

Resurrection Life of Jesus Church

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

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PART 86: PARADISE AND HELL

LIFE AFTER DEATH

When a human dies, the cellular functions come to a halt and the physical body is placed in a grave or cremated. However, the person did not actually die even though the earthly vehicle is dead. The soul and born-again spirit are still very much alive.

The Book of Revelation makes it clear that our spiritual makeup – the soul – continues to live long after afterward because it is eternal. It is just as real in the spirit realm as our physical body is on earth. In fact, the physical body is a replica of the soul. This is how you retain memories of loved ones and events on earth after you pass away.

The soul body features a head with eyes, ears, nose, and a mouth. It has a torso to which are connected arms and legs, feet and hands. The physical body is merely a replica of the soul body. **Revelation 6:9-11; 7:9-17**

PARADISE

Prior to the resurrection of Jesus, those who died, lost their physical bodies and were taken to paradise or hell, both of which are located in the earth. The spirit realm operates as a parallel dimension. The souls in paradise could see into hell and vice versa, but they were separated by an impassable chasm or ravine. **Luke 16:19-31**

Paradise was a huge place under the earth and hell is even a larger. Incidentally, hell has the ability to expand to account for the great number of souls that opt to reject God.

“Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it.” (Isaiah 5:14)

Many people falsely assume that hell is run by the Devil and his fallen angels.

Jesus emphasized that God the Father is God of the living – whether physically on earth or with their souls in paradise/hell. He is not the God of the dead. **Mark 12:26-27**

There are no dead humans, only dead bodies. Each person that dies is still very much alive – whether in paradise or hell. The first such reference of a person returning from the dead was with the prophet Samuel when King Saul asked a witch to summon him prior to his last battle. **1 Samuel 28:11-19**

Jesus told the malefactor on the cross next to Him that He was going to paradise after His body died. **Luke 23:42-43**

Paradise was a very pleasant place where people waited – up to 4,000 years – for the Messiah to be incarnated and perform His redemptive work. Only then could they leave paradise and move on to heaven itself. Paradise can be likened to a comfortable airport lounge where people are waiting for their flights.



Some of the prominent people in paradise were Noah, Job, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and his twelve sons. Moses was also there with Joshua, along with Samuel and the other prophets. Daniel was constantly asked about the timeline and how long before the Messiah would come. King David happily sang all the psalms he wrote, thinking about the Messiah that would come from his bloodline.

There were new people constantly arriving from the physical realm as their bodies died. I would imagine the newcomers were quizzed about the latest developments on earth, eager for any news about the Messiah.

There was a great stir in paradise when John the Baptist arrived and they were overjoyed when he told them about Jesus. John described the miracles Jesus was doing, convinced that the God-man was the anticipated Messiah. Paradise was soon buzzing with discussion and speculation about what would happen next.

When holy angels began showing up in paradise, the inhabitants grew silent and wondered what it meant. Was a dignitary arriving? Suddenly a bright light appeared and a great voice announced, "The Messiah is here!"

The atonement for sin has been paid and the Messiah was surprisingly the Son of God! Dressed in a white robe, Jesus announced how He had paid for the sins of mankind and the people in paradise would soon leave and go to heaven. **1 Corinthians 2:7-8**

The roar of the crowd filled paradise and changed into songs of praise as King David led them in one psalm after another. Tears streamed down faces as the people realized the dream had finally been fulfilled – the Redeemer stood among them!

When the singing finally ended, Jesus stated that His stay would be short, for He was due to be resurrected on earth after three days and three nights. **Matthew 12:40**

Jesus announced that He was going to cross over to hell and proclaim to its inhabitants that the redemption was complete, but none of them would benefit from it. **1 Peter 3:18-19**

Everyone in paradise was full of joy; the shouting, singing, and dancing kept going as Jesus departed and King David unapologetically sang and danced with all his might, remembering when he had done the same on earth.

The prophetic words of Jesus continued to be fulfilled.

"...the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again." (Matthew 20:18-19)

Remember, it's not so important how you begin your life after salvation, but how you finish it!

Do you have an ear to hear with?