

An hourglass with yellowish-brown sand, set against a light blue background. The hourglass is oriented vertically, with the top bulb containing more sand than the bottom bulb. The sand is in the process of falling, creating a sense of time passing. The hourglass is centered on the page, and the text is overlaid on it.

STANLEY M. HORTON

# OUR DESTINY

BIBLICAL TEACHINGS ON THE LAST THINGS

A grayscale image of an hourglass, viewed from a low angle looking up at the top bulb. The hourglass is centered and its vertical lines create a strong sense of perspective. The top bulb is dark, while the bottom bulb is lighter and partially visible at the bottom of the frame.

STANLEY M. HORTON

# OUR DESTINY

BIBLICAL TEACHINGS ON THE LAST THINGS

LOGION®  
P R E S S

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the HOLY BIBLE: NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®; NIV®. Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. All rights reserved.

6th Printing 2016

© 1996 by Gospel Publishing House, Springfield, Missouri 65802. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means-electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise without prior written permission of the copyright owner, except brief quotations used in connection with reviews in magazines or newspapers.

Logion Press books are published by Gospel Publishing House.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Horton, Stanley M.

Our destiny : biblical teachings on the last things I Stanley M.

Horton.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and indexes.

ISBN: 978-088243-246-5

1. Eschatology. 2. Eschatology-Biblical teaching. I. Title.

BT821.2.H67 1995

236-dc20

95-31343

Printed in the United States of America

Cover by Prodigy Pixel, Springfield, Missouri ([www.prodigypixel.com](http://www.prodigypixel.com))

## Chapter One

---

# Death and the Intermediate State

Part of eschatology deals with the last things with respect to our present life—the question of death and what happens in the intermediate state, the state between death and Christ’s return.<sup>1</sup> Though the Bible has much to say about death, it has comparatively little to say about the afterlife. It is more concerned about how to live this present life in a way that pleases God. God wants us to be ready for Christ’s return and the glories to follow. That is more important than the details of the temporary conditions that presently characterize the afterlife.<sup>2</sup>

### LIFE AND DEATH

#### THE OLD TESTAMENT VIEW

The Old Testament recognizes the brevity and fragility of life. Job in his anguish said, “‘My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle. . . . My life is but a breath’” (Job 7:6-7). David spoke of death as “the way of all the earth” (1 Kings 2:2), observing, “As for man, his days are like grass, he flourishes like a flower of the field; the wind blows over it and it is gone” (Ps. 103:15-16).

---

<sup>1</sup>That is, for the believer. For the unbeliever the intermediate state is the state between death and the final judgment of the Great White Throne. See chap. 7.

<sup>2</sup>Loraine Boettner, *Immortality* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Co., 1956), 91.

---

**Chapter 1**  
**Death**  
**and the**  
**Intermediate**  
**State**

On the other hand, the Old Testament encourages a healthy optimism, putting more emphasis on life as God's gift to be enjoyed along with His blessings (Ps. 128:5-6).<sup>3</sup> Long life was considered a special blessing from God (Ps. 91:16). Suicide was extremely rare. Death was to be avoided as long as possible. In the Law, God set before Israel a choice: Loving obedience would mean life and blessing; disobedience and the rebellion of idolatry would bring death and destruction (Deut. 30:15-20). This was true even when King Saul committed suicide, for the Bible says, "Saul died because he was unfaithful to the LORD. . . . So the LORD put him to death" (1 Chron. 10:13-14). God has the ultimate control over life and death; however, He allows intermediate causes, even our own carelessness, willfulness, or foolishness, to shorten or terminate life.

At the same time, death is in the world as a result of sin and is inevitable for all, for all have sinned (Gen. 2:17; 3:19,22-23; Rom. 3:23; 5:12; 6:23). This was recognized by the time of Enosh, whose name means "mortal one." The knowledge that everyone would have to die had a good effect initially, for "at that time men began to call on the name of the Lord" (Gen. 4:26). The godly in the Old Testament continued to follow that example as they looked again and again to the Lord to protect them from death and lengthen their lives. Death was considered an enemy, bringing sorrow usually expressed in loud wailing and deep mourning (Matt. 9:23; Luke 8:52). Even so, the mourning was for the loss of the bodily presence of the loved one, for, as Solomon wrote, "The spirit returns to God who gave it" (Eccles. 12:7).

---

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Robert Martyn-Achard, *From Death to Life: A Study of the Development of the Doctrine of the Resurrection in the Old Testament* (Edinburgh, Scotland: Oliver & Boyd, 1960), 3-5.

## THE NEW TESTAMENT VIEW

The New Testament recognizes that death entered the world through sin, and because all have sinned, death comes to all (Rom. 5:12). It brings an end to our opportunity to make decisions that will affect our eternal future (Heb. 9:27; cf. Eph. 5:15-16; Col. 4:5).<sup>4</sup> The New Testament also looks at death as an enemy, "the last enemy," which will not be destroyed until the final judgment (1 Cor. 15:26; Rev. 20:14). However, for the believer, Jesus' victory over the devil has set free "those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death" (Heb. 2:14-15). Death is no longer to be feared! "God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.' So we say with confidence, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?'" (Heb. 13:5-6). Death has lost its sting (1 Cor. 15:56-57).

Even though the natural body inevitably wastes away, inwardly believers "are being renewed day by day" (2 Cor. 4:16). Consequently, we can face death and be "more than conquerors through him who loved us," for "neither death, nor life, . . . nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:36-39). Death does not break our communion with our Lord. We may sorrow at the death of loved ones because of our personal loss, but we do not "grieve like the rest of men [fallen, unbelieving humankind], who have no hope" (1 Thess. 4:13).

For unbelievers, death is a shattering experience and brings an end to all their hopes and dreams and to all they have lived and worked for. Because in this life they have remained "dead in . . . transgressions and sins" (Eph. 2:1), physical death also brings an end to their opportunities to find Christ and to obtain eternal life and reward in heaven. Nothing remains

---

**Chapter 1**  
**Death**  
**and the**  
**Intermediate**  
**State**

---

<sup>4</sup>Thomas C. Oden, *Life in the Spirit*, vol. 3, *Systematic Theology* (San Francisco: Harper, HarperCollins Publications, 1992), 478-79.

---

**Chapter 1**  
**Death**  
**and the**  
**Intermediate**  
**State**

for them but the continued effects of sin and evil that they will suffer in hell.

