

ARE THEY IN OR OUT?

Luke 16:19-31

INTRODUCTION: Thirty-seven-percent of atheists, agnostics, and people with no identifiable religion say they believe in heaven, and twenty-seven-percent believe in hell. Exactly how a secularist can hold to a belief in the after-life with intellectual honesty is hard to figure out. The truth about atheism and secularism is to dispense with belief in God is to relinquish hope. Ecclesiastes 3:11.

I. TWO IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

At the death of a loved one two questions keep coming up: Where is my loved one right now? And How is it going with my loved one right now? Those two questions are not new to our age. Those two questions were being asked even as the New Testament was being written. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. The Apostle Paul said those who have died in Christ have “fallen asleep.” Matthew 9:18-26; Acts 7:60; Acts 13:36. At death the body of a Christian goes into the grave and rests. It decays. But the real question is about the soul of that person. That is the real issue because the soul is the real person. The body is just the house in which the soul lives.

II. TWO DIFFERENT MEN

This story is often referred to as the story of Lazarus and Dives, because “dives” is the word for the “rich man.” As Jesus told the story we see the contrast between these two men in life, in death, and in eternity. Luke 16:19-21: The rich man enjoyed an upscale life while the beggar, Lazarus lived a sickly and hungry life. In death these two men are contrasted once again: Luke 16:22-23. Very likely the poor man’s body was just burned in the dump while the rich man had an elaborate funeral. Now the next contrast we see between Lazarus and Dives point to eternity. After death Lazarus, the beggar’s spirit is with Abraham in Paradise: Luke 16:24-26. Notice how Lazarus got to Abraham’s bosom: Luke 16:22. The rich man found himself in Hades, and he is an illustration of all who fail to place their faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. Dives was in a place of memory: Luke 16:25; Luke 16:27-28; Luke 16:28-31. Do you understand that if your family and friends are ever going to be saved it will only be by faith in the written Word of God? Romans 1:16-17. Hades is the place were all go who have not placed their faith in Jesus Christ awaiting the Great White Throne Judgment: Revelation 20:11-15.

III. WHAT HAPPENS TO THE SOUL OF THE BELIEVER?

Prior to Jesus Christ’s resurrection people of faith went to Paradise awaiting the resurrection of the body. But at the resurrection of Jesus Christ a great change took place for the redeemed of the Old Testament: Ephesians 4:8-10. When our Lord died on the cross His body went into the tomb but His soul went to Paradise: Luke 23:42-43. Now when a believer dies their soul goes to heaven: 2 Corinthians 5:6-10; Hebrews 9:27. The Bible does not tell us we get a second chance to receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior after we die. In fact the Bible teaches the exact opposite: 2 Corinthians 6:2. How do you receive Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior? Romans 10:9-10, 13.