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The Bible defines physical death as the moment the immaterial part of a person leaves the material part of a person. **It is the moment that the person leaves his or her body.** The person and the personality leave their body. When we die we leave our bodies.

This is exactly how Paul defined it in II Corinthians 5:8. He described physical death as being “absent from the body.” For a believer, this is a one-time moment. For an unbeliever, this is not the case (Rev. 2:11).

The actual process of physical death was described by Moses in Genesis concerning Rachel in Genesis 35:18-19. Moses equated the moment that Rachel’s soul left her body as being the moment of her physical death.

(Way #2) - The Bible describes death as an actual departure. II Tim. 4:6

The word “departure” is one that refers to a ship being loosed from its moorings for departure. A ship was typically tied up by ropes and chains and anchors and when it was time to go those things were pulled in so the ship could depart. This word was also used of a soldier who would take down his tent because he was changing locations (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, pp. 31). So Paul says in death a person departs for a new location. He/she is freed from anything preventing it and off he goes. He leaves one location and goes to another. Death is a departure for home.

(Way #3) - The Bible describes death as being like sleep. I Cor. 15:51

The body goes to sleep because the person left the body and is no longer in it. The body work with all of its hurts and pains is over at death. The body is laid to rest like sleep.

(Way #4) - The Bible describes death as being a safe journey into Christ’s heavenly Kingdom. II Tim.4:18

Nothing could keep Paul from a safe journey to heaven. His own sin nature; his own sin or those evil forces against him could not keep him from a safe journey to heaven. This certainly contradicts some limbo state of purgatory. No one gets partially to heaven. They have a safe journey that takes them all the way there.

(Way #5) - The Bible describes death as going home. II Cor. 5:8

It does not just describe it as going to any home, but to be at home with the Lord. That is a wonderful place to think about going.

Now one of the things that most people think about when they think about going home is the fact that the family will be there. When we crawl through the first book of the Bible (Genesis) that gives us death scenes, we do see that one fact that is brought out is that when a person died they did go to where other family members were.

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Abraham was told by God that he would die and “go to his fathers in peace.” (Gen. 15:15)
When Abraham did die, it is said “he was gathered to his people.” (Gen. 25:8)
When Isaac died, it is said “he was gathered to his people an old man of ripe age.” (Gen. 35:29)
When Jacob died, it is said “he was gathered to his people.” (Gen. 49:33).

So we may assume from this that when a person dies, one of the reasons it is called going “home” is because other family members are there and of course so also is Jesus Christ. As one theologian said, this will be a “place of grand reunion” (Norman Geisler, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 4, p. 301).

Now when we view death as a departure and as a safe journey home, it is not so intimidating. This is the way God has taken millions of His people to heaven.

QUESTION #10 – What are wrong attitudes to have about going to heaven?

(Wrong Attitude #1) - To be so heavenly focused we are no earthly good.

Paul said it was an advantage to have him not die. He could continue to preach and teach if God kept him here. Let us remember what we do on earth stores up things in heaven (Matt. 6:19-21). Doing work for God on earth does have heavenly ramifications (I Tim. 6:17-19).

(Wrong Attitude #2) - To seek death so we can go to heaven.

Paul was not afraid to die, but he was not about to commit suicide to get to heaven. In fact, he clearly said there was value for him being on this earth (Philippians 1:22-26).

QUESTION #11 – What is the right focus one should have at death?

We may make some Biblical observations about how one should focus when facing death:

Focus #1 - The believer should be focused Jesus Christ who is the author and finisher of our faith and life. **Hebrews 12:2**

Focus #2 - The believer should be ready to die because of all heavenly ramifications. **Acts 21:13**

Focus #3 - The believer should have a desire to actually depart and go be with Christ. **Philippians 1:23**

Focus #4 - The believer should have confidence that the Lord will deliver him from any evil. **II Timothy 4:18**

Focus #5 - The believer should have confidence that the Lord will safely see to it that he gets to Heaven. **II Timothy 4:18**

Focus #6 - The believer should have confidence that the Lord will take him to a better place.
Philippians 1:23

Focus #7 - The believer should have confidence that he is going to meet with loved ones who have gone on before. **Genesis 25:8; I Thessalonians 4:17**

QUESTION #12 – What happens to a believer who dies?

There is some mystery here, but we do know from the above statements that the believer who dies departs or leaves his body and is taken safely home to be with the Lord in heaven. In other words, when a person dies, his soul/spirit stays in a state of consciousness that does not even know whether one has left his body (II Cor. 12:2-3). The implication of Jesus statement in John 11:26 is that one never dies, which means one is in a state of conscious life. In fact, Solomon says that God has set “eternity in their heart” (Ecclesiastes 3:11).

We may draw a conclusion from Luke 16:22 that holy angels are involved in the actual transporting of the person to heaven. When John wrote Revelation and was in heaven, an angel was very intimately connected to him personally and he saw many angels once he got to heaven (Rev. 1:1; 4:11; 10:8-11; 17:1; **21:9; 22:16**).

QUESTION #13 – What is the third heaven like?

From the Scripture we may make certain observations:

Observation #1 - Heaven is a place far better than earth.

Paul actually says this in **Philippians 1:23**. Paul said he had a desire to depart this world and go to be with Christ which he said was “very much better.” He said in **II Corinthians 5:8** that he would prefer to be at home with the Lord. Take the best things you have ever seen and experienced from this world and you can know heaven is far better than everything.

Now the inference we make from this is that being in heaven and being with Christ is far better than anything on this earth or in this world. In all aspects heaven is a far better place.

Observation #2 - Heaven is paradise.

This word is used for heaven three times in the N.T.: Luke 23:43; II Cor. 12:4; Rev. 2:7. Now the word “paradise” speaks of a beautiful garden park. We may assume that this is a spectacular Eden type of place, as Eden was before the fall. We know that there are trees with fruit on them (Rev. 2:7).