There will, however, be degrees of punishment in hell, just as there will be degrees of reward in heaven (Luke 12:47-48; 1 Cor. 15:41-42; cf. Matt. 23:15; Heb. 10:29). The degrees of punishment refer to the intensity of punishment, not the length of time, for those who die in their sins are eternally lost.<sup>5</sup>

Faith in Christ brings a new attitude. Death robs nothing from believers that they have lived and longed for. As the apostle Paul said, "To me to live is Christ and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21); that is, to die would mean gain in Christ, more Christ—and that is better by far than anything in this life (Phil. 1:23). Paul was "already being poured out like a drink offering" (Phil. 2:17; 2 Tim. 4:6), an offering giving glory to God. His death, therefore, was not a defeat, but a "departure" (Gk. *exodos*), like the exodus from Egypt, a triumphant deliverance—a way out that leads into a better country than the promised land of Canaan (Heb. 11:16).<sup>6</sup> Paul expected to go directly into the presence of Christ and to experience joy and peace beyond anything we know in this life (Rom. 8:38-39; Phil. 1:23; cf. Luke 16:22; 23:43).

#### OLD TESTAMENT TEACHING

Though much of what we know about life after death was not revealed until New Testament times, the Old Testament does hold hope for life after death. Most Old Testament Israelites seem to have had at least a vague idea of the afterlife. But because the emphasis is on serving God in this life some scholars say that most Israelites did not believe in an afterlife at all. This would be very strange and quite contrary to all the culture around them. The Egyptians made great preparations for what they believed

---

<sup>5</sup>See chap. 8, pp. 227-233.

<sup>6</sup>Dale Moody, *The Hope of Glory* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), 55.



would occur in the afterlife. They also believed in judgment after death. In the tombs of the Valley of the Kings, across the Nile from Luxor, I saw paintings on the walls that depicted people coming before the gods, one line going away looking happy, another going away upside down—their heads cut off. Every Canaanite burial included a lamp, a jar of oil, and a jar of food.<sup>7</sup> Israelites, however, simply wrapped the body in linen, anointed it with spices, and laid it in a tomb or buried it in a grave. This did not mean any less of a belief in an afterlife, for they spoke of the spirit going to a place called *Sh'e'ol*<sup>8</sup> or into the presence of God (Ps. 23:6).

If the Israelites really did not believe in an afterlife, the Bible would certainly have drawn attention to this.<sup>9</sup> Instead, Solomon recognized that God has “set eternity in the hearts of men [humankind]” (Eccles. 3:11). This implies we are made for eternity and, therefore, though we can enjoy the good things He gives us, we cannot be satisfied with them. Unless deadened by sin, our very being cries out for eternal fellowship with God.

Another phrase indicates the Old Testament saints expected an afterlife. God told Moses, after Moses went up the mountain (Mount Nebo in the Abarim range) and looked across to the Promised Land, “You too will be gathered to your people, as your brother Aaron was” (Num. 27:13). Aaron, however, was buried at Mount Hor, and no one knows where

---

<sup>7</sup>I observed this while taking part in an archaeological expedition at Dothan where several Canaanite family tombs were explored, some of them including as many as five layers of burials over a period of two hundred years.

<sup>8</sup>Some derive *Sh'e'ol* from *Sha'al*, “to ask,” indicating a place of judgment. Others derive it from *Sha'al*, “to be hollow or deep,” or from *Sha'ah*, “to lie desolate.” See Martyn-Achard, *From Death to Life*, 37.

<sup>9</sup>The words of the Teacher (Solomon) during his backslidden state, when he looked on life as meaningless and said, “Who knows” (Eccles. 3:21), were not characteristic of Israelite thinking.



---

**Chapter 1**  
**Death**  
**and the**  
**Intermediate**  
**State**

God buried Moses (Num. 20:27-28; Deut. 34:1,5-6). Therefore, being “gathered to one’s people” can hardly refer to the grave. The phrase also implies that “his people” were still in existence, not annihilated, not nonentities, as Jesus himself pointed out (Luke 20:38).

THE PLACE OF THE AFTERLIFE

In the Old Testament the place of the afterlife for the wicked is most often called *Shē’ol* (usually translated “hell” or “the grave”).<sup>10</sup> It is also identified with *‘avaddon*, “Abaddon, the place of destruction” (Job 26:6; 31:12; Ps. 88:11; Prov. 27:20), and *bor*, “the pit,” literally, a cistern, but used metaphorically as the entrance to *Shē’ol* or as a synonym for *Shē’ol* itself (Ps. 30:3; Isa. 14:15; Ezek. 31:14). When translated “hell” (KJV), however, it is not a place where Satan has his headquarters, nor is it controlled by Satan. God rules it (1 Sam. 2:6; Ps. 139:8; Amos 9:2).

*Shē’ol Not the Grave.* Because *Shē’ol*, “the pit,” “the grave,” “destruction,” and “death” are sometimes parallel in grammatical construction (e.g., Pss. 30:3; 88:11-12), some say both *Shē’ol* and “the pit” always mean “the grave.”<sup>11</sup> However, when the Bible speaks of *graves* in an unmistakable way, as when the Israelites asked Moses, “‘Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die?’” (Exod. 14:11), another word, *qever*, is normally used. When Jacob thought Joseph was torn to pieces and obviously not in a grave, Jacob still thought he was in *Shē’ol* (Gen. 37:35). The Bible also pictures people as having some kind of existence in *Shē’ol*

---

<sup>10</sup>The KJV translates *Shē’ol* as “hell” thirty-one times, as “the grave” thirty-one times, and as “the pit” three times. The NIV usually translates it as “the grave,” sometimes as “death,” “the depths,” or “the realm of death,” but notes that the Hebrew is “Sheol.”

<sup>11</sup>Martyn-Achard calls *Shē’ol* “a sort of vast grave of which the individual tombs are merely particular manifestations,” *From Death to Life*, 38.

(Isa. 14:9-10; Ezek. 32:21). God acts powerfully and intervenes in *Sb'e'ol* (Ps. 139:8; Amos 9:2), and it can do nothing against Him (Job 26:6). Consequently, others limit it to the place of the afterlife and say it never means the grave.<sup>12</sup>

Three passages (Pss. 6:5; 115:17-18; Isa. 38:17-19) are often cited to show that *Sb'e'ol* is the grave.<sup>13</sup> Psalm 6:5 reads, "No one remembers you when he is dead. Who praises you from the grave [Heb. *Sb'e'ol*]?" The remembering is, however, parallel to the praising. The same word (Heb. *zakhar*) is used of a solemn naming of God among the people (Exod. 3:15). It speaks of an active reminding here on earth, which ends when a person dies. In other words, when the spirit goes to *Sb'e'ol* that person's praise and testimony to the people here on earth ceases.

