



What Happens After We Die?

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A. Naturalism: Death is the end

Today many people in the western world accept naturalism. According to naturalism, nature is all that exists. In this view, human beings are material objects, and we cease to exist when we die.

Naturalism is a stark view which prompts three common responses.

1. Defiance

2. Distraction

3. Despair

B. Hope of something more

1. Glimmers of an afterlife?

Interestingly, there is intriguing evidence that naturalism is false and that human existence continues on after death.

Many people report *near death experiences* which provide some evidence that death is not the end.

Researchers like Christian cardiologist Michael Sabom and cardiologist Pim Van Lommel have carefully studied reports for near death and out of body experiences.

2. The Hebrew hope in the afterlife

Current NDE studies find corroboration in the ancient Hebrew view that the person continues to live in a shadowy existence after death in a place called *sheol*.

Perhaps the most famous biblical illustration of this idea is found in the story where Saul calls Samuel back from the dead by way of the medium of Endor (1 Samuel 28:3-15).

C. Peace in the presence of Christ

The hope that we find in NDE studies and the Hebrew concept of *sheol* emerges into its fullness in the New Testament with the peace we find in the presence of Christ in the intermediate state prior to resurrection.

Paul placed his hope and comfort in Christ:

We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.

2 Corinthians 5:8-9 NIV

In Christ we find peace in three ways:

1. **Peace in his** _____

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...

Romans 5:1 NIV

2. **Peace in his** _____

But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

1 Corinthians 15:20 NIV

3. **Peace in his** _____ **as we await resurrection**

Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

Luke 23:43 NIV

D. Where are the dearly departed now?

1. Where is the intermediate state?

2. Can they hear us? Can we hear them?

Small Group Questions

1. What was the main message that stayed with you from Dr. Rauser's sermon?

2. Do you know people who believe there is nothing after death? Why do they hold that position? Do you think they are at peace with their views?

3. Do you know anybody who has had a near death experience? Have you had an experience of this type yourself? Are you skeptical of these reports?

4. What do you think it will be like to be in the presence of Christ in the intermediate state?

5. Do you think the dearly departed can hear us? Do you think they are aware of what is going on here on earth?
