S. Lewis**

2. **Saved Man’s Eventful Reality – 2 Corinthians 5:10 – “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body.”**

The Bible says there will be two resurrections:

- The resurrection of the saved, **which is called the rapture** of the Church – 1 Corinthians 15:20-23, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17
  - **Believers** will stand before the Judgement Seat of Christ.

- The resurrection of the lost is called **the general resurrection** – John 5:29, 1 Corinthians 15:24, Revelation 20:11-15

- **Unbelievers** will stand before the Great White Throne Judgment of God.

- Believers will be judged:

- **As sinners** – but since Jesus has paid for our sins, we will be declared “not guilty!” Romans 8:1

- **As sons** – but having received Jesus as our Savior and Lord, we are already in His family. John 1:11-12, Hebrews 12:6

- **As servants** – this is where we want to hear Jesus says those words, ***“Well done, thou good and faithful servant.”*** Matthew 25:14, 1 Peter 4:10

- Believers will receive one or more crowns:

- **The golden crown** – will be given to all believers – Revelation 4

- **The incorruptible crown** – to those who remained faithful to God’s Word – 1 Corinthians 9:25-27

- **The crown of righteousness** – to those who live each day in the expectation of the Lord’s return – 2 Timothy 4:8

- **The crown of rejoicing** – to those who sowed the seeds of evangelism – 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20

- **The crown of glory** – Pastors and servants of the Church – 1 Peter 5:1-4

- **The crown of life** – to those who endured persecution – James 1:12, Matthew 5:10-12

### 3. **Saved Man’s Eternal Destiny – 2 Corinthians 5:8 – “*We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.*”**

Heaven is a place of security, acceptance, victory and praise; a place of perfect peace and rest; a place where our fellowship with God, and with God’s people, will never end, for we shall see Him face to face, and bask in the wonder of how we were saved by His grace!