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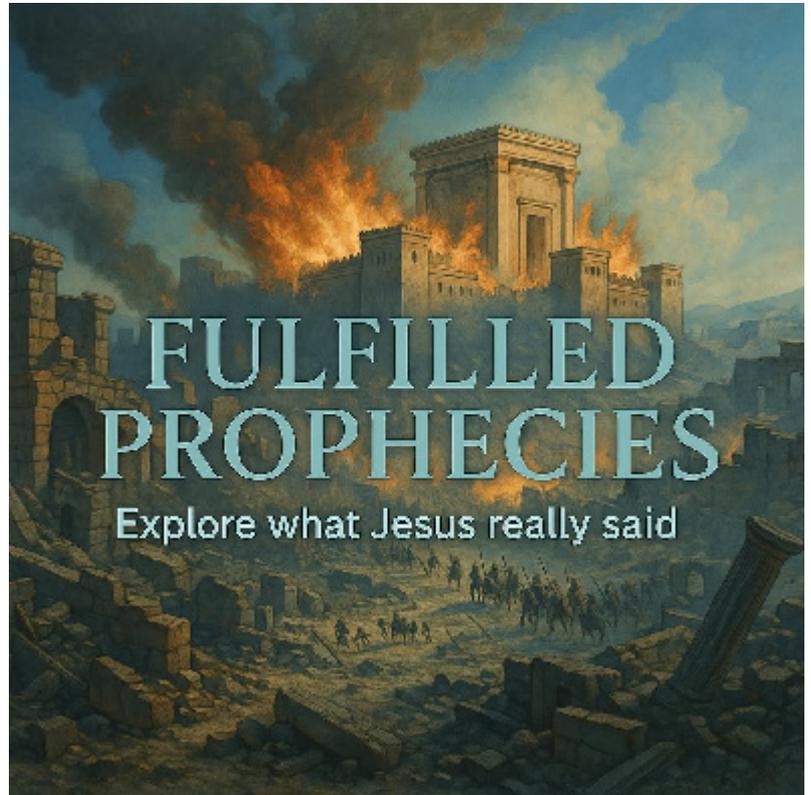
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Where Do We Go when we die - Where Do We Go After Physical Death Part 1 of 3



By Dan Maines

Where Do We Go After Physical Death Part 1 of 3

Those of us IN Christ, do we go into the spiritual realm at physical death here on earth or to the realm in Heaven?

Those in Christ, upon physical death, enter into the presence of God in the heavenly realm (i.e., the "Heavenly Jerusalem"), not a temporary holding place or waiting for a future resurrection. The spiritual realm where God dwells is often referred to as "Heaven," but not in the cloud-floating, harp-playing sense. It is the fulfilled Kingdom of God - a present, spiritual reality.

Scriptural Support:

1. Hebrews 12:22–24

"But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant..."

This is a present tense statement. The believers had already come to the **heavenly realm spiritually**.

"Spirits of just men made perfect" implies departed saints **already there**.

2. 2 Corinthians 5:6–8

"Therefore we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord... We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord."

Paul saw physical death as entering **direct presence with Christ**, not going to some interim "Hadean realm."

From a Preterist view, since resurrection and judgment are complete, this is immediate for us now.

3. Philippians 1:21–23

"For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain... having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better."

Again, Paul expected **to be with Christ upon death**, not sleep or wait.

4. Revelation 14:13 (Post-judgment context)

"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. 'Yes,' says the Spirit, 'that they may rest from their labors,

and their works follow them."

"From now on" points to a **change after judgment**, affirming immediate blessing in God's presence.

Before 70 AD, saints went to the realm of the dead (often described as "Sheol" or "Hades"), waiting for the resurrection.

After the **resurrection and judgment were fulfilled** (70 AD), believers now **go directly into the fulfilled Kingdom**, the heavenly realm (not earth and I will show why later).

There is no more waiting; Christ's victory has opened the way into the **Most Holy Place** (cf. Hebrews 10:19-20).

So where do we go at death now?

We go into the Heavenly realm - the spiritual Kingdom of God - into God's presence, where Christ is. This is not a "realm near earth" or "a spiritual intermediate state," but Heaven itself, in a fully realized spiritual reality.

So, how can we prove with scripture: This is not a "realm near earth"?

The phrase "realm near earth" isn't scriptural, but we can explore what the Bible does say about the location or nature of the spiritual realm believers enter at death. We will show that this isn't some intermediate "realm near earth."

Let's walk through it step-by-step, starting with what is revealed:

1. Jesus entered Heaven itself - far above, not near earth
Ephesians 4:10

"He who descended is also the One who ascended far

above all the heavens, that He might fill all things."

Christ didn't ascend into a nearby spiritual layer, He went **far above**.

"All the heavens" suggests a transcendent space beyond any earthly realm.

Hebrews 9:24

"For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands... but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us."

If we are united to Christ in death (Romans 6:5), and Christ is in **Heaven itself**, then that is where we go too.

2. Stephen saw Jesus in Heaven - not a realm near earth
Acts 7:55-56

"But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God..."

Stephen didn't see a "realm near earth" open up - he saw into the **heavenly dimension**, into God's actual throne room.

That same realm is where **Jesus went** (Acts 1:11), and where **believers go** to be with Him.

3. The "better country" - Heaven - is not earthly or near-earth
Hebrews 11:16

"But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them."

This is **not** a lower realm of the dead, nor an earthly paradise - it's **heavenly** in contrast to anything on earth.

4. The heavenly realm is called "Mount Zion... the heavenly Jerusalem"

Hebrews 12:22–24

"But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels..."

The description includes angels, perfected saints, Jesus, and God Himself. This is clearly **not** an earthly realm or an underworld type holding area.

The word "heavenly" (Greek: epouranios) literally means "above the sky" or "celestial," not something adjacent to earth.

5. The "realm of the dead" was cast away after judgment
Revelation 20:14

"Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire."

"Hades" as the underworld or a lower realm **no longer exists** after the judgment.

There is no more "near-earth" spiritual holding tank after 70 AD. Only Heaven remains.

6. The believer's citizenship is not on earth or near it
Philippians 3:20

"For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ..."

Citizenship implies **dwelling**. We belong to and go to **Heaven**, not an adjacent realm.

Before 70 AD:

The dead went to Sheol/Hades - often seen as "below" (e.g., Ezekiel 31:14–17).

Believers like Abraham were in a **comforting part** of Hades (Luke 16:22–23).

After A.D. 70:

That realm was destroyed (Rev 20:14), and the way into Heaven was opened.

The **New Jerusalem** is not physical nor near earth - it is spiritual and heavenly (Hebrews 12:22; Revelation 21:2).

Conclusion:

So! There is no scriptural support for the idea that post-death believers dwell in a "realm near earth." Instead, Scripture consistently describes the destination of the righteous as:

Heaven itself

The presence of God

Far above the heavens

The heavenly Jerusalem

The better country

All of which are clearly not on, in, or near the earth.

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