

# A Biblical View OF THE END TIMES

## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE DIE? PART 2

Week #22; June 7, 2026, 6PM

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### Review:

- Our last lesson was Part 1 of “**What Happens When We Die?**” This is Part 2.
- It makes sense for us to tackle this topic now after five weeks of studying the Rapture. I’m trying to follow a ‘somewhat’ normal flow-of-things.
- It’s why we’ll be learning about our rewards here shortly. Naturally, that follows our transition from earth to heaven.
- **Last time, we learned several foundational matters:**
  - In speaking of death - and from a human point-of-view - there are **only** two groups of people: (1.) those who die ‘IN the faith,’ and (2.) those who die WITHOUT saving faith.
  - We planted our stake in the text of **Luke Ch. 16** where Jesus told the story of ‘the rich man and Lazarus.’
  - These were likely two real figures of Jesus’ time. In the examples of these two men, we have both groups of people represented.
  - We learned that those who die ‘in the faith’ are those who believed the truth of ‘**the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ**’ while they were alive.
  - We had an overview of what exactly that means, and the critical importance of fully believing Jesus Christ IS who He said He is.
  - We looked at those who died ‘in the faith’ BEFORE the cross, and we understood from that what the Bible means by ‘having faith.’
  - We know that those who died **before** the cross (like OT saints) looked AHEAD with faith to what was coming.
  - Those who die **after** the cross (like us) look BACK with faith to what was accomplished.
- We spent a good part of our last lesson understanding what is meant by a ‘soul’ and a ‘spirit.’
  - We have both as believers in Jesus Christ – and while it’s a bit hard to understand, the Bible suggests there IS a difference between the two:
    - Our souls are the REAL us. It’s who we REALLY are – and that part of us will last eternally.
    - Our souls are the center of our mind, will, and emotions. We saw from **Rev. 6:9-11** that our souls communicate, feel emotion and a sense of justice, engage in worship, and even have some sort of form / structure.

- We ARE, in fact, souls! And our souls HAVE a perishable / mortal body on this earth. Eventually, in our eternal state, our soul will have an imperishable / immortal body.
- That is different from our spirit which is another PART of our intangible nature. Our spirit is what communes with God. It's that part of us that 'connects' with God.
- The Bible says our spirits 'are made alive in Christ' at the time of our salvation. Conversely, nonbelievers are stated to be 'spiritually dead.'
- We went over a lot of information last week about 'souls' and 'spirits' - - and that lesson and those notes are online. (It's 'heavy stuff,' and I encourage you to engage in further personal study on these things).

**NOTE:** This week, I want to pick up where we left off last time. I want to get back to the conditions that both Lazarus and the rich man experienced when they both physically died.

**A. Here are the things that happened to both of them in common:**

1. First, their physical bodies were buried, and those bodies decomposed. There is nothing more to the bodies we have right now than this.
  - Our bodies – as we learned last time - are just temporary flesh homes for the REAL US - - for our 'souls.'
  - Both Lazarus and the rich man – despite the different lives they had and lived – despite one being rich and the other being poor – despite one being 'somebody' and the other being 'nobody,' were **both** put into the ground where their bodies "*returned to dust*."
  - As I said last week, "Death is the great equalizer.' The Bible says ALL of us will have this fate:
    - God ordained it that way when we were created. **Genesis 2:7** tells us how that happened: "*Then the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, and the man became a living being.*"
    - This 'dust to dust' cycle of life is part of the curse of sin. **Genesis 3:19** says "*...until you return to the ground—because out of it were you taken. For dust you are, and to dust you shall return.*"
    - **Eccl. 3:20** reminds us of this same inevitable process. It says, "**All go to the same place; all come from dust, and to dust all return.**"
    - Notice the emphasis on **all**. This is a fate that everyone will endure because we ALL presently have 'perishable' bodies, we ALL suffer the consequences of sin, and our bodies will ALL suffer the same fate.
    - **Psalms 104:29** says, "*You take away their breath, they die and return to dust.*" When our current lives are done, regardless of who we were or what we accomplished on this earth, we will become dust once more.

