

LIFE AFTER DEATH

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Eternity

Do you know anyone who has died? Have you ever wondered what happened to him or her afterwards? Do you ever think about what that person is doing right now? Do you wonder what will happen to you when you die?

Everyone is curious about the future, so it makes sense to wonder about life after death. Luckily, God shows people all through the Bible that there is eternal life.

But concerning the resurrection of the dead—have you not read what was spoken to you by God, “I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob”? God is not the God of the dead but of the living. (Matthew 22:31-32)

Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise. (Luke 23:43)

God even lived in this world—as Jesus Christ—and died on a cross and rose from the dead to prove that He was still alive. In fact, He actually came back to earth and appeared to His followers after He died. This way, they would believe what He said earlier:

I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. (John 11:25)

My kingdom is not of this world. (John 18:3 6)

Angels

Many stories in the Bible have angels in them. The word “angel” really means “messenger,” so God used angels in heaven to bring messages to people on earth. Angels were used when God had something very important to tell someone—often they comforted people and told them not to be afraid.

Then the angel said to the shepherds, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people.” (Luke 2:10)

But the angel said to them, “Do not be alarmed You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified He has risen! He is not here.” (Mark 16:6)

All people are born to become angels when they die, because God loves everyone and wants to

live forever with them in heaven. Emanuel Swedenborg's Writings tell us a lot about what heaven is like, and also what hell is like, and what it's like to wake up after we die. The world we go to after death is called the "spiritual world."

What Is the Spiritual World Like?

Imagine someone who has died waking up in the spiritual world. He or she wakes up feeling safe, healthy, and happy and is greeted by angels. At first the person seems to still be in this world, but soon realizes that it's the spiritual world. Life it becomes clear that the spiritual world is appears to be a lot like it was on earth, but slowly different yet very real.

During their stay in the world of spirits, people continue the preparation that was begun on earth for either heaven or hell. This choice is up to each individual—it is not decided by God. While God invites everyone into heaven, and deeply hopes we will choose to be with Him, He allows us to make our own decision in freedom. Jesus said:

In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. (John 14:2)

Choosing Heaven

If we love God and want to live a life of goodness to the neighbor, we will choose heaven. People in heaven have jobs, enjoy celebrating together, worship with one another and do good things for each other. The angels are happier than we can even imagine!

Heavenly joy is so great as to be beyond description. (Heaven and Hell 409)

All in heaven take joy in sharing their delights and blessings with others. (Heaven and Hell 399)

If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love.... These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. (John 15:10-11)

God does not send people to hell, and hell is not a punishment for having done bad things. You might ask why anyone would choose to go there instead of heaven. People who do not love God and the neighbor would rather live in a place where there is selfishness, greed and jealousy. And these evils are their own form of punishment.

We can actually experience heaven and hell here on earth. Whenever we get a good feeling from helping someone else, or enjoy something beautiful in nature, we get a taste of what heaven is like. And, whenever we feel jealous of others or want bad things to happen to them, we know what hell is like.

So you see, when people die, they wake up in the spiritual world feeling safe and happy, and go

on living forever. Death is only the beginning of a new life.

Isn't it wonderful that God wants us to be with Him *forever!*

*The Lord has established His throne in heaven,
And His kingdom rules over all. (Psalm 103:19)*

*O Lord, You have searched me and known me.
Where can I go from Your Spirit?
Or where can I flee from Your presence?
If I ascend into heaven, You are there;
If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there.
If I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
Even there Your hand shall lead me,
And Your right hand shall hold me. (Psalm 139:1,7-10)*