

## Where to?

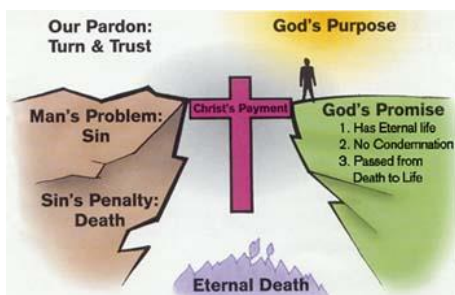
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One of the overriding questions of life has to do with destiny, 'Where are we going?' The human need to know this has led to many surprising answers. To some, destiny is about achieving enlightenment. To others, it is about final liberation from cosmic bondage. Yet to others, it is about either heaven or hell.

For instance, in ancient Greek mythology, people could end up either on Mt Olympus with Zeus and the gods or in Hades with the god of the underworld. Mt Olympus was the abode of the gods, a land of perfect utopia. Hades was zombie land, a place of torment and fire.

What does the Bible offer on this subject? The Bible provides the following concepts:

- Since humans were created by God (Genesis 1), he is the one who ultimately determines their destiny. Where we actually end up is not entirely up to us.
- There are two possible destinations for humans, eternal life and immortality (John 3; Revelation 2) or total disconnection from God and the life-force he supplies (Ecclesiastes 12).
- The words often translated as hell are 'sheol' in Hebrew and 'hades' in Greek. In the Bible, these words simply mean 'grave' or the place of the dead. 'Hell' is not the opposite of 'heaven', which is a real place and the home of God.
- Every human has and will experience physical death, a reality that must come to all humans regardless of status (Ecclesiastes 9). This reality exists because of sin.
- However, this is not viewed in the Bible as final destination; it is not our destiny. This death is an interloper, an intruder, in God's perfect creation (Genesis 3). It is a fearsome enemy but it is defeatable (1 Corinthians 15). This is why Jesus call this death, 'sleep' (John 11), a view maintained in several biblical records (Job 14; Psalm 13; Jeremiah 51; Daniel 2).
- The Bible also speaks of TWO deaths, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> deaths.
- First death is physiological or physical. This is what every person will experience. This is called sleep because it is completely reversible (John 11; 1 Corinthians 15).
- Second death is unique in the Bible. It is recorded in Revelation 20 and occurs after the 1,000 years and just before God creates a 'new heaven and new earth'. In this death, there is permanent disconnection from God. But this happens only to Satan and his followers who are destroyed in a final lake of fire.
- God's people, those who follow Jesus, will not experience this death (Revelation 2). Instead they will obtain eternal life (John 3:16). The gateway to this eternal life is through resurrection (1 Corinthians 15).
- Jesus is the one who makes eternal life possible (see diagram)



- In the Bible, there are TWO possible destinies: (1) eternal life with God through Jesus in a re-created universe, or (2) eternal death in the lake of fire which results in permanent disconnection from God.
- Ultimately, this is a personal choice. God offers destiny options, we choose which one.