2. Another thing Lazarus and the rich man both had in common is their souls went someplace else.
  - The real **“them”** moved on to something else after they died and were buried. **THEY** continued – but just not in their previous bodies.
  - The real **“them”** continued to feel emotion, distress, comfort, and agony.
  - The real **“them”** could fully sense everything and respond to their environment.
  - This has nothing to do with the bodies they had. The real **“them”** could feel anguish or peace, despair or joy, and so on. NOTICE: The soul of the rich man felt agony and torment.
  - Again, as we learned last time, it’s important to understand their souls had form, location, communication, and emotion.
  - They were still recognizable at some level. The real **“them”** was still in existence. Their former bodies were decomposing and returning to dust – but **they** continued to ‘live on.’

**B. Now we need to talk about the things that happened to them that were NOT in common:**

- Lazarus went to “Paradise” (AKA: “Abraham’s bosom,” or “Abraham’s side”). This is all figurative language to say that Lazarus went “into the presence of God” - - he went to **heaven**.
- I find no sound Biblical basis to suggest that those who die ‘in Christ’ find themselves in any other place OTHER THAN heaven.

**NOTE:** There are various terms used in Scripture to refer to heaven: “Abraham’s bosom” or “Abraham’s side” is used just once (here in **Luke Ch. 16**). Let me try to explain the basics:

- “Abraham’s lap,’ which sounds similar, is used in the Rabbinic Talmud as a synonym for heaven.
- Jesus used the term “paradise” to refer to heaven when He promised the ‘good thief’ on the cross that they would be together after death (**Cf. Luke 23:43**). So did Paul (**Cf. 2 Cor. 12:3-4**), and John (**Cf. Rev. 2:7**).
- Then we have the various terms “*sheol*” (Hebrew), “*hades*,” (Greek), and “*Gehenna*” (which is the Greek term for Hell).
- The two terms “*Sheol*” and “*Hades*,” **in their most generic sense**, simply refer to “the place of the dead” or “the place of departed souls/spirits.”
- If I die as a believer, I go to ‘*sheol*’ – meaning, I’ve departed THIS life and have gone to the ‘realm of the dead.’ I’m no longer alive on this earth. In my case, however, that also means ‘heaven.’ That’s where my soul would go...

- Again, this is a very general use of these two terms. For example, David, when writing prophetically about Jesus Christ's death, said in **Psalms 16:10**, "***For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.***"
  - ✓ David's point was Jesus Christ would not 'stay dead.' He would not remain 'in the place or category of the dead.'
  - ✓ He would not see corruption or decay. He would be resurrected.
- But the Bible also makes clear that this "realm of the dead" is divided into two parts, and it's here we need to pay attention to things that are more specific, especially with the Greek term "*Hades*," because **Luke Ch. 16** makes it clear that's where the rich man – who did NOT have a saving faith - went when he died. (More on that in a moment....)
- '*Gehenna*' is the most cursed place. It is used in the Bible this Greek form in **Matt. 5:29; 23:33** to describe 'hell' (proper), or '*the lake of fire*.'
- All that aside, a key point I want to drive home is when true believers in Jesus Christ die, they go immediately to heaven (AKA, 'paradise,' etc.). How do we know this?
  - The Scriptures teach that to be "*...absent from the body (is to be) at home with the Lord.*" (**Cf. 2 Cor. 5:8.**)
  - Jesus told the "good thief" "*today you will be with me in Paradise*" – When we die as believers, we are escorted (by the angels, I believe) into the very presence of God.
  - In that place – we are finally "at home;" we are fully aware, communicative, rejoicing, and we are possibly cognizant of events and things on earth (based on the passage in **Rev. 6**).

**IMPORTANT: I cannot overstate the blessedness of this state!** It is the fullness of our joy and the completion of our journey of faith. It is the end of our pain and distress. There are no words on earth to describe this glorious situation.

