

# THE INTERMEDIATE STATE

## 1. BY what figure does the Bible represent death?

“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are *asleep*, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.” **1Thessalonians 4:13**. See also **1 Corinthians 15:18, 20; John 11:11-14**.

**NOTE** — In sound sleep one is wholly lost to consciousness; time goes by unmeasured; and the mental functions which are active during consciousness are suspended for the time being.

## 2. Where do the dead sleep?

And many of them that *sleep in the dust of the earth* shall awake.” **Daniel 12:2**. See also **Ecclesiastes 3:20; 9:10**.

## 3. How long will they sleep there?

“So man lieth down, and riseth not: *till the heavens be no more*, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.” **Job 14:12**.

## 4. For what did Job say he would wait after death?

“If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, *till my change come*.” **Verse 14**.

## 5. Where did he say he would wait?

“*If I wait, the grave is mine house*: I have made my bed in the darkness.” **Job 17:13**.

## 6. While in this condition, how much does one know about those he has left behind?

“His sons come to honor, and *he knoweth it not*; and they are brought low, but *he perceiveth it not of them*.” **Job 14:21**.

## 7. What becomes of man's thoughts at death?

“His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; *in that very day his thoughts perish*.” **Psalms 146:4**.

## 8. Do the dead know anything?

“For the living know that they shall die: *but the dead know not anything*, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten.” **Ecclesiastes 9:5**.

**Publisher's Note: Solomon is not saying that the living forget or have no memory of the dead, but that the dead have no memory of anything, their lives, their families, their jobs, nothing.**

### **9. Do they take any part in earthly things?**

“Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion forever in anything that is done under the sun.” **Verse 6.**

**NOTE** — If one continued in consciousness after death, he would know of the promotion or dishonor of his sons. But Job says he does not know this. Not only so, but in death one loses all the attributes of mind,—love, hatred, envy, etc. Thus it is plain that his thoughts have perished, and that he can have nothing more to do with the things of this world. But if, as taught and held by some, man's powers of thought continue after death, he *lives*; and if he lives, he must be *somewhere*. Where is he? Is he in heaven, or in hell? If he goes to either place at death, what then is the need of a future judgment, or of a resurrection, or of the second coming of Christ? If the judgment does not take place at death, but men go to their reward at death, then their *rewards* precede their *awards*, and there would arise the possibility that some have at death gone to the wrong place, and must needs be sent to the other, after having been in bliss or torment for ages, perhaps.

### **10. What does the psalmist say about the dead praising God?**

“*The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence.*” **Psalm 115:17.**

### **11. How much does one know of God when dead?**

“For in death *there is no remembrance of Thee.*” **Psalm 6:5.**

**NOTE** — There is not even a remembrance of God. As already seen, the Bible everywhere represents the dead as asleep. If they were in heaven or in hell, would it be fitting to represent them thus? Was Lazarus, whom Jesus loved, in heaven when the Saviour said, “Our friend Lazarus *sleepeth*”? **John 11:11.** If so, calling him to life was really robbing him of the bliss of heaven that rightly belonged to him. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus, recorded in **Luke 16**, was given to teach, not consciousness in death, but that in the judgment riches will avail

nothing unless rightly and beneficently used, and that poverty will not keep one out of heaven.

**12. But are not the righteous dead in heaven?**

“For *David is not ascended into the heavens.*” **Acts 2:34.**

**13. What must take place before the dead can praise God?**

“Thy dead men shall live, together with My dead body shall they arise. *Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.*” **Isaiah 26:19.**

**14. When did David say he would be satisfied?**

“As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, *when I awake, with Thy likeness.*” **Psalms 17:15.**

**15. Were there to be no resurrection of the dead, what would be the condition of those fallen asleep in Christ?**

“For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain ye are yet in your sins. *Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.*” **1Corinthians 15:16–18.**

**16. When is the resurrection of the righteous to take place?**

“For *the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.*” **1Thessalonians 4:16.**

**NOTES** — If, as stated in **Ecclesiastes 9:5**, the dead know not anything, then they have no knowledge of the lapse of time. “Six thousand years in the grave to a dead man is no more than a wink of the eye to the living.” To them, consciousness, our only means of measuring time, is gone; and it will seem to them when they awake that absolutely no time has elapsed. And herein lies a most comforting thought in the Bible doctrine of the sleep of the dead, that in death there is no consciousness of the passing of time. To those who sleep in Jesus, their sleep, whether long or short, whether one year, one thousand years, or six thousand years, will be but as if the moment of sad parting were followed instantly by the glad reunion in the presence of Jesus at His glorious appearing and the resurrection of the just.

It ought also to be a comforting thought to those whose lives have been filled with anxiety and grief for deceased loved ones who persisted in sin, to know that they are not now suffering in torments, but, with all the rest of the dead, are quietly sleeping in their graves. **Job 3:17.**

Again, it would mar the felicity of one's enjoyment in heaven could he look upon earth and see his friends and relatives suffering from persecution, want, cold, or hunger, or sorrowing for the dead. God's way is best,—that all sentient life, animation, activity, thought, and consciousness should cease at death, and that all should wait till the resurrection for their future life and eternal reward. See **Hebrews 11:39, 40.**

SLEEP on, beloved! sleep, and take thy rest;  
Lay down thy head upon thy Saviour's breast.  
We love thee well, but Jesus loves thee best—  
Good night.