

What the Bible Says Happens After Death

Most people do not give much consideration to what might happen after death. They often think that if there is an afterlife that there is a reward for 'good' people and punishment for 'bad' ones. Given that such little thought is applied to the subject, it follows that little thought would be given to sources of information regarding the afterlife.

1. Popular culture. Many people have a composite in their mind of various ideas derived from popular culture. Saturday morning cartoons and movies about ghosts, zombies, and even space aliens can produce a hodge podge of images that come to mind when someone thinks about that which lies beyond the world with which we are familiar.
2. Demonic sources. It is a testimony to the cleverness of Satan that most people reject even the idea he exists. His hand can be seen in popular culture, but is more discernible in false religions. For example, several religions have doctrines of reincarnation coupled with karma. There is an inherent inconsistency in a system that promises advancement but is based on a system of stasis.
3. The bible. While many voices claim to be true, the Christian is encouraged to seek the truth from the word of God. This is somewhat hindered by the various Christian franchises (denominations) whose traditions and claims often add confusion rather than clarity.

It is the intention of this book to take a broad look at the factors that combine to give us what can be known about what happens after death from the bible. One might expect that a better understanding of the life after this one would create in a person a desire to seek that in this life that would aid that in the next.

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: - Matthew 6:19-20

However, we are told that those who are unmoved by the bible will not be moved by other persuasion.

And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead. - Luke 16:31

Chapter 1 - Eternity

We are experienced with life that begins at birth and ends at death. Outside of this familiar territory even our ability to consider concepts is difficult. For example, one might ask if eternity is the end of time or of time unending. This begins to help us recognize some of the limits of our understanding.

This is made even more difficult in that the bible was not originally written in English. As a result, there is often difficulty using concepts that come across differently in English than they were used in the original languages. For example, the Greek word 'aionios' is translated into English as 'eternal' or sometimes 'world'. The Greek word is more accurately used (as it is in Young's literal translation) as

'age'. Like the English word 'tall' (a man can be tall as can a mountain), the word can have different measures of time depending on the context.

"The adjective aionios, in like manner, carries the idea of 'time.' Neither the noun nor the adjective, in themselves, carry the sense of endless or everlasting, though they may acquire that sense by their connotation. Aionios means 'enduring through or pertaining to a period of time.' Both the noun and the adjective are applied to limited periods." - Vincent

We can see the use of aionios with an eternal context when it is used to describe God.

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen. - 1 Timothy 1:17

We have a variable usage of aion and aionios together where one is used to describe the age to come and the other is used to describe eternity.

Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting. - Luke 18:30

The decision to call the life in the age to come 'eternal' from the word 'aionios' (translated here as 'everlasting') cannot be derived from this context alone. However, there are other verses where this life is described in ways that lend support for a true eternal life.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. - John 5:24

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? - John 11:25-26

In a similar way there are verses that lend support for those who do not have faith in Jesus, perishing, rather than living forever.

The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. - Ezekiel 18:20

For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? - 2 Corinthians 2:15-16

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. - John 3:16

It is difficult to even use conjecture regarding the breadth of all existence. We think in terms of time and sequence. We know from the bible that there was a time before the creation of the world. We also know that there is a time to come. We can even see that there will be multiple periods in the future (age of ages, aion aion).

To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. - 1 Peter 5:11

Some theologians see in the Greek word *aion* some of the speculations of Plato who attempted to use the word to describe an ephemeral timelessness beyond creation. However, most Greeks used the word in a more concrete way (usually as short as a week or as long as a lifetime). However, some theologians and neo-platonists, like Augustine, would use their familiarity with the philosophy of Plato to bring the idea of infinite eternity into their writings about scripture. Centuries later those selecting an English word to translate *aionios* (pertaining to the age) would be inclined to select 'eternal'.

