



What happens when we die?

By Bill Subritzky

1. Before the time of Christ, only a few people went directly to heaven.

Examples:

(a) “**Enoch** walked with God; and **he was not, for God took him.**” (Genesis 5:24).

By faith He was translated into heaven so that **he did not see death.** (Hebrews 11:5).

(b) **Elijah** was taken up into heaven in a **chariot of fire.** (2 Kings 2:11).

(c) **Moses** died at 120 years of age and was buried. (Deuteronomy 34:6-7).

However he was resurrected because both he and Elijah talked with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. (Luke 9:30).

Other than these three, the righteous (those who obeyed God) and the unrighteous (those who disobeyed God) went to Sheol or hell after they died. In the Bible it is also named Hades or the pit.

2. The dead have knowledge and awareness. They speak to others.

In Scripture we read that those who had already died spoke to those earthly leaders coming into Hades.

"Have you become as weak as we? Have you become like us? Your pomp is brought down to Sheol." (Isaiah 14:10-11).

3. Whole nations were sent to hell. They are still there. It is a place of confinement of the unrighteous until the day of judgment

The Bible says that Syria and all her company have graves set in the recesses of the Pit.

Elam who caused terror in the land of the living as well as **Meshech, Tubal, Edom, Sidonians and Pharaoh** with his army, are all there awaiting the final judgment. (Ezekiel 32:17-32).

4. There are two parts of hell, one for the righteous and the other for the unrighteous.

The division is referred to in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. The rich man was in the part referred to as Hades and was experiencing torment. Lazarus was in the part named Abraham's bosom.

There was a great gulf fixed between them. Nobody could pass from one part to the other. Everybody in both parts had consciousness and could recognise each other. (Luke 16:19-31).

5. The Cross of Jesus Christ.

After He had died on the cross, Jesus went down into both parts of hell and proclaimed His coming resurrection both to the righteous and the unrighteous dead.

The righteous dead.

"For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit." (1 Peter 4:6).

The unrighteous dead.

"For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is eight souls, were saved through water." (1 Peter 3:18-20).

6. Jesus led the righteous dead out of hell.

The graves were opened. "And many bodies of the saints, who had fallen asleep (died) were raised, and coming out of the graves after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, they went into Jerusalem and appeared to many." (Matthew 27:51-53).

"Therefore He says:

"When He ascended on high,
He led captivity captive,
And gave gifts to men."
(Ephesians 4:8)

"(Now this, "He ascended" – what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)

"And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers," (Ephesians 4:9-11).

Jesus led the righteous dead out of Abraham's bosom and into heaven. The part referred to as Abraham's bosom is no longer occupied.

7. The veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom.

As Jesus died on the cross, the veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom signifying that believers now have access to the Throne of Grace in heaven.

8. The resurrection body of Jesus was a physical body that could appear and disappear.

When Jesus rose from the dead in His resurrection body he said to His disciples, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? **Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I myself. Handle Me** and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have."

"When He had said this, **He showed them His hands and His feet.** But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, "Have you any food here?"

"So they gave Him a piece of broiled fish and some honeycomb. **And He took it and ate** in their presence." (Luke 24:38-43).

"Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight." (Luke 24:30-31).

9. After appearing to His disciples for 40 days Jesus ascended into heaven.

"Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight." (Acts 1:9).

10. Stephen saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God in heaven.

As the apostle Stephen was being stoned to death, being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

He said, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" (Acts 7:54-56).

11. What happens today?

The answer: No longer does the true believer in Christ i.e. the person who trusts and obeys Jesus Christ go to the part of hell reserved for the righteous dead.

At the time of their death the believer in Christ who has trusted, obeyed, clung to and relied on Him goes directly to heaven and shall have the same type of body as the resurrected Jesus.

12. There is a natural body and a spiritual body.

Jesus will transform our body.

a). "Who will transform our lowly body that it may be **conformed to His glorious body**, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself." (Philippians 3:21).

b). We shall bear His image.

