

“Where Do We Go
When We Die?”

(1Jn 2:26-29)



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Exposit: 1Jn 2:26



26 These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you.

- ❧ Overall context of epistle: John is combatting false teaching
- ❧ Where v.26 flows in the letter, there is false teaching attacking the security of our salvation
 - ❧ Christ's atonement was not enough
 - ❧ By extension, we need to do our part
 - ❧ Undermined or attacked the deity of Christ
 - ❧ Minimized the severity of sin (tolerated sin; or explained it away)
- ❧ John is writing to set the record straight
- ❧ John is warning and exposing such false teaching (as lies)

Exposit: 1Jn 2:27



27 As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.

- ❧ "as for you" negates the concern of being deceived/led astray
- ❧ "the anointing" as we covered previously is tied to God's elective purposes in setting aside for Himself His possession, kingdom of priest, chosen race, holy nation (collectively believers)
- ❧ Believers will be able to discern false teaching because the Holy Spirit abides in us
 - ❧ Holy Spirit's role is to lead/guide you into all truth (Jn 14:16-17)
- ❧ The Holy Spirit who inspired Scripture confirms truth in our hearts as we continue to remain/abide in our faith in Jesus
- ❧ The Holy Spirit will reveal lies and expose false teaching

Exposit: 1Jn 2:28



28 Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.

- ❧ John weaves in and out of addressing age groups and pastoral tone
- ❧ “little children” in the context and flow is pastoral tone
- ❧ “He appears” and “His coming” refers to when we meet Jesus either in death or during the Rapture
- ❧ John exhorts us to have full confidence when that time comes to meet Jesus
- ❧ QUESTIONS: Where do believers go when they die? Did OT/NT believers go to the same place? When do believers meet Jesus?

OT: Enoch & Elijah



Genesis 5:24

24 Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.

☞ Where did God take Enoch?

☞ Doesn't say. Presumably heaven

2 Kings 2:11-12

11 As they [Elijah and Elisha] were going along and talking, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire which separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind to heaven. 12 Elisha saw it and cried out, "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" And he saw Elijah no more.

☞ Where did God take Elijah?

☞ To heaven (shamayim) which means: the heavens, sky

☞ Observation: we assume both were taken to heaven where God's throne is

OT: Different levels of heaven



☞ But clearly there are different levels of heaven (shamayim):

Deuteronomy 10:12-15

12 "Now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require from you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13 and to keep the LORD'S commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good? 14 Behold, to the LORD your God belong **heaven (shamayim) and the highest heavens (shamayim)**, the earth and all that is in it. 15 Yet on your fathers did the LORD set His affection to love them, and He chose their descendants after them, even you above all peoples, as it is this day.

☞ Proof there is different levels in heaven or the heavens

Deuteronomy 26:15

15 Look down from Your holy habitation, **from heaven (shamayim)**, and bless Your people Israel, and the ground which You have given us, a land flowing with milk and honey, as You swore to our fathers.'

☞ Somewhere in the shamayim is where God dwell's (many assume God dwells on His throne)

NT: Beatitudes



Matthew 5:33-37

33 “Again, you have heard that the ancients were told, ‘YOU SHALL NOT MAKE FALSE VOWS, BUT SHALL FULFILL YOUR VOWS TO THE LORD.’

34 But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by **heaven (ouranos)**, **for it is the throne of God**, 35 or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is THE CITY OF THE GREAT KING. 36 Nor shall you make an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. 37 But let your statement be, ‘Yes, yes’ or ‘No, no’; anything beyond these is of evil.

- ✧ ouranos is the Hebrew equivalent of shamayim
- ✧ ouranos/shamayim has different levels of heaven
- ✧ Jesus connects heaven with “throne of God”

NT: The Rich Man and Lazarus



Luke 16:19-31

19 “Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day. 20 And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, 21 and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man’s table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores. 22 Now the poor man died **and was carried away by the angels to Abraham’s bosom (in his arms)**; and the rich man also died and was buried. 23 In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and *saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his **bosom (in his arms)**. 24 And he cried out and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.’ 25 But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. 26 And besides all this, **between us and you there is a great chasm fixed**, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and that none may cross over from there to us.’ 27 And he said, ‘Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father’s house — 28 for I have five brothers — in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.’ 29 But Abraham *said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’ 30 But he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!’ 31 But he said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.’”