We might not be able to learn much about existence before creation or after this age. Even our understanding of the future is somewhat limited to knowing that there are ages and ages. The 'eternal' life that Christians are assured of is not solely dependent on the English word *eternal* for the Greek word 'age'. To understand what happens after death, we simply need to be able to see that there is a world after this one. We can see this much of 'eternity'.

Chapter 2 - Human Constitution

Most everyone is familiar with the physical human body. Anyone who has studied physiology should have an appreciation for the complexity and even beauty of the design of human life. Most are also familiar with the decay that begins at the time of death. However, to understand what happens after death, we need to examine two additional components of human existence, soul and spirit.

The bible tells us that these two components are so intertwined that it is difficult to distinguish the two.

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. - Hebrews 4:12

The spirit is usually considered as 'breath' or vitalizing force. The soul is usually considered the place of thoughts and emotions. The bible tells us of how life began.

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. - Genesis 2:7

We might think that our existence began as God constituted our soul life via his infusion of vitality from his 'breath' or Spirit.

We can see an additional differentiation as the bible contrasts Jesus with Adam.

And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. - 1 Corinthians 15:45

The soul life that we inherit from Adam is insufficient to rescue us from death. For this reason Jesus (referred to as the 'last Adam') is the means whereby we can be 'made alive'. Understanding this rebirth, or being born again, is critical to understanding what happens after death.

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. - 1 Corinthians 15:22

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. - John 3:5-6

God warned Adam that the day he ate of the prohibited tree, he would die.

But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. - Genesis 2:17

Since Adam did not physically die until over 900 years later, the question becomes, 'what died on that day?'. We have a hint when Jesus tells Nicodemus, 'that which is born of the Spirit is spirit'. The requirement for a natural birth (born of water) and a spiritual birth (born again) to enter the kingdom of God indicates the possibility of a restoration of that which 'died' when Adam sinned.

We get more insight into the difference between the natural man and the spiritual (reconstituted) man throughout the bible.

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. - 1 Corinthians 2:14

We get a picture of the freedom the reconstituted man has in that we are called to serve God on the basis of having been rescued from 'death'.

Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. - Romans 6:13

This begins to build a picture of differing fates after death. One fate awaits those who have been 'born again' (made alive) and another awaits those who remain 'dead'.

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; - Ephesians 2:1

For those who are not 'quickened' (made alive) a less favorable fate awaits.

And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. - Matthew 10:28

The fate of those who have not been 'made alive' again also begins to shed a little light on the difference between the death of the body and the death of the soul.

Being able to consider human existence with the three elements of body, soul, and spirit helps us to understand what happens after death and how there may be different conditions based on how these elements are constituted.

Chapter 3 - The Rich Man and Lazarus

In the gospel of Luke we are told that the Pharisees, described as greedy, began to ridicule Jesus as he taught. Jesus responded first by saying that their pretensions did not fool God. He then inserted a comment warning about divorce (one might assume that the covetousness of the Pharisees included the

desire for new wives). However following this introduction Jesus describes the fate of two people.

There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;

And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead. - Luke 16:19-31

This presentation by Jesus is so profound and suggests so many additional questions, that many have dismissed it as just an invented teaching story. However, there is nothing that suggests we should not take it as a literal description of actual people.

Our English word 'parable' is a transliteration of the Greek word parabole. It is a derivative of parabolos, which comes from two Greek words para and ballo. Para means alongside or by the side of. And ballo means to lay, or to place, something. A true to life story can be used to teach or illustrate a particular point. Jesus did this with the parable of the sower;

Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: - Matthew 13:24

The use of the word 'likened' indicates that an illustrative example is being given. With the rich man and Lazarus there is no mention of it being figurative. Unlike parables, specific names are used. It is even possible that those hearing this knew to whom it referred.

We do not know if the description given by Jesus represents what everyone who has died experiences. It may be that the conversation between Abraham and the rich man was allowed as a special circumstance such as with the conversation between king Saul and Samuel.

Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel.... And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? - 1 Samuel 28:11, 15a

There are some observations we can draw from the description Jesus gives;

1. There are two locations. One of comfort and one of torment.

2. One cannot cross from one location to the other.
3. These people could recognize each other.

We get a picture of these two different states when Daniel is told about the resurrection.

And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. - Daniel 12:2

We have seen where the word 'everlasting' can be applied to those who receive 'life' at the resurrection, not because the word translated 'everlasting' carries that concept in the Greek, but from other verses. However, there is no such external support for the use of 'everlasting' as applied to those who do not receive such life. The 'everlasting' (for the age) contempt Daniel mentions may describe the contempt rather than the people who are regarded as such. However, even such contempt cannot be held forever.

For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. - Isaiah 65:17

Considering the different circumstances one can end up in after death, it would be wise to make sure one has a solid understanding of how these two circumstances are entered.

Chapter 4 - Eternal Life for Israel .

The Jews of the Old Testament time had been told by God that he would send them a king who would establish a kingdom age for the nation of Israel.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. - Isaiah 9:6

However, even though God promised Adam and Eve to send a 'seed' of the woman to deal with Satan and Isaiah foretold of Jesus, something more specific was given to the nation of Israel. They might not be able to understand how God intended to use them to save the nations or how they as individuals could have eternal life (the Sadducees were known for not even believing in a resurrection). However, they could see the law that they were given and trust in the promises of him who gave it. Jesus reminded the rich young ruler that these works would testify to his faith and be sufficient to secure eternal life.

And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. - Matthew 19:16-17

The fact that it was faith and not the work of keeping the law was demonstrated by the Pharisees as they excelled in keeping the law, but not out of faith. Rather they sought the admiration of others and used it to convince themselves that they had made themselves righteous.

And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the

synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. - Matthew 6:5

Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. - John 8:44

Those who trusted in this promise (had faith) would be able to enter into the 'rest' described as Abraham's bosom. The book of Hebrews was written as a warning to Jews not to continue ignoring the offer of the kingdom to the nation of Israel.

Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.) Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. - Hebrews 3:10-12

We can see that those in Israel were given the opportunity to secure life eternal through faith as demonstrated by works and keeping the commandments.

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. - Hebrews 11:1-3

And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. - Hebrews 11:39-40a

The 'some better thing' that even Abraham did not receive was the new covenant (testament) that Jesus would offer the nation of Israel.

But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. - Jeremiah 31:33

Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you. - Luke 22:20

Even with a new covenant, the nation of Israel could not inherit the kingdom in their physical bodies. It was expected that when the nation of Israel received the new covenant, an event would occur that would provide the necessary changes for their physical bodies to be adapted to the eternal state.

Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. - 1 Corinthians 15:50-52

Chapter 5 - Eternal life for Christians

Jesus instructed the twelve disciples that they would be overseeing what is called 'the great commission' with the expectation that Israel would receive the kingdom.

And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. - Matthew 19:28

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. - Mark 16:15-18

Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen. - Matthew 28:16-20

In the ministry of Jesus every word was towards the faithful acceptance of Israel of the kingdom. There was not a hint that there would be a 'plan B' if Israel neglected the offer of the kingdom. If the kingdom had been received, Israel would bring in the gentiles to faith in Jesus. The first example we have of Jews going to gentiles with the good news (gospel) of the kingdom is with Cornelius.

While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter; Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? - Acts 10:44-47

One of the reasons gentiles were being saved before the formal establishment of the kingdom was to provoke the Jews to jealousy.

I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. - Romans 11:11

Israel had the promise of a new covenant as declared by Jeremiah.

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. - Jeremiah 31:31-34

While many Jews did believe and place their trust in Jesus, most did not. Even the gentiles receiving supernatural gifts from God proved insufficient to motivate most to receive the offered kingdom. With the ministry of Paul we see salvation being offered to the gentiles outside of the kingdom ministry of Israel. This allowed gentiles to be saved without any works or law following.

Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. - 2 Timothy 1:11

O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? - Galatians 3:1-3

Even though Christians today are saved outside of the law and immediately receive eternal life, we still have to have our physical bodies changed to be suited for the age to come.

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. - 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17

It is interesting to note that those 'which sleep in Jesus' (Christians who have died) come with Jesus but their bodies are separate. These verses seem to describe a resurrection but describe no 'change' as mentioned in 1 Corinthians 15. It may be that such a change will occur but is just not mentioned.

Chapter 6 - Jesus is the Only Way

A frequently asked question about eternal life is whether it was possible for people who have never heard about God (such as pagans or tribal people) to receive eternal life. We do know that Jesus is the only path.

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. - John 14:6

We also can know that tribal and pagan people can be judged for having rejected God from what can be known of him through his revelation in creation.

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: - Romans 1:20

However, there is no specific declaration that the general revelation of Jesus through creation is insufficient to be a path to eternal life for those who would trust in it. It is a poor practice to determine a doctrine from silence. We cannot declare that there is this option available, but one can hope that

some may have been so moved by the majesty of God as seen through his creation as to trust in the hand that made all things.

Since Jesus is the creator of all things, and has paid the price for all sins, it is logical that it is only in him that one can find life eternal.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. - John 1:1-4

And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. - 1 John 2:2

And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. - 1 John 5:11

It can be difficult to understand the mechanism by which we receive eternal life. Those of Israel who had faith will receive their eternal life at the first resurrection.

Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. - Revelation 20:6

Those who have a faith in Christ outside of the ministry of Israel and receive the gospel of grace given to Paul receive immediate eternal life. This is because we receive life from Christ by being 'baptized' into the body of Christ. (it is important to note that this baptism (the Greek word 'baptiso' simply means 'immersion') in Christ should not to be confused with water baptism).

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. - Galatians 3:26-27

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. - Colossians 3:1-4

From the bible we can see that there is eternal life only in Christ.

Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. - Acts 4:12

These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. - John 17:1-3

We can see that there is eternal life available for those who trust (have faith) in Jesus. This is not based on 'being a good person', doing the 'right' things, or making ourselves worthy. We know that this is 'eternal' life not because the meaning of eternity is in the word aion, but because aion receives its

meaning from the context of 'never dying'.

And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? - John 11:26

Chapter 7 - What About Those Who Reject Christ?

Most people are familiar with the word 'hell'. However, most only use it as a sort of punctuation in their vocabulary. Few consider it real. This may be because our popular culture has used images of hell as elements in fictional horror stories and even cartoons.

Some of the confusion about hell results from the different biblical words that are often translated as 'hell'.

1. The Grave - There are several words translated into English as the 'grave'. In general, they usually mean the location of the physical decomposition of the body.

2. Hell - Gehenna - The Greek word 'Gehenna' is the translation of 'valley of Hinnom' which was a narrow ravine on the south side of Jerusalem where garbage was burned and some of the dead were thrown. This word was used metaphorically to illustrate the unpleasant aspects of Sheol or Hades.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves. - Matthew 23:15

3. Hell - Sheol - Hades - These words are used to refer to the place the soul resides after death but before judgment. This had been divided into two realms (as seen with the illustration of Lazarus and the rich man). The righteous (those with faith) seem to have rest, while the unsaved seem to have torment.

The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God. - Psalm 9:17

4. Hell - Tartarus - This is the location of some angels whose particular rebellion required their confinement.

For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; - 2 Peter 2:4

5. Outer darkness. This may not specifically count as a description of hell, but it is difficult to consider what else it might describe.

And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. - Matthew 25:30

There is a second resurrection described in the bible which seems to include the rest of those who were not the believers described in the first resurrection. This is often called the 'Great White Throne' judgment and is based upon what works people have done in their lives.

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled

away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. - Revelation 20:11-15

These verses contain a lot of information both for what is said and what is not said. One key element is the phrase 'judged every man according to his works'. While no specific mention is made of individual 'punishment' (other than being cast into the lake of fire), there is an implication that there is proportionality of judgment according to what one has done in life.