Psalm 115:17 speaks of the dead going down into silence. This is from the point of view of people on the earth. However, the Psalmist goes on to say, "It is we who extol the LORD both now and forevermore" (v. 18), which implies a better hope and certainly does not rule out praising the Lord in the afterlife.

King Hezekiah in his prayer stated, "In your love you kept me from the pit of destruction: you have put all my sins behind my back. For the grave [Heb. *Sb'e'ol*] cannot praise you, death cannot sing your praise; those who go down to the pit cannot hope for your faithfulness" (Isa. 38:17-18). Here Hezekiah was concerned about his testimony and its results among the people. God's forgiveness of his sins kept him from going to the place of punishment. Now that he was healed, he would see God's faithfulness—and he did—for fifteen additional years (Isa. 38:5).

---

<sup>12</sup>Ernest Swing Williams, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 3 (Springfield, Mo.: Gospel Publishing House, 1953), 178; George Eldon Ladd, *The Last Things: An Eschatology for Laymen* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1978), 32.

<sup>13</sup>James Oliver Buswell, Jr., *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1963), 317.

---

Chapter 1  
Death  
and the  
Intermediate  
State

Actually, *Shē'ol* is often described as a depth that contrasts with the height of heaven (Job 11:8; Ps. 139:8; Amos 9:2). Often the context refers to the anger or wrath of God (Job 14:13; Pss. 6:1,5; 88:3,7; 89:46,48), and sometimes to both wrath and fire (Deut. 32:22). In some cases the references are brief, and it seems it is treated simply as the place or the state of the dead. In it the dead are called *repha'im*, or what we might call "ghosts" (Isa. 14:9; 26:14).<sup>14</sup> Other passages refer to some of the dead as *'elohim*, in the sense of "powerful spirit beings" (1 Sam. 28:13).<sup>15</sup>

*Shē'ol Translated as Hadēs.* Where the New Testament quotes Old Testament passages referring to *Shē'ol*, it translates the word *Hadēs*, which it sees not as the vague place pagan Greeks talked about but as a place of punishment (Luke 10:15; 16:23-24; cf. Rev. 6:8; 20:13).<sup>16</sup> Peter also describes the wicked dead from Noah's day as "spirits in prison" (1 Pet. 3:19-20).<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup>*Repha'im* possibly comes from the root *raphab*, "to become slack or feeble," "relax," or "fade," though others connect it with the idea of "awesome" or "wise." See Martyn-Achard, *From Death to Life*, 34.

<sup>15</sup>*Elohim*, depending on its context, is used of the one true God, of pagan gods, of angels, and of departed heroes.

<sup>16</sup>In addition to *Hadēs* as a place of punishment, 2 Pet. 2:4 speaks of *Tartarus* as a place of punishment for fallen angels. This seems to be in the depth of *Hadēs*. See also Acts 2:27 where Peter quotes Ps. 16:10, clearly understanding *Shē'ol* as *Hadēs*.

<sup>17</sup>First Pet. 3:19-20 is a difficult passage. Some in the early centuries of the Church supposed that Jesus preached the gospel to people in *Hadēs* and gave them a second chance for salvation. Heb. 9:27 contradicts the idea of a second chance. Augustine and many reformers taught that Jesus preached through Noah to the people of Noah's day before the Flood, people who are now in *Hadēs*. A more modern view is that Jesus preached to fallen angels in *Hadēs*, not to offer them salvation, but simply to declare His victory. Some believe Jude 9 supports the latter view.

*Sh'e'ol a Place for the Wicked.* In view of this it is important to note that the Old Testament does not teach that everyone goes to *Sh'e'ol*. It is true that Job spoke of death as a *beth mo'ed*, a "meeting house" for all living (Job 30:23). But he was simply referring to the fact that all die, not that all go to the same place when they die.

Some Old Testament saints had a better hope. Enoch and Elijah were taken directly to heaven (Gen. 5:24; 2 Kings 2:11; Heb. 11:5). When David felt the wrath of God because of his sin, he cried out for mercy to escape going to *Sh'e'ol* (e.g., Ps. 6:1-5,9). But when his faith rose, his hope was to "dwell in the house of the LORD forever" (Ps. 23:6; cf. Ps. 17:15).

Though the New Testament identifies Psalm 16:10 with the death and resurrection of Jesus, the verse that follows it indicates that the path of life made known by God leads to joy in His presence and eternal pleasures at His right hand. Psalm 49:15 says, after considering the lot of the wicked, who are headed for *Sh'e'ol*, "God, however, will redeem my soul from the hand of *Sh'e'ol*, for He will take me [to himself]" (author's translation). That is, *Sh'e'ol* is personified as trying to grab him and take him down to the place of punishment, but God redeems and rescues him so that he escapes from having to go to *Sh'e'ol* at all and instead goes into the presence of God.<sup>18</sup>

*Sh'e'ol a Place of Punishment.* Several passages clearly indicate that *Sh'e'ol* is a place of punishment for the wicked (Ps. 9:17; cf. Num. 16:33; Job 26:6; Pss. 30:17-18; 49:13-15; 55:15; 88:11-12; Prov. 5:5; 7:27; 9:18; 15:10-11; 27:20; Isa. 38:18).<sup>19</sup> God said of idolaters, "A fire has been kindled by my wrath, one

---

<sup>18</sup>See Martyn-Achard, *From Death to Life*, 155.

<sup>19</sup>R. H. Charles, *A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life: In Israel, in Judaism, and in Christianity*, 2d ed., rev. and enl. (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1913), 33-35. He accounts for this by referring to "the biblical doctrine that death is the issue of sin."

**Chapter 1**  
**Death**  
**and the**  
**Intermediate**  
**State**

that burns to the realm of *Sh'e'ol* below'" (Deut. 32:22). "The wicked return [change their total orientation] to *Sh'e'ol*, all the nations [Heb. *goyim*, "peoples," especially pagans] that *forget God*" (Ps. 9:17). "Let death take my enemies by surprise; let them go down alive to *Sh'e'ol*, for evil finds lodging among them" (Ps. 55:15; cf. 55:23). "My soul is full of trouble and my life draws near *Sh'e'ol*. I am counted among those who go down to the pit. . . . Your wrath lies heavily upon me" (Ps. 88:3-4,7). "Her house [the prostitute's house] is a highway to *Sh'e'ol*, leading down to the [dark] chambers of death" (Prov. 7:27). "The woman Folly is loud . . . calling out to those who pass by. . . . 'Let all who are simple come in here!' she says to those who lack judgment. . . . But little do they know that the dead are there, and her guests are in the *depths of Sh'e'ol*" (Prov. 9:13,15-16,18). When God pronounced judgment on the city of Tyre, He compared it to "those who go down to the pit," and said, "I will bring you to a horrible end" (Ezek. 26:19-21).

