



# PTNews

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P.O. Box 13006, Roanoke, VA 24030-3006

This newsletter is also available on our website: [www.ptnews.org](http://www.ptnews.org)

E-mail address for general communication: [mike@ptnews.org](mailto:mike@ptnews.org)

E-mail address for orders: [deedee@ptnews.org](mailto:deedee@ptnews.org)

## Five Minutes After You Die

*“... it is appointed unto men once to die ...”* — Hebrews 9:27

By Mike Wingfield

Most people live their entire lives without thinking about death and eternity. They know they will die someday, however, in their foolish thinking, they never consider the moment they will step out of the physical realms of this earth into the spirit world. Little do they realize that they will spend eternity in this spirit world.

Obviously, it is very important for a person to think about his death and where he will spend eternity. In reality, there is no subject more worthy of contemplation and discussion. Jesus asked the following thought-provoking questions: *“For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his own soul?”* (Matthew 16:26) The most important question of all is: “Where will you spend eternity?”

It is very wise for a person to consider his own death. [Ecclesiastes 7:2-4](#) teaches us that it is more beneficial to attend a funeral than to go to a party. While going to a party may be pleasant, it does not teach us anything meaningful

about eternity and life. When a person attends a funeral, he is forced him to think about death, time, and eternity. That is wise.

Most people are so afraid of death they refuse to think about it. Death is one of our major enemies. Death entered the world when man ate the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. Consequently, every person who has ever been conceived has died (except Enoch and Elijah). [Romans 5:12](#) declares: *“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”* This great enemy will continue to reign in this fallen world until it passes away at the end of Christ’s Millennial Kingdom. *“For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.”* (1 [Corinthians 15:25-26](#))

As believers in Jesus Christ, we do not need to be afraid of death. Our blessed Lord has resurrected from the dead, claiming victory over the devil, hell, the grave, and death!

(1 Corinthians 15:55-57; Hebrews 2:9, 14-15) In Revelation 1:17-18, Jesus boldly declared: *“Fear not; I am the first and the last. I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore. Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.”* Our lives are anchored in our living Savior. His resurrection from the dead guarantees our future resurrection. (1 Corinthians 15:16-23) We do not need to fear death because it is only a momentary transition into the spirit world where we will live forever in the presence of Jesus.

The greatest test of a person’s faith comes at the time of his death. Is he confident in a faith that is anchored in his Savior? If so, he will not fear death, but will be anxious to step into the presence of the Lord Jesus. The Apostle Paul faced death on many occasions. While he was in prison for the gospel’s sake, He wrote: *“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”* (Philippians 1:21) In essence, this great apostle of the faith was saying that he would be victorious if he lived or died. If he lived, he would continue to serve his Lord. However, if he died, he would be with his Savior in eternity. It is important to observe that all of the apostles, except the Apostle John, willingly gave their lives as martyrs for Christ. When you compare the spiritual demeanor of the apostles in the gospels after the death of Christ and before His resurrection, with their boldness in the book of Acts, it demonstrates a drastic change. What made the difference? They watched Jesus die and were eye-witnesses of His resurrection. This gave them great boldness and confidence to know that they did not need to fear death. They were confident that they too would be resurrected.

In recent years, I was privileged to speak with my dad and father-in-law only days before they passed into the presence of the Lord. Both of these men were anxious to step into His presence. With a smile on his face, only three days before his death, my dad said to me: “I have lived my entire life for this moment and I am now going to see Jesus.” That is real confidence.

In this brief article, I would like to examine three Biblical considerations about what happens to a person in the first five minutes of their death experience. I would encourage you to read a real historical account in Luke 16:19-31. In this report, Jesus tells about two people who died. One was a believer and the other was not. From this account,

supported by additional Scriptures, we will observe three considerations about death

### **The Entrance into the Spirit World**

As physical beings, we move about in a physical world. As far as our depraved and finite minds are concerned, the physical world is all that is real. However, those of us who study and believe the Bible know this is not true.

All of us move through our lives without being constantly aware of the spirit world. The spirit world may not be tangible to the physical human eye, but it is real. We cannot see them, but, according to the Bible, there are spirit beings [good angels and evil angels called demons] all around us at all times. For example, read 2 Kings 6:15-17.

