

SCRIPTURE READING: 1 Corinthians 15:50-58.

INTRODUCTION:

1. Imagine our death bed, a fatal car wreck.
2. After death, what then?

DISCUSSION:

1. When we die, our soul separates from our body. Ecclesiastes 12:6-7.
2. Our body eventually returns to dust.
3. Our soul goes to a place called Hades (*Sheol* in the Old Testament). Hades is the waiting place for disembodied spirits. Hades is to the soul what the grave is to the body.
4. There are three areas within Hades – paradise, torment (*tartarus* – 2 Peter 2:4), and a great impassable chasm. When the saved die, they go to paradise. When the wicked die, they go to torment (*tartarus*). Once in paradise, the saved cannot go to torment (*tartarus*); and once in torment (*tartarus*), the lost cannot go to paradise. Luke 16:19-26.
5. Jesus and the thief on the cross went to the paradise part of Hades when they died. Luke 23:43; Acts 2:25A, 27, 31.
6. The King James Version created considerable confusion by translating the Greek words “*haidēs*” and “*tartarus*” with the English word “hell,” when Hades and *tartarus* are not hell. Hades is the waiting place for all disembodied spirits. *Tartarus* or torment is the waiting place for the lost in Hades. Hell or “*gehenna*” is the final dwelling place of the lost.
7. Paul was caught up into the paradise part of Hades. 2 Corinthians 12:2-4.
8. Hades is the waiting place for what?
 - A. The Lord’s return. Acts 1:9-11.
 - B. The resurrection. John 5:28-29.
 - C. The judgment. 2 Peter 2:4, 9; 2 Corinthians 5:10.
9. After the judgment, the temporal heavens and earth will be destroyed. 2 Peter 3:7, 10-13. Death and Hades, also temporal things, will likewise be destroyed. Revelation 20:11-14.
10. After the judgment, all souls will spend eternity in one of two places, heaven or hell (*gehenna*). Romans 2:5B-11; Matthew 25:46.
11. Even among conservative brethren, there is some disagreement as to whether things changed for the saved who die after the ascension of Christ. Some say that when the saved die now they wait in heaven instead of Hades. I need to study the matter further, but it seems to me that both sides assume things about the nature of heaven where Christ is now, the paradise of Hades, and the new heavens and the new earth that may or may not be warranted. Without getting into a complete discussion of the matter, let me simply say that I believe the above is still the scriptural and basic answer to the question, “After death, what then?”



APPLICATIONS:

1. **Cremation.**
2. **Consider eternity.** 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.
3. **Consider the grace of God.** People who reject Jehovah God because they don’t think the true God would send people to hell, don’t understand, among other things, what Jehovah God has done for human beings.
4. **Consider eternal pleasure/pain.** At death, our fate is sealed; known; and, at least in part, experienced. Romans 13:8-10, 11-14.
5. **After death, what then for us?** 2 Peter 3:14-18.