Chapter 8 - The Lake of Fire

The bible uses the phrase 'lake of fire' four times and only in the book of Revelation. However, there is a description in Matthew of a 'fire' that is prepared for the devil and his angels.

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: - Matthew 25:41

It might be reasonable to view this as the same as the lake of fire mentioned in Revelation simply because it is the destination of the rebelling angels.

And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. - Revelation 20:10

We want to be careful that the English word 'everlasting' (aionios) and the English phrase 'for ever and ever' (eis aion aion) do not lead us to inject into the Greek an English meaning that is not in the original words. If we substitute the word 'age', we get 'age lasting fire' and 'age of ages'. In addition we can see that the tormenting of the beast and false prophet are 'day and night' indicating a procession of time predicated on the rotation of the earth and may be limited to the existence of the earth and sun.

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. - Matthew 24:35

Since Jesus declares that there will be a point where heaven and earth will pass away, it may indicate that there would be some future point where torment ends.

We can see that the devil and his angels are thrown into the lake of fire. We can also see that those 'on the left hand' (those who rebelled against Jesus during the tribulation) are thrown into the lake of fire. There is a third group of those who were not found to have their names in the Lamb's book of life.

And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. - Revelation 20:15

We have two characters specifically mentioned as being thrown "alive" into the lake of fire. This may mean extra punishment.

And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. - Revelation 19:20

A warning is given to any who would alter the word of God. Having one's name removed from the book of life would indicate that they also would be thrown into the lake of fire.

And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. - Revelation 22:19

Those who receive punishment in the lake of fire are said to have their 'part'.

But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. - Revelation 21:8

This may be reflective of varying degrees of torment, presumably based on what was written of their works when they were judged.

Chapter 9 - Rewards for those who are faithful

The bible speaks to the subject of judgment and reward in heaven for those who are faithful.

And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting. - Luke 18:29-30

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. - Matthew 6:19-21

Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. - 1 Corinthians 3:8-15

We get another glimpse into what 'rewards' might be available after death when we look at how the word 'crowns' can be used.

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. - 2 Timothy 4:8

Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. - James 1:12

And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. - 1 Peter 5:4

There is also the sense that those whom we have brought to the Lord, exhorted and encouraged can also be thought of as a 'crown'.

Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved. - Philippians 4:1

For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? - 1 Thessalonians 2:19

Our physical bodies have to be changed in order to enter the eternal realm. However, we may also receive abilities to understand more than we do now.

For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. - 1 Corinthians 15:53

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. - 1 John 3:2

For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. - 1 Corinthians 13:12

Chapter 10 - The Fate of Those Who are not 'Saved' or Redeemed

Those who inherit eternal life are those Jews who by faith kept the law.

And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. - Luke 10:25-28

When the gospel of grace came, the 'inheritance' was extended to all who believed and were 'born again'.

For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. - Romans 8:15

It is through this 'adoption' that we receive the righteousness of Jesus.

That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. - Ephesians 4:22-24

However, there are many who have not received this 'righteousness'.

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, - 1 Corinthians 6:9

It is interesting to note that two groups are cited. The first are called 'the unrighteous'. The second group consists of those singled out for particular malignant characteristics. It is not clear if there is a particular difference in what is encountered for the two groups other than both being excluded from the kingdom of God.

In considering why those who have not been made righteous through faith suffer, we should consider some of the various possible reasons.

1. Payment. We do know that Christ had placed on him the sins for the world for which he made payment.

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. - 2 Corinthians 5:21

And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. - 1 John 2:2

We are told that we should not take revenge because it belongs to Jesus. This assertion is supported by the payment perspective as since Jesus paid for all sin, he owns the right to take revenge for sin. He is also able to extend mercy and forgive sin.

The idea of sin 'payment' can be seen in a parable Jesus told about the kingdom.

Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses. - Matthew 18:32-35

2. Correction. Most prisons in the US changed their names from penitentiary to department of corrections in keeping with a modern social view that prisoners will be 'reformed' by prison and become unlikely to re-offend. The recidivism rate (the percent of criminals that commit crimes after prison) is generally about 85%. The hope that social problems can so easily be solved perhaps explains why many are so eager to see in the bible some means whereby all might eventually get into heaven. This is what makes the idea of Purgatory attractive although one is not able to find support for it in the bible. However, the idea that men can be prodded into heaven by the end of a pitchfork also seems to make 'free will' pointless.

3. Punishment. There is a common view that hell is just a place of torment unending for those who have offended a holy God. This view finds support from the neo-platonic ideas of the immortality of the soul held by Augustine and taken up by the reformers such that the English word 'eternal' was often used to translate the Greek word *aionios*. Often with this view proportionality of suffering to the degree of offense is not regarded as it is held that any un-forgiven offense is worthy of perpetual torment.

The payment purpose of hell seems to be best supported on a biblical basis as well as consistency with God's justice.

Chapter 11 - Clarifying the condition of hell

The word Sheol in the Hebrew and Hades in the Greek are both translated 'hell'. Both words indicate that which is veiled and where those who have died reside. One way of looking at life after death is that prior to the resurrection of Christ Hades had two regions. The first was populated by those who died without faith. The second was populated by those who were faithful. This is described by the story of the rich man and Lazarus.

It may be that when Christ rose and took 'captivity captive', the region of Hades sometimes called paradise was emptied and the souls of the righteous were relocated. We might see a little of their condition from Revelation where those righteous martyred await the return of the Lord.

And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled. - Revelation 6:9-11

These are described as 'under' an altar. While cognizant of the passage of time and desiring to be avenged, they are described as being 'at rest'.

Those who die as Christians seem to be with the Lord although it is not known if they are in the same location as those who are martyred in the tribulation.

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

Those who have no faith and are not part of the body of Christ still reside in Hades. We get a picture of communication between Abraham and the rich man from what Jesus described. However, we also get a picture of communication in Ezekiel.

The strong among the mighty shall speak to him out of the midst of hell with them that help him: they are gone down, they lie uncircumcised, slain by the sword. - Ezekiel 32:21

We see a picture of even mighty victorious warriors sharing with their victims all of whom come to have shame for their works.

There be the princes of the north, all of them, and all the Zidonians, which are gone down with the slain; with their terror they are ashamed of their might; and they lie uncircumcised with them that be slain by the sword, and bear their shame with them that go down to the pit. Pharaoh shall see them, and shall be comforted over all his multitude, even Pharaoh and all his army slain by the sword, saith the Lord GOD. - Ezekiel 32:30-31

Even Pharaoh who was slain by those mightier will take comfort in that those who defeated him are also with him in Hades.

We see that there is recognition, memory, and shame in Hades (Sheol). We see that the rich man (who had no interest in Hades prior to death) comes to such an understanding that he desires that someone return to warn his brothers.

Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead. - Luke 16:27-31

We can see that the experience of Hades imparts an understanding that most resist while alive. It may be that this experience produces an appreciation of truth such that all who are exposed to it come to such an understanding that they eventually recognize that Jesus is truth.

That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. - Philippians 2:10-11

We might be able to gain a little more understanding of what the unsaved experience in Hades by considering the word the rich man used to describe his 'torment' (basanos). The word was used to describe a touchstone. This was a stone that was used to determine the purity of a coin. If one rubbed the coin on a touch stone, the color left on the stone would indicate its purity. The word came to be used of the torture Greek slaves were subject to in giving testimony in court. This testimony was preferred because it was felt that testimony under adversity was closer to the truth.

The rich man also refers to the experience of 'flame'. However, Abraham contrasts the comforts of the rich man's earthly life with the rest Lazarus now receives. This may be reflective that hardships in the earthly life help one see the truth of God's sovereignty whereas an experience with difficulty in Hades finally shows those in death the truth of what they ignored in life.