In our text, Luke 16, notice that both the saved and unsaved persons entered into the spirit world immediately upon death. The saved beggar was met by the angels of God. (verse 22) When the unsaved rich man died, he entered into hell. (verse 23)

We need to remember the Bible teaches that all humans are equally created in the image of God. (Genesis 1:26) This means we, unlike all the other creatures in God’s creation, are a spiritual and physical being. Only mankind has an invisible part we call soul, spirit, intellect, conscience, etc. This is a very complex issue that has been debated by theologians for centuries. However, for the sake of this article, we will focus on the truth that man is a physical and spiritual creature. We, like God, are a moral and intellectual being that have been created to live and act with purpose and will. We also have been created to live forever. Unlike God, man has a beginning – at conception. However, like God, man will live for the remainder of eternity. The reality of man’s existence beyond the grave is a thread of truth that consistently stretches from Genesis to Revelation. The physical and bodily resurrection of our Lord is the most powerful evidence of this reality. Anyone who rejects this truth is calling into question the very foundational truths of the Word of God and the powerful testimony of Jesus and His resurrection as the Son of God! *“If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not*

God hath made him a liar: because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.” (1 John 5:9-10)

When we speak about death, according to the Bible, we should think of one word – “separation.” Physical death is the separation of the body and soul (spirit, conscience, etc.). At the very moment of physical death, the invisible part of man departs from the body. We have a perfect picture of this reality with the death of Christ on the cross. When the end of six long hours of suffering had come to an end on the cross, Jesus spoke to His spirit and gave it permission to leave His body. Luke, a physical physician, wrote in his gospel: *“And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the [spirit].”* (Luke 23:46) The power of life and death is in the hands of God. (John 1:4; 11:25; 14:6) While speaking of His approaching sacrificial death, Jesus said: *“... I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself, I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.”* (John 10:17-18) Therefore, when it came time for Jesus to voluntarily die on the cross, He did something that only God can do. He spoke to His spirit (the invisible part of man) and gave it permission to leave His body. That was the moment of physical death for Jesus. So, physical death should be understood as that moment the invisible part of man (soul or spirit) departs from the body.

When a person dies and his soul departs from his body, he is instantly aware of a world that he has not seen or experienced before. His body and the tangible world on this earth are left behind.

### **The Transport to our Destination in the Spirit World**

According to our text, Luke 16, when a person dies he immediately begins a journey in the spirit world that has been travelled by billions of people before us. When that person leaves his body and enters the spiritual realm, he ceases to be a creature that is bound by time, space, and matter. While his experience will be considerably different, it will be real.

Depending upon his spiritual standing while on this earth, he will immediately begin a brief journey to his residence

in the spirit world. According to the Bible, there are only two possible destinations – heaven or hell.

Notice in our text that the believer, the beggar, was transported to Paradise. Prior to the death of Jesus, all believers were gathered into a special temporary place of comfort, called Paradise (located in the earth), until their sins were paid for by Jesus on the cross. The place of the departed spirits of the dead in Old Testament days was called “Sheol.” As described in Luke 16, Sheol was made up of two compartments. One was a place of torment for the wicked, while the other was a place of comfort for the saved. These two places were separated by a great “gulf” or space. (verse 26) Remember what Jesus said to the dying thief who expressed saving faith to Jesus while on the cross. He said to him: *“Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.”* (Luke 23:43) Three days later, when Jesus arose from the grave and ascended back to heaven, He emptied Paradise and took all of the souls of the Old Testament saints to heaven with Him. (Ephesians 4:8-10) Therefore, when all believers die today, they immediately are transported into the presence of God in heaven. The New Testament is filled with the truth that when the believer departs from his body in death, he is in the presence of the Lord. (2 Corinthians 5:6-8; Philippians 1:20-24)

Our text, Luke 16, informs us that when the beggar died, he was immediately carried to Paradise *“by the angels.”* (verse 22) Hebrews 1:14 declares that God’s angels are *“all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.”* Perhaps the last assignment for the angels who are caring for God’s children on earth is to meet their spirit when they leave the body. With great care and comfort, they transport the spirits of the saints of God to their heavenly home. It is my opinion that this angelic transport of the spirit of the saints who have just died is rather quick. It is not instant, but also is not a lengthy process. 2 Corinthians 5:8 declares: *“...to be absent from the body”* is to be *“present with the Lord.”*

Let us examine two related questions in this consideration. First, where is heaven? We do not know the exact location of the spiritual heavenly dwelling place of God. We know that is in the heavens. In 2 Corinthians 12:2, the Apostle Paul reported that at one time he was *“caught up to the third heaven.”* The first heaven is where the clouds

are located. The second heaven is where the planets and stars exist. The third heaven is not visible to the physical human eye. The spiritual heaven is real and tangible to those who have spiritual vision in the spirit world. It does have an exact location in relationship to earth. However, it is unknown. Perhaps it is only a few million miles from earth.

