

- 1) Psalm 146:4 - The spirit departs the body and the body returns to the earth.
- 2) Ecclesiastes 12:5 - The man who dies goes to his eternal home.
- 3) Ecclesiastes 12:7 - The body returns back to dust and the soul returns to the Lord.
- 4) John 11:26 - The one who believes in Jesus Christ “shall never die.”
- 5) Luke 23:46 - Jesus said when He died His Spirit was committed into the hands of God  
The Father.
- 6) Acts 7:59 - When Stephen died he asked the Lord Jesus to receive his spirit.
- 7) Philippians 1:23 - Paul believed that if he died he would depart and be with Christ.
- 8) II Corinthians 5:1-8 - Paul clearly believed his body was an earthly house that he would  
leave to go be with the Lord.
- 9) II Corinthians 12:2-4 - Apparently one cannot tell whether one is in his body or out of it  
when he goes to heaven.

Now based on all of these passages, we must conclude that even though the body stays here when a believer dies, the believer goes to be with the Lord. The sleep that is referred to is not the sleep of the soul, but the sleep of the body.

**QUESTION #17** – What can a believer do to make certain he gets an abundant honorable entrance into heaven?

The Apostle Peter specifically addresses this question in **II Peter 1:5-11**. Peter lists a series of qualities in our character development in a lustful world that will guarantee us the highest possible entrance into heaven when our soul leaves our body. He specifically points out eight qualities that do determine whether or not our entrance into heaven is glorious or by the skin of our teeth.

Now the qualities ascend in a specific order. The participle “apply” (v. 5) means to make provisions to add these qualities to our faith. The verb “supply” means to add these things on to our faith (v. 5). The promise is if one develops in character, one will end up with an abundant entrance into heaven. All of these qualities are developed by faith and none of them are an automatic guarantee:

**Character Quality #1** - One with an abundant entrance into heaven will have diligence. **1:5a**

What this means is that one who will have an abundant entrance into heaven will have a diligent, eager desire and zeal that pursues an abundant entrance and pursues the Word of God and will of God.

**Character Quality #2** - One with an abundant entrance into heaven will by faith pursue moral excellence. **1:5b**

One who will have an abundant entrance into heaven will pursue that which is morally right. This is not just some passive absence of immoral things; this is a vigorous pursuit of that which God says is morally right. By virtue of the fact that Peter says, “add” this or “supply” this, it is not an automatic matter for the believer.

**Character Quality #3** - One with an abundant entrance into heaven will add knowledge to moral excellence. **1:5c**

The noun “knowledge” is articular, meaning one who will have an abundant entrance into heaven will want to know God’s Word. This kind of person will want to know books of the Bible and doctrines of the Bible. Those who receive an abundant entrance into heaven will not be shallow or simple in their knowledge. One could have moral excellence yet not have a passion to really know God’s Word. In this case, one could miss a full abundant entrance into heaven.

**Character Quality #4** - One with an abundant entrance into heaven will add self-control to knowledge. **1:6a**

The word means that one will have a disciplined self-mastery and self-control. This is just the opposite of self-excess. Those who are developing in a God-honoring self-control and discipline are moving toward an abundant entrance into heaven.

**Character Quality #5** - One with an abundant entrance into heaven will add perseverance to self-control. **1:6b**

This perseverance means that one will stay focused on this development of character over a long period of time, regardless what one faces. Faith that is honored in heaven perseveres.

**Character Quality #6** - One with an abundant entrance into heaven will add godliness to perseverance. **1:6c**

The word “godliness” is a word that speaks of a godly reverence and piety. The more one is developing in godly character; he will have a godly reverence. People without a reverence for God and His Word and His worship will never have an abundant entrance into heaven.

**Character Quality #7** - One with an abundant entrance into heaven will add brotherly kindness to godliness. **1:7a**

Those who will have an abundant entrance into heaven will develop not only in reverence but also in kindness. People who will receive an abundant entrance into heaven will be reverent and pious, but also friendly and loving. There will be a friendly, family type of love for other brothers and sisters in Christ.