Then when judgment comes on the hordes of Egypt, "From *within Sh'e'ol* the mighty leaders will say of Egypt and her allies, 'They have come down and they lie with the uncircumcised, with those killed by the sword'" (Ezek. 32:18-21). In fact, all those Ezekiel mentions as being in *Sh'e'ol* are wicked.<sup>20</sup> When Korah gathered his followers in opposition to Moses and Aaron, God told Moses to warn the assembly, "'Move back from the tents of these wicked men! Do not touch anything belonging to them, or you will be swept away because of all their sins.' . . . And the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them. . . . They went down alive into *Sh'e'ol*" (Num. 16:23-33).

On the other hand, when the spiritist medium at Endor said she saw a spirit coming up out of *the*

---

<sup>20</sup>Daniel I. Block, "Ezekiel's Vision of Death and Afterlife," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 2 (1992): 126.

ground (Heb. *ba'arets*) looking like an old man wearing a robe (1 Sam. 28:13-14), it may be referring to his body rising from the grave and does not prove his soul was in an underworld any more than the fact Jesus called Lazarus from the tomb proves it (John 12:17).<sup>21</sup>

The psalmist Asaph wrote that, in contrast to the destruction of the wicked, "You guide me with your counsel," that is, while on earth, "and afterward you will take me into glory," that is, into heaven (Ps. 73:18-19, 24-26; cf. Pss. 16:9, 11; 17:15).<sup>22</sup> Solomon also declared that "the path of life leads upward [to the place above] for the wise [that is, for those who fear the Lord] in order to avoid *Sh'e'ol* beneath" (Prov. 15:24, author's translation).<sup>23</sup> God's message to Balaam made him recognize that the death of the righteous is better than the death of the wicked (Num. 23:10).

#### TWO COMPARTMENTS IN *SH'E'OL*

Possibly because of the influence of Greek ideas and possibly also because Jacob, mourning, spoke of going down to *Sh'e'ol* to his son Joseph, later Jews, considering Jacob and Joseph righteous, reasoned that both the righteous and the wicked went to *Sh'e'ol*. So they concluded there must be a special place in *Sh'e'ol* for the righteous. This would call for divisions in *Sh'e'ol*: a place for the righteous as well as

---

<sup>21</sup>William Grenough Thayer Shedd, *The Doctrine of Endless Punishment* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1886; repr. Minneapolis: Klock & Klock Christian Publishers, 1980), 67. For more about the woman at Endor and Samuel see pp. 61-62.

<sup>22</sup>The majority of Bible scholars hold that Ps. 73:24 means that at death "the righteous will be received to the presence of Yahweh and will dwell in His glory." Martyn-Achard, *From Death to Life*, 163.

<sup>23</sup>"Upward" (Heb. *l'e'ma'e'lab*) is more literally "to the [place] above." "To keep him from" is a phrase that is used of avoiding something altogether (as when Job "shunned" evil [1:1]). Thus, *Sh'e'ol* in Prov. 15:24 cannot mean the grave, for even the wise who die cannot avoid the grave.

---

Chapter 1  
Death  
and the  
Intermediate  
State

for the wicked (1 Enoch 22:1-14).<sup>24</sup> However, Jacob at that time refused to be comforted, no doubt thinking that both he and Joseph were somehow under God's judgment. There is no record of Jacob's seeking the Lord again until after he received the news that Joseph was alive (Gen. 45:28 through 46:1). Therefore, Jacob probably considered *Sb<sup>e</sup>ol* a place of punishment. Actually, no passage in the Old Testament clearly necessitates dividing *Sb<sup>e</sup>ol* into two compartments, one for punishment, one for blessing.<sup>25</sup>

Dr. William Shedd (1820-94) gave a classic argument against the idea of two compartments. He pointed out:

[*Sb<sup>e</sup>ol*] is a fearful, punitive evil, mentioned by the sacred writers to deter men from sin, . . . and any interpretation that essentially modifies this must therefore be erroneous. [For it to be an] alarm for the wicked, [it must pertain] to them alone. If it is shared with the good, its power to terrify is gone. . . . It is no answer to this to say that Sheol contains two divisions, Hades and Paradise, and that the wicked go to the former. This is not in the Biblical text, or in its connection. The wicked who are threatened with Sheol . . . are not threatened with a part . . . but with the whole. . . . Sheol is one, undivided, and homogeneous in the inspired representation. . . . The Biblical Sheol is always an evil, and nothing but an evil. . . . To say that "the wicked shall be turned into

---

<sup>24</sup>This is indicated in the pseudepigraphal book of 1 Enoch (22:1-14). Some rabbis said the compartments of the righteous were separated from the compartments of the wicked by only a handbreadth; others said by only a fingerbreadth. This contrasts with the "great chasm" Abraham mentioned in Jesus' account of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:26).

<sup>25</sup>The pseudepigraphal book of Enoch does speak of four divisions in *Sb<sup>e</sup>ol*: one for martyrs, one for the righteous who die a natural death, one for sinners who suffered in this life, and one for sinners who did not. See H. A. Guy, *The New Testament Doctrine of the "Last Things": A Study of Eschatology* (London: Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, 1948), 19; Charles, *A Critical History*, 33-34.



Sheol" (Ps. 9:17), implies that the righteous shall not be; just as to say that "they who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ shall be punished with everlasting destruction" (2 Thess. 1:8-9), implies that those who do obey it shall not be. To say that the "steps" of the prostitute "take hold on Sheol" (Prov. 5:5), is the same as to say that "whoremongers shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone" (Rev. 21:8). To "deliver the soul of a child from Sheol" by parental discipline (Prov. 23:14), is not to deliver him either from the grave or from the spirit-world, but from the future torment that awaits the morally undisciplined.<sup>26</sup>

#### NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING

The New Testament emphasis is on the resurrection of the body rather than on what happens immediately after death. Death was never God's original intention for humankind and ultimately "there will be no more death" (Rev. 21:4); death will be "swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15:54). Although still an enemy,<sup>27</sup> death is no longer to be feared by the saved (1 Cor. 15:55-57; Heb. 2:15). For the believer, to live is Christ and to die is gain; that is, to die means a closer relationship with Christ, in effect, more of Him (Phil. 1:21). Thus, to die and go to be with Christ is far better than remaining in the present body, though we must remain as long as God sees that it is necessary (Phil. 1:23-24). Then death will bring a rest from (that is, a ceasing of) our earthly labors and sufferings and an entrance into glory (2 Cor. 4:17; cf. 2 Pet. 1:10-11; Rev. 14:13).

