

5 WHAT HAPPENS AFTER DEATH?

IN THIS LESSON YOU WILL STUDY THE FOLLOWING:

- *After Death—What?*
 - *What Are Heaven And Hell Like?*
 - *How Important Is Your Choice?*
 - *How Can You Go to Heaven?*
-

AFTER DEATH—WHAT?

THE INITIAL, TEMPORARY CONDITION

What happens when you die? Your spirit leaves your physical body. Your body will remain here, since it was made to be in this world. However, you will always be fully conscious.

If you have accepted Jesus Christ, you will go to be with Him at once. But if you have refused God's offer of eternal life, you will go away from Him to the place which is called Hades or Hell. Hell was prepared for Satan and all those who follow him.

Luke 16:22-23. "The beggar died and the angels carried him ... The rich man also died and . . . in hell, ... he was in torment."

The bodies we now have are not suited to heaven. They are temporary "houses" that are given to us for our life on earth. When we die, we leave them behind. God has prepared a new kind of body or home for us, one that will fit into His new creation.

2 Corinthians 5:1. "We know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands."

When a child of God dies, his or her spirit goes to be with God at once.

Hell is the place God has prepared for Satan and all who follow him.

THE RESURRECTION

Jesus is coming back again, possibly very soon, for those who belong to Him. At that time, those who have accepted Him will be changed. We will be given new bodies like His.

John 11:25. "Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies.'"

1 Corinthians 15:42–43. "The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power."

Philippians 3:20–21. "We eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body."

When Jesus returns to earth, all those who belong to Him will receive new bodies that are like His.

Memorize This

1 Thessalonians 4:16–17. "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, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever."

THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST

As children of God we will be judged according to what we have done on earth and why we did it. Rewards will be given for faithful service. God will assign us certain responsibilities and privileges in His eternal kingdom.

2 Corinthians 5:9–10. "We make it our goal to please him, ... For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad."

THE MILLENNIUM

After this first judgment, Jesus will come back to earth with His followers. The devil will be imprisoned for a thousand years.

Jesus will set up His kingdom and rule over all the earth for a thousand wonderful years of peace and prosperity. This period of time is called the Millennium. Even the wild animals will live at peace with one another and with humans.

Revelation 20:4. "They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

Isaiah 11:6. "The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, . . . and a little child will lead them."

Isaiah 35:1, 5–6, 10. "The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. . . . Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, . . . and the ransomed of the Lord will return. . . . Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away."

THE RESURRECTION AND JUDGMENT OF THE UNSAVED

After the Millennium and a final conflict between Christ and Satan, the devil will be thrown into the lake of fire. Then the dead who did not accept God's plan of salvation will come to life again and be judged. All those who insisted on following Satan instead of God will have to go to the place of punishment prepared for the devil.

Revelation 20:11–12, 15. "I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. . . . I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. . . . The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

THE ETERNAL STATE

The righteous (those who are right with God and who are His children) will enjoy forever all that God has prepared for them. Those who have refused His salvation will be separated forever from God.

Matthew 25:46. "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

TO HELP YOU LEARN

Choose the right word.

- After death the spirit is _____
_____ (conscious, unconscious).
- Those who have not accepted God’s plan of salvation go to _____ (heaven, hell).
- After death, those who have accepted Christ will live
- on in _____ (heaven, hell).

WHAT ARE HEAVEN AND HELL LIKE?

One of two places will be your eternal home: heaven or hell. The word *hell* refers both to Hades and to the lake of fire.

HELL <i>Separation From God</i>	HEAVEN <i>At Home With God</i>
<p>Matthew 25:41. “Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”</p>	<p>John 14:2. “In my Father’s house are many rooms....I am going there to prepare a place for you.”</p> <p>Revelation 21:3. “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people.”</p>

Everything good comes from God. With Him are light, life, beauty, and joy. Separated from Him, there are darkness, suffering, sorrow, and death.

HELL <i>Suffering</i>	HEAVEN <i>Perfect Happiness Forever</i>
<p>Luke 16:23–24. “In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, ... So he called to him, ... “I am in agony in this fire.””</p> <p>Matthew 25:30. “Throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”</p>	<p>Revelation 21:10–11, 18. “The Holy City . . . shone with the glory of God The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass.”</p> <p>Revelation 22:5. “There will be no more night. . . . The Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.”</p>

HELL <i>Suffering</i>	HEAVEN <i>Perfect Happiness Forever</i>
Revelation 20:10. "They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever."	Revelation 21:3-4. "God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain."

Think about what kind of neighbors we will have when we choose our home for eternity.

HELL	HEAVEN
Matthew 25:41. "'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'"	John 14:2-3. Jesus said, "I am going to prepare a place for you I will come back and take you to be with me."
Revelation 21:8. "'But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur.'"	Hebrews 12:22-23. "You have come to ... the city of the living God. ... to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect."

TO HELP YOU LEARN

- Beside the Holy Bible verses in the chart above, write NO by every line that tells of something that you do not want in your eternal home or that you do not want to experience. Write YES by whatever you do want.

How IMPORTANT Is Your CHOICE?

Do not blame God for sending anyone to hell. He wants to save everybody, but each person must choose between heaven and hell.

Deuteronomy 30:19-20. "I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him."

Whether you choose heaven or hell, others will follow you there. Think of your family and friends. Where do you want to lead them?

TO HELP YOU LEARN

- Thank God for sending Jesus to save you. Pray for any of your family or friends who are on their way to hell. Ask God to help you warn them and lead them to the Savior.

HOW CAN YOU GO TO HEAVEN?

If you want to lead others to heaven, first be certain that you, yourself, have taken these steps. Then help your friends to take them.

GET OFF THE WRONG ROAD

We have all been traveling the road of SIN away from God and toward hell. We must turn away from our sin, determine to obey God and go His way. We must ask His forgiveness for our disobedience. This is repentance, the first step toward heaven.

We must acknowledge the wrong we have done to others and do what we can to straighten it out.

We must forgive our enemies, ask forgiveness of those we have wronged, and return what we have stolen. As we confess all our sins to God, He will forgive us and help us in whatever we have to do.

You have chosen to follow the road to heaven when you have confessed your sins to God and accepted Jesus as your savior.

Memorize This

1 John 1:9. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

2 Peter 3:9. "He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."

RECOGNIZE THE RIGHT ROAD

God has given you a road map, the Holy Bible. It says that Jesus Christ is the Way. Follow it, and follow Him.

Memorize This

John 14:6. "Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'"

John 6:37. "Whoever comes to me I will never drive away."

CHOOSE THE RIGHT ROAD

Choosing the right road means to accept Jesus Christ the Son of God as your personal Savior and Lord of your life. Believe that He accepts you too, and trust in Him.

Memorize This

Acts 16:31. "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved."

John 20:31. "These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."

FOLLOW THE RIGHT ROAD TO THE END

Follow Jesus the rest of your life. He will guide and help you as you read the Holy Bible and pray.

1 Peter 2:25. "You were like sheep going astray, but now you have been returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls."

TO HELP YOU LEARN

In this part of the lesson, going to heaven has been described as taking a journey.

- Have you personally taken the steps that will lead to heaven? _____
- If not, will you now? _____
- Find a friend or member of your family and explain the steps of the journey to him or her.

CONGRATULATIONS.

- You have completed Lesson 5.
- Turn to the Lesson Review Questions at the end of this book.
- Answer the questions for Lesson 5.
- Then continue with your study of Lesson 6.

May God richly bless you!