



## Death - Where We Go When We Die

**What is the death and afterlife process?**

**What happens after a person dies?**

**Where do we go after we die?**

Traditionally, most people believe that *when a person dies, they either go to Heaven or they go to Hell*. That is the simplest way to look at it, but it's more complicated than that, and I think it's worth understanding. There are 3 different points of time to consider. In the past (OT times), everyone died and went to Sheol, which contains a safe side and a side of fiery punishment. Presently, a person dies and their spirit goes to either Heaven or Hell. In the future, our spirits will come back into our bodies, we will be resurrected, and those in Christ will live with Jesus on earth (not Heaven), while those outside of Christ are sent to the Lake of Fire.

## The Future: The Resurrection

People weren't created to die. Death is something that happens because of sin (Rom 5:12). We were made to live in our bodies forever. That's what the resurrection is all about, restoring what was lost. After we all die, our spirits will leave our bodies to be with God or away from God. Later, our spirits will come back into our bodies and we will all come back to life (1Cor 6:14, Rom 8:11). There will actually be 2 mass resurrections. In the first resurrection, the dead in Christ will rise (Rev 20:4-5). Sometime after that, those who are living with Christ in them will be taken up into the sky like Jesus was (1Th 4:16-17). That event is known to many as [the rapture](#). Those people don't stay in Heaven, but will end up on Earth forever with Jesus unless they turn from Him. After 1,000 years, Satan will come back from the bottomless pit and be thrown into the lake of fire. THEN, everyone else who has died (who does not have Christ in them, also called the "wicked dead") will be resurrected and judged (Rev 20:13). They will be thrown into the lake of fire with Satan and his angels (Matt 25:41). Originally, God created Hell for Satan. The reason people go to Hell with him is because they make him their father (John 8:44). Everyone will be resurrected and put back on planet earth. Even the lake of fire is in the earth.

## The Past: Sheol or Hades

Before Jesus died and was resurrected, everyone who died went to Sheol, which is called Hades in the NT (Rev 20:14). There are at least 2 compartments there: 1) Hell, called Gehenna (Mark 9:47-48) and 2) Paradise (Luke 23:43), sometimes called "Abraham's Bosom" (Luke 16:22) due to the story in Luke 16:19-31. The wicked dead died and went to Gehenna. Every dead person who believed in the resurrection were actually held in Sheol as captives. David, for example, died and was in Sheol, but Jesus died (though He didn't stay dead long enough for His body to decay) (Psalms 16:10) and brought David out of Hell. Jesus brought ALL of the righteous dead out of Sheol and led them as captive into freedom (Eph 4:8-10). Also, while Jesus was in the lower parts of the earth or the heart of the earth (Matt 12:40), which is Sheol, He preached to spirits who were in prison (1Pet 3:19).

## The Present: Heaven or Hell

Now, when a person dies, if Christ is in them, they go to Heaven. See Revelation 6:9 and Revelation 20:4. Since there will be people in heaven at that time, it's probably safe to conclude that there are people in Heaven at this time. It seems that Jesus, by dying for our sins and coming back to life for our righteousness, bridged the gap between Sheol and Heaven for those who are righteous. Paul did say, "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord" (2Cor 5:8). Where is the Lord? Our Father is in Heaven (Matt 6:9).

If someone dies outside of Christ, then they go to Gehenna, the fiery part of hell. Why do people go to hell to be punished if they haven't been judged or given a trial yet? Because "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John 3:18)

At the time of writing, I've considered, "If the wicked dead are sent to Hell when they die, what good is it for them to be resurrected and judged at the great white throne judgment JUST to be thrown into the lake of fire for eternity? If anything, it seems that being pulled out of Hell to be judged would be a brief relief before they have to go back". The only thing I can conclude is that all things must be restored, so their bodies must be restored, and they used their body to sin as much as their spirit, so both are punished.

## Jesus Is the Resurrection

**John 11:25-26** – "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"

Jesus is called the firstborn of the dead (Col 1:18). There were a few people resurrected before Him, but what this means is that He was the first resurrected and immortalized. Every other person resurrected before Jesus were brought back to life and died again later on. Jesus never died again, and He never will (Heb 9:27). That's how we will be in the resurrection. Our bodies will be different (1Cor 15:35-44), not exactly the same as they were on earth, but perfected.

### Related Links

1. [Where is Hell? What is it like? What does the bible say about hell?](#)
2. [What does the bible say about reincarnation?](#)
3. [Is Judas in Heaven or Hell?](#)
4. [Is suicide unforgivable?](#)
5. [How did Satan become the god of this world?](#)
6. [Creationism vs. Evolution](#)