☞ Where is Abraham? Presumably heaven (shamayim)

NT: Paul taken to the third heaven



2 Corinthians 12:1-6

1 Boasting is necessary, though it is not profitable; but I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. 2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago – whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows – such a man was caught up **to the third heaven (ouranos)**. 3 And I know how such a man – whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows – 4 was caught up **into Paradise** and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak. 5 On behalf of such a man I will boast; but on my own behalf I will not boast, except in regard to my weaknesses. 6 For if I do wish to boast I will not be foolish, for I will be speaking the truth; but I refrain from this, so that no one will credit me with more than he sees in me or hears from me.

- ☞ Again ouranos/shamayim has different levels of heaven
- ☞ OT: “highest heavens”: NT: “third heaven”, in both cases depending on context could refer to where God’s heavenly throne is or where Paradise is
- ☞ Paul connects third heaven with “Paradise” (paradeisos = park, garden, a paradise)

NT: “absent from the body”



2 Corinthians 5:1-10

1 For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens (ouranos).

2 For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven (ouranos), 3 inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked. 4 For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life. 5 Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge.

6 Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord – 7 for we walk by faith, not by sight – 8 we are of good courage, I say, **and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at *home with the Lord.** 9 Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

☞ Where do NT believers go? * endēmeō = home country with the Lord or where the Lord dwells

Exposit: 1Jn 2:28



Back to v.28:

28 Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.

❧ QUESTIONS: Where do believers go when they die? Did OT/NT believers go to the same place?

❧ ANSWER: OT and NT believers go to the highest heavens, the third heaven, a Paradise garden prepared by Jesus and where Jesus is

❧ NOTE: OT/NT unbelievers are in torment and held in Hades

❧ Why else did I go through all that?

Paradise vs. God's throne



- ❧ Paradise and God's throne are in two different locations!
- ❧ Paradise is a city, a garden prepared by Jesus and where Jesus dwells
- ❧ God's throne is in a different location in the heavens
 - ❧ In the heavenly temple, in the holy of holies

- ❧ Now biblical proof for all this...

Paradise vs. God's throne



❧ What did Isaiah see when he saw the throne in heaven?:

Isaiah 6:1-3

1 In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. 2 **Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.** 3 And one called out to another and said,

“Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts,
The whole earth is full of His glory.”

❧ Isaiah did see Seraphim (angelic beings; in Revelation they're the 4 living creatures)

❧ No mention of Enoch, Elijah, nor any OT saints

Paradise vs. God's throne



❧ What did Ezekiel see when he saw the throne in heaven?:

Ezekiel 1:26-28

26 Now above the expanse (sky) that was over their heads there was something resembling **a throne**, like lapis lazuli in appearance; and on that which resembled **a throne**, high up, was a figure with the appearance of a man. 27 Then I noticed from the appearance of His loins and upward something like glowing metal that looked like fire all around within it, and from the appearance of His loins and downward I saw something like fire; and there was a radiance around Him. 28 As the appearance of the rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the surrounding radiance. Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell on my face and heard a voice speaking.,

The whole earth is full of His glory.”