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: - 1 Peter 4:14

Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. - 2 Timothy 3:12

That time spent in Hades is not the eternal punishment many expect for the unjust as described by Peter such as they are held (reserved) until their being judged and punished.

The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: - 2 Peter 2:9

While we are not given much information about the realm of the unsaved dead or what their experiences are, we might speculate that their experiences will bring them to such an understanding of truth that when they are judged out of the books of their life at the Great White Throne judgment, they will have no objection to their sentence.

We do know that it is the soul that is in Hades. Even without a physical body, souls somehow can recognize each other as well as communicate. We know it is uncomfortable by indications of thirst.

Chapter 12 - Those who trust in Jesus

The apostle Paul writes wistfully of looking forward to death when he writes the Philippians.

According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. - Philippians 1:20-24

There is no experience of Hades for those who trust in Jesus. Paul writes of either being in the body or being with the Lord.

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

The reason we are able to escape the destination of Hades is that we have new and eternal life in Jesus. We have been made alive in Christ and are somehow part of his body.

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. - 1 Corinthians 15:22

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. - 2 Corinthians 5:17

Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. 1 Corinthians 12:27

Chapter 13 - How people come to Hades

Paul in writing to the Thessolonians tells them that those who follow the Antichrist do so because they are vulnerable to his deceptions. This vulnerability is a result of their failing to have received a 'love of the truth'.

And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and

shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. - 2 Thessalonians 2:8-10

We may not ever understand the difference between election and free will (how much God does and how much we do), however, we can see that people are held accountable for not receiving a love of truth. One result of this failure is that God compounds their blindness and they suffer for it.

And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. - 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12

Since God is truth, the rejection of truth is a rejection of God. When Jesus was before Pilate we can see that he comments that those 'who are of the truth' would hear his words. We might surmise that those who are not of the truth are not interested in or even hostile to the words of Jesus.

Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. - John 18:37

Paul tells the Romans that the truth of God can be seen in creation so that those who reject this are subject to God's wrath.

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: - Romans 1:20

People who do not trust in Jesus are said to perish, be destroyed, and fail to secure 'eternal life'. This seems to preclude an infinitely eternal torment..

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. - 1 Corinthians 1:18

Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; - 2 Thessalonians 1:9

He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. - 1 John 5:12

Chapter 14 - Where Christians go after death

Paul tells the Corinthians that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. We can see a further picture of this condition when Paul describes a future event (called the rapture).

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are

asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. - 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17

What is described is a future event where Jesus will appear in the atmosphere to collect those that are his. He brings with him those Christians which 'sleep' in Jesus (Christians who have physically died). It is at this point that we will receive new bodies.

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. - 1 John 3:2

Those who receive Christ have a much better fate than those who reject him.

But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: - 2 Timothy 1:10

Those who receive Jesus also receive eternal life.

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. - Romans 6:23

There is an administrative function for 'saints' (holy ones) during the future millennial kingdom.

Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? - 1 Corinthians 6:2

This may apply to those of Israel who took part in the 'first resurrection'.

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. - Revelation 20:4

There is also a comment about 'judging angels'.

Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life? - 1 Corinthians 6:3

It is unclear as to if the 'we' includes all resurrected believers or just the 'saints'. It is also unclear as to if these are good angels for reward, or bad angels for punishment.

We are told that believers will be judged for rewards based on works.

Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. - 1 Corinthians 3:13-15

Regardless of the rewards a Christian may receive, he will always be with the Lord. Those who trust in Christ now have the opportunity to become part of the 'body of Christ'. We may not fully understand, or even be capable of understanding, what this means.

For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. - Ephesians 5:30

However, Christians have the assurance that we will always be with Jesus.

Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. - 1 Thessalonians 4:17

Chapter 15 - Summary

There can often be confusion regarding what happens to people after they die. The bible (the only reliable source of information) describes different places, conditions, and reasons for different circumstances and it can be helpful to clarify what we are able to know.