The second related question is: How fast can angels fly? [Ezekiel 1:14](#) indicates that angels can move like *“a flash of lightning.”* This would mean that angels can at least travel at the speed of lightning, which is about 93,000 miles per second. Perhaps we have another hint in [Daniel 9](#) concerning how fast angels can travel. According to [Daniel 9:21](#), the angel Gabriel was commanded to fly from the presence of the Lord to the prophet Daniel in Babylon when he began to pray his prayer recorded in [Daniel 9:4-19](#). Before Daniel was finished praying, Gabriel interrupted him and informed him that the Lord had sent him with an answer to his prayer. In the processes of communicating this message to Daniel, Gabriel reported to Daniel that he had been *“caused to fly swiftly.”* ([Daniel 9:21](#)) The Hebrew words from which this phrase is translated, suggest that Gabriel was flying a great speed, even for angels, and that he was exhausted from his exertion in traveling such a distance in such a short period of time. In another comparison, we have been told that the entire process of the supernatural resurrection of the dead saints at the rapture will take place in *“the twinkling of an eye.”* ([1 Corinthians 15:52](#))

Therefore, while we cannot be dogmatic about this, it would appear that the angelical escort of the spirit of the dead saints into the presence of the Lord is perhaps only a brief flight of no more than a few seconds or minutes. One can only image the sheer joy of the saints of God who have been escorted to heaven by the angels of God. What a trip!

When my dad went home to be with the Lord several years ago, I was in Indiana for a speaking engagement. He was hospitalized in Virginia, when he made his heavenly journey. My family was at the hospital when dad passed. When my little precious granddaughter, who was six at the time, was told that her great grandfather Wingfield had gone to be with Jesus, she asked: “How did he get out of the building?” I laughed when they told me

about her question. However, it was a powerful testimony to her little, but growing, spiritual mind. The angel, a spirit being, and the spirit of my dad, made their way in a fraction of a second through the roof of that hospital and disappeared out of earth’s atmosphere on their flight to heaven. I had to fly home from Indianapolis, Indiana on a much slower flight. There are three approaches to the runways at the airport in Roanoke, Virginia. One of the approaches takes you almost directly over the hospital where my dad took his flight to heaven. However, in all of my flights back home for many years, I had noted that it was very rare to fly over the hospital. As our plane was in flight to Roanoke that night, I asked the Lord, if was His will, if I could fly over the hospital and see my dad’s launching pad to heaven. My assigned seat, the last one available on the full flight, put me at a window seat on the left side of the aircraft – the only possible view I could have of the hospital. As we made the approach in darkness at around 11 p.m. that night, I was still praying that my desire would be granted. As we made our final approach, the tears began to flow when I looked out of that window and saw the roof of the hospital. In my glorified imagination, I could see the angel with his arm around the spirit of my dad, flying up toward heaven. No one can convince me that the Lord had not ordered my steps that night and was so gracious as to answer my prayer.

Now, let us consider the transportation of the spirit of the dead sinners to hell. Our text, Luke 16, does not mention that the spirit of the dead sinner was supernaturally escorted to hell. However, there seems to be some Biblical evidence that demons -- those fallen, evil angels who are in league with Satan – are present to escort the spirits of the unsaved down into hell. It appears that the Lord allows Satan and his demons to play some role in the death of the wicked. Notice in [Psalm 78:49](#) that the first-born of the Egyptians that died as a part of the final divine plague against Egypt in the days of Moses were killed *“by sending evil angels among them.”* It appears that the Lord allows Satan and his demons to kill sinners and escort them to hell. This only seems natural for the one that is described as *“a murderer from the beginning.”* ([John 8:44](#)) Please notice that the demons who aid the one who is called the destroyer (*Apollyon*) in [Revelation 9](#) will be forbidden to kill those who have the seal of God in their foreheads (probably the 144,000 mentioned in [Revelation 7:1-8](#)) at the mid-point of the Tribulation Period. The fact



that they are forbidden to kill indicates they would have acted as murderers if the Lord had not restrained them. In [1 John 3:12](#), we are told that Cain was acting like *“that wicked one”* when he murdered his brother, Abel. Therefore, it seems obvious to me that at death, the spirits of the sinners will be escorted to hell by demons.

