



Pastor's Comments

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When Christians Die

Do Christians **immediately go to heaven** when they die? The Bible teaches that our bodies go to the grave until the first resurrection, but our spirits **immediately go to heaven!**

The apostle Paul was assured of this truth, "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be **present with the Lord**" (2 Corinthians 5:8). He knew that when he died he would be **immediately in the presence of the Lord**. He stated this truth again in Philippians 1:23, "having a desire to depart, and to **be with Christ**."

Jesus told the thief on the cross, "**Today shalt thou be with me in paradise**" (Luke 23:43). In the story of the rich man and Lazarus, Jesus said, "the beggar died, and **was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom**" (Luke 16:22). Jesus makes it clear that these **immediately went to heaven!** They were **not annihilated**, as some falsely teach, they did **not remain in some unconscious "soul sleep" state**, and they did **not enter some intermediate "purgatory" state!** Instead, they **immediately entered the presence of the Lord!**

In the story of the first Christian martyr, we get a glimpse of what happens when believers die. At his death, Stephen, "**looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus** standing on the right hand of God" (Acts 7:55). Jesus was standing—ready to welcome Stephen into His presence **immediately upon his death!**

Perhaps you are wondering **what happens to the non-believer immediately after death**. In the story of the rich man and Lazarus, Jesus stated, "the rich man also died, and was buried. And **in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments**" (Luke 16:22-23). To avoid such a horrible future, please see our website at: www.NAOG.ws and read about "**The Way**" to Heaven.

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