Jesus in Luke 16:19-31 describes an unnamed rich man<sup>28</sup> who dressed like a king and every day enjoyed a banquet complete with entertainment. At his gate

---

<sup>26</sup>Shedd, *The Doctrine of Endless Punishment*, 21-25.

<sup>27</sup>Erickson suggests that death is not natural to mankind. Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985), 1170-71.

<sup>28</sup>"Dives" is the transliteration of a Latin common noun, which means simply "a rich man"; it is not a proper name.

---

Chapter 1  
Death  
and the  
Intermediate  
State

was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores, who wanted the scraps of food that would be swept out the door for the street dogs. These scavengers, unclean animals under the Law, licked his sores, making him unclean. Lazarus had only one thing in his favor—his name,<sup>29</sup> which means “God is my help” and indicates that in spite of everything he kept his faith in God.

At death the angels carried him away to Abraham’s side,<sup>30</sup> which was certainly a place of blessing, for he received comfort there. The rich man after death found himself in agony in the fires of *Hadēs*. When he looked up, that is, to heaven (cf. Matt. 8:11–12; Luke 13:28–29), he saw Abraham and Lazarus “far away.” But it was too late for him to receive help, for Abraham said, “Between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us” (Luke 16:26). In other words, we see that the destinies of both the wicked and the godly cannot be changed after death.<sup>31</sup> Some treat this account as a parable, since it follows a series of parables, but even in His parables Jesus never said anything that was misleading or contrary to the truth.<sup>32</sup>

The difference in the state of the rich man and that of Lazarus also seems to imply that at their death a judgment was made with respect to their destiny. Traditionally this has been called “particular judgment” in contrast to the judgment seat of Christ after

---

<sup>29</sup>Lazarus is a Greek form of “Eliezer.”

<sup>30</sup>“Bosom” (KJV) was used of eating together while stretched out on the same couch (cf. John 13:23). It implies close communion and probably a place of honor.

<sup>31</sup>Origen, a few mystics, some Anabaptists, Friedrich Schleiermacher, and Jehovah’s Witnesses are among those who hold to a second chance for salvation after death. But Boettner points out that this “depreciates the importance of the present life and . . . extinguishes missionary zeal.” Boettner, *Immortality*, 104–8.

<sup>32</sup>Francis J. Hall, *Eschatology* (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1922), 9.

the Rapture and the Great White Throne Judgment after the Millennium.

#### WITH THE LORD

The apostle Paul's desire was to be not with Abraham, however, but with the Lord. He indicated that as soon as he was away from the body (at death), he would be present with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:6-9; Phil. 1:23). This was Jesus' promise to the dying thief on the cross, "'Today you will be with me in paradise'" (Luke 23:43), implying immediate fellowship.<sup>33</sup> In a vision Paul was caught up to the third heaven, which he also calls paradise (2 Cor. 12:1-5), thus identifying paradise with heaven.<sup>34</sup> There he "heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell" (12:4).<sup>35</sup>

Stephen saw heaven open and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. Whereupon Stephen prayed, "'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit'" (Acts 7:56,59). Clearly, Stephen expected that upon his death, his spirit would be immediately in heaven with Jesus.<sup>36</sup>

Hebrews 8:1-2 also declares that Jesus "sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, and . . . serves in the sanctuary." This is in line with other passages which recognize that there is a

<sup>33</sup>This is very emphatic. The Greek word order is "Today, with me, you will be in paradise!"

<sup>34</sup>Paul seems to have thought of the first heaven as the atmosphere surrounding the earth, the second heaven as that of the stars, the third heaven as the heaven of heavens, the place where the throne of God and paradise are. The idea of seven heavens is not found in the Bible, though it became part of later Jewish theology. See Wilbur M. Smith, *The Biblical Doctrine of Heaven* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1968), 167; William O. E. Oesterley, *The Doctrine of the Last Things: Jewish and Christian* (London: John Murray, 1908), 172-73.

<sup>35</sup>"Not permitted" (Gk. *ouk exon*) can also mean "not possible."

<sup>36</sup>John Miley, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2 (New York: Hunt & Eaton, 1893; repr. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1989), 431.

**Chapter 1**  
**Death**  
**and the**  
**Intermediate**  
**State**

special place in heaven where God manifests himself in a special way at His throne (Ps. 103:19; Isa. 57:15; 63:15; 66:1; Matt. 5:34).

Solomon recognized that “the heavens, even the highest heaven,” cannot contain God (1 Kings 8:27), for God is everywhere present “in heaven above and on the earth below” (Deut. 4:39; cf. Josh. 2:11). But many passages show God is able to manifest himself and His glory in specific places, and He does so especially in heaven.<sup>37</sup>

#### A PREPARED PLACE

Jesus speaks of heaven as a prepared place where there is plenty of room (John 14:2), not temporary but “eternal dwellings” (Luke 16:9). It is a place of joy, of fellowship with Christ and other believers, and resounds with worship and singing (Rev. 4:10-11; 5:8-14; 14:2-3; 15:2-4). There they “rest from their labor” (Rev. 14:13). “Rest,” however, does not mean sleep, nor being inert or idle. In the Bible, rest “carries with it the idea of *satisfaction in labor, or joy in accomplishment*,” thus suggesting work, worship, and freedom from the effects of all that is evil.<sup>38</sup>

Paul longed to be with Christ (Phil. 1:23) and, because “our citizenship is in heaven,” he was eager for Jesus to return and “transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body” (Phil. 3:20-21). Because the resurrection body will be immortal, not subject to death or decay, and because Paul seems to withdraw from the idea of being a naked spirit (2 Cor. 5:3-4), some teach that in the intermediate state between death and resurrection believers will be disembodied spirits who, however, will be comforted by being with Christ.

Others teach that at death believers receive a temporary “heavenly” body, noting that Moses and Elijah appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration with

<sup>37</sup>Smith, *The Biblical Doctrine of Heaven*, 50, 61.

