

DEATH IS A JOURNEY

When the apostle Paul was facing certain death in a Roman dungeon, he wrote this to his dearest friend: "I am now ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand" (2 Tim. 4:6). He called his impending death a departure, or literally, an unloosing for a journey. Death, he said, is an unloosing from all the limitations of this life in order to take a journey to somewhere. And when death comes, that journey begins.

How long a journey is it? Actually, as quickly as the journey begins, it ends, for it takes but an instant to arrive at the destination. For the Christian, that journey holds no fear, for to depart from the earth means to arrive in heaven immediately and to be forever in the presence of the living Christ. The same apostle Paul wrote in another place that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8). The journey involves no intermediate stops on the way, either. From that deathbed at home or in the hospital, or from the scene of the accident to heaven immediately is the assurance of every believer in Jesus Christ.

Death is certain, But, you ask, can one be certain that the journey of death will take him to heaven? The good deeds of one's life cannot furnish sure proof, for it is not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to God's mercy that He saves us (Tit. 3:5). Good works do attest to the change that Jesus Christ makes in a life, but it is, after all is said and done, whether or not the Lord Jesus Christ is your Savior from sin that determines the destination of the journey of death. Only faith in Him who died in your place and for your sins guarantees that when death comes you will arrive that very moment in His presence in heaven.

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