Questions I’ve Always Wanted To Ask God
“How Happens When I Die?”
(Part 6)

Intro: Since this is Memorial Day Weekend; a day we honor those who have died, I thought it would be a great time to ask the question: What Happens When I Die? Has God given us any answers to this mystery? Absolutely, but first,…

Reject Common Misconceptions About Death

*II Tim. 4:3-4 “For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to right teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever they want to hear. They will reject the truth and follow strange myths.”* (NLT) (8 common myths)

Reincarnation myth: (spiritual recycling / we get recycled into another form)
1. We will exist again after we die / we will be born again / we also existed before in a previous life. (Grace Williams quote: Can’t get it right after 60Xs – get some counseling!!)
2. Appealing theory: Doesn’t matter how you live this life – get another shot

Soul sleep myth: (A spiritual sleep after death where God awakens you at a some future date.)
1. Since the Bible uses the term “sleep” many times to refer to physical death, people have erroneously concluded that we are not conscious after death.
2. Problem is the Bible doesn’t support this theory (Rich man and Lazarus)

Annihilation myth: (we cease to exist after death)
1. Some groups hold that this is a form of eternal punishment – we just cease to exist altogether. An atheist would hold to this type of thinking. There’s nothing after this life.
2. Problem, the Bible teaches that we are eternal spiritual creations of God.
Purgatory myth: (A middle place between heaven and hell – where people who are not good enough / or bad enough – can get their act together.)
1. Nice theory, but not in the Bible at all! This promotes a salvation by works mentality.
2. This contradicts the grace and forgiveness provided by Jesus and gives false hope to people that they get another chance after death.

Everyone goes to heaven myth:
1. This is a lot like saying all roads eventually lead to God. This not only contradicts what is taught in the Bible, but is contrary to everyday life.
2. Nothing in your life works like this? Give me a break! Why would your eternity?
3. Also, this gives people a license to live however they want!

Near Death Experience myths:
1. These stories abound. They are fascinating, but most contradict what Scripture teaches. So where are you going to get your information?
2. Betty Eadie’s book: Embraced by the Light: “I remembered the creation of the earth. God wanted me to know how it felt when creation occurred. And the only way to do that was for me to view it again and feel what I felt before.” (She pre-existed???)

Ghosts and spirit myths: (we hang out on earth for awhile)
1. Are the spirits of the dead walking among us and can we communicate with them? Are they here because they have unfinished work?
   • Popular TV series: Ghost Whisperer
2. Absolutely NOT! WHY? Because of what the Bible teaches. We do have a spiritual enemy and he can masquerade as an angel of light. The demonic real is very real – they can impersonate people who have died.

Angel myth: (We become angels when we die.)
1. Not true! We do not get wings / halos / harps / and hang out on clouds.
   I. We are children of the living God. Sons and daughters of the King of Heaven. We get to judge the angels!
2. Our status in eternity is above the angels. They are just servants, we are heirs with Christ!
A. We are eternal beings

Luke 20:37-38 “…He is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. So He is the God of the living not the dead. They are all alive to Him.”
(NLT) Jesus is saying they still exist!

1. The Bible clearly teaches that when we physically die, we continue to live on; a person’s soul and spirit continues into eternity. Our physical bodies are simply vessels to hold who we really are. (Physical & Spiritual)

2. We are eternal being made in the image of God; made to exist forever! Think about this! You will exist forever! I believe this is one of the reasons the 2 greatest commands are relational commands. (Love God / Love each other) – What hope!

B. We live and die only once

Heb. 9:27 “…it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment.”
(NASB)

1. We don’t get another chance. We don’t get to be recycled / We don’t get a few practice runs. We only get one shot at life. We live once, we die once, and then we face God. (We don’t come back 60Xs!)

2. If this is true, then how I live this life really matters. If I only have one shot at this, I’d better make this life count. I better get a few things figured out in this life while I have the time!

3. To live in such a way as to not prepare for something in the future that is inevitable is foolish! Too many people are trying to ignore the fact of death, rather then preparing for it!

C. There are only two options for eternity

Matt. 25:46 “And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous will go into eternal life.” (NLT)

1. The Bible is very clear that there are only 2 locations for where we will spend eternity. (No purgatory) They are both eternal. One is a place of eternal punishment / the other is a place of eternal blessing. What will heaven be like?

