



# Links Players

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## Death Is Conquered

*Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, **that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death**, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. (Hebrews 2: 15-16, ESV)*

In a recent interview, two-time United States Open Champion Retief Goosen related a story about being struck by lightning at the age of sixteen. After the incident, Goosen was taken to the hospital where he woke up with extensive burns covering his body. It would be weeks before he could return to the golf course again.

Astonished by this, the interviewer asked what the actual experience of being struck by lightning was like. Goosen responded by saying, “You don’t see or feel anything after being struck by lightning, it’s so instant and *you wake up where you wake up. Hospital, heaven, or hell!*” What a poignant reminder that the greatest issue facing the living can arise suddenly and without warning – the issue of death.

Christianity distinguishes itself not only for the joy it brings to this life, but also for its refusal to dodge the greatest and most difficult issues, especially death.

Death is rarely the topic of choice in our clubhouse conversations. Normally, we go out of our way not to think about such a morbid subject. Yet, the reality of death, and what happens after death, are issues extensively covered in Scripture.

Before we briefly ponder this unavoidable topic, we should make an important distinction: *There is a difference between a Christian’s faith and the Christian faith.*

A “Christian’s faith” is what *we believe* about any given topic. The “Christian faith” is what *Scripture teaches* about all topics. The first is something a person does with their whole heart and mind. The second is the content found in Scripture. Hopefully, what we believe and what Scripture teaches are the same.

I want you to see this distinction because I discovered many years ago when engaged in ministry on university campuses that people who claim to be Christians sometimes fail to see that what they profess does not always correspond to what Scripture teaches.

So, what do you believe about death and the “hereafter?” Some say that everyone goes to “a better place.” This is Universalism. Others say you are reincarnated into various life forms until you reach

your karmic quota, at which point you are reabsorbed into an impersonal “world-spirit”. This is found in various Eastern religions. Some say that you cease existing altogether. This is Hedonism - “eat, drink, be merry, for tomorrow you die.” For them, there is no “hereafter.”

There are many worldviews, religious or secular, that try to provide an answer to the questions surrounding death, but they can't all be right.

So, what does the Christian Faith teach about death? For those who believe in Christ Jesus, the answers are exhilarating: 1) when a believer physically dies, the believer's soul goes directly into the presence of the Lord. 2) When Jesus returns at the Second Coming, all believers will be reunited with their resurrected, immortal, physical bodies. 3) After the final judgment, believers will live in never-ending, joy with their King in the New Heavens and New Earth.

For those who refuse Jesus Christ, physical death is followed by judgment and eternal punishment—irreversible exile from the presence, glory, goodness, love, and grace of God.

Life is a “Timed-Exam” and, as Retief Goosen discovered at the ripe old age of 16, the buzzer can go off at any time. Where will you wake up?

**Prayer – Jesus, open the eyes of my heart to see the greatness of your salvation.**

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Dennis Darville

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