

the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and [then] (a) the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ *Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up* [lit., snatched, seize, rescue; the Latin translation uses the verb *rapere* (i.e., Rapture)] *together with them* [the dead in Christ now raised] *in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.* ¹⁸ *Therefore comfort* ["to come alongside" and "call by name"] *one another with these words.*

Summary: One command from Jesus, one shout from the archangel, one blast from the trumpet of God and God in Person will come down from Heaven to rescue His church. Jesus will return—physically, visibly and dramatically. He will come for those who have believed in Him. Living bodies will be “changed.” Dead bodies will be raised, changed and reunited with their souls.

A. The Lord's Return

1 Thessalonians 4:16, NIV84 -¹⁶ *For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God...*

B. The Departed Ones

1 Thessalonians 4:14, NLT -¹⁴ *For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus returns, God will bring back with him the believers who have died.*

C. The Living Ones

1 Thessalonians 4:17, NLT -¹⁷ *Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.*

D. Our Final Position

1 Thessalonians 4:17, NCV -¹⁷ *After that, we who are still alive will be gathered up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And we will be with the Lord forever.*

5. What happens to those who are lost?

A. At the moment of death, this soul is sent to hell (Luke 16:19-31)

B. The punishment is eternal (Mark 9:43-48)

C. Their body is raised at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11ff)

D. The unsaved are then cast into the lake of fire where they will reside forever, eternally separated from the presence of Almighty God.

(Rev. 20:11-15)

“What happens after you die depends on what you do with Christ before you die”

TOUGH QUESTIONS

and Straight Answers by Pastor Joe K. Taylor

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All Scriptures are printed verbatim with translations noted. • Pastor Joe's email is Joe@southreno.com.

Here's the **TOUGH QUESTION:**

What Happens the Very Moment We Die?

Here's the **STRAIGHT ANSWER:**

1. The Short Answer:

What happens after you die depends on what you do before you die.

If you know Christ, you go to Heaven.

If you don't know Christ, you go to Hell.

If you want a one sentence answer, here it is:

Hebrews 9:27, NASB95 -²⁷ ... *It is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment.*

2. Introduction to the issue:

A. The statistics on death are appalling: “*One-hundred out of one-hundred people die.*”

B. If we look to human experiences to figure out what happens when we die, we have guesses, theories, but no real answers.

C. If we look to God's Word, we can know all about death.

D. The topics of “Heaven” and “Hell” will be discussed later in this series.

3. What happens to all of us—lost or saved.

A. The very moment we die, we will stand before the Lord.

Hebrews 9:27–28, NLT ⁻²⁷ *And just as each person is destined to die once and after that comes judgment,* ²⁸ *so also Christ was offered once for all time as a sacrifice to take away the sins of many people. He will come again, not to deal with our sins, but to bring salvation to all who are eagerly waiting for him.*

B. God's Three Books:

Revelation 20:12, NASB95 ⁻¹² *And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.*

Daniel 7:10, NLT ⁻¹⁰ *(At the last judgement) ... Then the court began its session, and the books were opened.*

The Lamb's Book of Life – Records the name of everyone saved.

Revelation 21:27, NLT ⁻²⁷ *Nothing evil will be allowed to enter, nor anyone who practices shameful idolatry and dishonesty—but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.*

Revelation 3:5, NLT ⁻⁵ *All who are victorious will be clothed in white. I will never erase their names from the Book of Life, but I will announce before my Father and his angels that they are mine.*

Cf., Revelation 3:5; 20:12; 21:27; 20:15; Luke 10:20; Rev. 20:11-15; 17:8; 3:16; Ps 69:28; Phil. 4:3; Exodus 32:33; Malachi 3:16; Dan. 12:1; Exodus 32:31-33.

The Book of Deeds (Sins) – Records every lost man's sins.

Revelation 20:12–13, NLT ⁻¹² *I saw the dead, both great and small, standing before God's throne. And the books were opened, including the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to what they had done, as recorded in the books.* ¹³ *The sea gave up its dead, and death and the grave gave up their dead. And all were judged according to their deeds.*

The Book of Rewards – Records every believer's rewards (good deed)

Revelation 22:12, NLT ⁻¹² *"Look, I am coming soon, bringing my reward with me to repay all people according to their deeds.*

2 Corinthians 5:10, ESV ⁻¹⁰ *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.*

Cf., 1 Cor. 3:12-14; Matt. 5:17-19; matt. 6:19-21; Rev. 21:4; Jer. 17:10; Matt. 25:46; 1 Peter 5:4; Isaiah 40:10; Ps. 18:20; Heb. 11:6; and Luke 6:23.

4. What happens to those who are saved?

A. Our soul goes into the conscious presence of the Lord.

2 Corinthians 5:8, NKJV ⁻⁸ *We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.*

B. Our body is buried until the day of resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15:51–54, NASB95 ⁻⁵¹ *Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.* ⁵³ *For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory.*

C. When Christ returns, we will be raised bodily from the grave (or, be raptured from the earth, if still alive).

1 Thessalonians 4:17, NASB95 ⁻¹⁷ *Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.* ...

D. Body and soul reunited, we will be with the Lord FOREVER.

1 Thessalonians 4:17, NCV ⁻¹⁷ *After that, we who are still alive will be gathered up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And we will be with the Lord forever.*

STUDY VERSE SECTION - 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18, NASB95 ⁻¹³ *But we do not want you to be uninformed* [root lit., means "to not know"] *brethren, about those who are asleep* [a simple word for "sleep" but used in the perfect—it was a starting point but never ends; under euphemistically of "death"] *so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if* [i.e., conditional clause—something has to happen on our part] *WE believe* [we must "be impacted by a truth"] *that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep* [or, who have died] *in Jesus. ¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with*