

DEATH & RESURRECTION TO LIFE

A 6-HOUR MULTI - PART SEMINAR ON THE STATE OF THE DEAD



SPIRIT & TRUTH FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

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The sacred name of God, Yahweh, is indicated by "LORD."

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Printed in the United States of America.

Death and Resurrection to Life

[This seminar was recorded using the ESV (*English Standard Version*) of the Bible]

Total Time for Seminar: 6:21:23

PART ONE

INTRODUCTION

There is a common saying that only two things are certain: death and taxes. I do not know about taxes, but I do know that death is certain for all men unless the Lord returns and you are one of the few whose mortal bodies will be changed.

Because death is certain, the promise of being raised from the dead and given everlasting life is the greatest promise that God has given to mankind. Think about it: if we do not get up from the dead, then all the other promises of God are, for the most part, pointless. We would live a short life, and then just die and be gone forever.

1 Corinthians 15:16-22

(16) For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised.

(17) And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.

(18) Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.

(19) If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

(20) But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

(21) For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.

(22) For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

This seminar has 6 parts:

PART ONE: Introduction

PART TWO: What happens to the body, the soul, and the spirit when a person dies

PART THREE: The dead are in the grave, not in heaven or "hell"

PART FOUR: The dead will get up at the Rapture, or one of the Resurrections

PART FIVE: The Judgment follows the Resurrection

PART SIX: An examination of Scriptures commonly used to show the dead are alive

The truth sets people free

Many people believe when a Christian dies, he or she goes to heaven and is with Jesus, and they take comfort in that. This seminar is not designed to cause people discomfort. Jesus taught us that there is great value in the truth. Jesus taught us that the

truth would set us free, and there is great freedom in knowing what happens to people when they die.

The Bible teaches that when a person dies, he is dead in every sense of the word. His body is dead, his soul is dead, and his spirit is gone. Some people hearing this for the first time may find that revelation upsetting, so the information in this seminar will be set forth as kindly and factually as possible.

This seminar is designed for three types of people:

First: those who already believe that the dead are dead. If you are in this category, I hope this seminar gives you insight, and increases your confidence to testify to what you believe.

Second: those who are not sure what happens when a person dies. If you are in this category, I hope you become convinced from Scripture that the dead are dead, and gain greater insight into the Bible and the spiritual world around you.

Third: those who believe that when a person dies his soul or spirit goes to heaven and is in the presence of God and Jesus. If you are in this category, let me start by saying thank you for taking the time to listen to this seminar. It is a wonderful thing to be open to the possibility of changing what you believe if you can be convinced from Scripture of the truth of something, even if it differs from what you have believed. I speak for myself and the Staff and Board of Spirit & Truth Fellowship in saying, “Thank you for listening to this presentation, and being open to the possibility that when a person dies, he is actually dead in every sense of the word, and not alive in any form.”

There is no way that this short seminar can cover every verse and every argument about the state of the dead. Nevertheless, we trust it presents enough material that a Christian can read and understand what the Word of God says about the subject, and also understand much of the spiritual activity that we hear so much about such as ghosts, apparitions, hauntings, possessions, etc.

God vs. Satan (the two opposing viewpoints)

- **God: Genesis 2:17:** “...but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”
- **Satan: Genesis 3:4:** “But the serpent said to the woman, ‘You will not surely die.’”

Death is horrible

Death is horrible. It is the end of us and everything we know. It is the loss of everything.

Ecclesiastes 9:4 and 5

(4) But he who is joined with all the living has hope, for a living dog is better than a dead lion.

(5) For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten.

What is death?

“Death” is the total absence of life. Some branches of theology teach that death is not the absence of life, but rather separation from God. However, that is a theological definition of death based on the doctrine that a person does not actually die when he is dead. It is not a definition based on lexical evidence. The Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek all use words that mean “die” in the sense of cease to live; they do not mean “continue to live in a separated state.”

Many ancient societies, including the ancient Greeks, believed that the soul lived on after the body died, but they did not define “death” as “separation from God.” They knew that when the body “died,” it ceased to have life.

We must derive our theology from the Word of God, which never says “the body” dies. It says, “the person dies.”

Hebrew and Greek Lexicons define death as the absence of life. Here are a couple of examples:

Hebrew:

Maveth: (Strong’s #4194 מָוֶת): Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Lexicon: The opposite of life.

Muth: (Strong’s #4191 מוּת): die, death.

Greek:

Thanatos: (Strong’s #2288 θάνατος): BDAG (*A Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*) : “natural death”; Thayer: “properly, *the death of the body.*” Then Thayer adds: **1.** properly, *the death of the body, i.e. that separation (whether natural or violent) of the soul from the body by which the life on earth is ended.*

Apothnesko: (Strong’s #599 ἀποθνήσκω): to cease to have vital functions; to die; to face the prospect of death; to be about to die.

If death were separation from God, what would we expect to find in the Bible?

- There would be different words used for the death of animals, the death of evil, unsaved people, and the death of saved people. That is logical because the soul in animals would not continue, but just die; the soul in the unsaved would live on in torment, separated from God; the souls of the saved would live on in the presence of God.

What do we find in the Bible? The same Hebrew and Greek words are used for the death of insects, birds, animals, and both good and evil people. We have to learn from the Bible. We have to believe that the Bible is the Word of God and God-breathed. If God uses the same words for death for animals, and good and bad people, then we have to understand that the same event is happening to all of them, and that one event is death, the absence of life.

#4191 מוּת *muth*: die, death

- **Genesis 7:21:** And all flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, livestock, beasts, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all mankind [**mostly evil**].
- **Exodus 7:18:** fish in the Nile died
- **Genesis 9:29:** Noah [a good man] died

#4194 מָוֶת *maveth*: death, the opposite of life

- **Leviticus 11:30 and 31:** dead animals and reptiles
- **Numbers 16:29:** speaks of the common death of all men
- **Genesis 25:11:** Abraham, a good man
- **2 Kings 1:1:** Ahab, the husband of Jezebel, an evil man

#2288 θάνατος *thanatos*: death

- **Romans 5:12:** “Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to **all men [both good and evil]** because all sinned...”
- **John 21:19:** Peter, a good man
- **Revelation 2:23:** the “children” (or followers) of “Jezebel”

#599 ἀποθνήσκω *apothnesko*: to die

- **Matthew 8:32:** the death of the **pigs** in the Sea of Galilee
- **Revelation 8:9:** the death of **sea life** when a burning meteor hit the ocean
- **Hebrews 9:27:** “And just as it is appointed for **man** to die once, and after that comes judgment,”

The same words, in Hebrew (such as *maveth*, *muth*), Greek (such as *apothnesko*, *thanatos*), and English (die, death), are used of death in general, the death of animals, and the death of all people, (good and bad people; saved and unsaved people).

Death is the absence of life, and understanding that someone who is dead is dead in every way should give us a much greater appreciation of life.

Why would Satan promote the lie that the dead are alive?

- It makes the stark reality of death seem less of an enemy than it actually is (1 Cor. 15:26; Heb. 2:14). “You will not die” is what most people believe. If everyone, good and bad, goes on living after they die, then “they” are not dead after all, so “death” is not so bad.

- It allows Satan's demons to impersonate the dead and communicate untruths to mankind.
- It blurs the reality that there are two types of "spirits" that communicate to mankind: Good angels sent from God, and demons.
- It promotes ancestor worship, and the worship of the dead. The best example of Christian worship of the dead is the worship and veneration of Mary and the saints (such as Saint Christopher) in some Christian denominations.
- It promotes controlling people through guilt and fear, because people would naturally tend to feel very guilty if a loved one came back and accused them of not caring for them in life, or not caring for their body, and then threatened to haunt them.
- It causes great confusion and concern about how people died and whether or not their "ghosts" are peaceful now. Thus, well meaning people try to discern how to make "dead people's ghosts" peaceful or satisfied, rather than simply realizing they are dealing with demons and casting them out by the power of Jesus Christ.
- It makes Jesus' living a sinless life for us much less important. If people go on living in a spirit body after they die, then why did he come? If Moses and Elijah could be in heaven before Jesus died for their sins, then any good person could be in heaven before Jesus came. So why did Jesus have to die?
- It makes the physical Resurrection a non-event. If people can live in the presence of God without a body, why would they want one?
- It makes the sin of murder less heinous, less horrific. If killing someone does not actually kill them, the sin of murder is much more tolerable.

Why would God say the dead are dead over and over in the Bible?

Because people believe what they see and not what they read. The fact that demons appear and impersonate dead people year after year causes people to believe what they see.