<sup>38</sup>Boettner, *Immortality*, 92-93.

some kind of a body and that white robes were given to the souls of the martyrs in heaven (Luke 9:30-32; Rev. 6:9-11). However, Paul was expecting to go to be with the Lord, and being absent from the body hardly means going into another body.<sup>39</sup> Further, the resurrection of the body is clearly at the time of Christ's coming for His church (Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Thess. 4:16-17).<sup>40</sup>

Whatever the case, it is clear that we shall know each other in heaven, just as the rich man knew who Abraham was.

## OTHER VIEWS OF THE AFTERLIFE

### SOUL SLEEP

Because Jesus spoke of Lazarus and the daughter of Jairus as "sleeping" (Matt. 9:24; John 11:11), and because Paul referred to death as "sleep" (1 Cor. 15:6,18,20,51; 1 Thess. 4:13-15; 5:10), some, especially the Christian Advent Church and the Seventh-Day Adventists, have developed a theory of psychopannychy, or soul sleep.<sup>41</sup> Jesus and Paul used "sleep" simply as a figure, however, to indicate that death was not to be feared but was an entrance into

---

<sup>39</sup>Moody, *The Hope of Glory*, 65; William W. Stevens, *Doctrines of the Christian Religion* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1967), 378-79; Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, trans. John R. De Witt (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975), 505.

<sup>40</sup>Ladd, *Last Things*, 35-36.

<sup>41</sup>See Boettner, *Immortality*, 109-113; Smith, *The Biblical Doctrine of Heaven*, 156. Seventh-Day Adventists modify this by saying that "death is not complete annihilation; it is only a state of temporary unconsciousness while the person awaits the resurrection." Ministerial Association General Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists, *Seventh-Day Adventists Believe* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review & Herald Publishing Association, 1989), 352.

---

**Chapter 1**  
**Death**  
**and the**  
**Intermediate**  
**State**

quietness and rest, which Jesus also identified with paradise.<sup>42</sup>

Oscar Cullmann, reacting to Greek ideas of the immortality of the soul, taught that the dead were indeed asleep, but “in proximity to Christ.”<sup>43</sup> They would awake refreshed, as a person does who has had a pleasant dream. Most of those who teach soul sleep, however, go to an extreme. They say that the soul, or spirit, is not simply in a state of stupor after death, but that the total person is dead and the soul or spirit goes out of existence until recreated at the resurrection.<sup>44</sup> Some compare this to switching off a light bulb. The light is out until its circuit is reconnected by putting the switch in the on position. But the light that comes on again is not the same light. If the “soul ceased to exist at death, and a new soul were created at the resurrection[,] it could not possibly be the same soul, and could not justly be rewarded or punished for what the former soul had done.”<sup>45</sup>

That God is “not the God of the dead but of the living” also means that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were (and are) alive, not out of existence (Matt. 22:32). Then, Moses and Elijah at the Mount of Transfiguration knew what was going on and talked to Jesus “about his departure [Gk. *exodos*, including His death, resurrection, and ascension], which he was

---

<sup>42</sup>Ray Summers, *The Life Beyond* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1959), 9.

<sup>43</sup>Oscar Cullmann, *The Immortality of the Soul, or Resurrection of the Dead?* (London: Epworth Press, 1958), 11, 48-57.

<sup>44</sup>Victor Paul Wierwille, founder of the cult The Way, taught that “when you are dead, you are dead,” and that there is no one in heaven now but Jesus Christ. Passages used as proof texts for soul sleep (Pss. 6:5; 13:3; 115:17; 146:3-4; Eccles. 9:5-6; Matt. 9:24; John 11:11-14; Acts 7:60; 1 Cor. 15:51; 1 Thess. 4:13-14) all deal with the dead body as it appears from the standpoint of the ordinary person who is still living. These texts do not deal with what happens to the person who goes to hell or who goes to be with the Lord after death.

<sup>45</sup>Boettner, *Immortality*, 110.

about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem" (Luke 9:31). They understood this would mean something to them as well. Peter used the same word, *exodos*, referring to his death (2 Pet. 1:15), as does Paul (2 Tim. 4:6).

As with the Old Testament saints, and as the Church throughout its history has generally held, death for the believer can only mean entering into the presence of the Lord, not into sleep.<sup>46</sup> When one of the criminals crucified with Jesus said, "Remember me when you come into your kingdom," Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:42-43)—not in sleep, not out of existence.<sup>47</sup>

Paul understood that after death he would be able to feel whether he was a naked spirit or not.<sup>48</sup> "Sleep," therefore, is a term used from our present point of view and can apply only to the body.<sup>49</sup> It is the body that is raised to life in the resurrection (cf. Matt. 27:52).<sup>50</sup> The spirit remains consciously alive. Not only so, the dead are "in Christ" (1 Thess. 4:16; Rev. 14:13), not "enveloped by Him after a quietistic, unproductive fashion," but sharing "after their own degree in his glorified state," with the "certitude of being themselves changed in due time."<sup>51</sup>

Others suppose that after death the person is not out of existence but in a state of stupor. Certainly

---

<sup>46</sup>Smith, *The Biblical Doctrine of Heaven*, 161, 165.

<sup>47</sup>Some who teach soul sleep make Jesus' statement a question. However, the Greek is very emphatic, "This day, with me, you will be in paradise."

<sup>48</sup>Stevens, *Doctrines*, 381.

<sup>49</sup>For a discussion of three Greek verbs translated "sleep," see Thomas R. Edgar, "The Meaning of 'Sleep' in 1 Thessalonians 5:10," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 22:4 (December 1979): 345-47.

<sup>50</sup>See Boettner, *Immortality*, 109-16, for a good discussion of the doctrine of soul sleep; Edgar, "The Meaning of 'Sleep,'" 345-49; Moody, *Hope of Glory*, 67-69.

<sup>51</sup>Geerhardus Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972), 158.



---

**Chapter 1**  
**Death**  
**and the**  
**Intermediate**  
**State**

neither Lazarus, Abraham, nor the rich man were unconscious or in a state of stupor. They knew what was going on, and Lazarus was being "comforted" (Luke 16:25).<sup>52</sup> The Book of Revelation also draws attention to the conscious life and blessing enjoyed by those who are in heaven (5:9; 6:10-11; 7:9-10).