What a shocking chill it will be when people like the rich man in [Luke 16](#) have lived their lives seeking the pleasures of this world, while totally rejecting Jesus Christ, only to be confronted by a demon at the moment of death. What a shock for their spirit when they are met by demons that immediately escort them down into the heart of the earth to hell. In light of the changed attitude of the rich man in hell, one can only image the immediate sense of foolishness and desperation that will overcome the soul of the sinner as he descends into hell.

### **The Initial Experience of Those Who Arrive at their Final Destination in the Spirit World**

According to [Luke 16](#) there are only two possible final destinations for the spirit of the departed dead – heaven or hell. The Catholic Church teaches that the spirits of the dead go to an intermediate place called “Purgatory.” It is believed that those who need to attain more holiness before they can enter into heaven are held in Purgatory. Therefore, according to this doctrine, living saints on earth must intercede in their behalf until they acquire such purification and can enter into heaven. This entire concept has no Biblical foundation. The Bible declares that upon death a person’s spiritual state is fixed. [Hebrews 9:27](#) clearly states: *“... it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.”*

When a believer in Jesus Christ enters into heaven he will be once and for all in the presence of his Lord. ([2 Corinthians 5:8](#); [Philippians 1:23](#)) Heaven is a place of *“comfort”* ([Luke 16:25](#)) and *“fullness of joy.”* ([Psalm 16:11](#)) It is a place of worship ([Revelation 4:10](#); [5:8-13](#)) and service to our Lord. ([Revelation 7:15](#)) The Lord will care for our every need with intimate attention. ([Revelation 7:16-17](#))

The Bible declares that it is the delight of our Lord to have His children join Him in His heaven. In [John 14:3](#), Jesus said: *“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come*

*again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.”* In His high priestly prayer, Jesus prayed to His Father: *“Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me for thou [loved] me before the foundation of the world.”* ([John 17:24](#)) The entire process of welcoming a child of God home is precious to the Lord. He has declared: *“Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.”* ([Psalm 116:15](#))

The saints of God cannot begin to imagine the sheer joy and thrill it will be to finally be in the presence of their Savior and all of the other saints in glory. The ecstasy of worship around the throne of God will create a perfect spirit of thanksgiving and praise that will fill our minds with thoughts of awe and wonder as we witness the infinite attributes of our awesome God. Our tongues shall never cease to join the angels and saints in glory to give our Lord the glory that is due unto His Name. The worship and service of our Lord in heaven, even in its initial moments, will confirm that we were created to for His pleasure. ([Revelation 4:11](#)) We will never tire of gazing upon His face and prostrating ourselves before His throne. We will know down deep in our souls that we are finally “home.”

In sharp contrast to the final destination of the saints in glory is the final place of torment that awaits the wicked. [Luke 16:23](#) pictures the rich man in his initial moments in hell with the following words: *“And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments...”* His initial response was: *“I am tormented in this flame.”* (verse 24)

The sinful, finite mind of man cannot begin to image the horrors of hell. The thought of this is so painful that most people refuse to give it any thought. Some even try to rationalize that God is so merciful and loving that He would certainly not allow anyone to suffer in hell forever. However, we all need to remember that our blessed Lord continually spoke about the reality of hell as a place of fire and great torment. He spoke more about hell than heaven. Why? The answer is found in [Ezekiel 33:11](#): *“As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die...”*

Please notice that in the immediate context of [Ezekiel 33](#), the Lord commanded His prophet, Ezekiel, to remind the children of God that they must warn the wicked to turn from their sinful ways. If we do not warn them, their blood will be on our hands on the judgment day. ([Ezekiel 33:8-9](#))

