

Briefing: The Christian's Understanding of Death, the Afterlife, and the Rapture

This document summarizes key theological concepts presented in "**Where Do Dead Christians Go?**" **Lesson 2**, 07/13/2025. The core focus is on comforting believers regarding death and providing a detailed understanding of the rapture.

I. The Nature of Death for Believers: "Falling Asleep"

The teaching emphasizes a unique understanding of death for Christians, distinguishing it from the common perception of death.

- **Temporary Repose:** For Christians, death is consistently referred to as "falling asleep." This term signifies a "temporary repose" or rest for the body, akin to a "dormitory" or "cemetery" where bodies are temporarily housed. The Greek word for "repose" (*harpazo*) means "to cause to go to sleep."
- "He doesn't say dead because sleep is a unique way to speak of Christians who are in temporary the word in your outline is the word R E P O S E."
- "It's also a word that's used to describe a place where people go to sleep as in the military where did people sleep in the military mama in a dormitory."
- **Body vs. Spirit:** The "sleep" refers exclusively to the **body** of the believer. The **spirit** (or soul) does not go to sleep but immediately enters a conscious presence with God.
- Referencing Lazarus: "From Jesus's view though he's only asleep, his soul is alive, it's not bound by that grave does not pass out of existence since the soul is in fact eternal. He is eternally conscious but his body is at rest and Jesus saw that body resting as only being temporary that's why He calls it sleep because when you go to sleep what do you do-you hope you wake up, right-you hope you're going to wake up..."
- Referencing Stephen: "it was only a temporary repose for his body; his spirit didn't go into unconsciousness, in fact if you go back one verse he says 'Lord Jesus receive my spirit.'"
- **Implications for Unbelievers:** While the term "sleep" can technically apply to the bodies of unbelievers as well (as they too will experience a bodily resurrection), for them, it is a "permanent death" in essence, leading to "eternal damnation and death." Their souls are immediately conscious and experience torment.
- "There's a sense in which their bodies only sleep because their bodies will be raised too right because they get to get a new body right they get a new body just like we get

a new body they get a new body that will be designed so it will last forever in the torments of hell we get a new body that is designed for us to enjoy the eternity of heaven and so they are raised to eternal damnation and death..."

- "There is no such thing as your soul going to sleep... nowhere does a scripture ever teach that there is any time that the spirit of a person is unconscious... they are conscience as soon as they leave as soon as they die their conscience and what are they doing they're being tormented."

II. The Immediate State of the Soul After Death

The source explicitly rejects the concept of "soul sleeping" or any intermediary, unconscious states.

- **Immediate Consciousness:** Upon death, the soul/spirit of both believers and unbelievers remains fully conscious.
- "When Steven was dying, what did Stephen say when he was dying? his soul did not go to sleep, he said 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' And then he was dead, he went to sleep, okay, so he had the anticipation of entering into a conscience conscious presence of the Lord Jesus Christ and nowhere does a scripture ever teach that there is any time that the spirit of a person is unconscious."
- **Believers: Presence with the Lord (Heaven/Paradise/Abraham's Bosom):** Saved individuals are immediately in the "presence of the Lord." Terms like "Abraham's bosom" and "paradise" are synonymous with "heaven."
- "We are confident... rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord as soon as you are absent from the body you are present with the Lord." (2 Corinthians 5:8)
- "For I am hardpressed between the two having a desire to be part to depart and be with Christ which is far better." (Philippians 1:23)
- "If you're saved tonight you are either here or you're with Jesus you're not anywhere else... there's no intermediary condition."
- **Unbelievers: Torment in Hell:** Unbelievers immediately enter a state of conscious torment in hell.
- "If an unbeliever dies what happens well they go to torment their soul their their soul does not go to sleep because that's the exact reason why they go to torment they go their soul has to be awake or they couldn't be tormented that's what has to happen

to them okay they are conscience as soon as they leave as soon as they die their conscience and what are they doing they're being tormented."

- **No Purgatory:** The concept of purgatory or any "spiritual coma" is explicitly rejected. "There's no such animal as purgatory there's not any intermediary conditions okay there's no state of unconsciousness or semiconsciousness nobody falls into a spiritual coma."

III. The Purpose of Understanding Death: Comfort and Hope

Paul's teaching on death and the afterlife is primarily pastoral, intended to comfort grieving believers.

- **Eliminating Ignorance and Grief:** The primary reason for this teaching is to prevent believers from being "ignorant brethren concerning those who have fallen asleep lest you sorrow."
- "He wants to comfort these people... he doesn't want them to be grieving because there's people that are coming around behind him and lying to him and tell him that these people have missed what what's this what's the object of here what are we talking about really what we're talking about what he is teaching is the great gathering big G and what is the great gathering the rapture exactly."
- **Grieving with Hope vs. Hopelessness:** While grief is natural and normal for believers ("weeping with those that weep"), it should not be "dead-end grief" like that of unbelievers who "have no hope."
- "He doesn't want them to grieve like people who have no hope i don't want your grief to be I don't want you to have what I would call deadend grief."
- "Christians don't ever say a final goodbye they say I'll see you later."
- **The Assurance of the Holy Spirit:** A key differentiator for believers' hope is the indwelling Holy Spirit, who assures them of the afterlife and reunion. Unbelievers, even if they intellectually believe in an afterlife, lack this divine assurance, leading to "whimsical kind of hope that's not sound."

