

## We Believe The Afterlife Community Group Questions

1. What questions do you have about the afterlife?
2. Do you have a hard time explaining to others that Heaven and Hell are real places?
3. What are some things that you do in your life that have eternal value?
4. Why do you think that Jesus is the only way?

For the last two weeks of our series I will be dealing with articles of faith #'s 8 and 9 and they both deal with issues of the future. What to expect as a believer and what this current world should expect.

So today our main topic is we believe the Bible teaches that there is life after death.

The question children ask when they finally understand that people die...is what happens next? or Is there life after death?

The book of Job asks the same question about an afterlife *Job 14:14 "If a man dies, shall he live again?"*

The ancient philosopher Epicurus (341–270 B.C.) recognized that the fear of death was present in everybody, and he sought a way to remove that fear. Epicurus taught that humanity should not fear death because human beings are nothing more than a composition of atoms, which at death disperse, and that is the end of things.

Epicurus didn't believe there were any gods to fear or anything to face once a person breathed his last. His teaching of maximum pleasure in this life with minimum pain and suffering dictated that everything ends when death occurred. (*gotquestions.com*)

A brief study of history shows that there are many different philosophies and teachings about the afterlife...like reincarnation and different descriptions of paradise and eternal punishment. Where do we go to find the correct answers to this critical question of life after death.

Of course we as Christians go to the Bible but more specifically we can go to the words of Jesus and we believe that Jesus teaches 3 things about the afterlife...

***There is an afterlife, there are two destinies in the afterlife and how to know which destiny is yours in the afterlife.***

### **There is an afterlife**

In Mark 12:24-27 the Sadducees were questioning Jesus in order to try to corner Him because they did not believe in the afterlife and they asked if man dies and he and his wife have no children and his brother takes his wife as his own wife...in the resurrection whose wife will this women be. Jesus corrects there error by telling them that in the resurrection there will be no marriage but then He reminds them that when God introduced Himself to Moses in the burning bush he said "I am the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob, referring to them as living but they were physically dead...then Jesus says *"He is not God of the dead, but of the living"* Saying they are not dead but very much alive in another place.

\*John 14:1-4 In this passage, Jesus comforts His disciples by telling them specifically that they can look forward to being with Him in heaven and He is preparing a place for them.

*Hebrews 9:27 "It is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment"* which illustrates that there is an afterlife.

If there is an afterlife what can we expect? The Bible teaches...

### **There are two destinations in the afterlife**

In Matthew 25:46 *“These [unbelievers] will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life”*

In \*Luke 16:19-30 there is a more elaborate picture (read the passage) Here we see there are two places in the afterlife...one is good and one is not. There are a few important things that we learn in this passage...

- One place is a place of comfort “Abraham’s side” and the other is a place of torment “Hades”
- There is no crossing over from one place to the other
- The opportunity to be in the place of comfort comes in this life
- If people do not listen to the Word and the Prophets it is unlikely they will listen because their hearts are hard.

This brings us to our next point about the afterlife...

### **How to know your destination in the afterlife.**

\*Matthew 7:13-14 (read and talk about)

What is the narrow gate? The GOSPEL

But is this life just about securing our spot in the afterlife?

### **What should we do with this life in view of the afterlife?**

\*Matthew 6:19-21

Jesus is teaching us that things of eternal value should have greater importance than things of earthly value.

**Focus on what has eternal value** What has eternal value? God and People...our lives should be lived to serve God and people.

You see most of us even though we believe there is an afterlife and have secured our spot, we don’t seem to live in view of it. We live in view of the stuff we can acquire, the reputation we build, what makes

us feel good, the way we look and really the bottom line is the struggle we all share is living life with ourselves as the center.

But when we start to live with God and other people as the focal points it ties the afterlife and this life...if this life was just about believing in Jesus so your afterlife was good, then your work on earth is done once you believe.

But the truth is your work on earth begins when you believe in Jesus because you come to realization that you and how you feel and what you want should not be the center of your world but serving God and other people should be the center...and what Jesus is saying is that it will impact eternity...meaning you will be storing up treasures in heaven.

Finally I want to clarify one last question that you may be asking or others may have asked you...**Why should we trust Jesus and that He knows all about the afterlife? Or why is He the only way?**

Remember what Epicurus taught...no life after death...One of the groups the Apostle Paul encountered on his trip to Athens in Acts 17 were the Epicureans.

They listened to Paul preaching in which he taught about the resurrection of Jesus Acts 17:32-34 *"Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, "We will hear you again about this." So Paul went out from their midst. But some men joined him and believed"*

The *"some that joined him believed"* did so because Jesus rose from the dead and this proved that He conquered sin and death and brings life. This is why He and only He stands out in the crowd of philosophies on life after death because He lived after He died.

*1 Corinthians 15:54-55 "Death is swallowed up in victory." "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*