



Physical Death

Physical death occurs when the soul leaves the physical body. For believers, the soul and the human spirit remain in the presence of the Lord until the Rapture, when the dead in Christ rise first. The soul and human spirit will come down to wherever the death occurred and receive a resurrection body and meet the Lord in the air. The bodies of the living believers are changed and they meet the Lord in the air. Phil. 3:21; 2 Cor. 5:8.

“who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.” (Philippians 3:21, NASB)

“we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.” (2 Corinthians 5:8, NASB)

For the unbeliever at physical death, the soul leaves the body and goes to Hades to await the Last Judgment - the Great White Throne Judgment. The body is deserted in physical death. The elements that form the chemistry of the body go into the soil and the air.

The sovereignty of God determines the time, place, and manner of our physical death. It is part of His plan. When the believer’s purpose on earth has been completed, God calls us home to be with the Lord. Psalms 68:19-20.

“Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears our burden, The God who is our salvation. Selah. God is to us a God of deliverances; And to GOD the Lord belong escapes from death.” (Psalms 68:19-20, NASB)

The believer’s lifetime can be extended by God. The believer’s life can also be shortened by reversionism. The worst-case scenario for shortening your lifespan is the sin unto death which does not bring glory to God. Psalms 102:23-24; Prov. 14:27; Psalms 118:18; Isaiah 38:18.

“He has weakened my strength in the way; He has shortened my days. I say, “O my God, do not take me away in the midst of my days, Your years are throughout all generations.” (Psalms 102:23-24, NASB)

“The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, That one may avoid the snares of death.” (Proverbs 14:27, NASB)

“The LORD has disciplined me severely, But He has not given me over to death.” (Psalms 118:18, NASB)

“For Sheol cannot thank You, Death cannot praise You; Those who go down to the pit cannot hope for Your faithfulness.” (Isaiah 38:18, NASB)

Because a believer’s soul is saved, in physical death, the soul and the human spirit leave the body and go into the presence of the Lord. 2 Cor. 5:8; Rev. 21:4.

“we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.” (2 Corinthians 5:8, NASB)

“and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.” (Revelation 21:4, NASB)

In 2 Corinthians 5:8, “absent from the body” means physical death and “at home with the Lord” means we will instantly be face to face with Jesus Christ. The soul and human spirit will have perceptive ability



regarding things in heaven in their vicinity, but probably will not be aware of what is going on down on earth. In Philippians 3:21, the phrase “for to me to live is Christ” refers to the spiritually mature believer fulfilling God's purpose for their life via filling of the Holy Spirit and through application of *epignosis* Bible doctrine. “To die is gain” means death for the mature believer will be even greater than the living the spiritual life. See category on [Dying Grace](#).

“For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.” (Philippians 1:21, NASB)

In 2 Corinthians 5:1, the phrase “For we know” refers to believers in the Church Age. “If” is a third class condition - maybe we will, or maybe we won't die before the Rapture, which may be any time. The “earthly tent” is our physical body as a temporary structure. “Torn down” means the body, after death, returns to the chemicals from which it was made. “Building from God” is a permanent structure or the resurrection body.

“For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” (2 Corinthians 5:1, NASB)

In 2 Corinthians 5:2, the phrase “in this house” refers to our temporary bodies. “We groan” is in the present tense and means we keep on groaning. “Longing” means intense desire to be face to face with the Lord. Phil. 1:22-24.

“For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven,” (2 Corinthians 5:2, NASB)

“But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose. But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better; yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake.” (Philippians 1:22-24, NASB)

In 2 Corinthians 5:3, “having put it on” is our resurrection body and “will not be found naked” refers to physical death before the Rapture. The physical body (corpse) without the soul and spirit is naked. The application here is that a casket should never be open in a believer's funeral. Heathenism makes much over the corpse.

“inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked.” (2 Corinthians 5:3, NASB)

In 2 Corinthians 5:4, “in this tent” refers to those alive right now and “to be unclothed” means to not be worried about receiving a resurrection body. “What is mortal will be swallowed up by life” means that we might enter into the Rapture without physical death.

“For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life.” (2 Corinthians 5:4, NASB)

In 2 Corinthians 5:5, God has planned that we should have a resurrection body like the Lord Jesus Christ. He proved this by giving us a down payment - “gave to us the Spirit” or the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

“Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge.” (2 Corinthians 5:5, NASB)

In 2 Corinthians 5:6, “being always of good courage” is in the present tense and means we are to keep on being of good courage or having confidence. This should be the normal Christian life. “Knowing” is



in the perfect tense and means knowing the past and we keep on knowing forever. “Home in the body” means we are still physically alive.

“Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord—” (2 Corinthians 5:6, NASB)

The Believer’s Hope

In 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14, the term “asleep” refers to sleep of the body. Soul and spirit are never said to sleep. The awakening of the body is the resurrection. The Thessalonians had been listening to false teachers regarding those dead in Christ. John 11:25-26; Rev. 21:4.

“But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.” (1 Thessalonians 4:13-14, NASB)

“Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?”“ (John 11:25-26, NASB)

“and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”“ (Revelation 21:4, NASB)

In 1 Thessalonians 4:14, the word “if” is a first class condition (if and we do) and refers to Church Age believers who have died. The phrase “God will bring with Him” refers to the Second Advent of Jesus Christ.

In 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18, the “dead in Christ” refers to the Church Universal or the invisible Body of Christ. The soul and spirit at the Rapture go where the body checked out. They rejoin the body (which has since become dust in most instances) and the moment the soul and spirit hits the body, it becomes a new resurrection body. The dead in Christ rise first, then the living believers are caught up and they all rendezvous with the Lord in the air.

“For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.” (1 Thessalonians 4:15-18, NASB)

Children who have not reached the age of accountability (where their volition is operative) will go to heaven (Christ died for all - Unlimited Atonement). Children who have reached the age of accountability and remain unbelievers will stay on earth.