The so-called "Immortal Soul"

There is no such thing as an "immortal soul" in the Bible. The phrase simply does not appear in the Bible at all.

Apparitions, ghosts, hauntings, and demons impersonating people have had a powerful effect in getting people to believe that dead people are actually alive in another form. Satan's demons have been appearing to people in many types of forms since mankind was first on earth. Hauntings and people seeing ghosts have been well documented all over the world, and anthropologists studying the cultures of the world have documented people reporting all kinds of apparitions, including animals, people, and spiritual beings of all types. Sometimes they do not appear clearly, but are dark, or as a shadow (almost like you were not sure you saw it), or wispy, or the apparition is not there long. Sometimes they are very clear, and even carry on conversations with people.

- **Talking animals; spirit guides; demonic manifestations (people seeing demons).**

- **Reincarnation:** there are documented cases of people “knowing” things that there is no way they could know: describing earlier lives, speaking in a foreign language. This is not due to the continuous existence of the soul, but to a demon (which the KJV refers to as a “familiar spirit”) inside the person, who knows things that the person could not know on his own, and communicates it to the person (Mark 1:34; Luke 4:41).

- **Dead people appearing: necromancy and mediums are forbidden by God**

Deuteronomy 18:9-12

(9) "When you come into the land that the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominable practices of those nations.

(10) There shall not be found among you anyone who burns his son or his daughter as an offering, anyone who practices divination or tells fortunes or interprets omens, or a sorcerer

(11) or a charmer or a medium or a necromancer or one who inquires of the dead,

(12) for whoever does these things is an abomination to the LORD. And because of these abominations the LORD your God is driving them out before you.

The number and kinds of appearances have convinced the people of many cultures that the dead are not dead, but are alive.

The Greeks

One culture that believed the dead lived on after death was the Greeks; they believed the soul was immortal.

The Greek influence on the Jews

- The Greeks, under Alexander the Great, conquered Israel in 332 B.C.
- 250 B.C.: the Septuagint, the Greek Old Testament, was translated.
- The Hebrew word “*sheol*” is translated as “*Hades*,” in the Septuagint, leading many Jews to believe that the dead are alive. [For further study, see TruthOrTradition.com/sheol]

By the time of Christ, the Pharisees had come to believe that the soul lived on after the body died, but many other Jewish sects, such as the Sadducees, did not believe it did.

Early Christianity

Jews, and over time many Greeks, became Christian. Since many Jews, and almost all Greeks, believed in an immortal soul, that belief came to be held by many in the early Church.

The man we know as Saint Augustine was a Greek who firmly believed in the immortality of the soul, and before he became a Christian, he wrote a book in which he

listed 16 reasons for his belief that the soul was immortal. When he became a Christian he did not change his position on the subject, and greatly helped solidify the orthodox belief that the soul is immortal.

PART TWO

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE BODY, THE SOUL, AND THE SPIRIT WHEN A PERSON DIES?

When a person dies, he is dead, that is, totally without life. A Christian has body, soul, and holy spirit, so we need to look at what happens to each of these components if he dies.

The Body

The body cannot live without the animating life force of the soul, so when the soul is gone, the body is dead. We have all seen lifeless bodies—the body is there but the soul, the life force, is gone.

The Soul

English: “soul” has many meanings; some are:

- A person (“I was alone; there was not a soul with me.”)
- A moving and essential part (“The 12 cylinder engine is the true soul of that sports coupe.”)
- The quality that arouses emotion (“That song just has no soul to it.”)
- Animating principle (Without soul the body is dead.)

Hebrew and Greek: “soul” has many meanings; some are:

- Person

Exodus 1:5 (KJV)

And all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls:

- Living being (Gen. 9:10. Every living creature [soul])
- Personality
- The center of feelings and emotions
- Personal life
- Life

The soul is in the category of spirit. It is an invisible, incorporeal substance. The soul is a kind of spirit life; it is just not the same spirit as holy spirit. It is also not the same kind of life force that plants have.

Nephesh (soul) occurs more than 650 times in the Hebrew Bible, and in the *King James Version*, some of the ways it is translated are: “appetite, beast, body, breath, creature, dead, desire, ghost, heart, life, lust, man, mind, mortally, person, pleasure, self, soul, thing, will.”

The soul is not a ghost

Just as the body is not alive without the soul, so the soul cannot live on its own without a body. The soul is not a ghost that lives on after the body dies. Rather, it is the animating force that makes the body alive. God created the soul, the life force, for both animals and man, and it is passed down from one generation to the next. There was no “soul ghost” that God put into us when the sperm of our father and egg of our mother came together.

The Bible says that God created the same life force, called “soul,” for both animals and man, but it is hard to see that in most English Bibles because the translators use “soul” when the verse refers to humans, but use other English words such as “creature,” “thing,” “life,” etc., when the verse refers to animals.

Humans have a soul

Genesis 2:7

then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed [*naphach*] into his nostrils the breath [*neshama*] of life, and the man became a living creature [soul; *nephesh*].

Animals have a soul

The Hebrew text reveals that animals have a soul. Some clear examples are: Genesis 1:20 (first use of “soul”), 21, 24, 30, Genesis 9:10, and Leviticus 24:18.

Genesis 1:20, 21, 24 and 30

(20) And God said, "Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures [souls], and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens."

(21) So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature [soul] that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

(24) And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures [souls] according to their kinds--livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so.

(30) And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, **everything that has the breath [soul] of life**, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so.

Genesis 9:10

and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the livestock, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark; it is for every beast of the earth.

Leviticus 24:18

Whoever takes an animal's life [*nephesh*: soul] shall make it good, life [soul] for life [soul].

Humans are uniquely created in the image of God

The fact that humans and animals both have “soul,” both have the same life force, does not mean that humans are not unique. Humans are unique, because we are created in the image of God. It is not soul, our life force, that makes us unique.

Genesis 1:27

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

“Soul,” life, is in every part of us

Every living part of a human or animal has “soul,” that is, life. Every cell of our body has soul in it, which is what makes it alive. A dead cell is a cell without soul—the soul is gone. As with every cell, the egg from my mother and the sperm from my father that became “me” each had their own cell-body and soul, and that soul was passed down to “me” when the sperm fertilized the egg. If the egg were “dead,” the lifeless egg-body would be there, but it could not be fertilized; and if the sperm were dead, it could not fertilize the egg.

When a human cell dies, the life in that cell does not go to be with God, it is just gone. Similarly, the soul that makes the egg and sperm alive does not live on in the presence of God if the sperm or egg dies. Men have millions of living sperm, sperm with soul, that die and women have hundreds of thousands of living eggs, eggs with soul, which are never fertilized, and die. The soul in all those sperm and eggs does not “go” anywhere if the sperm or egg dies, and certainly not to be with God, rejoicing in His presence. As with the life in any cell, it just dies and is gone. On the other hand, if the sperm fertilizes an egg, then the life in them is passed on and becomes the life of the new baby.

The soul, the life, in animals and in mankind does not “go” anywhere when the animal or person dies, it just ceases to be. Interestingly, most Christians recognize that about animals, and realize that animals do not go to heaven or “hell” when they die. Their bodies decay, and their soul is gone. Although the Bible says that mankind is different from animals, we are not different when it comes to the life force that makes us alive. We are alike in that when men or animals die, the bodies decay and return to dust, and the soul dies too. That is one reason why there are verses that say that when a person dies, his “soul” is in “*sheol*,” the grave or the state of being dead.

Soul (soul life) is not permanent. It can, and does die. However, soul life can live on year after year if it has a viable body to empower. You and I have the same soul life as Adam. That soul life has lived on year after year, being passed from parents to children. Yet the soul life in any given person can and does die. It is true that when God put Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, they would have lived forever if they had not sinned. That only shows that soul can live year after year, it does not show it cannot die. Soul empowered the bodies of Adam and Eve, and would have continued to as long as their bodies were viable. But sin caused the bodies to break down and eventually to be unable to be powered by the soul. However the soul in the cells of Adam and Eve regularly died,

for example, the sperm Adam produced that was not united with one of Eve's eggs, or the living cells that would have been pulled out of Eve's scalp as she combed her hair.

What we need to learn from Scripture is that soul life dies and then it is just dead. It does not "go" anywhere.

Our holy spirit

Just as the soul gives the body physical life, the gift of holy spirit from God gives us spiritual life. The word "spirit" can have different meanings, just as we saw the word "soul" has different meanings.

In both Hebrew (*ruach*) and Greek (*pneuma*), the words for "spirit" refer to an invisible force.

