

# BEYOND BELIEF

## Heaven and Hell - Fact or Fiction?

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In our modern culture some believe that when a person breathes their last breath – their life is extinguished.

It's just like blowing out a candle.

The question is – does the evidence support that conclusion?

The Process:

- Examine the evidence.
- Apply Reason.
- Arrive at a Conclusion.
- Take Action.

### The Evidence for Life After Death...

#### 1. The Evidence in Nature.

When you look at the natural world it is easy to see the pattern of death leading to new life.

Example:

- Seeds dying to produce plants.
- Caterpillars building tombs and emerging as butterflies.

Plato recognized this pattern in nature and concluded based on the probabilities that human death must also mean some form of new life.

#### 2. The Evidence in Physics.

Einstein and other experts have argued, in the first law of thermodynamics, that matter can change states but cannot be created or destroyed.

It would follow that human matter cannot be destroyed and can only change forms as it goes on perpetually.

#### 3. The Evidence in Philosophy.

Immanuel Kant observed that all people have an inner generated concern for ethics.

He defined this concern as justice.

And concluded that since justice is not applied fully in this life it must be applied somehow following this life.

Kant said there must be an afterlife, if for no other reason, so that justice can be served.

#### 4. The Evidence in Anthropology.

Anthropologists concluded long ago that in virtually every culture there has been and continues to be a well developed sense of life after death.

The field of anthropology accepts the fact that human beings as a whole seem incapable of believing that death actually ends life.

#### 5. The Evidence in Scripture.

The Bible clearly teaches that life continues after death.

1 Corinthians 15:19 Paul says *"...if only for this life we have hope in Christ then we are to be pitied more than all men."*

And he adds in vs. 32 *"...if the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die."*

The Bible says this life is meaningless if it all just ends at the grave.

#### 6. The Evidence in the Teachings of Jesus.

Jesus taught 4 basic truths about life after death...

1. Our spirits move immediately from this life into the next.

Luke 23:43 (Jesus to the thief on the cross) *"I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."*

2. Everyone will account for their life and face judgment.

Matthew 12:36 (Jesus to the religious leaders) *"But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken."*

3. God will separate those who trusted Christ from those who did not.

Matthew 7:21-23 (Jesus in the sermon on the Mount) *"Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord; will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven..."*

4. Those who trusted Christ will be assigned to heaven forever and those who did not will be assigned to hell.

Matthew 25:34 (Jesus to His disciples) *"Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you...'"*

Matthew 25:41 *"Then He will say to those on His left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels...'"*

Matthew 25:46 *"Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."*

Jesus was clear in His teaching concerning the reality of Heaven and Hell.

## The Reality of Heaven...

A community of those who loved and worshiped Christ in this life.

A community of forgiven people freed from the devastation of sin.

A community of joyful people where there is no sorrow, pain, guilt or remorse.

A community of perfect relationships and glorified bodies.

A community of limitless opportunities to serve and glorify God.

Jesus wanted believers to know what Heaven is like so they could long for it and count on it in their future.

## The Reality of Hell...

Jesus described it as –

A place of utter darkness.

A place of eternal fire.

A place of gnashing teeth.

A place of separation from God.

Jesus wanted everyone to know what Hell is like so we can arrive at an informed conclusion.

Hell is the place prepared for those who have chosen to deny God.

Heaven is the place prepared for those who have chosen to trust Him. God's going to give us all an expanded capacity to do in the next life what we most desired to do in this one.

God always honors our choices.

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What's Your Verdict?