

One Hour After Death-James Smith

One Hour After Death! James Smith, 1859

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The news of the unexpected death of a dear friend has suggested this thought. He is gone. He is in another world.

I too, must die soon. It may be very soon. Let me, then, think of death, and of the hour after death. If I die among friends, my eyes will then be closed, my body will be laid out, the white sheet will cover it, and in the quiet chamber it will be left. It is now unconscious, inanimate, a mere mass of matter. It must soon be conveyed to the grave, and there be hidden from the sight of man, or it will become offensive. Yes, the nearest relative, the one who loved me most, will say, "Bury my dead out of my sight!" But the soul, the immortal part, the real man — what has become of him?

One hour after death, WHERE shall I be?

Ah, where! That will entirely depend upon what I am now — what death finds me. Like Judas, each one will go to his own place. Where shall I be?

I may be in Hell, lifting up my eyes in torments, grasping for someone or something to comfort me. Dreadful supposition! But it is not impossible. If I die under the guilt of sin; if I die without having experienced a new birth; it is certain. For unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Awful thought — to be in Hell one hour after death! Then no prayers will avail, no sufferings will excite pity, nor cries or tears will be regarded. Hope will be forever shut out. Agony and despair must be endured perpetually.

But if I die a believer in Jesus; if cleansed in his blood; if clothed in his righteousness; if sanctified by his Spirit; if united to his person — then where shall I be one hour after death? Oh, glorious thought — I shall be with Jesus! Yes, I shall hear his sweet voice, see his lovely face, and stand before his glorious throne! I shall be in heaven; the home of the saints; the house of the living God — the region of holiness, happiness, and love. I shall know what Heaven is. I shall realize what perfect holiness means. I shall have lost every wish — and be in possession of all I could desire. Oh, to be with Jesus; to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God; to enjoy the company of prophets, apostles, martyrs, and holy ministers forever! What a noble place I shall be in! What glorious company I shall have! What ecstatic joys I shall taste! Oh, what a change I shall experience!

One hour after death, WHAT shall I be?

I shall be a pure and holy spirit, no longer, fettered, imprisoned, hindered, and pained by a body of flesh, or a body of sin and death. I shall be a son of God, realizing my relationship — at home with my Father; surrounded with myriads of my brothers and sisters, all perfectly holy, and perfectly happy. I shall be a saint, fully sanctified, and made fit for my Master's use. To doubt my election, or question my calling, or suspect my sincerity, will be impossible. I shall be as holy as my Father is holy. I shall be as perfect, as my Savior is perfect. I shall be without fault before the throne of God.

Oh, wondrous mystery, that one like me, so full of faults, so deeply depraved, so dreadfully polluted — should be pronounced faultless by the Judge of all!

But if I should die out of Christ, without repentance, without holiness — then what shall I be? Ah, what! A soul lost! A ruined sinner! Condemned to suffer God's just wrath, the bitter reflections of my own mind, the fearful lashings of my own conscience — forever! Self-condemned; condemned by all around me; a spectacle of misery; a monument of God's justice; a terrified witness to God's holiness and truth. Ah, then I shall know the meaning of those terrible words, "Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, fire, brimstone, and a horrible tempest." Then I shall experience what is meant by being "cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone," and shall feel all the unknown horrors of the "second death."

What a fearful thing must sin, my sin, be — to demand such tremendous punishment at the hands of a just God; to call for such a terrible infliction from a God who is emphatically love! Oh, the thought, that I should be a lost soul, a companion of devils and damned immortals!

One hour after death, How shall I be EMPLOYED?

How am I employed now? Is Jesus my Master, his service my delight, and his glory my end? If I now live for God, walk with God, and work in order to please God — then I may expect to be employed in praising his name, admiring his love, and adoring his glorious perfections. My employment will be my pleasure, and my service my joy. I shall stand among the ransomed, walk with Jesus in white, and praise his name on my golden harp forever!

No wandering thoughts, no roving imagination, no tempting devil, no corrupt heart, no unhallowed associations — will interrupt, disturb, or hinder me in my services there. No, all will be as pure as the light, as peaceful as the bosom of God, and as happy as the presence of God and the Lamb can make it!

But if Satan is my master, if his service suits my taste, and if self-gratification is my end — then my employment will be dismal, dreadful, unspeakably painful! What can I do but inflict torment on myself, and increase the torment of others — but hate myself, and everyone that suffers with me? The mind will be always active; but every exercise of the mind will but add to the weight of woe already experienced. Every thought of God, of his justice or his mercy — will be another bitter drop in the cup of suffering. Every thought of the past will only aggravate the agonies of the present. But to look forward will be worst of all. What is before? ETERNITY! Duration without termination. Existence without change for the better. A fearful "forever." The death-knell of hope is sounded. The endless reign of despair has commenced. Time is ended. All through the future, God's judgments must be endured, his threatenings will be fulfilling. How dreadful my employment may be!

One hour after death, What will be my FEELINGS?