Rev. 21:4 “He will remove all their sorrows, and there will be no more death, or sorrow or crying or pain. For the old world and its evils are gone forever.” (NLT)

2. The Bible is very clear that heaven is a literal place that we are to look forward to. If we are eternal beings created for an eternal relationship with God and each other, then it makes a lot of sense to have an eternal place to enjoy each other forever.
3. The Bible doesn’t tell us a lot about heaven. It doesn’t describe a lot of details to us. WHY? First, we wouldn’t comprehend it – it’s beyond our abilities / Secondly, if we knew too much, it would ruin our stay here!

D. All who reject Christ will be judged
Rev. 20:12,15 “I saw the dead...standing before God’s throne. The books were opened, including the book of Life...And anyone whose name was not found recorded in the book of Life was throne into the lake of fire.” (NLT)

1. I realize this is not politically correct, but it is Biblically accurate. There is an eternal place of punishment called Hell / or Lake of Fire / that awaits those who reject Christ. (75% of Americans believe in a hell)
2. God is not mean and unfair in punishing sin. Since God is a just God, He has to punish sin. He provided the payment for sin with the death of His Son. Those who reject Christ have rejected the payment for sin that God has provided.
3. Now, the only option someone has left is to pay for sin themselves in eternity. A loving God doesn’t send people to hell. A loving God provided a way so no one has to go there.
4. The awful reality is that if we reject Christ in this life, we have rejected Him for eternity!

E. Upon death, we are immediately with the Lord
II Cor. 5:8 “…to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.” (NASB)
Luke 23:43 “I assure you, today you will be with Me in paradise.” (NLT)

1. We do not become ghosts / or lost spirits who wander around earth trying to communicate with loved ones. We are immediately in the Lord’s presence!
2. This is why we cannot communicate with the dead! (This may bother some of you) There is no one here to communicate with. Satan though, I believe preys upon people’s grief.
3. The demonic realm can impersonate dead loved ones. WHY? To get your eyes off of Christ. To keep people from seeing the truth. Most of what these “psychics” say is completely contrary to scripture.

F. I will be held accountable for the quality of my life
II Cor. 5:10 “For we must all strand before Christ to be judged. We will each receive whatever we deserve for the good or evil we have done in our bodies.” (NLT)

1. We each will have to give an account of our lives to God. This is NOT to determine where we spend eternity. That is decided in this life. After
death, we will be rewarded, or not, based upon how I followed Christ in this life. (I have described this as an award ceremony.) (I Cor. 3: 13-15)
2. Therefore, how I live this life as a Believer in Christ matters eternally. I have talked to so many people; “Hey, just as long as I’m in, that’s all I care.” I guarantee you that you’ll change your mind in eternity!
3. Although there are not different levels of heaven based upon our behavior, there are different rewards. Faithfulness is rewarded in eternity.

G. I will receive a heavenly body

Philip. 3:21 “He will take these weak mortal bodies of ours and change them into glorious bodies like His own...” (NLT)
1. So quit wasting money on plastic surgery / lipo / implants / botox / etc…If you don’t like what you have now, relax! You’re going to get a new one!
2. I get to shed my physical body with all its imperfections and limitations for a glorified body. A body that is like Jesus’ resurrected body.
3. What was His like? Not bound by physical laws or limitations / He was recognizable / Could eat, be touched, / He interacted with disciples.
4. What will we look like? How old / What kind of physique? Will I look like I just came from the gym? I don’t know. I do know that no one will be disappointed.
5. Can you imagine what hope this gives people who are blind? Quadriplegic / Amputees / those who live in pain / those who struggle with physical limitations every day? / People who are elderly who put up with their bodies just wearing out / What hope!
   • So why is all this so important?

• What we believe regarding what happens when we die affects the way we live today. It impacts our choices / our values / our relationships / even how we spend out time. It affects everything!

Conclusion: Because what the Bible teaches about death and eternity; and because God has told us these things to give us hope, I leave you with 2 choices.

1. It is imperative that we settle the issue regarding our eternity.
   • Do I know without any doubt that if my life ended suddenly this week, I would spend my eternity in heaven?

2. It is also imperative that we settle the issue of how we’re going to live this life.
   • Since you only get one shot at this life, how are you living it? Are you living for what God says is most important? Are you living this life as a way to prepare for
the next? Are you living, knowing that this life impacts the next? Are you living this life with an eternal perspective, or just an earthly one?