- An immaterial substance (God is spirit – John 4:24)
- God
- Jesus Christ (the Lord is the Spirit – 2 Cor. 3:17)
- Angels and demons
- The invisible nature of God called holy spirit
- The soul, because it is an invisible substance, is generically spirit and a few times is referred to as "spirit."
- Our mental attitude or emotions (restore people in a spirit of meekness - Gal. 6:1).

For this study, we are interested in the invisible nature of God that is born inside a Christian when he is saved.

The holy spirit inside a Christian is not like a ghost with thinking capacity on its own. The holy spirit gives spirit life to the "person" (who is a body animated by soul). Our holy spirit was not alive with God before we became Christian, thinking and rejoicing in His presence, and then somehow came into us, like a ghost possessing our body, when we got saved. Rather, the holy spirit we now have was a part of God's great reservoir of spiritual life, of which He gave us a part when we got born again.

1 John 4:13

By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us **of his Spirit**.

Acts 2:18 (KJV)

And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days **of my Spirit**; and they shall prophesy:

The holy spirit is the spiritual life from God that infuses every cell of our body and, as our new spiritual nature, is part of who we are.

When a person dies, his holy spirit "returns" to God.

Ecclesiastes 12:7

and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.

The phrase, “the spirit returns to God,” has two possible meanings. Since God is everywhere, it can mean that He remembers us; our spirit “returns” to God in the sense that it is kept in His memory and He will reenergize us when we are raised from the dead. Another possibility is that God simply reclaims the spiritual life force He put in us. If that is the case, the spiritual life force, our spirit, which came from God’s great reservoir of spirit, simply returns to that great reservoir when we die.

No matter which of those interpretations is true, the fact is that the holy spirit God gave us when we were born again did not have a mind or memory before it was given to us, and it does not have one after we die. It is spiritual life, spiritual power, that we have from God. My “spirit” is not rejoicing with God after “I” die. A person is alive only as an integrated whole before he dies, and only as an integrated whole will he live again, when God raises him from the dead.

[For further study, read “A New Holy Spirit: The Power to be Like Christ” at TruthOrTradition.com/power and visit TruthOrTradition.com/holyspirit]

PART THREE

THE DEAD ARE IN THE GRAVE, NOT IN HEAVEN OR “HELL”

The Bible focuses our attention on the fact that the dead are dead, “sleeping” in the ground and turned back to dust. They are not alive in heaven, hell, or Paradise. (We add “Paradise” here because many theologians recognize that no person could “go to heaven” before Jesus did, for if so, his death was not really necessary. Thus, what is commonly taught is that before Jesus made heaven available, the righteous people went to “Paradise,” and then all the “immortal souls” in Paradise went to heaven after Jesus rose from the dead.)

What will we see in this segment of the seminar?

- The dead are in the grave
- There is no mention of anyone being in heaven or hell
- God never comforts anyone by telling them they will be in heaven
- God never divides people into body, soul, and spirit when it comes to death. He refers to people as “people” and never says different parts go to different places.
- No one in the Bible is excited about dying; no one mentions being in the presence of God; no one mentions getting to go be with their departed relatives or friends.

What would we expect if the orthodox position were correct?

- God would comfort people by telling them they would be in heaven with Him, or at least in a good place—certainly better than earth.
- People would not want to die, but nevertheless they would look forward to being joined with their relatives.
- People would look forward to being in a better place than this earth.

Death is described as “sleep”

Deuteronomy 31:16

And the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, you are about to lie down with your fathers...

Deuteronomy 31:16 (KJV)

And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers;

Deuteronomy 3:25 and 26

(25) Please let me go over and see the good land beyond the Jordan, that good hill country and Lebanon.'

(26) But the LORD was angry with me because of you and would not listen to me. And the LORD said to me, 'Enough from you; do not speak to me of this matter again.

If Moses was going to go be with God, then it seems that our loving God would have told Moses, “Moses, you will not be able to enter the land, but you are going to be with Me, which is far better.”

Moses was very upset that he was not going to get to go into the Promised Land. So much so that God had to tell Moses to stop asking Him to go in.

God told Moses he would “sleep” with his ancestors, not that he was going to heaven to be with God or his ancestors. God made it clear that Moses was going to sleep, a state that, for Moses, will end with the Resurrection of the Just. There are three times when people rise from the dead: the Rapture, for Christians (1 Thess. 4:16-18); the First Resurrection, or the Resurrection of the Just, for the righteous who died before Pentecost or after the Rapture (Rev. 20:5); the Second Resurrection, or the Resurrection of the Unjust, for all others (John 5:29; Rev. 20:11-15).

We use the ESV here because it uses “sleep.” In different verses the Hebrew text uses different words to convey the state of sleep. In this case and context, the Hebrew means “to lie down in sleep,” so many versions say “lie down” instead of “sleep.”

Psalm 13:3

Consider and answer me, O LORD my God; light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death,

“Sleep” is an excellent metaphor for death, because a sleeping person is not participating in life’s activities, but will wake up as the same person who went to sleep. “Sleep” is often used of death (Job 7:21; Ps. 13:3; 90:5; Dan. 12:2; John 11:11; 1 Cor. 11:30 KJV; 1 Cor.15:51; 1 Thess. 4:14; 5:10). The fuller metaphor of sleeping with one’s ancestors occurs in reference to King David in 2 Samuel 7:12, 1 Kings 1:21, and Acts 13:36.

The Testimony of Job

Job 7:21

...For now I shall lie in the earth; you will seek me, but I shall not be.”

Job 14:12-14

(12) So a man lies down and rises not again; till the heavens are no more he will not awake or be roused out of his sleep.

(13) Oh that you would hide me in Sheol, that you would conceal me until your wrath be past, that you would appoint me a set time, and remember me!

(14) If a man dies, shall he live again? All the days of my service I would wait, till my renewal should come.

When a person dies, he “lies down” in death and does not rise out of that sleep until his “renewal” at the resurrection. Job’s saying he would be hidden in *sheol* (the state of

death) would make no sense if he believed that at his death he would be with God in heaven or in a good place.

Psalm 6:5

For in death there is no remembrance of you; in Sheol who will give you praise?

People who die are not in the presence of God. They are dead in every way, and in the sleep of death do not remember or praise God.

Psalm 16:10

For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.

This verse is very clear. A person is in *sheol*, the grave, the state of death, when he dies. We need God to raise us from the dead, so we, like the psalmist, must be confident that God will not let us remain dead, in *sheol*, the grave.

Psalm 30:9

What profit is there in my death, if I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise you? Will it tell of your faithfulness?

When we die, we return to dust, and that dust does not praise God. The psalmist is asking God to keep him alive, and reminding God that if he dies, He will get no praise from “dust.”

Psalm 49:12, 14 and 15

(12) Man in his pomp will not remain; he is like the beasts that perish.

(14) Like sheep they are appointed for Sheol; death shall be their shepherd, and the upright shall rule over them in the morning [i.e., at their resurrection]. Their form shall be consumed in Sheol, with no place to dwell.

(15) But God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol, for he will receive me. Selah.

The “soul” in man is like the soul life in animals. This verse is very accurate when it says that man is like the animals that perish. Both man and animals have the same animating force, which the Bible calls “soul” and in both man and animals the soul dies and is gone at death. Believers remain in *sheol*, the grave, until God ransoms us from death at the Rapture or one of the resurrections. At that time God re-empowers our bodies, but not with the soul life we have now.

Psalm 89:48

What man can live and never see death? Who can deliver his soul from the power of Sheol? Selah.

This verse affirms what other verses have taught; that at death our soul goes to the grave, it is dead and gone.

Psalm 115:17

The dead do not praise the LORD, nor do any who go down into silence.

The dead are not in the presence of God praising Him. They are in “silence” until the Rapture or resurrection.

Ecclesiastes 9:4-6 and 10

(4) But he who is joined with all the living has hope, for a living dog is better than a dead lion.

(5) For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten.

(6) Their love and their hate and their envy have already perished, and forever they have no more share in all that is done under the sun.

(10) Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might, for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going.

These verses are very clear. The dead are not celebrating in the presence of God. They are in *sheol*, the grave, and there they have no knowledge, no love, no hate, no work, no thoughts, and no wisdom.

Isaiah 26:19

Your dead shall live; their bodies shall rise. You who dwell in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For your dew is a dew of light, and the earth will give birth to the dead.

Dead people are dwelling in the dust, not in heaven. But there is a time coming when the graves will open and the earth will give birth to the dead.

Isaiah 38:18

For Sheol does not thank you; death does not praise you; those who go down to the pit do not hope for your faithfulness.

