



# Fear Not!

Death and the Afterlife  
from a Christian Perspective



Ligon Duncan  
with J. Nicholas Reid

CHRISTIAN  
**FOCUS**





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## D E D I C A T I O N

To the congregation of  
First Presbyterian Church, Jackson, Mississippi

And especially to the Reverend Brister H. Ware  
Beloved Minister of Pastoral Care  
Who has loved us all so well and has helped so many  
Standing on Jordan's stormy banks.





## F O R E W O R D

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*by*  
*Jerry Bridges*

Most people, even Christians, live in a state of semi-denial about death. We hesitate to say a dearly loved relative or friend “died.” We prefer to say she “passed away” or she “went to be with the Lord.” Even unbelievers who assume that everyone ends up in heaven are known to say something such as “he’s gone to a better place.”

I went to a mortuary to visit the family of a deceased friend. To my amazement, the room where the friend’s body was available for viewing was called a “slumber room.” I don’t know what such a room should be called. But I was struck again by how we use euphemisms to obscure the fact that the person whose body lies in the casket is dead. He is not slumbering; he is dead.

Death, however, is not the final word for either believers or unbelievers. But there is much confusion about what happens to each after death. Two highly successful collegiate football coaches





from intensely rival schools died – one of them on the eve of the annual big game between the two schools. During the television broadcast the next day, the TV announcers were commenting on the fact that these two former rival coaches were probably sitting together looking down on the game, presumably from “up in heaven.” Quite apart from the fact that neither coach had ever indicated by life or testimony that he would be in heaven, those comments by the TV announcers illustrate the bizarre ideas that many people have of life after death.

We, however, do not have to live in ignorance about life after death for either believers or unbelievers. God’s Word, the Bible, tells us everything we need to know. It doesn’t tell us everything we might *want* to know, but it tells us everything God wants us to know – which means everything we need to know for our instruction and comfort. And then God has provided ministers to mine His Word for its truths and teach them to the rest of us.

Such a man is J. Ligon Duncan, who is both a scholar and a pastor. With a scholar’s mind and a pastor’s heart, Dr. Duncan has given to us the excellent book, *Fear Not*, which covers extensively all aspects of death, including what happens to believers immediately after death, the resurrection, the final judgment and then the eternal state. Along the way, he sheds helpful light on several troublesome passages, especially concerning the final Day of Judgment. This is a book to inform and encourage every Christian. All of us will be edified by its pages. It is my pleasure to commend it to every Christian reader.

*Jerry Bridges*





## I N T R O D U C T I O N

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by  
*J. Nicholas Reid*

⊕ Martin Lloyd-Jones once said, “When you are traveling through a bog, you look for solid ground.” *Fear Not!* by Dr. J. Ligon Duncan is designed to provide people with greater clarity on the various issues that surround death. ⊕

The concern behind this book is less about trying to satisfy curiosity and more about trying to equip people to approach death from a Biblical perspective. Dr. Duncan gave a series of talks on this issue in the spring of 2007. The church hall was packed week after week as people sought to better understand the truths of God’s Word. The lady diagnosed with cancer sat attentively with her husband as they tried to find solid ground on which to stand. The bereaved mother sat, as she looked at her one remaining child, curious if she would know in Heaven the little one she lost only a few





years before. That couple that we all know and love sat close to one another, as they had been doing for some fifty years at this same church, trying to figure out how they could cope with being soon separated by death. Our people needed to hear the truth proclaimed, and that is just what they got.

As I edited the manuscript and prepared it for publication it soon became apparent that Dr. Duncan's material is practical in its concern, chock full of Scripture, and theologically astute.

Much to her chagrin, we would be remiss if we did not mention Donna Dobbs, Director of Christian Education at First Presbyterian Church, Jackson, who saw the need for a series on death in the life of our church.

We would also like to thank Colin Duriez for his helpful editorial assistance.

Our prayer is that God might use this study to strengthen the hearts of wearied saints as they and their loved ones tread on the verge of Jordan. .

*J. Nicholas Reid  
In Christ, In Jackson*

