

# Title: The Intermediate State: Heaven, "Getting Ready for a Trip of a Lifetime"

You might wonder what happens one minute after you die. It's a question that has intrigued humanity for centuries. As Christians, we have a unique perspective on this, rooted in the teachings of Jesus and the Bible. Today, let's explore what the Bible says about the intermediate state—Heaven—and how we can prepare for this incredible journey.

## Where Are We Headed?

When a Christian dies, they go to what Jesus called Paradise, which is synonymous with the present Heaven. In Luke 16:22, we read about the poor man who was carried away by angels to Abraham's side. This passage gives us a glimpse into the care and gentleness with which God welcomes His children into Heaven.

Heaven is described as the dwelling place of God and His angels. Erwin Lutzer puts it beautifully: "Heaven is the earthly life of the believer glorified and perfected, but not finalized." This means that while Heaven is a place of incredible joy and peace, it is also temporary, much like Hades. The ultimate destination is the New Heaven and New Earth, but for now, Paradise is a walled garden, reminiscent of the Garden of Eden and the tree of life (Revelation 2:7).

## How Will We Get There?

The journey to Heaven is one of care and divine escort. Luke 16:22 tells us that angels carried Lazarus to Abraham's side. Angels are God's messengers and protectors, and they play a crucial role in our transition from this life to the next. Billy Graham once said, "Death for the Christian cuts the cord that holds us captive in this present evil world so that angels may transport believers to their heavenly inheritance."

Imagine the thief on the cross, who was promised by Jesus that he would be in Paradise that very day (Luke 23:43). It's comforting to think that Jesus Himself might have escorted him into God's presence. Angels are amazing creatures, and while they should not be worshipped, they should be respected as extensions of God's presence and work.

## What Will Life Be Like When We Get There?

In Heaven, we will have recognizable physical bodies. Luke 16:23-24 describes the rich man in Hades seeing Abraham and Lazarus, indicating that we will retain our identities and be recognizable. We will also retain and grow in our knowledge. Luke 16:25, 27-28 shows that the rich man remembered his life on earth and his family, indicating that our memories and knowledge will continue to grow.

When we see God face to face, we will finally begin to understand how much He really loves us (1 Corinthians 13:8-13). We will retain our love for family and friends, and there is biblical evidence that they are in the presence of God praying for us (Romans 8:34, Revelation 6:9-10).

We will also retain our emotions and feelings. While there will be joy in Heaven, there will also be moments of grief until God wipes every tear from our eyes (Revelation 21:4). Psalm 16:11 tells us, "In your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand there are pleasures forevermore." We will rejoice over lost people coming to faith in Christ (Luke 15:10).

Finally, we will retain our passions and purpose. Our God-given passions and purposes will continue in Heaven, only they will be redeemed, perfected, and unhindered by sin.

## How Can You Know You Are Going?

Every person will be judged at death, and this judgment of faith does not depend on our works but on our faith in Jesus Christ. Romans 10:9-10 says, "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."

So, what does this mean for you? It means that you can have the assurance of Heaven by placing your faith in Jesus Christ. It means living a life that reflects that faith, loving God and loving others.

## Conclusion

The point is, Jesus wants your whole heart. What will you do this week to give it to Him? Will you take a moment to reflect on your faith and your relationship with Jesus? Will you share this incredible hope with someone who needs to hear it?

## Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for the promise of Heaven and the assurance that we will be with You one day. Help us to live our lives with Heaven in mind, loving You and loving others. Guide us as we share this hope with those around us. In Jesus' name, Amen.