

ple they have known in this world.

The souls or spirits go into paradise or torment, according to whether they are saved or lost. On the day of judgment, it would seem that their lives will be made an open book, and that they will be allowed to speak in their defense (Revelation 20:12; Matthew 25:31-46). They will be sentenced by the righteous Judge to an eternal hell with the devil and his angels or to live with the Lord in heaven with all of the saved forever more.

Death and the judgment will be final and one's destination will be eternal. There will be no second chance, and neither will the wicked simply cease to exist. The soul will live on forever, either in heaven or hell.

How Do the Scriptures Describe Heaven?

“For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now” (Romans 8:20-22).

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the

*works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for **new heavens** and a **new earth** in which righteousness dwells”* (2 Peter 3:10-13).

“Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea” (Revelation 21:1).

My friend, we have today to prepare to meet the Lord and to get our soul ready to live in that new and perfect creation. Please do not neglect your salvation and hear the Lord say, “Depart from me...,” to be lost for all eternity.

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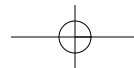
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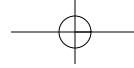
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What Will Heaven Be Like?

J.C. Choate





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The Bible teaches that all of us will die, or put off the mortal body at the second coming of Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:16,17). We are also told that *“it is appointed unto man once to die, but after this the judgment”* (Hebrews 9:27). The Apostle Paul declared, *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad”* (2 Corinthians 5:10).

Perhaps the most important question at this point would be, “What happens to one between the time he dies and the judgment?” In other words, during that time, where does one abide? Is he still alive? Is he conscious? Or does he remain in the tomb or the place of the dead in an unconscious state?

In Luke 16:19-31 Christ tells the story of the rich man and Lazarus. He says that both of these men died. The poor man’s soul was taken by angels to Abraham’s bosom or to the place of the righteous dead, which is described as being Paradise. But the rich man’s soul went to a place of torment in flames. Then he cried out to Father Abraham to have mercy on him and to send Lazarus that he might dip the tip of his finger in

water to cool his tongue. Abraham reminded the rich man that in his life he had received all of the good things the physical world had to offer but Lazarus’ life had been one of misery and deprivation. He concluded by saying that now Lazarus was comforted while the rich man was tormented.

Abraham explained that it would be impossible, anyway, for Lazarus to come to him since there was a great gulf between the two and that no one could pass over to the other.

The rich man then requested that Abraham send Lazarus to his father’s house to warn his five brothers not to come to that place of torment. Abraham answered that they had Moses and the prophets, and if they would not hear them then they would not listen even though one rose from the dead to warn them. The obvious truth being taught here is that the dead cannot change their place of habitation, nor can they return to earth to make appearances to living humans.

When Do the Resurrection and the Judgment Take Place?

“But,” someone might object, “in Jesus’ account, the rich man was already in torment and Lazarus was already in paradise. What about a resurrection (John 5:28,29), and the general resurrection and judgment for all?” There is no problem here. In this life, if a murderer is caught,

he is kept in prison until his judgment day and the time he is sentenced to pay for his crime. The Scriptures, therefore, teach that when the righteous man or the faithful Christian dies he will go immediately to Paradise or the place of the righteous dead; when the wicked person dies, he will go immediately to torment or to the place of the wicked dead.

But when Christ returns (1 Thessalonians 4:16), *all* will hear His voice and the physical bodies will be resurrected from the grave, to be reunited with the souls that have been in paradise or torment, to be transformed into immortal substance, and to appear before the Lord to be judged and sentenced (Acts 17:31; Matthew 25:31-46). Finally, the record says in the words of Jesus that the wicked or unsaved *“shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal”* (Matthew 25:46).

Is It a Parable?

While some would say that the account of the rich man and Lazarus is only a parable, it is not called such in the Scriptures. Also, in no account which is a parable are people identified by name. Regardless, parable or not, the truth being taught doesn’t change. That means, then, that those who die remain conscious of who they are, of what they have done, and of the peo-