My friend, you do not know when you will die. However, unless you are saved through the blood of Jesus and raptured to heaven, ([1 Corinthians 15:51](#)) you will experience death. When you die, who will meet you – the angels of God or the demons of hell? Five minutes after you die you will either be in heaven or hell. If you make no preparations in this life, you will join the majority of mankind in hell. ([Matthew 7:13](#)) You cannot go to heaven unless you have been redeemed by the blood of God's sacrificial lamb – Jesus Christ. According to the Bible, only the blood of Jesus can satisfy the wrath of God against your sin. Your sin is an offence to the Holy Lord God! I urge you to cry out to Him today and ask Him to save you. ([Read Romans 10:9-10, 13.](#)) Turn from your sins and give Him your life. Read the gospel of John and believe everything you read about Jesus. Do not delay in making this commitment. Hell is filled with millions who had good intentions of receiving Christ. They did not know they would die so soon. Do not let that happen to you.

### Is Israel Preparing to Strike Iran?

Those of you who have been receiving this newsletter for several years know I have been following the developing Iranian nuclear threat against Israel. I believe that if Israel attacks Iran militarily to eliminate this threat, it will probably set in motion the eventual response of the Gog and Magog nations mentioned in Ezekiel 38-39. In March, *Israel Today* released the following report:

“The government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has reportedly maintained massive military funding for a possible strike on Iran's nuclear facilities despite ongoing negotiations between Western powers and the Islamic Republic.

Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz reported that Knesset members taking part in committee hearings in January and February were informed that the 2014 national budget still includes 10 billion shekels (\$2.89 billions USD) for preparations for a long-range strike on Iran.

A number of Knesset members who spoke to the newspaper on condition of anonymity said army officials were asked if the large expenditure was justified in light of negotiations taking place between Iran and the West to resolve the nuclear issue. The [Israeli Defense Force] representatives simply answered that these were their orders.” (e-mail from *Israel Today*, March 19, 2014)

### Ukrainian Jews and Russia

In light of the Russian involvement in the Ezekiel 38-39 future invasion of Israel, it is not an accident that Russia is once again testing the response of the U.S. and U.N. by threatening to take over Ukraine. This is a move that many conservative analysts are saying demonstrates that Russian president Putin is working toward rebuilding the former Soviet Union. Of great concern is the following *USA Today* report on April 17<sup>th</sup>:

“World leaders and Jewish groups condemned a leaflet handed out in the eastern Ukrainian city of Donetsk in which Jews were told to "register" with the pro-Russian militants who have taken over a government office in an attempt to make Ukraine part of Russia, according to Ukrainian and Israeli media.

Jews emerging from a synagogue say they were handed leaflets that ordered the city's Jews to provide a list of property they own and pay a registration fee "or else have their citizenship revoked, face deportation and see their assets confiscated," reported Ynet News, Israel's largest news website, and Ukraine's Donbass news agency.

Morton Klein, president of the Zionist Organization of America, the oldest pro-Israel group in the USA, said the leaflets should be seen in the context of a rising tide of anti-Semitism across Europe.

“This is a frightening new development in the anti-Jewish movement that is gaining traction around the world,” Klein said.” ([www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2014/04/17/jews-ordered-to-register-in-east-ukraine/7816951/](http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2014/04/17/jews-ordered-to-register-in-east-ukraine/7816951/))

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### Mike's Upcoming Speaking Schedule

Please pray for these meetings and encourage your family and friends who live near these meetings to attend. It is very important for God's people to have a proper Biblical world-view.

|          |                  |   |              |
|----------|------------------|---|--------------|
| May 1    | Rocky Mount, VA  | Monthly Bible Study at Franklin Heights Baptist | 540-798-5110 |
| May 4-7  | Roanoke VA       | Harvest Baptist Church                          | 540-293-9860 |
| May 15   | Roanoke, VA      | Monthly Bible Study at Grace Baptist Church     | 540-798-5110 |
| May 18   | Collinsville, VA | Victory Christian Church                        | 276-629-7680 |
| June 1-3 | Hyden, KY        | Victory Mountain Grace Brethren Church          | 606-672-2520 |
| June 5   | Rocky Mount, VA  | Monthly Bible Study at Franklin Heights Baptist | 540-798-5110 |
| June 19  | Roanoke, VA      | Monthly Bible Study at Grace Baptist Church     | 540-798-5110 |

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