- **Now, let's talk more specifically about the rich man in Luke Ch. 16.** The rich man's soul took a different trip.
- He went to Hades (again, some translations say Hell – but that's inaccurate as I shared last time if we think of the eternal burning lake of Sulphur and fire here). The better translation is the Greek term "*Hades*."
  - **IMPORTANT:** This is a temporary holding place for people who die without salvation.
  - It is a terrible place of torment and agony as **Luke 16:22-24** makes clear.
  - But it's not yet HELL. And the worst is yet to come for souls who go here (comment on those who have 'glimpsed hell').
  - Like Lazarus, the rich man was fully cognizant, aware, feeling, emotional, communicative, etc. BUT, he was in torment.

- And there was no way out of this situation. There was no further remedy for his soul after this point. He died without Christ and that was his GREATEST mistake.
- **NOTE:** One question that comes up that is related to this concerns **Heb. 4:12** which reads:

*“For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”*

**NOTE: There are several things I want to say about this passage:**

- a. **First**, notice that this passage clearly makes the point there is a difference between ‘soul and spirit.’ While some of our English translations appear to use these two terms synonymously, they are two different concepts as we learned last time.
- b. **Second**, it is the Word of God that convicts us. It gets to the deepest parts of who we are. It holds accountable even our most secret parts, thoughts, and attitudes.
- c. **Third**, the Word of God is sufficient to save us. It is sufficient to bring us to a right relationship with God. We don’t need other means to have this spiritual reality check.

**NOTE:** This is important to understand, because the rich man in **Luke 16:27-31** wanted Abraham to send Lazarus back to earth from the dead, and to go back to earth and warn his family about Hades and the peril about not being in a right relationship with God.

- The rich man was told that’s not possible to do.
- Further, he was told that his family members already had “*Moses and the prophets.*” In other words, his family already had the Scriptures.
- The point is, God’s Word is sufficient to convict us and save us.
- The rich man wanted a physical miracle rather than the plain truth.
- This will be the nature of the ‘powerful delusion’ which God will send to those who remain on earth after the Rapture (**Cf. 2 Thess. Ch. 2**). They will believe what they see rather than the truth of Scripture.

**NOTE:** But the worst of the rich man’s fate was still to come. And this story underscores that this is true for anyone who dies ‘without saving faith.’ The main judgement is still coming AFTER Hades.

- The Great White Throne judgment still needs to be faced, and the “second death” which is worse yet, is still pending (**Rev. 20:11-15; READ**). Several points are made clear in this passage:
  - ✓ This event will take place after the 1,000-year Millennial Kingdom.
  - ✓ ALL unsaved humanity from ALL ages of human history receive their final fate at this ominous event. Nobody is missed, and all the records are detailed and complete.

- ✓ Everybody will be judged for their decisions, their choices, their actions, and ultimately their rejection of Jesus Christ and His offer of salvation - - so, the point is CLEARLY made: they are CHOOSING to condemn themselves!
- ✓ They all get thrown into the lake of fire which is the 'second death.' In other words, Hell is that NEXT phase of judgment. It's worse.
- ✓ Hades is the first phase, and Hell is the second phase. Hades marks the 'first death,' and Hell marks the 'second death.' So, Hades is a temporary holding place **until this event**.
- ✓ Hades then gets tossed into the eternal lake of fire as well. This means its role is done. It no longer serves any purpose as a holding place for the unsaved dead.
- ✓ Hell is the FINAL judgment for all who die and who have rejected Jesus Christ. The rich man, in this case, will be transferred from Hades into Hell.
- ✓ We'll be learning more about Hell when we study the conclusion of the Millennial Kingdom in this series.

**NOTE: Now, let's shift gears and go back to the issue of our resurrection.** But at the resurrection (this is at the Rapture), something happens to our souls. They are reunited with our bodies. But it's not the same body we have now.