A further complication arises from the frequent English translation of the Greek word *aionios* as 'forever' or 'eternal'. The word in Greek meant an 'age' and was often used to describe the length of time of a life or the reign of a ruler. The length of time generally has to be deduced from the context. In a similar way the English word 'tall' can refer both to a man or a mountain.

Categories of People.

1. The unsaved. Those who reject Jesus or never trusted in him go to Hades (Sheol) to await the time when they will be judged according to their works.
2. Those who never heard about Jesus. It may be possible that some who trust in the hand that created the world could escape being judged for their works because the bible does not declare specifically that they cannot be saved through the revelation of Jesus in creation. However, they are held responsible for rejecting the creator.
3. Babies and small children who die young. Some try to use a verse about David lamenting the death of a son to 'prove' that infants who die go to heaven. It is unlikely that God takes those who die so young and subjects them to torment, but this doctrine is not specifically stated in the bible. We have to trust that a merciful God is not cruel.

It may be that being held accountable for sin requires a degree of understanding to be held accountable.

And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: - Acts 17:30

For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. - Romans 5:13

It would seem that to be held accountable for sin, one has to have a degree of understanding.

4. Jews under the law. Jews who have faith can trust in the first resurrection to receive eternal life.

5. Jews under grace. When salvation through grace was made available, Jews who trusted in Jesus would also be able to secure their eternal life immediately.

6. Jews with no faith. The Jew who does not have faith faces the same fate as the unsaved.

7. Christians. Gentiles (and Jews) who trust in Jesus, while grace is available, receive their eternal life immediately and can be assured by this through the indwelling presence of God.

Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. - John 14:23

In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, - Ephesians 1:13

Locations

Because of the common and pervasive understanding of two afterlife locations (heaven and hell) it can be helpful to clarify again what the bible tells us.

1. The grave, sheol, hades. This is the place of residence after death for all except Christians. It has two divisions. One defined by torment and the other defined by rest. The part with rest was called 'paradise' by Jesus.

And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise. - Luke 23:43

2. With Jesus. Christians, who by trusting in Jesus become part of his 'body', are with Jesus after death rather than in sheol, hades, or even 'paradise'.

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. - 1 Thessalonians 4:14

3. The abyss. The phrase 'bottomless pit' is used to translate this word and is often used to describe a containment location of some demonic entities.

4. Tartarus. This word is used once by Peter in verb form. It conveys the idea of a segregated location of confinement for some rebelling angels.

5. Gehenna. This word describes the garbage dump outside Jerusalem and is used metaphorically to convey some of the less pleasant aspects of sheol.

6. The lake of fire. While some bible translations use the word 'hell' to describe other words. The idea of a final destination for those without Jesus is most accurately described by this location.

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: - Matthew 25:41

And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. - Revelation

20:15

7. Heaven. The cartoon image of people with wings floating on clouds and playing a harp has caused many people to be dismissive in regard to their future state. Those who are with Jesus for his 1,000 year rule on earth will have tasks to perform. After Satan is set loose to have one more chance to get people to fight against God, he will be thrown into the lake of fire.

What is called the 'eternal state' begins with a new heaven and new earth and a new Jerusalem.

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. - Revelation 21:1-2

It is difficult for us to understand what this existence will be like. However, we can know that we will have no memory of this life.

For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. - Isaiah 65:17

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. - Revelation 21:4

Resurrection body

Life in the eternal state will be in a new body. Since there will be no more death, we might presume that the new body will not be subject to the effects of aging we see with the body we receive at birth.

Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. - 1 Corinthians 15:50-52

John writes that we will be like Jesus.

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. - 1 John 3:2

From this we might surmise that we would also have additional abilities like being able to enter closed rooms as Jesus did after he was resurrected. It is also possible that we will understand more.

For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. - 1 Corinthians 13:12