

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER WE DIE?

Introduction:

An insurance company advertisement says "Within five minutes after the death of one of our policy holders we have an agent going out to settle the claim and pay the beneficiaries!" But, what about the spirit at that time? What happens to it? Where does it go? What about its welfare? While we can't verify the "five minutes" part of it, we can determine the fate of a person's spirit following death. Let's see what the Bible says.

I. A PERSON'S SPIRIT (sometimes called 'soul') LEAVES THE BODY AT DEATH

- A. Matt. 10:28. What cannot be done to the soul when the body is killed?
- B. Luke 23:46. What did Jesus commit to God when he took his last breath on earth?
- C. Acts 7:59. What did Stephen pray that Jesus would receive when he died?
- D. Eccl. 12:5-7. What happens to a person's spirit when his body returns to the dust in death? (Note: The spirit is to be judged...Rom. 14:10)

II. THE SPIRIT OF THE UNSAVED WILL BE IN TORMENT AFTER DEATH

- A. Luke 16:22-24. Describe the experience of the rich man following his death. What does this say about being conscious after death?
- B. Rev. 20:13-15; 21:8. Into what will the inhabitants of "Hades" be cast? Which "death" is this? What then, would the "first death" be?
- C. Matt. 25:46. How long is the "punishment" here said to last? (Note: The "punishment" would endure as long as the "life.")

III. THE SPIRIT OF THE SAVED PERSON WILL BE COMFORTED AFTER DEATH

- A. Luke 16:22, 25. Describe the experience of Lazarus following his death. What does this say about being conscious following death?
- B. Luke 23:43. Where does it say the thief was following the death of his body?
- C. II Cor. 5:6-8. Where did Paul say a person would be when absent ("away" NIV) from his body?
- D. Phil. 1:20-24. Where did Paul say he would be following his death?

Other discussion questions:

1. In the light of Bible teaching, how can we account for the pleasant "after death" experiences of non-Christians related in recent books?
2. How can we reply to those who argue that we can't be certain of conditions after death since no one has returned from the dead to confirm them? (See Luke 16:29-31)
3. Allowing for the truthfulness of the Bible's description of conditions after death, how should that affect us?