- It's a "glorified one."
  - It's a much more upgraded / advanced version of the one you have right now.
  - Paul calls it an "imperishable" one in **1 Cor. 15:52** –  
*"...in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed."*
  - Right now, the body we have is a perishable one. It doesn't last. From the time we are born, we start the process of dying. For some of us it takes longer than for others.
  - But the inevitable, the inescapable truth is, we will DIE! This body is a temporary house for our soul – the real US!
  - Some people spend a lot of money trying to upgrade this temporary house. They tummy tuck and they face lift. They color their hair, botox their wrinkles, and throw in an occasional new joint or two.
  - But none of that sidesteps the fact we are going to die in this body. It's a house for our soul but it's not who we really ARE.
  - At the Rapture, the Bible says true believers will get a new body, we will be CHANGED!
1. And that returns me to the question of those saints who have died before the Rapture. Their bodies have already been buried. What happens to those people at the Rapture, especially since their souls (as we've learned) are ALREADY WITH JESUS CHRIST.
- This is an event we call "the resurrection." It happens at the moment of the Rapture.
  - For those believers who died before this point, something happens to their souls. They are INSTANTLY reunited with their bodies.
  - But it's not the same body they once had.

- ✓ It's a "glorified one."
  - ✓ It's a glorified one just like the one the saints who are alive at the time of the Rapture will also receive.
  - ✓ Paul says in **1 Cor. 15:53** – in speaking of this very moment – that all bodies of the saints, at the Rapture, whether they have died before this point or not, are transformed (glorified!) the same way.
- These glorified bodies are eternal. They are a MUCH more upgraded / advanced version of the one you have right now.
- Paul – as I said a bit ago - calls it an "imperishable" one. Once again, in **1 Cor. 15:52** it reads – *"...in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed."*
  - We see here a sequence (**Cf. also 1 Thess. 4:15-17**)
    - ✓ Those who have **already** died before the Rapture will be raised. They will be resurrected into glorified bodies.
    - ✓ This takes place first – before those who are still alive get their glorified bodies.
    - ✓ **Then – and only AFTER that point** - we are all "caught up together with them" in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.
  - Now, we don't know the precise timing of all these events (Explain....)
    - ✓ Most scholars believe it all happens very quickly – the text says it's in a "flash" or in the "twinkling of an eye" (the Greek term here – "**atomo**" is where we get the word "atom" – the idea is this change is comprehensive and it happens at the most detailed level).
    - ✓ But it's significant to note that this rapidity, this "flash" is tied to the change of bodies > the speed with which we get the glorified body.
    - ✓ It's not necessarily associated with the rest of the Rapture process
  - While most Bible scholars believe we will disappear in a "flash" > the Bible does not necessarily say that. It says our bodies will be changed in a flash, but the actual "Rapture" experience could be a more drawn out process
  - Elisha saw Elijah go up; the disciples watched as Jesus ascended to heaven, the enemies of the Two Witnesses will watch them ascend when they come back to life **Cf. Rev. 11:12**, and nobody was around to see how Enoch was taken (probably the same).
  - But since these events are types or representations of the future Rapture, it's possible the unsaved world will watch as the dead are physically resurrected, then as they ascend.
  - And then the world will watch as all living saints at that point are then raptured. This is the position of some very qualified Bible scholars like Dr. Larry Ollison, and multiple others.
  - I don't believe we can be dogmatic one way or another, but it is interesting to think about.
- Bottom line: At the Rapture, the Bible says true believers will get a new body (whether we were dead before that point or alive AT that point). We will be CHANGED!

**NOTE: So, what are our glorified bodies going to be like? THE ANSWER IS NOT SO STRAIGHTFORWARD:**

There is not a specific passage which says, “Here you go! This is what they’re going to be like.” That said, we know our glorified bodies will be like that of Jesus’ resurrected body (**Cf. Phil. 3:20-21, READ**). THIS MUCH IS CLEAR – OUR GLORIFIED BODIES WILL BE LIKE HIS.