We have already seen that those in the grave have no knowledge or wisdom. There is no consciousness of any kind in death, so of course there is no “hope” either.

Isaiah 38:9-11

(9) A writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, after he had been sick and had recovered from his sickness:

(10) I said, In the middle of my days I must depart; I am consigned to the **gates of Sheol** for the rest of my years.

(11) I said, I shall not see the LORD, the LORD in the land of the living; I shall look on man no more among the inhabitants of the world.

Isaiah uses the phrase “gates of Sheol,” as if *sheol*, the state of being dead, were like a prison and a dead person was shut in by gates he could not open. Job uses the same basic image, but says “bars of Sheol” instead of “gates of Sheol.” It was common for strongly fortified gate areas to have both gates and bars to hold the gates even more firmly closed.

Job 17:13-16

(13) If I hope for Sheol as my house, if I make my bed in darkness,
(14) if I say to the pit, ‘You are my father,’ and to the worm, ‘My mother,’
or ‘My sister,’
(15) where then is my hope? Who will see my hope?
(16) Will it go down to the **bars of Sheol**? Shall we descend together into
the dust?”

The “pit” here is a reference to the grave.

The “bars of Sheol” are also referred to as the “gates of Sheol” in the Bible.

Jesus Christ also used the idea of the grave being barred and gated like a prison from which no one could escape, but said that the gates of *Hades*, the grave, could not prevail against his church.

Matthew 16:18

And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and
the **gates of hell** [*Hades*] shall not prevail against it.

The Septuagint always translates the Hebrew word *sheol* as “*Hades*,” and “*Hades*” is not “hell” in the Christian sense of a place of torment and just another word for “hell.” Rather, the Greek word *Hades*, as a translation of *sheol*, has to mean the same thing as *sheol*, and therefore means the state of being dead, the grave. Interestingly, the ESV always translates the Greek word “*Hades*” as “*Hades*” except this one verse, Matthew 16:18. The message of Christ, when interpreted in light of the Old Testament use of the phrase “gates of Sheol,” is very clear. When a person dies it is like going to a prison from which there is no escape. *Sheol*, the grave, is gated and barred. But those gates will not prevail against Jesus, who will stage a huge “jail break” and get his church, his people, out of the prison of the grave when he comes again and raises the dead.

Daniel 12:1 and 2

(1) “At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of
your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been
since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be
delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book.
(2) And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake,
some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

The angel told Daniel that the people who were sleeping in the dust of the earth will awake in the resurrection, of which Scripture tells us there will be two: the Resurrection

of the Just and the Resurrection of the Unjust (John 5:29; Acts 24:15; Rev. 20:5, 6, 11-15).

Daniel 12:13

But go your way till the end. And you shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days.

As great a man as Daniel was, he did not go to heaven when he died, but will receive his inheritance after he sleeps in death and then rises from the dead “at the end of days.” The NIV makes this clearer: “As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance.”

Hosea 13:14 (NIV)

“I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. Where, O death, are your plagues? Where, O grave, is your destruction?”

God does not ransom “bodies” from the grave; He ransoms the whole person, and the dead get up in a new body. This verse makes it clear that people are in the grave and need to be “ransomed” by God to live again. There would be no need to pay a ransom just to get a body from the grave if the soul was already alive. It is only when we get up from the dead, alive again and with a new body, that we have victory over death.

[For further study, read “The New Body: Looking Good and Feeling Fine” at TruthOrTradition.com/newbody]

John 3:13

No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.

This verse could not be clearer. Even though some 4000 years had gone by since Adam, no one had yet ascended into heaven. John 3:13 is a very important verse in letting us know the dead are dead. It appears in red letters in most versions, but should not be. It was not spoken by Jesus, but narrated by John. Jesus started speaking in verse 10 and ended in verse 12. The fact that Jesus stopped speaking in verse 12 is clearer in the KJV than in the ESV. The KJV says, “And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, *even* the Son of man which is in heaven.” By the time John narrated the gospel of John, Jesus was in heaven, as the last phrase in the KJV says. It seems likely that as the tradition developed that it was Jesus who had spoken these words, the last phrase was dropped from many of the Greek manuscripts by copyists, because it made no sense to them that Jesus could be on earth speaking with Nicodemus and in heaven at the same time. That is why most modern versions translate the verse in its shorter version, because that seems to make the most sense to them also.

If the KJV is correct, which we believe it is based on the evidence of Scripture, and the general principles of textual criticism, then this verse is saying that even after Jesus was in heaven no one else was in heaven. This is very strong testimony that the dead are dead and not in heaven. However, even if the ESV, NIV, NASB, etc., are correct in

leaving off the last phrase, the verse still says no one had ascended to heaven except the Son of Man, making the same basic point: Jesus had ascended, but no one else had. E.W. Bullinger has some good notes about this section in *The Companion Bible*.

Acts 2:29-32 and 34

(29) "Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.

(30) Being therefore a prophet,...

(31) he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption.

(32) This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses.

(34) For David did not ascend into the heavens....

If David was in heaven, Peter would have said so. Instead, Peter said just the opposite. Peter said that David "did not ascend into the heavens." His point was not that Jesus was in heaven with a body and David was in heaven without one. His point was that David was dead and in the tomb, and Jesus was not.

PART FOUR

THE DEAD WILL GET UP AT THE RAPTURE, OR ONE OF THE RESURRECTIONS

When a person dies, he goes to *sheol* (the grave; the state of death), and returns to dust. Therefore, the Bible rightly directs our attention to the Rapture or resurrection, which is when people will be raised to life.

The Christian Church is Raptured into heaven immediately before the Great Tribulation that is set forth in some detail in the book of Revelation. The Rapture can be found in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. [For further study, see TruthOrTradition.com/rapture]

Revelation 19:11-14

(11) Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.

(12) His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself.

(13) He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God.

(14) And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses.

After the Tribulation there is the Resurrection of the Just (Rev. 20:4-6) and then, after the 1,000 year Millennial Kingdom, the Resurrection of the Unjust (Rev. 20:11-13).

We will now examine verses that speak of the resurrection from the dead. It is important to note that in the Bible, this is the time when the dead are made alive. It is never described as a time when the immortal soul that “has been living in heaven or hell” is somehow united with a body again.

Job 19:25-27

(25) For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth.

(26) And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God,

(27) whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. My heart faints within me!

Even after Job’s flesh was destroyed (returned to dust), he would be given a new body and would stand on earth. The new body is spiritual, which means it is empowered by spirit. It is still a flesh and blood body, as we see from the example of Jesus and from other parts of Scripture.

Philippians 3:20 and 21

(20) But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

(21) who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

Luke 24:39 (NIV)

Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.

1 Corinthians 15:35-46

(35) But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?"

(36) You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies.

(37) And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain.

(38) But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.

(39) For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish.

(40) There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another.

(41) There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory.

(42) So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable.

(43) It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power.

(44) It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

(45) Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

(46) But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual.

Job was excited about seeing God in his new body, which would happen at the resurrection. He never spoke of being with God when he died.

Isaiah 26:19

Your dead shall live; their bodies shall rise. You who dwell in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For your dew is a dew of light, and the earth will give birth to the dead.

Ezekiel 37:1-14

(1) The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones.

(2) And he led me around among them, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley, and behold, they were very dry.

(3) And he said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" And I answered, "O Lord GOD, you know."

(4) Then he said to me, "Prophesy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD.

(5) Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live.

(6) And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the LORD."

(7) So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied, there was a sound, and behold, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone.

(8) And I looked, and behold, there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them. But there was no breath in them.

(9) Then he said to me, "Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live."

(10) So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army.

(11) Then he said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are indeed cut off.'

(12) Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel.

(13) And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people.

(14) And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the LORD."

These verses are loaded with truth, and chief among that truth is that the people would know the LORD was God when He opened their graves and raised them up. If people's "immortal souls" went to heaven when they died, that would be the time they knew the LORD was God, not much later when their bodies were raised.

Verses that imply the resurrection: Psalm 37:9, 11, 22, 27-29.

Daniel 12:2

And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

Matthew 22:23-32

(23) The same day Sadducees came to him, who say that there is no resurrection, and they asked him a question,

(24) saying, "Teacher, Moses said, 'If a man dies having no children, his brother must marry the widow and raise up children for his brother.'

(25) Now there were seven brothers among us. The first married and died, and having no children left his wife to his brother.

(26) So too the second and third, down to the seventh.

(27) After them all, the woman died.

(28) In the resurrection, therefore, of the seven, whose wife will she be? For they all had her."

(29) But Jesus answered them, "You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God.

(30) For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.