"And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, (Adam) we also shall bear the image of the heavenly Man (i.e. Jesus)." (1 Corinthians 15:49).

c). We shall be clothed with a heavenly body.

"For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation, which is from heaven, if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked.

"For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life.

Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has also given us the Spirit as a guarantee." (2 Corinthians 5:1-5).

13. The believers in Christ shall be like the angels.

Jesus was questioned as to whose wife a woman would be in heaven who had been widowed but had remarried several times.

He said, "**For In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are like the angels of God in heaven.**" (Matthew 22:30).

14. Paul's visit to heaven.

Paul said that he was caught up into Paradise (the third heaven) and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. (2 Corinthians 12:4).

15. Paul shares his desire to be with Christ in heaven.

He said, "But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labour; yet what shall I choose I cannot tell. For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart **and be with Christ, which is far better.**" (Philippians 1:22-23).

16. Truly believing Christians shall not come into judgment of condemnation.

These are the born-again Christians who have trusted in Jesus, obeying His commandments and walking in true holiness i.e. abstaining from deliberate sin.

a). They are not judged.

Jesus said, "Most assuredly I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and **shall not come into judgment**, but has passed from death into life." (John 5:24).

"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death." (Romans 8:1-2)

b). No spiritual death.

"Most assuredly I say to you, if anyone keeps My word, he shall never see death." (John 8:51).

Jesus is referring to spiritual death i.e. separation from God forever and eternal damnation.

c). They have everlasting life.

"Most assuredly I say to you, he who believes Me (i.e. trusts and obeys Jesus) has everlasting life." (John 6:47).

d). They never die spiritually. I.e. go into the lake of fire.

Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes Me (puts trust in and obeys) 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).

17. Our sins are forgiven.

When we truly trust and obey Jesus Christ and keep His commandments our sins are fully forgiven at the Cross.

18. The consequences of deliberate sin after we have received the knowledge of the truth.

There is no forgiveness.

We must avoid the doctrines of cheap or easy grace which are so prevalent in the world today.

a). "For if we go on deliberately and willingly sinning after once acquiring the knowledge of the Truth, there is no longer any sacrifice left to atone for [our] sins [no further offering to which to look forward].

[There is nothing left for us then] but a kind of awful and fearful prospect and expectation of divine judgment and the fury of burning wrath and indignation which will consume those who put themselves in opposition [to God]."

(Hebrews 10:26-27 Amplified Bible).

b). "How much worse (sterner and heavier) punishment do you suppose he will be judged to deserve who has spurned and [thus] trampled underfoot the Son of God, and who has considered the covenant blood by which he was consecrated common and unhallowed, thus profaning it and insulting and outraging the [Holy] Spirit [Who imparts] grace (the unmerited favor and blessing of God)?"

(Hebrews 10:29 Amplified Bible).

c). "For we know Him Who said, Vengeance is Mine [retribution and the meting out of full justice rest with Me]; I will repay [I will exact the compensation], says the Lord. And again, The Lord will judge and determine and solve and settle the cause and the cases of His people. It is a fearful (formidable and terrible) thing to incur the divine penalties and be cast into the hands of the living God!"

(Hebrews 10:30-31 Amplified Bible).

d). "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?"

(Romans 6:1-2).

e). "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

(Romans 6:23).

f). "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it." (Matthew 7:13).

g). "Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life and there are few who find it." (Matthew 7:14).

19. THE JUDGMENT OF TRUE BELIEVERS IN CHRIST.

Those are the believers in Christ who obey, trust in, cling to, rely on Him and walk in the path of holiness.

"Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord."

(Hebrews 12:14).

Jesus said, "Narrow is the gate and difficult is the way, which leads to life, and there are few who find it." (Matthew 7:14).

Those who are true believers will appear before the judgment seat of Christ for reward not condemnation.

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or worthless." (2 Corinthians 5:10).

"For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." (Romans 14:10).