**PURGATORY**

Roman Catholics declare by the authority of their church that all the future elect except special saints and martyrs<sup>53</sup> must go through purgatory (a condition rather than a place) to purify them, rejuvenate them, render them immortal, and prepare them for entrance to heaven.<sup>54</sup> This doctrine has no basis in Scripture. Augustine introduced the idea in the fourth century,<sup>55</sup> but the word "purgatory" was not used until the twelfth century, and the doctrine was not fully worked out until the Council of Trent in the sixteenth century.<sup>56</sup>

Some Catholics speculate that purgatory is nearer to heaven than to hell. Some take the fires as literal, with frightening, ever-intensifying flames, but this is "not part of the dogmatic pronouncements of the

---

<sup>52</sup>Gk. *parakaleitai* implies an atmosphere of encouragement.

<sup>53</sup>Alois Winklhofer, *The Coming of His Kingdom: A Theology of the Last Things*, trans. A. V. Littledale (Freiburg, West Germany: Herder; Montreal: Palm Publishers, 1965), 114.

<sup>54</sup>Some Roman Catholics will admit there is no scriptural support for purgatory, but they say there is nothing in the Bible contrary to the doctrine. Zachary Hayes, "The Purgatorial View," in *Four Views on Hell*, ed. William Crockett (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992), 107. Catholic "tradition commonly appeals to 2 Maccabees 12:38-46." Zachary Hayes, *Visions of the Future: A Study of Christian Eschatology* (Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier, 1985), 112.

<sup>55</sup>Some Catholics claim the idea goes back to Tertullian (A.D. 160-230). Winklhofer, *The Coming of His Kingdom*, 100.

<sup>56</sup>Jacques Le Goff, *Birth of Purgatory*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 3, 41, 61. The Council of Trent said nothing about the nature of the fire, the location of purgatory, or even that it is a place. Hayes, "The Purgatorial View," 113.

Church,” though the Church of Rome has allowed and still allows such teachings to circulate. Others spiritualize the fires or combine them with water as a sort of spiritual sauna. Thus, they say that purgatory is “not a state of horror and misery,” but has “a note of confidence and joy” and “an element of sweetness and hope,” even though the suffering is real. However, the suffering may be intense for some, but “it may be that many souls pass through this purification as through a spring-breeze.”<sup>57</sup>

Augustine also introduced the idea that prayer, good works, and the saying of the Mass would help the dead through their sufferings. Gregory the Great went further and said that the saying of the Mass, as a repetition of Christ’s sacrifice, would release souls from purgatory. By the eleventh century indulgences were made a convenient way to lessen or shorten the sufferings of purgatory.<sup>58</sup> Luther reacted against their misuse, and the misuse of Luther’s day is no longer allowed in Catholic churches.

#### LIMBO

Some Roman Catholics also conjectured that there is a condition called Limbo for unbaptized babies and another Limbo for Old Testament saints, where they suffered temporary punishment until Jesus died.<sup>59</sup> Then the soul of Jesus descended into the Limbo of the Old Testament saints “to introduce them to the

---

<sup>57</sup>Winkelhofer, *The Coming of His Kingdom*, 102, 104, 107–10.

<sup>58</sup>Hans Schwarz, *On the Way to the Future: A Christian View of Eschatology in the Light of Current Trends in Religion, Philosophy, and Science*, rev. ed. (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1979), 181.

<sup>59</sup>Limbo (Lat. *limbus*, “fringe,” “outskirts”) was connected by some with the “spirits in prison” (1 Pet. 3:19). See Boettner, *Immortality*, 102. Boettner, however, takes the preaching to be that done long ago by the Spirit of Christ through Noah to the people of his day who are now “in prison.”

---

**Chapter 1**  
**Death**  
**and the**  
**Intermediate**  
**State**

beatific vision of God,” and since His ascension they have been in heaven.<sup>60</sup>

Limbo (for infants) is “now generally rejected” in favor of the idea that infants and the severely retarded will, after death, be presented with God’s offer of eternal life and allowed to accept or reject it.<sup>61</sup> One Roman Catholic professor points out that “the hierarchical magisterium has offered no clear, definitive position on the matter of limbo” and suggests the doctrine should be “removed from the map of eschatology.”<sup>62</sup>

#### SPIRITISM

Spiritism (often called spiritualism) teaches that mediums can communicate with the dead, usually through a “control” spirit, and that the spirits of the dead remain in the vicinity of the earth.<sup>63</sup> “There is almost universal insistence that the supraterrrestrial world is composed of seven or eight spheres, each a little higher than its predecessor.”<sup>64</sup> This is contrary to the assurance that at death the believer is “present with the Lord.”

The Bible emphatically warns against any attempt to communicate with the dead. “Do not turn to me-

---

<sup>60</sup>Joseph Pohle, *Eschatology, or the Catholic Doctrine of the Last Things: A Dogmatic Treatise*, English version by Arthur Preuss (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1971; repr. from 1917), 26-27.

<sup>61</sup>Francis X. Cleary, “Roman Catholicism,” in *How Different Religions View Death and Afterlife*, ed. Christopher J. Johnson and Marsha G. McGee (Philadelphia: Charles Press, Publishers, 1991), 271.

<sup>62</sup>Hayes, *Visions*, 120.

<sup>63</sup>“There is no satisfactory proof that the mediums actually do contact those spirits. . . . Even the most famous mediums have been detected in fraud.” Also, the witch at Endor was very surprised at Samuel’s appearance. God took over and used this occasion to pronounce judgment upon King Saul (1 Sam. 28:12). Boettner, *Immortality*, 138, 149.

<sup>64</sup>G. W. Butterworth, *Spiritualism and Religion* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1944), 129.

diums or seek out spiritists, for you will be defiled by them. I am the LORD your God” (Lev. 19:31). “I will set my face against the person who turns to mediums and spiritists to prostitute himself by following them, and I will cut him off from his people” (Lev. 20:6). Any reliance on spiritist mediums is a rejection of God’s guidance as well as any relationship to Him. Thus the Law called for mediums to be put to death (Lev. 20:27).

The practices of spiritists and mediums were among the detestable ways of the nations that called for God’s judgment (Deut. 18:9-12). Isaiah referred to these teachings of the Law when he said,

When men tell you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God? *Why consult the dead on behalf of the living?* To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn. Distressed and hungry, they will roam through the land; when they are famished, they will become enraged and, looking upward, will curse their king and their God. Then they will look toward the earth and see only distress and darkness and fearful gloom, and they will be thrust into utter darkness (Isa. 8:19-22).