❧ Ezekiel too makes no mention of Enoch, Elijah, nor any OT saints

Paradise vs. God's throne



- ❧ In the NT: What did the Rich Man see from Hades in the Lazarus (Lk 18) account?
 - ❧ Abraham and Lazarus. Abraham is an OT saint, but no mention of throne
- ❧ What did Paul see when he was raptured into the third heaven?
 - ❧ He wasn't allowed to tell, but he did tell us it was Paradise (no mention of throne)
- ❧ What did John see in his vision when he was taken to heaven in Revelation 4-5:
 - ❧ God the Father sitting on the throne (rainbow around it)
 - ❧ 24 thrones/24 elders (around the throne)
 - ❧ 7 angels (before the throne)
 - ❧ 4 living creatures (Seraphim)
 - ❧ Lamb as if slain (God the Son standing between the throne and the 24 elders)
 - ❧ Sea of glass before the throne
 - ❧ No mention of OT/NT saints, except for souls under the altar
 - ❧ After the 5th seal souls who were martyred during the Great Tribulation was taken there and asked to wait for rest of GT martyrs to join them

Paradise vs. God's throne



☞ Lastly, where was Jesus going and promised to take His disciples:

John 14:1-6

1 "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 **In My Father's house** are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for **I go to prepare a *place (in My Father's house) for you.** 3 If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also. 4 And you know the way where I am going." 5 Thomas *said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?" 6 Jesus *said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

- ☞ Disciples are NT believers and were promised to be taken to the Father's house that has many dwelling places
- ☞ *place is topos = area, location
- ☞ Where is that area, location?

Paradise vs. God's throne



☞ Jesus speaking to the thief on the cross:

Luke 23:43

And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me **in Paradise.**"

☞ Jesus equates "My Father's house" to the temple

Luke 2:49

49 And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house (the temple)?"

Now let's pull it all together...

Paradise vs. God's throne



- ❧ Where do OT/NT believers go when they die?
 - ❧ To heaven, specifically, to Paradise (where God dwells)
 - ❧ Paradise = My Father's house = temple in heaven
 - ❧ SPOILER: Paradise is the New Jerusalem (Rev 21-22)

- ❧ Ok and to our last question, when will we meet Jesus and how will we get to Paradise?

Paradise vs. God's throne



Acts 7:54-60 (Stephen stoned to death)

54 Now when they (the Jews) heard this, they were cut to the quick, and they began gnashing their teeth at him. 55 But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently **into heaven** and saw the glory of God, **and Jesus standing** at the right hand of God; 56 and he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." 57 But they cried out with a loud voice, and covered their ears and rushed at him with one impulse. 58 When they had driven him out of the city, they began stoning him; and the witnesses laid aside their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59 They went on stoning Stephen as he called on the Lord and said, "**Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!**" 60 Then falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" Having said this, he fell asleep.

TRUTH: Jesus will receive your spirit and personally escort you to Paradise!

Exposit: 1Jn 2:28



So John is saying in v. 28:

28 Now, little children, abide (remain steadfast in faith) in Him, so that when He appears (either in death when He escorts you to Paradise or during the Rapture when you are changed and meet Him in the air), we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming (when we are raised and Jesus judges the world).

☞ Jesus is our personal escort to Paradise... isn't that pretty cool 😎

Exposit: 1Jn 2:29



29 If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him.

- ☞ Since we know that Jesus is Holy and righteous and will judge each person with equity
- ☞ So will His followers practice righteousness in their lives which is proof of their anointing
- ☞ Contrast is true as well: unbelievers, those not redeemed, will not practice righteousness, instead continue to do evil because they have not received the anointing (believed in the truth)
 - ☞ This is the essence at the close of Revelation...

Exposit: 1Jn 2:29



Revelation 22:10-15

10 And he *said to me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. 11 Let the one who does wrong (unrighteousness), still do wrong; and the one who is filthy, still be filthy (unrighteousness); **and let the one who is righteous, still practice righteousness; and the one who is holy, still keep himself holy.**”

12 “Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done. 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”

14 Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city. 15 Outside are the (unrighteous) dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying.

Exposit: 1Jn 2:29



TAKEAWAYS:

- ☞ Let those who are anointed continue in righteousness so that when we meet Jesus we will not be ashamed and condemned, but instead received and commended
 - ☞ “Well done, good and faithful servant”
- ☞ Let those who are not anointed continue to do evil so that when they meet Jesus, they will be ashamed, judged, and condemned to the fiery hell
 - ☞ “I never knew you”