



Year 8 Is death the end?



1. The end or a new beginning?

What is death? This seems to be a completely straightforward question with an obvious answer. Nothing could be further from the truth, however. Forty years ago, if your heart stopped beating, you were considered to have died. Now, brain death seems to be a major factor. The decision about whether someone is brain dead is made by checking that there is no eye movement, that the pupils in the eyes are fixed and dilated (Larger than usual), and that there is no sign of breathing. It does not take into account whether or not the heart is beating. However, people who are brain dead can be kept 'alive' on a life-support machine, despite there being no prospect of 'life' as we know it, and they don't appear to be dead. People have believed in life after death for thousands of years. Archaeologists have found Neanderthal burials all around Europe and Asia dating from over 25,000 years ago. Some were buried with items that they thought might be important in the afterlife. The ancient Egyptians preserved the bodies of important people by mummifying them so they would be of use in the afterlife. Christians believe that when they die, God will decide where they spend eternity (Heaven or Hell). Whatever a person believes about life after death will affect their attitude towards the meaning and purpose of life. Are we here for a good time? Are we here to worship & obey a God so we can spend eternity with Him?

2. Ghosts & Near-Death Experiences

The paranormal refers to Ghosts and spirits. A medium is a person who says they can provide evidence of survival of the human personality beyond the physical state we call death. They are the link between the two worlds communicating with people who have died through mind-to-mind contact.



Some people claim to have Near Death Experiences where they see heaven, a bright light, angels, God etc.

Are they good evidence of the afterlife? Yes because...Consistent, Cross cultural, produce significant, positive change over long period of time, Report details that are 'impossible' No because ...Brain chemistry, Reaction to high stress, People see what they want to see, Some religions see them as 'the work of the devil'



3. Resurrection

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the foundation of the Christian faith. Without the resurrection, the belief in God's saving grace through Jesus is destroyed. When Jesus rose from the dead, he confirmed his identity as the Son of God and his work of atonement, redemption, reconciliation, and salvation. The resurrection was a real, literal, physical raising of Jesus' body from the dead.

Every time Christians recite the Apostles' Creed, they affirm their belief in what will happen to them after death: "I believe in the resurrection of the body and life everlasting." The belief in the resurrection of one's physical body at the end of time is central to Christian theology. According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church: "The 'resurrection of the flesh' means not only that the immortal soul will live on after death, but that even our 'mortal body' will come to life again.

The Apostle Paul said the Resurrection was of "first importance" because it established another important truth for you and me as human beings. The Resurrection of Jesus demonstrated the power and intention of God to resurrect all of us someday. When Jesus rose from the dead, he demonstrated not only the power of God to raise Jesus, but also the power of God to provide all of us with eternal life: 1 Corinthians 15:20-22

'But now Christ has been raised from the dead, ...For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.'

5. Christian teachings about life after death

Christians & Muslims believe that when a person dies, God decides whether they should spend eternity in heaven (or paradise) with Him or in Hell with the Devil. Roman Catholics believe that there is a time of spiritual cleansing and preparation, called purgatory, for some before they enter heaven.



6. Effects of beliefs on individuals & Communities

Spending eternity in heaven or hell depends on how they have followed their religion and how their beliefs have affected their actions throughout their life. For Christians, they believe that Jesus' teaching in **Matthew 25:31-46** The Parable of the sheep & goats, explains Judgement Day and so this will encourage them to follow God's teachings. For many Christians, this is what gives their life meaning and purpose.



4. Reincarnation

Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists believe in reincarnation or rebirth, which is dependent on good deeds (karma). They refer to samsara as being the cycle of birth, death and rebirth (Buddhism) or reincarnation (Hinduism & Sikhism). Hindus describe reincarnation as the soul discarding the body at death just as a person may take off clothes and put on new ones. Liberation (Freedom) from this cycle is called Moksha. Sikhism believes the same. Buddhists do not believe in the soul or separate self (anatta)- at the time of rebirth, the impermanent life force that is fashioned by actions (karma) is reborn at a different level of life.



7. Funeral ceremonies

Christian funerals are bespoke services, tailored to meet the needs of the Christian faith. Christians believe that when someone passes away, it is the end of their life on Earth and they are subsequently judged by God. Family and close friends gather at Christian funerals to grieve but also to celebrate the life of the deceased. Generally, Christian funerals are held around a week after someone has passed away. The funeral service can take place almost anywhere, including a church, cemetery or crematorium. A Church of England funeral service usually follows a general structure, with the order of service including readings, a sermon, prayers and hymns. In addition, the service may include a eulogy written and delivered by a family member or close friend. Special requests such as the deceased's favourite music and funeral flowers are customary at Christian funerals. If you're wondering what to take to a Christian funeral; flowers, wreaths and cards are common to see both at Church of England funeral services and Catholic funerals. The funeral service often ends with a burial or cremation and are followed by a post-funeral reception, commonly known as a wake. A Catholic funeral service is led by one or more priests and follows an orderly ritual, including: Vigil, Mass, Rite of Committal, Burial. Traditionally, the Catholic Church has preferred its members to choose burial, however, cremation is allowed. If a loved one is cremated, their ashes should not be scattered or kept in an urn at home. Instead, the ashes should be buried in a respectful manner. Traditionally, Christians sing a selection of hymns during the funeral service such as Amazing Grace, The Lord is my Shepherd and Abide with Me.

Keyword	Meaning
Dead	The end of life.
Ghost	A spirit of a person who has died.
NDE	Near Death Experience.
Resurrection	Raising back to life after death.
Eternal life	Everlasting life after death.
Reincarnation	Being born again in another form.
Karma	Good or bad force produced in a person's life that affects their next life.
Moksha	The end of the death and rebirth cycle.
Rebirth	The process of being reincarnated or born again.
Soul	The spiritual part of a human which is believed to be immortal (Doesn't die)
Judgement	The belief that God will judge humanity on their beliefs and actions.
Heaven	Eternal place with God after death.
Hell	Eternal place without God (or with the devil) after death.
Purgatory	A place of spiritual cleansing and preparation for heaven.
Parable	A story with a hidden meaning.
Funeral	A ceremony held after a person's death, usually including the person's burial or cremation.