Thus, spiritists and those who consult them are identified as rebels who will come under the judgment of God.<sup>65</sup>

This was true of King Saul when he consulted the spiritist medium at Endor (1 Sam. 28:4-25). Because Saul was estranged from the Lord, the sight of the Philistine army filled him with terror. He tried to get a word from the Lord, but the Lord did not answer him personally, not through dreams, nor by the Urim of the priests, nor through prophets. Even though Saul had previously outlawed spiritism and sentenced

---

<sup>65</sup>René Pache, *The Future Life*, trans. Helen I. Needham (Chicago: Moody Press, 1962), 77.

---

**Chapter 1**  
**Death**  
**and the**  
**Intermediate**  
**State**

spiritists to death, he now turned to a pagan spiritist medium for aid.

The Bible says, "The woman saw Samuel" (v. 12). Samuel's appearance before her has been understood in various ways: Some suppose the woman simply saw Samuel in her mind and then by some sort of mental telepathy discerned Saul's thoughts. Others suppose a demon appeared impersonating Samuel.<sup>66</sup> However, she was startled by Samuel's appearance; it was obviously something different from what she was used to. In view of her amazed and terrified reaction it seems more likely that the woman was expecting a demonic spirit, whereas God actually permitted the spirit of Samuel to appear in order to confirm to Saul God's sentence of defeat and death. What Samuel said accords with his previous prophecies (1 Sam. 15:26,28). In fulfillment, Israel's armies were defeated. Then Saul committed suicide (1 Sam. 31:4). Thus, there is nothing in this account to indicate that spiritist mediums can really communicate with the dead.

Jesus also made it clear that the rich man in *Hadēs* was unable to communicate with his five brothers who were still living, and his request that someone from the dead be sent was denied (Luke 16:27-30).

#### REINCARNATION

A number of Eastern religions, because of their cyclic view of history that denies a beginning and an end, teach reincarnation: At death a person is given a new identity and is born into another life as an animal, a human being, or even a god. They hold that a person's actions generate a force, *karma*, that demands transmigration and determines the destiny of

---

<sup>66</sup>Ralph W. Klein, *1 Samuel*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 10 (Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1983), 271-73.

that person in the next existence.<sup>67</sup> Thus, by going from one existence to another, a person is supposed to gradually purify and save himself or herself. In India they suppose this may take as many as six hundred thousand reincarnations.<sup>68</sup>

The Bible, however, makes it clear that “now is the day of salvation” (2 Cor. 6:2). We cannot save ourselves by our good works. God has provided a full salvation through Jesus Christ that atones for our sin and cancels our guilt. We do not need another life to try to take care of sins and mistakes of this life or any supposed former existences. Furthermore, “Man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation [including the full blessings of our inheritance] to those who are waiting for him” (Heb. 9:27-28).

It is evident also that the judgment of believers deals only with “the things done while in the body” during this present life (2 Cor. 5:10). Nor do unbelievers have a second chance after death (Rom. 2:5-6,8; cf. Rom. 1:18). At death a person’s destiny is fixed (Matt. 13:42; 24:51; 25:30; Luke 16:19-31; John 8:24; 2 Cor. 5:10; 6:2; Heb. 9:27).

It is clear also that when Moses and Elijah appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration they were still Moses and Elijah. Jesus Christ also retained His identity after His death and resurrection. He said, “Look at my hands and my feet. *It is I myself!* Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have” (Luke 24:39). “This same Jesus”—not some reincarnation—will come back from heaven to earth again (Acts 1:11). We shall know Him, and we shall know each other.

---

<sup>67</sup>See Anne C. Klein, “Buddhism,” and Swami Adiswarananda, “Hinduism,” in *How Different Religions View Death*, ed. Johnson and McGee, 85-108, 157-84.

<sup>68</sup>Pache, *Future Life*, 92.

---

**Chapter 1**  
**Death**  
**and the**  
**Intermediate**  
**State**

Paul expected to know the Thessalonians, for they would be his hope, joy, and the crown in which he and his fellow workers would glory “in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes” (1 Thess. 2:19; cf. 2 Cor. 1:14). At our Lord’s coming, believers will receive rewards, an eternal “inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade,” and all the blessing that is included in “the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Pet. 1:4–5).

### STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What are some of the ways the Old Testament saints looked at life?
2. What are some of the ways the Old Testament saints looked at death?
3. What are the reasons the New Testament believer no longer needs to fear death?
4. How does the Old Testament view of life after death compare with that of Israel’s pagan neighbors?
5. What does the Old Testament reveal about the place of the afterlife for the wicked?
6. What does the Old Testament reveal about the place of the afterlife for the godly (the “wise”)?
7. What lessons can we learn from the account of the rich man and Lazarus?
8. What assurance do we have that New Testament believers will be with Christ in paradise immediately after death?
9. What are the chief reasons for not accepting the theories of soul sleep, spiritism, reincarnation, and purgatory?



*By the same author*

---

BIBLE DOCTRINES: A PENTECOSTAL PERSPECTIVE

THE BOOK OF ACTS

READY ALWAYS

THE ULTIMATE VICTORY: AN EXPOSITION OF THE  
BOOK OF REVELATION

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT

## DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHERE THE RAPID AND FRIGHTENING CHANGES IN WORLD EVENTS ARE LEADING?

We live in a world where the future seems to be more and more uncertain and frightening. Injustice, terrorism, and political conflicts are increasing across the globe. In spite of our best efforts, this world seems to be hurtling toward chaos and oblivion, and today's media give us little hope. Yet God's Word consistently gives us good news for the past, the present, and the future: God has a specific and positive plan for this world that He is carrying out with exact precision. The grand fulfillment will be the millennial kingdom, the New Jerusalem, and the new heavens and new earth.

*Our Destiny* is a guidebook of sound biblical principles and deep theological truths that will help you understand what God's Word says about life after death and God's future plans for this world and His children. It examines clearly and in depth such topics as the rapture, the tribulation, the millennial kingdom, and the final judgment. Most of all, it explains that God is the ultimate Victor and His purpose will prevail—now that's great hope!

**Stanley M. Horton**, (May 6, 1916–July 12, 2014), was a highly respected theologian within the Pentecostal movement and the author of numerous books including *Acts*, *The Ultimate Victory*, and *What the Bible Says About the Holy Spirit*. He served as the senior editorial advisor for the Modern English Version of the Fire Bible and was Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Bible and Theology at the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, Missouri. He held an MDiv from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, an STM from Harvard University, and a ThD from Central Baptist Theological Seminary. He was an ordained minister in the Assemblies of God.

USD \$19.99

RELIGION/Biblical Studies/Prophecy

ISBN 978-0-88243-246-5



9 780882 432465

  
P R E S S