

If the dead will not be disadvantaged at the return of Jesus, the question arises – ‘Where are they now?’ And this also concerns each of us – Where will we go if we die before the Lord returns?

Read [Luke 16:19-31](#), and answer the following:

Where did Lazarus go after death?

What treatment did he receive there?

How did he get there?

Where did the rich man go after death?

What treatment was he receiving there?

What separated the two places?

Can anyone go from one place to the other?

What can be learned about consciousness after death from this scripture?

(Compare with [Rev 6:9-11](#))

The place where disembodied spirits reside after death is called “Sheol” (Hebrew) or the ‘grave’ in the Old Testament and is called “hades” (Greek) in the New Testament. These terms were used to describe the unseen world where both the good and evil spirits are gathered until judgment day. [Isa 14:9-11](#) describes the King of Babylon’s fate after death.

Read [2Sam 12:23](#), and tell what David states about the relationship between the living and the dead:

Jesus Himself went to Hades and returned from there at His resurrection. It was prophesied that this would happen- Read [Acts 2:27, 31](#), and tell what the prophecy said:

Read [Matt 16:18](#), and tell what Jesus said the gates of Hades would not overcome (prevail):

The two sections of Hades are called 'Abraham's bosom' or 'Paradise' on one side and 'torment' on the other. Read [Luke 23:39-43](#), and consider the following:

How was this man's attitude about his sins different from the other?

When did Jesus say this man would be 'in Paradise'?

Note that this man lived under the Old Testament Law and was subject to it. Read [Jer 15:19](#) and [Ezekiel 18:30-32](#), and tell what was required for forgiveness of sins under the Old Law:

Read [2Cor 12:2-7](#), and tell who had been privileged to see Paradise:

What else is this place called?

What did he see and hear in this place?

What was he given to temper his pride?

Read [Phil 1:21-24](#), and tell where Paul expected to go after death:

This is also indicated in [2Cor 5:6-8](#). Read this scripture and tell:

How is being 'in the body' described?

How is being 'absent from the body' described?

Read [Acts 7:55-59](#), and tell who Stephen calls upon to receive his spirit:

Do these references to the 'waiting places' in Hades nullify final judgment? Not at all. The Bible teaches that once a person dies that there is no changing their final destiny. Hades is a temporary holding state where God who knows all, places people according to their deeds. Read [Rom 2:6-10](#) At final judgment all will be brought before the throne of God ([Rev 20:13](#)) and the eternal sentence will be pronounced. Read [Matt 25: 31-34, 41, 46](#), and tell:

Where will the righteous and for how long?

Where will the evil and disobedient go and for how long?

Read [2Tim 4:6-8](#), and tell when Paul expected to begin receiving his 'reward':

When did Jesus say "Father into your hands, I commit my spirit"? ([Luke 23:46](#))

Man's ideas on this subject:

**Purgatory** – this is the Catholic doctrine of an intermediate state of punishment where one's sins can be atoned for after they have died. This doctrine was incorporated by the council of Florence in 1438, and teaches that after sufficient financial payment by loved ones, the soul may be released from Purgatory into heaven itself. This idea is not found in the Bible at all.

Read [2Cor 5:10](#), and tell on what basis we will be judged:

Read [1Pet 1:17](#), and tell how God judges:

**Reincarnation** – this is one of the tenets of Hinduism. This doctrine teaches that, after death, the spirit is 'recycled' in an ongoing attempt to gain purification. Depending on one's karma (the principle that one's life form is based on how well you lived in a past life), one may come back as a worm, tree, or prince. This false doctrine has been embraced by many in Hollywood who market it to the popular culture.

Read [Heb 9:27](#)- how does this refute reincarnation?