(31) And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God:

(32) 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not God of the dead, but of the living."

This record is also covered in Mark 12:18-27 and Luke 20:27-38. The Sadducees did not believe in any form of life after death. They rightly understood Jesus' message that the dead would get up "in the resurrection," so they asked whose wife the woman would be at that time. If Jesus believed that after a person died his soul lived on, this was the perfect place to say that one's soul or spirit did not marry in heaven. Instead, because he knew that dead people are dead until the resurrection, he said "in the resurrection" people will not marry.

Luke 14:12-14

(12) He said also to the man who had invited him, "When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid.

(13) But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind,

(14) and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.

If people went straight to heaven or "hell" when they died, they would be repaid for their actions immediately after death. Jesus did not teach that. What Jesus taught was that people are repaid after they rise from the dead and are judged at one of the judgments.

John 11:21-26

(21) Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.

(22) But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you."

(23) Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

(24) Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day."

(25) Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live,

(26) and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

Even if Martha believed her brother was alive in a good place but still wanted him to be with her, she would have said she wanted him back from heaven. Instead, she clearly indicated she believed her brother was dead, and would only live again "in the resurrection."

John 14:1-3

(1) "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.

(2) In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?

(3) And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

Jesus told his disciples they would be with him when he came again, not when they died.

Acts 4:1 and 2

(1) And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them,

(2) greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

The Apostles were not teaching that people went to be with Jesus when they died. If they had been, that is what the religious leaders would have been upset about. Instead, they were teaching the resurrection from the dead. Other verses confirm that the Apostles taught the resurrection (Acts 17:18, 32; 24:15).

1 Corinthians 15:42, 51, 52, 54 and 55

(42) So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable.

(51) ... We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

(52) in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.

(54) **When** the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, **then** shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.”

(55) "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"

It is very important to note that these verses teach that every believer is “raised imperishable” at the same time: “the last trumpet.” We do not have an imperishable, immortal soul that lives with Jesus after we die. We become “imperishable” only when we are raised from the dead. Furthermore, it is only “when” we become imperishable that “then” death is swallowed up in victory. If our immortal soul went to be with Jesus when we died, then that would be the time, not much later when our bodies were raised, that death would be swallowed up in victory.

Because the dead are given life only at the resurrection, the question people were asking that is recorded in 1 Corinthians 15:35 makes sense: “But someone will ask, ‘How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?’” That question, while interesting, is not really important if people have been living in heaven with Jesus without a body year after year. If that were the case, the more important question would be, “What is it like to live in heaven as a disembodied soul?” It is also important to note that the question was, “How are **the dead** raised?” It was not “How are **dead bodies** raised?”

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

(13) But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.

(14) For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

(15) For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.

(16) For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

(17) Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

(18) Therefore encourage one another with these words.

If Paul wanted Christians not to grieve, and knew that when people died their soul or spirit went to be with God, he would have said so here in order to help comfort people. Instead he tells us that all the dead in Christ will rise at the Rapture when the Lord comes, and comforts us by letting us know that even when a person dies, he will rise again.

Titus 2:13

waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

Our hope is the coming of the Lord, because that is when the dead are raised and can be with Jesus.

Revelation 20:4-6

(4) Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus.... They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

(5) The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection.

(6) Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

These verses separate the people who come to life in the first resurrection from those who do not. The souls of the righteous, meaning righteous people, come to life after the Battle of Armageddon (Rev. 19:11-21) and reign with Christ.

Revelation 20:11-13

(11) Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them.

(12) And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.

(13) And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades [the grave] gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done.

These verses depict the Resurrection of the Unjust (Acts 24:15), also called the Resurrection of Judgment (John 5:29), and the Judgment that follows immediately afterward. At this future time, all the unjust people will get up and be judged. The souls of the wicked are not judged and thrown into *gehenna* when the person dies.

The Greek phrase, “*ek nekrōn*” (out from among dead people)

The Greek phrase, “*ek nekrōn*” (ἐκ νεκρῶν) occurs 44 times in the New Testament, and it is always plural. The singular form would be “*ek nekros*” (ἐκ νεκρός), but it does not appear in the Greek New Testament.

Matthew 17:9

And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them,
"Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead."

This is the first usage of *ek nekrōn* in the New Testament, and almost every version of the Bible translates it as “from the dead.” When the average English speaker reads that Christ was “raised from the dead,” he thinks that “dead” refers to the state of death, as if

the verse were saying that “Christ was raised from the state of death,” or that “Christ was raised from being dead.” This is not at all the meaning.

It is not accurate to translate “*ek nekrōn*” as “from the dead.”

First, there is no word “the” in the Greek text, so “from the dead” would be reduced to, “from dead.”

Second, the word “*ek*” in Greek is “out from,” or “out from among.” In a bushel of apples, one apple would be taken “*ek*,” out from among, the other apples.

Third, the word “dead” in the English phrase “from the dead,” is a noun, and the phrase means that Jesus was raised from death, the state of being dead. However, in the Greek text the word *nekrōn*, “dead,” is an adjective. An adjective modifies a noun. In the phrase, “She owns a red car,” “red” is the adjective describing the noun “car.”

In both English and Greek we use adjectives without nouns if the noun is understood. You grammarians know this as a “substantive,” which is an adjective expressing substance. For example, in the Clint Eastwood movie, *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*, we know by the context that we are referring to good, bad, and ugly people. It is common in both Greek and English to use an adjective as a noun if the subject is understood, although sometimes Bible translators add the noun for clarity.

Psalm 71:22

I will also praise you with the harp for your faithfulness, O my God; I will sing praises to you with the lyre, O Holy **One** of Israel. [No “One” in Hebrew]

Matthew 13:19

When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil **one** comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path. [No “one” in Greek]

Colossians 3:12

Put on then, as God's chosen **ones**, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, [No “ones” in Greek]

Fourth, the word “dead” in Greek is plural, not singular. The Greek text reads, “*ek nekrōn*” (ἐκ νεκρῶν), not “*ek nekros*,” thus it means that Jesus was raised out from among many dead people. A good translation would be: “out from among dead *ones*” [or “dead *people*”].

At the Rapture, Christians will be raised out from among the rest of the dead, who are still in the ground, not having been raised yet. Then at the first resurrection the righteous will be raised out from among the other dead people, the unrighteous being left in the ground until the Resurrection of the Just (Luke 14:14 KJV; Rev. 20:6). There are 44

usages of *ek nekrōn* in the New Testament, and they all refer to being raised “out from among” those who are still left dead in the ground. Not one of the 44 occurrences refers to the resurrection of the unjust. That makes sense because at the resurrection of the unjust, which occurs at the end of Christ’s 1,000-year reign, no one is left in the ground.

PART FIVE

THE JUDGMENT FOLLOWS THE RESURRECTION

If people died and went straight to heaven or “hell,” it would mean that their judgment had already occurred, for no one could be allowed in heaven or sent to “hell,” (more properly, burned up in *gehenna*) before they were judged. However, Scripture is clear that the Day of Judgment is still in the future. This is clear evidence that dead people are not alive, but are dead and waiting to be given life when they are raised out from among the dead.

In the Old Testament there are quite a few verses about the coming Judgment. It is important to note that *none* of them say that a person is judged right after he dies. Traditional Christianity teaches that when a person dies, he is judged immediately and then allowed into heaven, where he is blessed, or sent to “hell,” where he is tormented.

Before we get into the specific verses about the Judgments, let’s review the **four great Judgments** in the Bible.

Three are associated with people being raised from the dead, and one immediately follows the Battle of Armageddon.

1. Judgment of the Christian believers, which comes sometime after the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:16 and 17). All Christians are saved, so this is not a judgment to determine if someone will live forever. It is a judgment to see to what extent each Christian will be rewarded (2 Cor. 5:10).
2. Sheep and Goat Judgment (Matt. 25:31-46). Some enter Christ’s kingdom, some are thrown into the fire and receive everlasting **punishment** [*kolasis*; a noun].
3. The Resurrection of the Just (Rev. 20:4-6). Everyone is saved. No Judgment mentioned with it, but there is in other verses of Scripture.
4. Great White Throne Judgment after the Resurrection of the Unjust (Rev. 20:11-21:4). Tears wiped away.

There are a few clear verses, such as in Daniel 12 and Ezekiel 37, which we have already read, that point to the resurrection and thus the Judgment being in the future. Most verses in the Old Testament that mention the coming Judgment do not specify much about it except that it is future:

Psalm 1:5

Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;

Ecclesiastes 12:14

For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.

In these verses above we see that the Judgment is future, but when a person will be judged cannot be accurately determined.