IV. The Great Gathering: The Rapture

The discussion on death serves as an introduction to the "great gathering" or the rapture, which provides the ultimate comfort and promise of reunion.

- **Definition and Origin of the Term:** The term "rapture" itself is not in the Bible but is derived from the Greek word "harpazo" (found in 1 Thessalonians 4:17), which

means "to snatch, to seize and to carry off by force." This signifies a "sudden swoop of irresistible force."

- "The word that is used is harpo harpado and when we who are alive and remain shall be caught up harpazo in the Greek means to snatch to seize and to carry off by force that will be what the rapture will be like..."
- **Biblical Passages:** The rapture is delineated in three main New Testament passages:
 - John 14
 - 1 Corinthians 15
 - 1 Thessalonians 4
- **Context of Distress and Comfort:** Each time the rapture is taught in scripture, it is in response to a time of "distress," "doubt," "confusion," or "denial," serving as a source of comfort for believers.
 - John 14: Disciples distressed about Jesus leaving.
 - 1 Corinthians 15: Corinthians confused and denying the resurrection.
 - 1 Thessalonians 4: Thessalonians distressed about Christians dying and potentially missing the gathering.
- **Pastoral, Not Eschatological:** Interestingly, the rapture is primarily presented in a "pastoral" context, offering comfort, rather than as a central focus in the major "eschatological passages" like Matthew 24-25 or Revelation, which detail the chronological flow of end times.
- "It's almost as if the idea of the great gathering is reserved to provide comfort for God's people..."
- **Four Aspects of the Rapture (Planned for Future Study):** The speaker outlines four areas to be discussed regarding the rapture:
 1. The Pillars of the Rapture
 2. The Participants in the Rapture
 3. The Plan of the Rapture
 4. The Profit (Benefit) of the Rapture

V. The Pillars of the Rapture: Its Foundation

The rapture is not a philosophical concept or mythology but is built on a solid foundation of Christian belief.

- **Three Pillars:** The rapture rests on three foundational "pillars":
 1. **The Death of Christ:** This is the starting point. It signifies not just martyrdom but the "whole atoning work" of Christ, where He "paid the penalty for our sins" and brought believers into "possession of eternal life." This makes believers "acceptable to God," a prerequisite for being raptured.
- "If you believe that Jesus died and in order to believe in the rapture in order to understand the coming of Christ to snatch away his church you have to believe in the death of Christ... he's summing it up with the whole atoning work if we believe as it were in the full implications of the death of Christ that we know our judgment has been satisfied for and then by that we know by virtue of that we have been made thus acceptable to God and since we're acceptable acceptable to God there is a pillar on which the gathering can occur."
- "Jesus died that he might turn your death into sleep."
 1. The Resurrection of Christ (to be discussed later)
 2. The Revelation of Christ (to be discussed later)

VI. Other Notable Points

- **No Communication Between Heaven and Hell:** While those in hell will be aware of what is happening in heaven (part of their torment), those in heaven will not be aware of hell, ensuring "no tears in heaven."
- "I think that people in hell will see everything going on in heaven and I think it'll destroy them... those in heaven there aren't there are no tears in heaven right they aren't going to know what's going on in hell no they're not they're not going to see anything in hell there'd be tears for me no tears that's why they won't be."
- **Eternal Souls:** "Every soul that's ever been born is still existing yes either in heaven or hell... souls are eternal whether damned or glorified they are eternal because they were all created by God and given life by God and because he gave them life that life is eternal."
- **Conversion at Death:** As long as someone has breath, they can confess sins, repent, and be saved.

- **Tears in Heaven for Lost Rewards:** The last time believers will weep in eternity is when God reveals the "loss of your rewards" due to unfulfilled opportunities to serve Him. After this, there will be "nothing but joy."
- **Paul's Experience of Heaven:** Paul's account in 2 Corinthians 12 describes being "caught up to the third heaven" (paradise), seeing "unexpressable words which it is unlawful for a man to utter," implying that human descriptions of heaven are unreliable if Paul himself could not speak of them.
- "So that's why when you buy a book and somebody says they've been to heaven and come back again and they tell you about it take that book and put it in your trash can if Paul can't talk about it you think they can talk about it that's ridiculous."

This briefing highlights the central tenets of the lesson, emphasizing the comforting nature of Christian eschatology, particularly regarding death and the future gathering of believers in the rapture.