

Do Our Spirits Go To Be With The Lord After Death?

In Luke 16, Jesus taught that Lazarus went to “Abraham’s bosom,” which to the Jew was a place of paradise. The rich man went to “hell” or Hades (vv. 22-23). This teaches that there is a realm spirits enter before the judgment. In Revelation 1:18, Jesus said that He had the “keys of Hell (Hades) and of death.” Revelation 20:14 says, “And death and hell (Hades) were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.” “Death” means “separation,” so when a person dies there is a separation of the soul from the body. The body goes back to the dust of the earth and the soul returns to God (Ecclesiastes 12:7).

The King James Version did not recognize a distinction in 1611 so they translated “Hades” as “hell.” In Acts 2:31, Jesus was not left in “hell” (KJV). The word used there is “Hades.” In Acts 2:34, Peter shows that Psalm 110 does not apply to David, but to Christ. However, it also implies that if David has not ascended to heaven, then his soul must reside somewhere. The Bible teaches this “somewhere” to be Hades. Hades is a realm composed of two parts: “paradise” and “torments” (cp. Luke 16:23). The two separate parts consists of one part for the righteous (“paradise” — cp. Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 12:4) and one part for the wicked (“torments” — cp. 2 Peter 2:4). This does not mean that we will be judged twice. The Bible plainly only speaks of one judgment (2 Corinthians 5:10; Hebrews 9:27-28). After the judgment, we will go to “everlasting punishment” or “life eternal” (Matthew 25:46).

At that point, God will bring an end to Hades (1 Corinthians 15:24; Revelation 20:11-15). If we have been righteous in this life, we will then go and be with Christ. In 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, Paul is assuring those Christians that those who are alive will be judged along with the righteous dead. No one will be exempt or left behind. There is no contradiction to say that we go to an intermediate place to await the judgment.

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