If Heaven is gained; if endless happiness is secured; if the approbation of God is realized; if the assurance of unchangeable blessedness is enjoyed — what will be my feelings? What joy, what gratitude, what peace, what holy exultation! No tongue can speak, no pen can write, no language can describe — the feelings of the happy spirit.

The sight of Jesus, the songs of saints, the unveiled glories of God — what, oh, what feelings will these produce! The absence of pain, freedom from sin, full victory over Satan, the full realization of all our highest and holiest desires — what feelings will these produce! But we must die, to fully know what our feelings of gratitude, joy, and love will be — one hour after death.

But if Heaven is lost, if Hell is my doom, if everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord is my portion — what, oh, what will my feelings be! What bitter remorse! What agonizing reflections! What terrible apprehensions! What hopeless despair! What awful sufferings! But we must die — die under the curse of God, die rejecting the gospel, die unpardoned — in order to know what will be the feelings of a lost soul — one hour after death!

How many of my readers will die in this state? How many will risk the possibility of dying so — by living in sin, by neglecting their souls, by presuming on God's mercy, or by hardening themselves in sin?

One hour after death, How shall I THINK?

How differently we shall think of money, pleasure, the indulgence of our lusts, all that we now call great, grand, and desirable — one hour after death! Let us endeavor to think now — as it is probable we shall think then!

Let us place ourselves in Heaven — and try to think there!

Let us place ourselves in Hell — and try to think there!

How different will things then appear!

Let us instantly, heartily, importunately, seek a title to Heaven, and a fitness for it, nor rest until we possess them!

MULTIPLE ARTICLES RELATED TO HELL

Journal articles, sermons, books

1. [How can I not go to hell? | GotQuestions.org](#) (THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION TO ANSWER!)
2. Eternal Punishment - In depth article on site
3. [Jesus' View of Eternal Punishment \(Mt 25:31-46\)](#) - Robert L. Thomas - 31 pp
4. [Hell: Never, Forever, or Just for Awhile](#) - Richard Mayhue - 16 pp
5. [Paul's Concept Of Eternal Punishment](#) - James Rosscup - 24 pp
6. [Eternal Punishment In John's Revelation](#) - Trevor P Craigen, 13 pp
7. [A Kinder, Gentler Theology Of Hell?](#) - Larry D. Pettegrew, 17 pp
8. [Wrath That Endures Forever](#) William V. Crockett - JETS 34.2 (1991): 195-202
9. [The Horrors and Habitat of Hell](#) - Chris Gee (short, pithy, painful read)
10. [A Horrible Place Called Hell](#) - Alan Carr
11. [Eternal Punishment](#) - Eryl Davies, Foundations 13 (Autumn 1984): 34-44
12. [Jonathan Edwards & Hell](#) - Christopher W. Morgan - 180 page book, can be borrowed
13. [The Eternity of Hell Torments, by the late Rev. Jonathan Edwards - Revised and corrected by the Rev. C.E. De Coetlogon, A.M. 1788](#)
14. [Whatever Happened to Hell?](#) - John Blanchard - 340 page book, can be borrowed
15. [Whatever Happened to Hell?](#) - Jon E Braun - 216 page book, can be borrowed [5 ratings](#)
16. [The Doctrine of Eternal Punishment](#), Harry Buis
17. [Death and the afterlife](#) - Morey, Robert A. Morey - 328 page book, can be borrowed
18. [One Minute After You Die](#) - Erwin Lutzer - 148 page book, can be borrowed
19. [One Minute After You Die - A Preview of Your final destination](#) - 28 minute video by Dr Erwin Lutzer
20. [Luke 16:19-31 A Great Chasm Fixed](#) - Steven Cole
21. [Eight Myths about Hell](#) Sam Storms (very interesting)
22. [Who will go to hell? | GotQuestions.org](#)
23. [Does hell exist? | GotQuestions.org](#)
24. [Is hell real? Is hell eternal? | GotQuestions.org](#)
25. [Where is hell? What is the location of hell? | GotQuestions.org](#)
26. [What does hell look like? How hot is hell? | GotQuestions.org](#)
27. [Are there different levels of punishment in hell? | GotQuestions.org](#)
28. [What kind of bodies will people have in hell? | GotQuestions.org](#)
29. [Did God create hell? | GotQuestions.org](#)
30. [How is eternity in hell a fair punishment for sin? | GotQuestions.org](#)
31. [How is an eternity in hell a just punishment for only a human lifetime of sin? | GotQuestions.org](#)
32. [How can a loving God send someone to hell? | GotQuestions.org](#)
33. [Is hell literally a place of fire and brimstone? | GotQuestions.org](#)
34. [What does it mean that hell is referred to as a lake of fire? | GotQuestions.org](#)
35. [Does God love the people who are in hell? | GotQuestions.org](#)
36. [Why does God send people to hell? | GotQuestions.org](#)
37. [Questions about Heaven, Hell, and Eternity \(All\) | GotQuestions.org](#)