

## **The Intermediate State What Happens to a Believer at Death?**

Psalm 116:15 – Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His believers

Rev – 14:13 – 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.”

1. In God’s view the death of a believer is a precious time of home going and a face-to-face encounter with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. There, in His presence, believers will rest from their labor and the work they have done on earth will continue to bear fruit until Jesus returns to set up His Millennial Kingdom followed by the final eternal state of all believers, Ps 116:15; Rev 14:13.
2. The intermediate state is an out-of-body, temporary existence (Mt 22:32; Lk 16:22, 25), in which a believer retains their personal identity and other attributes of their conscious physical existence, such as seeing, hearing, talking, thinking, remembering, etc., without their physical body, Mt 17:1-13; 2 Cor 5:1-4; Lk 16:19-31 ; Rev 6:9-11.
3. The intermediate state is an indefinite waiting period for the coming reunion of body, soul and spirit in the same way Jesus was resurrected and his body was glorified in its eternal state, Ps 17:15; Job 19:25-27; 1 Thess 5:23. The intermediate state is a more blessed fellowship with Christ than our present earthly life, Phil 1:23 and a foretaste of the glory reserved for the redeemed, Isa 64:4; 1 Cor 2:9.
4. While the body is empty, and the spirit-soul is with God, He sends angels to guard the body of believers so that not even Satan himself has power to claim them, but they are protected for the coming resurrection, Jude 1:9, just as angels watched over and guarded the body of Jesus, Mk 16:5-6; Lk 24:1-6.
5. At death believers are taken immediately into the presence of Christ and God (Lk 16:22; 23:43; Phil 1:23, where they will remain in uninterrupted fellowship with Him, Rom 8:38-39, and in a state of happiness and rest until the resurrection, Rev. 14:13.
6. Those who have joined Jesus will remain with Him and return with Him at the Second Coming to be the first resurrected, 1 Thess 4:13-15. Jesus will bring with Him those who have faithfully served and entered into His rest, Heb 4:9-11.
7. One final observation concerns the appointment every person will keep. It is appointed once for every person to die and to be judged, Heb 9:27. Saved believers and lost persons alike will enter into the intermediate state. The believer will wait in joy for the coming rewards at the judgment seat of Christ, Rom 14:10; 2 Cor 5:10. The lost wait in pain for their appearance before the great white throne of judgment, Lk 16:24; Rev 20:11-15. We choose in this life the destiny that awaits us, see Jn 3:16; 3:18.

Lamar E. Cooper, Sr.