Let’s list this out:

1. According to **1 Corinthians 15:42–53** (we studied this passage a few weeks back), our present bodies are perishable, corruptible, decaying, dishonorable, and weak - - all due to sin.
  - ✓ Conversely, our glorified bodies will be imperishable, honorable, and powerful.
2. Our present bodies are “natural” > they are confined to natural processes and senses.
  - ✓ Conversely, our new bodies will be no longer be confined to “natural” laws.
  - ✓ They will also be “spiritual” bodies, at one with the Holy Spirit, and capable of expressions beyond the physical laws which define us now.
3. Our present bodies are weakened by sin and temptations.
  - ✓ Conversely, our glorified bodies will be empowered by the Holy Spirit that indwells us and owns us.
  - ✓ The weaknesses of sin will be done away with. These things will tempt us no more.
4. Our present bodies are subject to the physical laws of gravity, time, space, and all the barriers and needs of those conditions.
  - ✓ Conversely, our glorified bodies will not be hindered by such conditions.
  - ✓ Though our glorified bodies will be solid and have form that can be felt and measured, we will be able to move instantly from one place to another as Jesus did, move through physical barriers, and eat fish (**Cf. Luke 24:36-43; READ**).
5. Our present bodies could not endure being in the presence of Almighty God. In fact, God told Moses in **Exodus 33:20**, “...no man shall see my face and live.”
  - ✓ Conversely, Moses himself, along with Elijah, was able to commune with God directly, and they were able to be in direct fellowship with him (**Matt. 17:2–3**).
  - ✓ This passage says something else. Our glorified bodies will continue to manifest our same features in some manner, but otherwise in a state of perfection.
  - ✓ Jesus was recognizable, but something was different about Him (I suspect it was the same with Moses and Elijah).

**NOTE:** There is a lot of fanciful speculation beyond these things as to what our glorified bodies will be like, but we know they will be powerful, perfect, and perpetual.

**NOTE:** Let's start wrapping up with this topic of those who die without Christ. These are people who die and are **not** saved. What is their full fate?

To answer this, we continue to look to our operative text in **Luke 16:19-31** to understand this tragic situation. Jesus makes several points very clear, and I'll outline them as THE PLACE, THE PERSON, and THE PERPETUITY.

A. THE PLACE –

1. According to **Luke 16:19-31**, this place is called Hades (**vs. 23**).
  - Some translations call this “hell,” but that is inaccurate since true hell is still forthcoming as we will see.
  
2. This place called Hades is – in effect – nothing more than a holding place. It is an interim abode before the final judgement.
  - This final judgment is called “The Great White Throne Judgment” **Cf. Rev. 20:11-15 (read)**, and several points are clear about it:
    - Nobody is missed. If anyone dies without Christ at any point in history, they end up here.
    - It is a time of judgment. A record is kept of every person's deeds during their life. No detail is overlooked.
    - It is an evaluation of whether or not one's name is recorded in The Book of Life > are they saved?
  - “The Great White Throne Judgment” is an event that precedes Hell (**vs. 14**), or the “lake of fire” (AKA “the second death”).
  
3. While Hades is not yet Hell, Hades is still a place of great torment (**Cf. Luke 16:19-31**). Some things we know about it include....
  - It is a place of agony and torment
  - It is a place fire and heat
  - It is a place of great regret
  - It is place of cognition (a little different than “regret”)
  - It is a place that is quarantined and cannot be escaped
  - It is a place of comparison (somehow, one in Hades can perceive the better situation of others)
  - Its role extends into and through the 1,000-yr. Millennial Kingdom
    - It's not till after this point that Hades is done. That's why Hades gets thrown into the lake of fire too. It has reached its end.
  - All said, Hades is an awful place. Nothing good about it.
  
4. Now let's talk about the PERSON. Sadly, it gets much worse for the unbeliever, and for these details, we go back to the outcome of The Great White Throne Judgement
  - NOTE: If you are at TGWTJ, your fate is already determined!

- The point of TGWTJ is God is **Just**. He provides the full evidence for one's terrible judgement.
  - Nobody will question why this happened to them or whether or not God has the sovereign right to make this decision
    - **Philipp. 2:10-11** – “every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord...”
    - The final reality check for everyone will be at TGWTJ
  - The “everyone will confess” element (I believe) includes Satan and his fallen angels.
    - They too are destined for Hell as **Matt. 25:41** makes clear
    - However, there is nothing in Scripture that suggests the devil and his angels face TGWTJ
    - In fact, we see from **Rev. 20:10 (read)** that this is not the case
    - They are not human and so they are not judged the same way as humans are...
5. For the person who dies without saving faith, there is eternal judgment following TGWTJ.
- This is called in various places, including **Rev. 20**, “Hell,” the eternal lake of fire,” “the lake of burning sulfur,” and “the second death.”
    - I think it's called the “second death” because it is another terrible fate BEYOND the first death. It expands upon it.
  - But these are all synonyms for the same place and the same fate, and I believe the Scriptures make several points clear about it:
    - It's a real place. Not fictitious or allegorical. It's definite!
    - It's just as real as heaven (though many more people believe in heaven than in hell)