The New Testament teaches more clearly about the future Judgment.

Matthew 3:7-12

(7) But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

(8) Bear fruit in keeping with repentance.

(9) And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham.

(10) Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

(11) "I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

(12) His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

The one thing that is clear in these verses is that the wrath is future and it is Jesus who will clear his threshing floor. It seems clear that there was no wrath going on at the time John was teaching.

Matthew 10:15

Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of **Sodom and Gomorrah** than for that town.

Jesus said that the Day of Judgment for Sodom and Gomorrah is still future, but those people died about 4,000 years ago. It is obvious that after they died they were not judged, but still await the Resurrection and Judgment along with everyone else who has died.

Matthew 12:41 and 42

(41) The **men of Nineveh** will rise up at the judgment with **this generation** and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.

(42) The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.

In these verses Jesus makes the general point that people will get up in the future at the Judgment. He was not being specific about the two resurrections (he was clear about them in other places), nor was he trying to justify or condemn any one person, but was

showing that in the resurrection, when everyone gets up, they will together condemn those who rejected Jesus. All the people Jesus mentioned, “the queen of the south” (who is the Queen of Sheba and lived in the 900’s B.C.), the men of Nineveh (800-750 B.C.), and the people Jesus preached to (about 30 A.D.), **will**, in the future, “rise up” from the dead **with** each other at the Judgment. All the dead will be raised and judged at the same time, in the judgment appropriate to them.

Matthew 13:47-50

(47) “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind.

(48) When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad.

(49) So it will be at the close of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous

(50) and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Jesus taught in his parable that the Judgment is future, “at the close of the age.” It is then and only then that evil people will be separated from righteous people. Jesus taught a similar lesson in the parable of the weeds of the field (Matt. 13:36-42).

Matthew 16:27

For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done.

People are repaid for what they have done in life when Jesus comes and they are raised from the dead, not when they die.

John 5:22

The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son,

Every person who has ever lived will be judged by the Son, which will occur in the future. Before Jesus died and rose again, these words could not be fulfilled.

John 5:28 and 29

(28) Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice

(29) and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

Right now, dead people are “in the tombs.” In the future, they will be a part of the Rapture of the Church or one of the two resurrections. Jesus spoke of the “resurrection of life” because in that resurrection people are raised to everlasting life, while in the “resurrection of judgment” the vast majority will be condemned to *gehenna* and burned up.

John 12:48

The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on **the last day**.

Acts 17:31

because he has **fixed a day** on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."

1 Thessalonians 2:19

For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you?

Note that the people we have won for the Lord are our crown when Jesus comes. If the dead went immediately to heaven to be with Jesus, that is when they would be our crown, not years later when their body got up from the dead.

2 Timothy 4:1

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who **is to judge the living and the dead**, and by his appearing and his kingdom:

The Greek text of this verse is very clear that the Judgment is coming in the future. Some English versions say "will judge," some say, "is going to judge," and some say "is about to judge." This verse shows that people who have died have not been judged yet, so it goes without saying that they cannot be in heaven or condemned to *gehenna* yet.

1 Peter 1:7

so that the tested genuineness of your faith--more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire--may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

If we went to heaven when we died, that is when our faith would result in praise and glory. However, when we die we are dead until we are raised, so it is when Christ is revealed and raises us that our faith results in praise and glory.

1 Peter 1:13

Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

We get "grace" when Jesus Christ is revealed from heaven, and that grace is the gift of being raised from the dead and given everlasting life in a new body. Now that is real grace; undeserved divine favor. If our soul or spirit went to heaven to be with Jesus when we died, then that would be when we received grace.

2 Peter 3:7

But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

The ungodly are not thrown into hell and destroyed when they die, but later, at the Judgment.

1 John 3:2

Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that **when he appears** we shall be like him, **because we shall see him as he is.**

We will not see Jesus until "he appears." We do not see him when we die, we die and are dead.

Jude 6

And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day—

Some of the angels (fallen angels, which we sometimes refer to as demons) sinned so grievously that God is not allowing them to be free, but instead is keeping them in chains until the Day of Judgment. Thus, even angels are not judged immediately, but await Judgment Day. [For further study, read "The Sons of God of Genesis Six" at TruthOrTradition.com/sons] Another verse saying some angels are awaiting the Judgment is 2 Peter 2:4. When the demons spoke to Jesus, they asked if he was going to torment them "before the time," meaning before the Day of Judgment (Matt. 8:29).

We have now seen a large amount of Scriptural evidence that those who have died are not alive, but are dead and awaiting the resurrection. On the other hand, the Devil has a vested interest in getting people to believe that the dead are alive.

The stark reality is that dead people are dead, and that death is a terrible, horrific enemy, stealing our most valuable possession—our very life. The great comfort to Christians is that death is not the end of our existence, because God will raise us from the dead in new, imperishable bodies, and we will be with Him and the Lord forever.

These Judgments are very real. They will happen. If you are not saved: please, consider the evidence. Jesus Christ is Lord (Rom. 10:9). If you are a Christian, but are not doing your best for Jesus, make the changes you need to make to set yourself up for success in this life and the next. Confess any sins you have, 1 John 1:9 guarantees you will be forgiven, and begin serving God from a pure and fervent heart.

PART SIX

AN EXAMINATION OF SCRIPTURES COMMONLY USED TO SHOW THE DEAD ARE ALIVE

We will now examine verses that people use to support their belief that people's souls live on after they die.

Unclear verses in light of clear verses

There is no verse of Scripture that plainly says a person goes to heaven or a place of torment when they die. In contrast, there are many clear Scriptures we have read that say a person goes to the grave and awaits the Resurrection.

People do not come to believe that the soul or spirit lives on after the body dies by reading it in the Bible: they already believe the soul or spirit lives on after the body dies. The best example of that is the Pharisees. They believed the soul of a person went to a good place or a place of torment after the person died, and there is no way they could have gotten that belief from the Old Testament. Similarly, Augustine wrote about the eternity of the soul before he became a Christian and carried that belief into his Christian life in spite of the clear teaching of the Bible. Today, millions of Christians and non-Christians believe that the soul lives on after a person dies, but often because they are fooled by demonic lying signs—and we will study that in this sixth session.

1. Enoch

There are several sections of Scripture we must read in order to get the scope of what happened to Enoch.

Genesis 5:18-24

(18) When Jared had lived 162 years he fathered Enoch.

(19) Jared lived after he fathered Enoch 800 years and had other sons and daughters.

(20) Thus all the days of Jared were 962 years, and he died.

(21) When Enoch had lived 65 years, he fathered Methuselah.

(22) Enoch walked with God after he fathered Methuselah 300 years and had other sons and daughters.

(23) Thus all the days of Enoch were 365 years.

(24) Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.

We need to be clear about the fact that although the Bible says “God took him,” it does not say “God took him to heaven.” That is a theological conclusion, not what the Word says.

Hebrews 11:5

By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God.

Although Hebrews, like Genesis, says that God took Enoch, it also clearly states that Enoch died.

Hebrews 11:13

These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.

Hebrews 11:13 makes it clear that Enoch died. Furthermore, John 3:13 makes it clear that Enoch was not taken to heaven:

John 3:13

No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.

God moved Enoch to save his life on earth. (He also moved Philip in Acts 8:39). Enoch had angered the people of his time by foretelling their doom, and God moved Enoch to save his life.

Jude 14 and 15

(14) It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones,

(15) to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him.”

[It will come up later that the record of Enoch actually has no valid bearing on whether or not a person’s soul lives on after the person dies because orthodox Christian teaching is that Enoch did not die, but was assumed bodily into heaven. If that is the case, then the fact that God took Enoch to heaven bodily does not tell us anything about the soul living on after the body dies.]

2. Samuel (1 Sam. 28:3-20)

Many Christians believe that the medium at Endor literally brought the living soul of Samuel into her presence. This cannot be the case for a number of reasons.

First: The scope of Scripture shows us Samuel was dead, not alive and in a position to revisit earth.

Second: It would contradict all the clear Scriptures that teach that the dead do not know anything, nor have a part in what is done on earth.

Third: God forbids necromancy (Deut. 18:9-12). Are we to believe that He would then not only allow it, but allow Samuel, who was a righteous man, to participate in it?

Fourth: God had already refused to contact Saul by three ways that were legitimate and godly: dreams, prophets, and the Urim which was kept by the High Priest (1 Sam. 28:6). Are we really to believe that after refusing to communicate with Saul in allowable ways, God would communicate with Saul by letting a dead prophet return to Saul through a medium and give Saul a message? If that were so, God would be doing exactly what He commanded not to be done in Deuteronomy 18:9-15. Also, if that were the case, it would indicate that Samuel, who was a godly and obedient prophet all his life, had decided to visit Saul through a medium, something that was an abomination to God.