The words "judgment seat" is a translation of the Greek word "bema" which means a seat where **rewards** are given to true believers in Christ. **It is not a judgment for punishment of sin.**

20. It is a judgment of works. Our works will be tested. There will be reward and punishment for the righteous.

The Scripture says,

"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 manifest; 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 as through fire." (1 Corinthians 3:11-15).

21. Our reward.

"And, behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give everyone according to his work. (Revelation 22:12).

22. Jesus has prepared many mansions in heaven for believers. (Those who trust and obey Jesus Christ.)

Before He went on to the cross, Jesus said to His disciples,

"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are **many mansions**; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." (John 14:1-2).

23. We are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses that is, true believers who have died before us.

a). "Therefore we also, **since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses**, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:1-2).

Also,

b). "But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, **to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven**, to God the Judge of all, **to the spirits of just**

men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel." (Hebrews 12:18-24).

24. What about children?

Young children are incapable of knowing good and evil. They will not be judged until they reach the age of accountability.

a). When the people of Israel rebelled against God, He told them that they would not enter the Promised Land. However their children would do so because they would not be held accountable.

b). "Moreover, that your little ones and your children, who you say will be victims, who today have no knowledge of good and evil, they shall go in there; to them I will give it and they shall possess it." (Deuteronomy 1:39).

c). "For before the Child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that you dread will be forsaken by both her kings." (Isaiah 7:16).

d). Jesus said, "Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 18:10).

e). "Even so, it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish." (Matthew 18:14).

f). Jesus implied that children go to heaven.

"Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 18:3-4).

Conclusion.

The Bible does not give an exact age of accountability. It will depend on the individual child. Some children with mental disabilities may never become accountable. It is clear that children will not be judged until they are capable of making moral choices. We have a loving God who will deal with them accordingly.

25. THE FINAL JUDGMENT OF THOSE WHO HAVE NOT ALREADY GONE INTO HEAVEN.

The Great White Throne Judgment at the end of time.

This will be a judgment of those who have been confined in hell awaiting the final judgment. This will include those people who have made a commitment to Jesus Christ but not followed His commandments and who have failed to repent from sin.

For example,

a). "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders

in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness (sin)!' (Matthew 7:21-23).

Also,

b). "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

c). "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 that 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 in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.**" (Revelation 20:11-15).

e). "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone which is the second death." (Revelation 21:8).

26. What happens to people who have never heard the gospel?

Prior to the time of Noah and the Flood, God saw the wickedness of men was great on the earth and He was sorry that He had made a man on the earth. God then destroyed mankind at the Flood. However because he was righteous before God, only Noah and his family were saved.

The time of Moses.

Later, God chose only Israel to be a people for Himself out of all the nations of the world. (Deuteronomy 7:6 and Deuteronomy 14:2). God did not call any other nations to Himself.

27. God's ways are not our ways.

a). This may seem unjust but God's ways are not our ways.

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts,
Nor are your ways My ways," says the Lord.
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are My ways higher than your ways,
And My thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:8-9).

b). In the New Testament we see the same pattern again of the rebellion of mankind against God.

"For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor

were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools." (Romans 1:20-22).

28. Mankind has turned away from Him.

Mankind has ignored the general revelation of Himself which He gave to all mankind.

"And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man – and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

"Therefore God also gave them to uncleanness, in the lust of their hearts, to dishonour their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creation rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen

"For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature." (Romans 1:23-26).

29. No one can come to Jesus unless God calls them.

"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day." (John 6:44).

30. Christ is the only Saviour.

The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour of the world. All other ways of salvation are wrong.

"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12).

31. The only way to God is through Jesus Christ.

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14: 6).

"He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." (John 3:36).

32. The grace of God.

If we have heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ then God will hold us accountable if we ignore Him. He has chosen us and expects us to respond to Him by turning from all sin and surrendering absolutely to Him through Jesus Christ. We have only heard the Gospel because of the grace of God toward us.

33. God will reveal Himself to people who search for Him.

If people really reach out towards God, then God will find a way of reaching them.

"Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?" (John 14:22).

"Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him." (John 14:23).

34. Jesus appears in dreams and visions.

There have been many reports of Muslims and people of other faiths having visions or dreams of Jesus Christ.

35. Only one God and one Mediator.

For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus. (1 Timothy 2:5).

36. Necessity for evangelism.

"Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved. How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Romans 10:13-14).

37. Conclusion.

In order to be saved one must hear of Christ and absolutely trust, cling to, rely upon and obey Him. The person must hear the Gospel to be saved. Therefore we must do our utmost to proclaim the gospel as widely as possible.

38. Finally.

The new heaven and new earth.

"Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

"Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."" (Revelation 21:1-5).

39. What a privilege it is to have been called into the kingdom of God by Jesus Christ! Are you ready to die? You can decide yourself whether or not you are truly following Jesus Christ. By doing the following:

"For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged." (1 Corinthians 11:31).

Jesus said, "He who rejects Me and does not receive My words, has that which judges him - the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day." (John 12:48)

The Word of God is clearly set out in the Bible.

40. Need for repentance

Finally we must repent from all sins. Our sins separate us from God and can prevent our healing and deliverance.

"Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened,

That it cannot save;

Nor His ear heavy,

That it cannot hear.

But your iniquities have separated you from your God;

And your sins have hidden His face from you,

So that He will not hear."

(Isaiah 59:1-2).

42. The Bible describes sin as follows (NKJV)

1 Corinthians 6:9-10:

“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived.

Neither fornicators (sex outside of marriage)

Nor idolaters (putting other things ahead of God)

Nor adulterers

Nor homosexuals

Nor sodomites

Nor thieves

Nor covetous

Nor drunkards

Nor revilers (cursing other people)

Nor extortioners (taking other people’s money by threat)

will inherit the kingdom of God.”

Colossians 3:8:

Uncleanness (impurity)

Using bad language

Dirty jokes

Licentiousness (indecent) e.g. pornography

(Galatians 5:19, Ephesians 5:3-4)

Galatians 5:20-21:

Sorcery i.e. Witchcraft

Examples:

Fortune telling (horoscopes),

Some forms of heavy metal rock music,

Ouija boards,

Drugs (wrong kind),

Charms,

New Age e.g. worship of the creation,

Spiritism: Séances,

Freemasonry,

Martial Arts i.e. Kung Fu, Aikido, Tae Kwon Do, Karate, Tai Chi, Judo (rooted in Taoism and Buddhism),

Druids Lodge,

Eastern religions: Hypnosis (Hinduism Goddess Shiva), Yoga, TM, ESP,

Worship of the creation (Idolatry) (Romans 1:25).

Those practicing...

Hatred

Contentions e.g. quarrelsome, causing fights

Jealousies
Outburst of wrath
Selfish ambitions
Dissensions (causing fights)
Heresies e.g. Jehovah Witnesses and Mormons
Envy
Murders e.g. deliberate unnecessary abortion
Drunkenness
Revelries (wild parties)

Revelation 21:8:

Also those who are...
Cowardly (refusing to follow Christ)
Unbelievers
Abominable
Liars

All of the above scriptures show the need for us to come before the Lord and repent of any of these sins so that we can inherit the kingdom of God.

“For the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 6:23).

43. The Bible says, if we confess our sins God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9).

44. We suggest you say the following prayer believing it in your heart.

“Dear Heavenly Father I come to You in the mighty name of Your Son, Jesus Christ. I believe He died on the Cross to pay the penalty for all my sins, to forgive me, to heal me and to reconcile me to You. I confess Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour and I repent of these sins (name them).

Thank You Heavenly Father for Your forgiveness, love and healing in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.”

45. Growing in faith

It is vital that you attend a Christian church which believes and acts upon the Bible. You should be water baptised, read your Bible daily and keep company with believing Christians who can help you grow in God.

You should also seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit was speaking in tongues. (Acts 2:1-4).

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