**QUESTION:** “Is hell eternal?” (By that, I mean, is it a never-ending fate for those who go there?). Let's talk about the PERPETUITY.

**NOTE:** I am aware that there are scholars of God's Word that claim hell is not eternal. I've read articles, essays, and arguments that take this position. I understand their arguments, but I find their case very weak in the face of plainly stated passages of the Bible.

I think the plainly stated facts of Scripture make the self-evident case that hell IS eternal. This is MY position. Consider the following:

- The punishment of hell is described throughout Scripture as “eternal fire” (**Matthew 25:41**),
- As “unquenchable fire” (**Matthew 3:12**),
- As “everlasting contempt” (**Daniel 12:2**),
- As a place where “the fire is not quenched” (**Mark 9:44-49**),
- As “everlasting destruction” (**2 Thessalonians 1:9**),

- As a place where “the smoke of their torment rises forever and ever” (**Revelation 14:10-11**),
- And, as a place where the wicked are “tormented day and night forever and ever” (**Revelation 20:10**).

**NOTE:** These passages, and others, make a clear case for the perpetuity or eternity of Hell. There are three things which are unwise for us to DO or BE at this point:

- I think it is unwise to get hung up on terms like “destruction” and try to confine those meanings to processes we understand in our time today
- I think it is unwise to read too deeply into the fathomless nature of God and attempt to limit His sovereign will by the confines of our human understanding
- I think it is unwise to choose a literal view of the Scriptures except when they tax our tolerances and preferences.

**NOTE:** I cannot explain to my own satisfaction – or to the satisfaction of some others – the nuances and implications of eternal damnation IN hell. But, here’s what I have concluded:

1. Everybody lives forever – By this, I am not referring to what we call “eternal life.” That is ONLY for those who have placed their full faith in Jesus Christ.
  - Here instead, I am referring to “eternal consciousness, awareness, cognition, and experience.” In that respect, everyone “lives forever.”
  - The important difference is some receive eternal blessing and great joy, and others receive eternal torment and suffering.
2. Another way of looking at this (and I’ve shared this perspective from time to time in this class) is everyone gets a new and different body.
  - The righteous (those who are truly saved) get a “glorified body.” We’ve talked about this, and one of the points is it has the ability to exist forever in a state of bliss.
  - The unrighteous (those who are NOT saved) get a body that can endure the eternal torments and anguishes of hell.
    - I cannot explain it better than this, but those who are sent to hell are not burned away by the flames of that fate.
    - They are fully cognizant and aware, they are in full torment, and they are in eternal regret and separation from God, but I believe they do not disappear and essentially evaporate into nothing.
    - If this were the case, then we would need to make a similar argument for Satan and his fallen angels, and I find no passage in Scripture that suggests Satan and his minions will disappear in hell.
    - These notions are not supported in God’s Word as I see the matter, and while I know there are those that choose to see this issue differently than I have stated here, I respectfully disagree with them.

Again, I think the meaning of the plainly stated Scriptures concerning Hell is that it is eternal and never-ending.

**NEXT TIME:** We've spent two weeks now on the question of "What Happens When We Die?" Honestly, I feel like – in many respects – I have only scratched the surface. I hope it's been an exercise that provokes you to personal study. Next time, we will look at our REWARDS. This is a big deal for the believer. We need a strong understanding about our REWARDS.

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The rules are simple. First, teach what IS there. Don't pretend the Bible is not saying what it is saying.

Second, don't teach what is NOT there. Don't force a passage to mean something it really doesn't.

And – number three, if the Bible states it plainly, we should too.

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