Fifth: The message of the apparition of Samuel was typical of demons, not of God. It filled Saul with fear (1 Sam. 28:20), and did not contain any comfort or guidance as to how to save anyone's life. It just led to more death and destruction.

Demon spirits are familiar with the people in this life and can impersonate them. The KJV calls these demons, "familiar spirits."

1 Samuel 28:7 (KJV)

Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor.

3. Elijah taken into heaven (2 Kings 2:9-18)

2 Kings 2:11 says Elijah went into heaven via a whirlwind, however, it never says that Elijah went into the presence of God. That is an assumption.

When the Bible says Elijah was taken into heaven, it is using "heaven" in the common sense of the air above the earth.

Heaven is where the birds are:

2 Samuel 21:10

Then Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth and spread it for herself on the rock, from the beginning of harvest until rain fell upon them from the heavens. And she did not allow the **birds of the air** [heaven] to come upon them by day, or the beasts of the field by night.

Rain comes from heaven.

Deuteronomy 11:11

But the land that you are going over to possess is a land of hills and valleys, which drinks water by the **rain from heaven**,

Snow comes from heaven.

Isaiah 55:10

"For as the **rain and the snow come down from heaven** and do not return there but water the earth,

The prophets who were Elijah's disciples did not think he went up to be with God, but correctly knew that God simply moved him, so they went to look for him (2 Kings 2:15ff).

John 3:13 is clear that no man ascended into heaven except Jesus, and so Elijah could not be in heaven.

If Elijah, who was a sinner, could go into heaven before Jesus paid for his sin, then anyone could go to heaven without having their sins paid for, and Christ's death was unnecessary.

Like the Enoch record, the Elijah record has no bearing on the soul living on after death, because Elijah is believed never to have died in the first place, but was assumed bodily into heaven.

4. Kill the body but not the soul (Matt. 10:28)

Matthew 10:28

And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell [*gehenna*].

This verse has been used to show that the soul cannot be killed. However, in this seminar we have seen many verses that show the soul can die, and be in the grave. The key to understanding the verse is to realize that "soul" has many meanings, including, the invisible, immaterial life force in the body, a person as an individual, personality, attitude and emotions, etc. In this verse soul refers to the person and his personality.

If anyone asserts from Matthew 10:28 that the soul cannot die, then he must realize that it would be contradicted by **Ezekiel 18:20**, "The soul who sins shall die." [The Hebrew text literally reads: "The soul, the sinning one, will die."]

In Matthew 10:28 the "soul" is not the life force, but the person himself; his personality. The life force is killed when the body dies, but the "person" remains in the grave in the mind of God and will be raised to life one day, complete with a new and spiritually energized body.

Acts 4:32

Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and **soul** [attitude, emotions, personality], and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common.

1 Peter 2:11

Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your **soul**.

If we read Matthew 10:28 carefully, it actually shows us that the body and soul can indeed perish in *gehenna* at the hand of God.

5. Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-9)

Matthew 17:1-9 is the record of the transfiguration. God was preparing Jesus for his death (Luke 9:31), and gave him a vision of Moses and Elijah, because those two people would be able to encourage Jesus in a powerful way. Matthew says the experience was a “vision.” Jesus said, “Tell no one the **vision**, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead” (Matt. 17:9). Peter had a vision of a great sheet coming down from heaven filled with unclean animals (Acts 10:9-16). The vision looked very real, but it was still just a vision. The same was true of the transfiguration. It was a vision to encourage Jesus.

Furthermore, Jesus had not yet died for the sins of mankind, so if Moses and Elijah could have been in heaven before Jesus died, then Jesus did not have to die. Beyond that, John 3:13 says no one had ascended into heaven yet.

6. The Parable of Lazarus in Abraham’s bosom (Luke 16:19-31)

Some people say Luke 16:19–31, the record of the rich man and Lazarus, portrays heaven (or paradise) and hell, but it is actually a parable, not a literal portrayal of factual events. Jesus spoke the parable to the Pharisees who believed that evil people suffer after death. By wording the parable the way he did, Christ was “becoming a Pharisee to win the Pharisees,” (cp. 1 Cor. 9:19–22). He was speaking their language to make the point that even if a person returned from the dead, the hard of heart would not believe (Luke 16:31). This was shown to be the case when both Lazarus and Christ rose from the dead.

People who assert that the record about Lazarus is actual and not a parable argue that *a)* Jesus did not say it was a parable and *b)* no other parable contains a proper name. In answer to *a)*, there are many parables that start without Christ saying that he is speaking a parable. A few examples from Matthew include the parable of the Workers in the Field (Matt. 20:1–16), the Two Sons (Matt. 21:28–31), the Wise and Foolish Virgins (Matt. 25:1–13), and the Talents (Matt. 25:14–30). In Luke 15 and 16 the openings of the parables are very similar. The parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11–32) opens, “There was a man.” The parable of the Shrewd Manager (Luke 16:1–13), opens with the phrase, “There was a rich man.” A few verses later in Luke 16:19, the parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man opens, “There was a rich man.” The similarity of these openings, and the fact that the parables were taught closely together is strong evidence that Jesus was continuing to speak in parables.

In answer to *b*), note that there is no rule that says a parable cannot have a proper name. Many parables contain very specific details, such as amounts of money or goods, times of the day, and even the specific names of cities. For example, the parable of the Good Samaritan mentions both Jerusalem and Jericho (also, it is not called a parable, and it opens with, “A man”). Thus we would expect that with all the parables in the Gospels, one would have a proper name.

It is important to realize that the majority of conservative and orthodox biblical scholars believe that the record of Lazarus and the rich man is a parable. An exhaustive list would not be appropriate, but the sources are varied and include: Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament*; Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed., *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*; E. W. Bullinger, *The Companion Bible*; Trent Butler, ed., *Holman Bible Dictionary*; F. L. Cross, and E. A. Livingstone, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*; Edward Fudge, *The Fire that Consumes*; H. B. Hackett, ed., *Smith’s Dictionary of the Bible*; James Hastings, *A Dictionary of the Bible*; R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Luke’s Gospel*; John Lightfoot, *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica*; Watson Mills, ed., *Mercer Dictionary of the Bible*; W. R. Nicoll, *The Expositor’s Greek New Testament*; Alfred Plummer, *The International Critical Commentary: The Gospel According to S. Luke*; A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*; R. C. Trench, *Notes on the Parables of Our Lord*, and Claus Westermann, *The Parables of Jesus in the Light of the Old Testament*.

Why would conservative Christian scholars recognize this as a parable? Because of the structure and the way it is presented, as we have seen, yes, but, if it were literal, it portrays a picture of the future that few conservative scholars believe could be real, which is that the saved people would watch people in torment forever. We would be so close we could hear them scream and cry, and they could even call to us and beg us for mercy. Civilized societies have long condemned torture of criminals for any reason, even to get information that could save lives, but torturing criminals as a punishment is strictly forbidden in all civilized societies. Are we then to conclude that in our perfected and eternal bodies we will somehow be unconcerned about the torture of the people who call out to us for mercy? That fact, as well as the fact that there is nothing else like Luke 16 in all of Scripture, is why even conservative scholars who believe in heaven and hell still conclude that Luke 16:19-31 is a parable. The picture that is portrayed in Luke 16 cannot be a literal portrayal of the future.

7. Jesus in Paradise (Luke 23:43)

Luke 23:43b

...I say to you today, you will be with me in Paradise.

The word “today” can be before or after the comma. The original Greek text had no punctuation. The word “today,” the word “now,” and other “time” words are often used for emphasis. The book of Joshua has an example of “today” being used for emphasis.

Joshua 23:14 (KJV)

And, behold, this day I *am* going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, *and* not one thing hath failed thereof.

1. Joshua did not die that day as the verse above is punctuated. It should have read, “And behold this day, I am going....”
2. The context is a key to the time of Paradise. The criminal said, "Jesus, remember me **when you come into your kingdom**" (Luke 23:42). The criminal wanted to be in the Kingdom, which he would enter at the Resurrection of the Just, when the kingdom was made available. The kingdom of Christ has not come yet, and it will only come after the Tribulation and the Battle of Armageddon. Paradise is the Kingdom. “Paradise” is equivalent to Eden (Gen. 2:8). “Garden of Eden” was, in the Greek, the same word as “Paradise” here.
3. Why did Jesus use “Paradise” in this context? Why not just say, “You will be saved.” The man’s life had been rough—but better times are ahead for him, and for us. Jesus used “Paradise” to encourage the man and remind him of the wonderful Paradise that will come on earth in the future.
4. Jesus did not go to “Paradise” that day. He was buried. That is clearly testified in the Bible. Furthermore, he did not go to Paradise after he was raised from the dead. He ascended to heaven, and heaven is never called “Paradise.”

