

# SIGNIFICANCE

Devotional | Destiny: Where Am I Going After I Die? | Dec 11, 2022

GRACE  
FELLOWSHIP

**Discuss:** What are some beliefs people hold about what happens after we die?

**Key Text:** *“For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come. 15 Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. 16 Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.”* (Hebrews 13:14-16)

Christian pastor and author Chuck Swindoll tells the story of a merchant in Bagdad who sent his servant to the market to buy provisions. A short while later, the servant returned, trembling in fear, and said, “Sir, when I was in the marketplace just now, I was jostled by a woman in the crowd, and when I turned I saw it was Death that jostled me. She looked at me and made a threatening gesture. Please, sir, lend me a horse, and I will ride away from this city and avoid my fate. I will go to Samarra—Death will not find me there.” The merchant lent him a horse, and the servant mounted it, riding away as fast as the horse could gallop toward Samarra. Later that day, the merchant went to the market, and he saw Death standing in the crowd. The merchant said to Death, “Why did you make a threatening gesture to my servant when you saw him this morning?” Death replied, “That was not a threatening gesture, it was a reaction of surprise. I was astonished to see your servant in Bagdad this morning—I have an appointment with him tonight in Samarra.”

In this final lesson of our “Significance” series, we’re addressing what Scripture says about Destiny: Where am I going after I die?

## 1. What is death?

To understand death, we must start with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. God, who is holy and cannot tolerate sin in His presence, warned Adam and Eve that disobeying Him would result in their death (Gen.2:17), and that’s what happened. Death has a two-fold meaning: 1) Physical death which is when the vital processes of the physical body end and the body goes back to the dust (Gen.3:19), and 2) Spiritual death which is separation from God’s Spirit, resulting in broken fellowship with God (Gen.3:8; Is.59:2). Physical death occurred gradually for Adam and Eve, but spiritual death occurred instantly—their fellowship with God was broken at once. So, death is the result of sin (Rom.6:23) and involves loss of physical and spiritual life.

## 2. Why do we face the consequences of Adam’s sin?

As the first created human, Adam stood at the “head” of the human race—he acted not only for himself but for all his progeny. Thus, Adam’s sin affects us all in two ways: Adam’s guilt is credited to us, ruining our standing before God (this is called imputed sin), and we are born in a morally defiled condition with a natural inclination to sin (this is called original sin or sin nature). Further, we are sinners by choice—we act contrary to God (Is.53:6). Romans 5:12 says, *“Sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all have sinned.* Imputed sin, original sin, and our choice to sin puts us under God’s judgment.

**Discuss:** Is a relationship with God the best thing that could happen to a person? Why or why not? Is separation from God the worst? Why or why not?

### 3. God abolished the law of the sin and death through Jesus Christ.

Even though we had sinned against God, and we could not avoid the physical or spiritual death that resulted from sin, God did not give up on us. In His love and grace, He came to Earth in the Person of Jesus Christ who was God in the flesh (Jn.1:1, 14), and substituted Himself for us sinners. Jesus, being God, had no sin to pay for (2 Cor.5:21), so His death alone could avail to us and pay for our sins. He took our sins upon Himself vicariously and died the death of a sinner in our place on the cross (1 Pet.2:24). Jesus' sacrificial death made amends for our sin and released us from its penalty (Col.2:13-14). Jesus then rose from the dead to verify that He was the Son of God and that His salvation work on our behalf satisfied God (Rom.1:4).

**Discuss:** What key words and phrases do you see in Ephesians 1:7 and Colossians 2:13-14 that pertain to Christ's substitutionary sacrifice for us?

### 4. For those who have been made spiritually alive through faith in Christ, the Bible presents a picture of death that brings great hope.

In Philippians 1:21 the Apostle Paul wrote, *"To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."* As Paul considered his future, he concluded that he could not lose! Jesus was the inspiration of Paul's life, so to continue living was a glorious experience, but if Paul died, he would profit even more since he would go to be with Jesus in person. Paul was in a win-win situation—there was no way to lose. This is the prospect for every person who trusts in Christ Jesus. Since only through death can we go to be with God in Heaven (unless we are still living when Christ returns), rather than being an enemy, death is actually a great friend to the believer!

**Discuss:** What key words and phrases do you see in 1 Corinthians 15:20-26 that pertain to Christ's salvation work on our behalf?

### 5. For those who die in their sin apart from Christ, the Bible presents a dreadful picture of death.

God wants all people to be saved (1 Tim.2:4-6; 1 Pet.3:9), but He has given us a free will—God will not force us to choose to receive Jesus. God made Heaven for those who want God in their life to go to at death, and God made Hell for those who have rebelliously chosen separation from God to go to at death. Both Heaven and Hell are eternal. Hell is a terrible place of judgment and condemnation where all are subject to the wrath and fury of God (Lk.16:24; Rev.20). The Bible indicates no second chance for salvation for a nonbeliever after death (Heb.9:27).

**Discuss:** Jesus spoke more than anyone else in the Bible about Hell; in fact, He spoke more about Hell than He did about Heaven. Why does this matter?

#### For Further Study:

*Heaven* by Randy Alcorn

Bible-based articles and videos about death, Heaven, and Hell at [www.gotquestions.org](http://www.gotquestions.org)

*One Minute After You Die* by Erwin Lutzer