

# What Happens When You Die?

By Victor Gluckin

---

Since we are obviously alive as we read this paper together, we are not the authority on what will happen when we die. With that fact being true, we must rely on the Holy Scriptures to be our source and our guide. There are two important points to understand when looking at this subject from the Scriptures – what happens at death and what will happen beyond that point.

A foundational verse for this entire subject is Daniel 12:2 – “And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” The words here tell us that at this time in the future, there will be two groups of people who will one, be “sleeping” and two, will awake to two different destinations. Jesus confirms that this is his view as well in John 5:28-29. So we have this idea that people will “sleep” at death and that tells us a lot about their state. During sleep the sleeper knows nothing, and is not really able to do much on their own. “For the living know they will die; but the dead do not know anything, nor have they any longer a reward, for their memory is forgotten<sup>1</sup>.”

This seems to be a bit contrary to the orthodox view of an immortal soul, which exists beyond the realm of the body. With such a view it would be easy to conclude that even at death, some part of you lives on in another existence, maybe even in heaven. It is from this idea that most people, even outside of the church, believe that at death, the soul has two possible destinations – heaven or hell.

Although tremendously prevalent, this view is difficult to formulate from the Scriptures. Returning to Daniel 12:2, we have people awaking from a sleep to a new life, not returning to their body after an alternative life as a spirit or soul. The Biblical view is that the whole person is the soul, not a threefold, “body, soul, and spirit” model. “And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul<sup>2</sup>.” The entire person is a soul!

All of the church should agree to the fact that after Jesus’ death he was buried in the earth for three days. Take note, Jesus told the criminal on the cross that “And He said

---

<sup>1</sup> Ecclesiastes 9:5 - NASB

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 2:7 - KJV

to him, "Truly I say to you today, you shall be with Me in Paradise<sup>3</sup>." With this in mind, can we keep the view of the immortal soul living on when Jesus himself said nothing about going to heaven to the criminal, but instead told him that because of his display of faith he would indeed "remember him in his kingdom." Neither of them went to heaven or lived on beyond their physical death. The physical death that both of them suffered were a complete, total death.

All men, especially professing Christians must return to the view of the Bible regarding the sleep of the dead and the eventual "great awaking" that will occur in the last day. Jesus tell us that "an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment<sup>4</sup>." This is the view of life after death from the Bible. We sleep at death and await the call of life in the age to come. The mainstream view of Christians today unfortunately reflects more of the view of the original lie of the devil. "You will not surly die<sup>5</sup>." Let us be those who hear and heed the words of Christ now so that we may be those who hear his words when he calls forth those to life everlasting.

---

<sup>3</sup> Luke 23:43 - NASB

<sup>4</sup> John 5:28-29 - NASB

<sup>5</sup> Genesis 3:4