8. Away from the body and at home with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:1-9)

2 Corinthians 5:1-9

(1) For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

(2) For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling,

(3) if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked.

(4) For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

(5) He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

(6) So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord,

(7) for we walk by faith, not by sight.

(8) Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

(9) So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him.

Many Christians assert that these verses teach that when a person is absent from the body he is present with the Lord. However, that is not at all what the Bible is teaching. These verses point out the three states of the Christian. We have an earthly “tent,” an “earthly home” (v. 1), which is our earthly body, and while we are in it we “groan” and long to put on our heavenly dwelling (v. 2), which is our new spiritual body. We want to put on our heavenly dwelling rather than to be found naked (v. 3), that is, dead, and therefore without any body physical or spiritual.

It is important to note that these verses in 2 Corinthians do not portray two states (alive in our body or dead in the presence of the Lord), but rather three states: (alive in our earthly tent; dead [naked or unclothed]; or in our heavenly dwelling, in the presence of the Lord, which happens at the Rapture. Verse 4 notes these three states quite clearly. Paul says that while in our body we groan, which we do because life is tough. However, in spite of that we do not want to be “unclothed,” dead. What we long for is to be “further clothed,” to put on our new bodies, and that will only occur at the Rapture of the Church; it will not happen when we die. In light of that, Paul states the obvious when he says that while we are in our earthly body we are away from the Lord (v. 6). However, then he said in verse 8 that he would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. Every Christian should long for that, because it will happen when the Lord returns and the Church is Raptured. It will not happen when we die, because that is when we are found “naked” and “unclothed.” 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 is clear that we are with the Lord when he comes and gets his Church.

9. To live is Christ, and to die is gain (Phil. 1:21)

Philippians 1:21

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

From this short verse it has been taught that if a person dies it is his gain because he goes to heaven to be with the Lord. That is not at all what the verse is saying. We need to examine the context to see exactly what Paul is saying.

In verse 20 we see Paul knew that Christ would be honored whether Paul lived or died. Paul had already made the point that when he was put in prison, instead of hurting the Gospel, it helped the Gospel (Phil. 1:12-14). That fact set the stage for Paul’s statement that if he lived it was “Christ” and if he died it was “gain,” in other words, just as Paul’s imprisonment was gain to the Church, so too, if Paul died for the Gospel, the Church would gain. That fact put Paul in a tough position. If he died, the Church would gain just as it gained when he was imprisoned. If Paul lived, however, he could engage in “fruitful labor” (v. 22), which would help the Church and accrue to his account. Thus Paul says he was “hard pressed between the two” (v. 23), the two being dying (which would mean gain to the Gospel), or living (which would mean fruitful labor for him). However, Paul then expresses a third possibility, the one he really wanted, and that was to “depart” and be with Christ. This would only happen at the Rapture, something he had no control over. Thus these verses in Philippians do not teach that when a Christian dies he goes to be with the Lord in heaven. These verses agree with the dozens of clear verses

that teach that when a person dies, that is the end of his life until he is raised from the dead.

There are dozens of verses which are very clear about this subject, specifically, that the dead are indeed dead and in the grave, waiting to be raised by the power of the Lord. The few verses that seem to be unclear about the state of the dead can all be satisfactorily explained to show that they, too, actually proclaim that the dead are dead.

The stark reality of death only serves to highlight how wonderful life is and how even more wonderful being raised to everlasting life in a new and spiritually energized body will be.

Sheol to Hades
Or
How the Pharisees came to believe that the soul lived on after death

Translated as “the grave” in KJV

Genesis 37:35

All his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted and said, “No, I shall go down to Sheol to my son, mourning.” Thus his father wept for him.

Genesis 37:35 (KJV)

And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the **grave** unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him.

Translated as “hell” in KJV

Proverbs 15:24

The path of life leads upward for the prudent, that he may turn away from Sheol beneath.

Proverbs 15:24 (KJV)

The way of life *is* above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath.

Translated as “the pit” in KJV

Numbers 16:30

But if the LORD creates something new, and the ground opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into Sheol, then you shall know that these men have despised the LORD.”

Numbers 16:30 (KJV)

But if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that *appertain* unto them, and they go down quick into the **pit**; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD.

The KJV also translates *sheol* as “the depth.”

NIV. The Grave; the realm of death; death, the depths

The Septuagint:

Sheol was translated as “*Hades*.” In *Hades* everyone is alive.

Greek *Hades* = the land of shades

English translations of *Hades*:

NASB: Always "*Hades*"

ESV: always "*Hades*" except in Matthew 16:18: "the gates of hell"

NIV: *Hades*, Hell, the depths, the grave

KJV: Always "hell"

"*Hades*" refers to "the grave" as a study of its uses will show:

Acts 2:25-27 (KJV)

(25) For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved:

(26) Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope:

(27) Because **thou wilt not leave my soul in hell**, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

But David never was in what most Christians know as hell, he was in the grave.

Revelation 20:13 (KJV)

And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and **death and hell** delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

This verse cannot be accurate as it is translated, because then people would go to hell before they were judged and condemned. *Hades* refers to the grave.

Luke 23:43. "...I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

2 Corinthians 5:1-9 (KJV). Absent from the body, present with the Lord.

Philippians 1:21. "...to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

Some practical problems with believing the dead are dead

- Murder/suicide
- Not being sexually intimate

The concept of the Immortal Soul

Sheol to *Hades*

No eternal "Hell"

"from the dead" verses

Luke 24:46

and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead,

Acts 3:15

and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses.

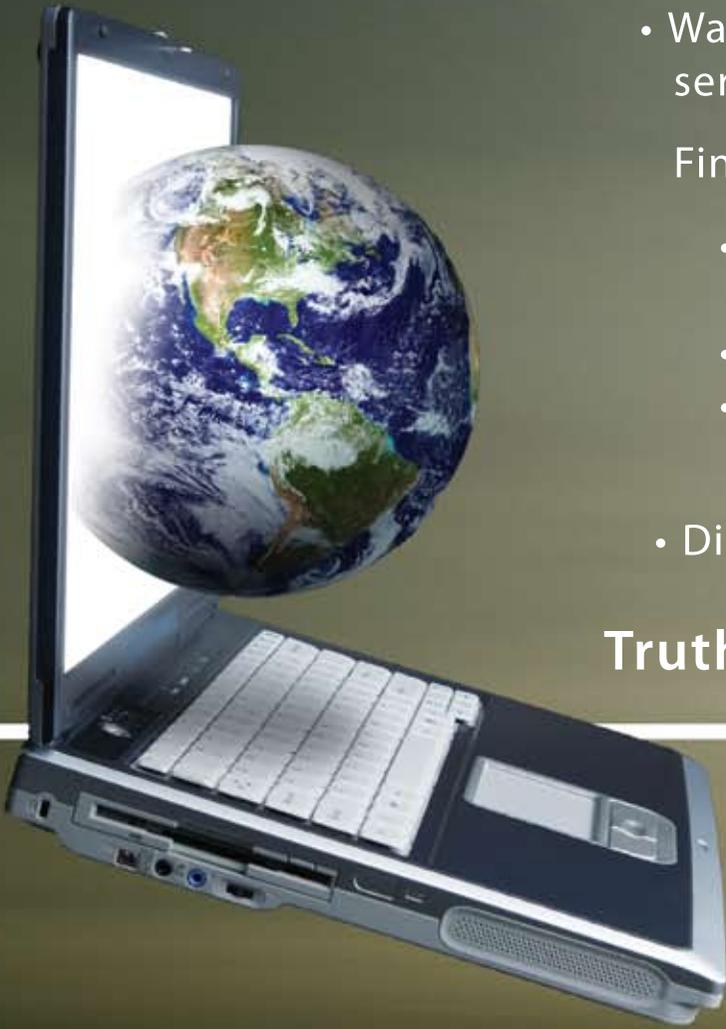
Romans 10:9

because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

2 Timothy 2:8

Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel,

FURTHER STUDY MATERIAL ONLINE



- Watch a four part (2 hr) video series on the state of the dead

Find answers to questions like:

- What Does the Bible Say About Cremation?
- What is Hell?
- Will Christians Really Live Forever in Heaven?
- Difficult scriptures explained

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