**Character Quality #8** - One with an abundant entrance into heaven will add love to brotherly kindness. **1:7b**

This is the highest kind of love. Brotherly love is give and take and this love is all give. God's kind of love is the kind of love that chooses to do what is best for the object loved. God did not love us because we had mutual interests. He did not love us because He saw something He really liked. He loved us in spite of ourselves.

Now Peter says the believer who develops these character traits will not be useless (**1:8a**); will be fruitful (**1:8b**); will not short change himself by being involved in sinful things (**1:9**); will prove his election (**1:10a**); will not stumble (**1:10b**) and **will have an abundant entrance into heaven 1:11**.

By developing in these qualities by faith, we are assuring that when it is our turn to go to heaven, we will go in an honored state. That is exactly what Peter taught.

**QUESTION #18** – What do believers do in heaven and what are things like?

Now people who presently are in heaven or who go to heaven do not just sit around and do nothing. Heaven is a wonderful place and there are some things we may glean about what believers do. There are some observations we want to make:

**Observation #1** - The soul that goes to heaven is presently confined or limited to heaven.

For 2000 years, all those who go to heaven are there. They are not now reigning with Christ back on this earth. But they are in heaven, which is called their eternal inheritance (Heb. 9:15).

**Observation #2** - The soul that goes to heaven rests from their works and labors on earth.  
Revelation 14:13

Once one is in heaven, all things done or not done for the Lord on this earth are over. Those things stand for all eternity. Now this raises an interesting question which is "Is there progress in heaven?" We will address this later, but for now we would say that the moment one enters heaven there can be no progress in one sense of progressive sanctification or holiness because one must be holy in order to enter heaven.

**Observation #3** - The soul that goes to heaven is no longer capable of sinning.

Romans 6:23 says that the wages of sin is death and since there is no more death in heaven, there is no more sinning in heaven. When we get to heaven, we will be completely clothed with the full righteousness of Jesus Christ (II Cor. 5:21). Once one is in heaven there is no more chance to sin and there is no chance of eviction from heaven.

Jonathon Edwards said, “Even the very best of men, are, on earth, imperfect. But it is not so in heaven. There shall be no pollution or deformity or offensive defect of any kind, seen in any person or thing; but every one shall be perfectly pure and perfectly lovely in heaven” (*Heaven, A World of Love*, p. 16).

In heaven we will not be able to be tempted to do something sinful because nothing sinful is there. Satan won't have any access to this place plus no one in heaven will ever think God is withholding something good from them so they need to seek some new experience. Our hearts and minds will be pure. One writer said, “Our greatest deliverance in Heaven will be from ourselves. Our deceit, corruption, self-righteousness, self-sufficiency, hypocrisy—all will be forever gone” (Randy Alcorn, *Heaven*, pp. 314-315).

**Observation #4** - The soul that goes to heaven does worship God. Rev. 4:10; 5:9-12; 7:9-10

There can be little doubt that God's people in heaven do worship God. The Psalms are filled with passages of Scripture that teach God's people will praise God forever and ever (i.e. Psalm 145:21). Many Psalms speak of this—Ps.29:2; 95:6; 96:9). The last six Psalms of the book of Psalms indicate there will be praise and worship services that will feature all people praising and worshipping God and singing praises to Him. We may assume that even though much of this occurs when Christ reigns on earth, this is certainly part of a heavenly existence. The passion to want to worship God is certainly greater in heaven than it was on earth and we know we have a desire to worship God while here on earth.

It is a true observation that we may make that as people increase in their knowledge of God, they have a desire to worship and praise God. Certainly this will be at a much higher level in heaven because our knowledge level will be much greater than it is now. All there will want to worship God.

**Observation #5** - The soul that goes to heaven does serve God. **Rev.7:15; 22:3**

Now we know from certain texts that part of service will involve judging angels (I Cor. 6:1-3). We are not sure all that is involved here, but clearly heaven will be a place of service.