

What happens when you die?



WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU DIE, PART 2: NEAR DEATH EXPERIENCES

A lot of people struggle to believe what they read in Scripture. Instead, they argue that they'd be more likely to believe if someone came back from the dead and told them about what happens when you die. This week we'll look at the stories of three people who did just that.

BIG IDEA: If you would believe in eternity if someone came back from the dead, then why don't you believe?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Many of us tend to give stories more credibility than scripture. Are there any stories you've heard from friends or in the media that have influenced what you think about what happens after you die?
2. There are two stories in scripture we're looking at this week. The first, Luke 16:19-31, is a haunting parable.

¹⁹ Jesus said, "There was a certain rich man who was splendidly clothed in purple and fine linen and who lived each day in luxury. ²⁰ At his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus who was covered with sores. ²¹ As Lazarus lay there longing for scraps from the rich man's table, the dogs would come and lick his open sores. ²² "Finally, the poor man died and was carried by the angels to sit beside Abraham at the heavenly banquet. The rich man also died and was buried, ²³ and he went to the place of the dead. There, in torment, he saw Abraham in the far distance with Lazarus at his side. ²⁴ "The rich man shouted, 'Father Abraham, have some pity! Send Lazarus over here to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue. I am in anguish in these flames.' ²⁵ "But Abraham said to him, 'Son, remember that during your lifetime you had everything you wanted, and Lazarus had nothing. So now he is here being comforted, and you are in anguish. ²⁶ And besides, there is a great chasm separating us. No one can cross over to you from here, and no one can cross over to us from there.' ²⁷ "Then the rich man said, 'Please, Father Abraham, at least send him to my father's home. ²⁸ For I have five brothers, and I want him to warn them so they don't end up in this place of torment.' ²⁹ "But Abraham said, 'Moses and the prophets have warned them. Your brothers can read what they wrote. ³⁰ "The rich man replied, 'No, Father Abraham! But if someone is sent to them from the dead, then they will repent of their sins and turn to God.' ³¹ "But Abraham said, 'If they won't listen to Moses and the prophets, they won't be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.'" Luke 16:19-31 (NLT)

3. Focus on verses 30-31. What dynamic do you think Jesus is addressing here? Have you seen this logic at work before in yourself, or people you know?
4. With your Bible or YouVersion, read Luke 24:35-49. Jesus does return from the dead. Why do you think the disciples doubted?



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³⁵ Then the two from Emmaus told their story of how Jesus had appeared to them as they were walking along the road, and how they had recognized him as he was breaking the bread. ³⁶ And just as they were telling about it, Jesus himself was suddenly standing there among them. *“Peace be with you,”* he said. ³⁷ But the whole group was startled and frightened, thinking they were seeing a ghost! ³⁸ *“Why are you frightened?”* he asked. *“Why are your hearts filled with doubt? ³⁹ Look at my hands. Look at my feet. You can see that it’s really me. Touch me and make sure that I am not a ghost, because ghosts don’t have bodies, as you see that I do.”* ⁴⁰ As he spoke, he showed them his hands and his feet. ⁴¹ Still they stood there in disbelief, filled with joy and wonder. Then he asked them, *“Do you have anything here to eat?”*

Luke 24:35-41 NLT)

5. After Jesus’s death and resurrection, Paul apparently also had a near death experience, outlined in 2 Corinthians 12:1-4. Some scholars believe Paul is describing what happened during his conversion, backfilling more details on what’s chronicled in narrative form in Acts 9. How did what happened to Paul change his life?
6. Chris showed a video of someone who had a near death experience. Does evidence like that help or hinder your belief in the afterlife the way it’s described in Scripture? How so?
7. How does the reaction of the disciples mirror the reaction to Jesus’ resurrection by people today?
8. What’s the hardest part of the resurrection for you to believe? Why?
9. What other evidence do you think you might need to be persuaded that the Biblical view of eternity is accurate?
10. Which arguments in favor of believing in the resurrection presented in the message this week helped you the most (if any)? Why?

MOVING FORWARD

Often, we spend more time planning a family vacation than we do planning for eternity. What do you need to do to take eternity more seriously? And if you spent more time expecting there to be life after death, how would that impact how you live today?

CHANGING YOUR MIND

“The rich man replied, ‘No, Father Abraham! But if someone is sent to them from the dead, then they will repent of their sins and turn to God.’”
Luke 16:30 (NLT)



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