

Many suggested answers. Most people make life about things on this earth that will not last. But, we should learn from Israel's King Solomon when he wrote about his search for true meaning and happiness in the book of Ecclesiastes. Although Solomon seemed to have all the best this life could offer (wealth, pleasures, knowledge, relationships, etc.), he concluded it was all futile (meaningless) because he was going to die and everything he worked to accumulate would be left behind (Ecclesiastes 1:2-4; 2:9-11).

Like Solomon, many suggest a variety of things as the true meaning of life – and they are all ultimately meaningless! First, while wealth can be used to do some good things, it will not do you any good when you die (1 Timothy 6:7). Second, while many pursue their own happiness, they are focused on temporary earthly things that don't last (Hebrews 11:24-26). Third, while some live to see the most sights and experience the most pleasures, none of this will benefit you when you die. Fourth, while family is a great blessing, every member of the family is dying (and some may have died already). Fifth, while friends are a great blessing, all your friends are also dying (and some may have died already). Surely, if there is no greater meaning to your earthly life than these, your life is meaningless!

Our magnificent purpose. Our magnificent purpose is to devote ourselves entirely to God so we will bring glory to Him! Consider the two-fold purpose Solomon expressed in Ecclesiastes 12:13-14. First, you must fear God. This is a deep, reverential fear for God that is coupled with being afraid of disobeying Him. For, your life is about honoring and glorifying God in everything you do (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). Second, you must keep God's commandments. Keeping God's commandments in the Bible is essential to showing your deep respect for God and glorifying Him in your life. For, God has given you free will so you can either choose to live for Him or not (Matthew 7:13-14; 1 John 5:3). So, are you living according to this magnificent purpose? Only those who live according to this purpose will spend eternity in Heaven!

Conclusion

In recognition of where you are going, you should determine to live according to your magnificent purpose! Prepare yourself today for what is waiting for you after your earthly life ends.

Discovering God's Word Bible Study Series

Written by Eric Krieg

Watch video @ WWW.GODSAIDSO.COM/DGW45

Answers To Life's Most Essential Questions



Where Are We Going And Why Are We Here?

Have you ever considered what God has to say about the true meaning of life and what happens after death? The Bible is the only way we can know the true answers to these questions. While we can observe that everyone dies physically, it is impossible to observe what (if anything) happens on the other side of death. Since the Bible is the only book that accurately gives the answers, it is also the only book that can accurately describe the true purpose of our earthly lives. This is an essential question, then, because it applies to every person and because it dramatically impacts the way we live on earth.

The purpose of this lesson is to learn some basics about the soul, what happens after death, and the purpose of life on earth.

The Soul Of Man

Mankind has a soul that survives physical death. There is more to a person's existence than the physical body. For, there is also a spiritual part to our existence (a "soul"). One reason this is significant is because this soul survives physical death. In fact, physical death occurs whenever the soul departs from the body (James 2:26; Ecclesiastes 12:7).

Created in the image of God. People are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27). But, being created in the image of God does not refer to a physical resemblance. Rather, since God is spirit (John 4:24), this means that mankind has also been created as a spiritual being (a soul).

Passages demonstrating this truth. First, consider Luke 16:22-23. Two individuals (the rich man and Lazarus) are each shown to have a continued existence after death.

Second, consider Luke 20:37-38. Whenever God claimed to *be* the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (in Exodus 3), the necessary implication is that they continued to live (even though they had been dead for many years) – because God is not the God of the dead.

Third, consider Luke 23:43. Although Jesus and the thief were both about to die physically, Jesus said they would continue to exist in a place called “paradise” that day.

Fourth, consider 2 Corinthians 5:1-8. Paul speaks of the physical body as a tent (a temporary place to live), whereas he also speaks of having a building from God (a permanent structure). So, there is a spiritual body after this physical one.

Fifth, consider Ecclesiastes 12:7. When the physical body experiences death, it will turn back to dust (Genesis 2:7). But, the spiritual existence will continue.

Where Are We Going?

Many different people living on this earth. Why are there so many people living on earth? Why are we all different? Do we all have the same purpose or do we each have a different purpose? While there are many differences between people, there are two major similarities. First, we have each been given a soul that survives this earth. Second, we will all die, be judged, and spend eternity in Heaven or Hell. All this helps to demonstrate we have the same purpose in living on earth.

Death. We will all die someday. In fact, we each have an appointment with death (only, we do not know when that appointment is, Hebrews 9:27). James put the duration of our lives into perspective by comparing them to a vapor that appears for a short time before vanishing away (James 4:13-16). When you die, all the functions of your physical body that work to sustain your life stop. Plus, this is the point when your physical body and soul separate (James 2:26). And, your physical body begins to turn back into dust (Ecclesiastes 12:7).

Hades. Those who die before Jesus comes back will go to Hades. This is the realm of the dead (where those who have died are today). Hades has two sections (Luke 16:23-26). First, there is a section of comfort (referred to as Abraham’s side/bosom and paradise, Luke 23:43). Lazarus, the repentant thief on the cross, and Jesus went to this place when they died (Luke 23:43; Acts 2:31). This is a peaceful place that is free from every kind of suffering. Second, there is a section of torment. The rich man went to this place when

he died. This is a place of torment in the flame, where not even a drop of water is given to offer a moment’s relief from the agony. Then, between these two sections is a great chasm so that those in one section cannot go to the other, as their fate has already been sealed at this point (Galatians 6:7-8). If you die before Jesus returns, you will go to one of these two sections of Hades. There, you will experience a conscious spiritual existence while you wait for the final Judgment at the coming of Christ.

The coming of Christ. Christ is coming again (John 14:3). But, nobody on this earth knows when His coming will be (Matthew 24:36, 42-44; 25:13). Consider three main things that will happen when Jesus comes. First, the dead will rise (John 5:28-29), as those who are in Hades (both comfort and torment) will be brought out (Revelation 20:13). Second, everyone will be judged (John 5:28-29; Revelation 20:13). Third, this earth and everything on it will be destroyed by fire (2 Peter 3:10-12). You will take part in the return of Christ and this great resurrection! Therefore, you must live preparing for this day!

The Judgment. Everyone will stand before Jesus Christ and be judged when He comes again. The Judgment scene is pictured in Matthew 25:31-33, with verse 34 describing what will be said to those on His right hand and verse 41 to those on His left hand. Nothing you do on this earth will escape God’s attention and you will be fairly judged for it all – both good and evil (2 Corinthians 5:10; Ecclesiastes 12:14; Proverbs 15:3). The standard Jesus will use to judge you is the law He has given in the Bible (John 12:48; Revelation 20:12).

Eternity. There are only two options as to where each person will spend eternity, based on the judgment each one receives. One option is eternity in Heaven. This is described as eternal life (Matthew 25:46), a beautiful place that is a true paradise (Revelation 21:1-22:5), a place without pain and death (Revelation 21:4), a place with no evil (Revelation 21:27), and a place where you will forever be with God (John 14:3). The other option is eternity in Hell. This is described as eternal punishment (Matthew 25:46), a place represented by fire and darkness (Revelation 21:8; Matthew 25:30; Mark 9:47-48), and a place where you will be forever separated from God (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9). Since you will spend eternity in one of these two places, you must seriously evaluate where you want to live (as there is a clear connection between how you live and where you will spend eternity). Therefore, it is important to make up your mind right now to do whatever God says you must to go to Heaven!

Why Are We Here?