

State of the Dead – Is there hope beyond the grave?

- Purpose:** Death is an unconscious sleep until the resurrection.
- Focus:** Eternal life is a gift from Jesus that He will give at the resurrection to those who receive Him.
- Introduction** Our belief about death affects how we live. IE: Pyramids, M. Applewhite. Today we will look at what the Bible says happens when you die.
- In order to understand death, we must first understand life, its antitheses.*
- Joh 14:6** What is Jesus? He is not only our Creator, but the very source of life.
God is also our life sustainer...
- Acts 17:25, 28** Life is a gift. Breath is a gift. Nothing we possess in and of ourselves. We ought to be thankful to God for every breath! He is our life sustainer. (**Heb 1:3**)
The heathen religions say man is immortal. But this doesn't agree with the Bible...
- 1 Tim 6:15-16** Who alone is immortal? Are humans? Are angels? Not by nature. They have received immortality as a conditional gift. (**Rom 2:6-7**)
But what about our soul, is it immortal?
- Ezek 18:4, 20** Most religions say that human beings have an immortal soul. Is this biblical? (**Ps 22:29**, Matt 10:28, James 5:20) IE: Luther, Tyndale.
What then is the soul? Let us turn to the first usage of the word.
- Gen 2:7** What is the soul? DUST + BREATH = SOUL (Conscious, living creature). Man became a soul, he didn't receive one. No preexistence.
When a person dies, the reverse of creation takes place...
- Ecc 12:7** Death is the undoing of life. What returns? Not the soul. The spirit/breath (**Job 27:3**). It is not a conscious being that returns, but simply the life force, the ability to breathe (Ps 104:29, Job 33:4). IE: Wooden box. IE: Lamp.
So what happens with the dead? How conscious are they?
- Ecc 9:5-6, 10** How much do the dead know? Do they feel? Is there knowledge with the dead? Is there wisdom? The dead are simply dead (**Ps 146:4**).
If you died and got to Heaven (as is popularly believed) would you not praise Jesus? But the Bible says
- Ps 115:17** Do the dead praise God? (**Ps 6:5**, Isa 38:18-19)
Many times the Bible compares death to a sleep...
- Job 14:10-12, 21** What happens to a man when he dies? Death = a pause of life until Jesus' return. Does he know what happens on earth? Relief! IE: Luther quote.
IE: Haunted houses (**Job 7:9-10**)
Jesus also compared death to a sleep...
- John 11:11-14** What does Jesus compare death to? 70+ times the Bible calls death a sleep.
But death was not the end according to Jesus...
- John 5:28-29** When do the righteous receive eternal life? At the resurrection! What is the point of the resurrection if man goes straight to heaven or hell?
The NT Church did not believe that the righteous soul was immortal and goes to heaven at death...
- Acts 2:29, 34** What did the early church believe about death? IE: Justin Martyr quote.
Why is this truth important to know?
- Deut 18:10-12** What does God say about communication with the dead? (**Lev 20:27**)
Why so strong statements, if they anyway don't know anything?
- 2 Cor 11:14-15** Who can masquerade in the form of our dead loved ones? (cf. Deut 32:17 & Ps 106:28) Spiritualism will be huge in the last days (1 Tim 4:1, Rev 16:13-14).
This Bible truth, concerning the state of the dead is our safeguard against deception...
- Isa 8:19-20** Should we seek counsel from the dead? IE: Mormonism. IE: Boy visits heaven.
- Appeal** What have you thought of death previously? Has what we studied today changed your understanding? Questions? Do you see that this is important? Is it your desire to base your beliefs solely on the testimony of the Bible?

APPENDIX

Pope Leo X

"we condemn and reject all who assert that the intellectual soul is mortal" – *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, December 19, 1513

Luther

"However, I permit the Pope to establish articles of faith for himself and for his own faithful—such are: ... that the soul is immortal; and all these endless monstrosities in the Roman dunghill of decretals" —Martin Luther, Weimar edition of *Luther's Works*, vol. 7, pp. 131, 132

"[Ecclesiastes 9:5 quoted] Another place proving that the dead have no ... feeling. There is, saith he, no duty, no science, no knowledge, no wisdom there. Solomon judgeth that the dead are asleep, and feel nothing at all. For the dead lie there, accounting neither days nor years, but when they are awaked, they shall seem to have slept scarce one minute."—Martin Luther, *Exposition of Solomon's Booke Called Ecclesiastes*, p. 152

"For just as one who falls asleep and reaches morning unexpectedly when he awakes, without knowing what has happened to him, so we shall suddenly rise on the last day without knowing how we have come into death and through death.' 'We shall sleep, until He comes and knocks on the little grave and says, Doctor Martin, get up! Then I shall rise in a moment and be happy with Him forever.'" – Martin Luther, Quoted in T. A. Kantonen, *The Christian Hope* (1954), p. 37

Tyndale

"I confess openly, that I am not persuaded that they be already in the full glory that Christ is in, or the elect angels of God are in. Neither is it any article of my faith; for if it were so, I see not but then the preaching of the resurrection of the flesh were a thing in vain." – William Tyndale, Preface to *New Testament* (ed. 1534)

Justin Martyr

"If you have fallen in with some who are called Christians, but who do not admit to this [the truth of the resurrection], and venture to blaspheme the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; who say there is no resurrection of the dead, and that their souls, when they die, are taken to heaven; do not imagine that they are Christians" – Justin Martyr, "Dialogue With Trypho", chapter 80, *Ante Nicene Fathers*, 1:239

Amos Phelps

"This doctrine [of natural immortality] can be traced through the muddy channels of a corrupted Christianity, a perverted Judaism, and pagan philosophy, and a superstitious idolatry, to the great instigator of mischief in the garden of Eden. The Protestants borrow it from the Catholics, the Catholics from the Pharisees, the Pharisees from the pagans, and the pagans from the old serpent who first preached the doctrine amid the lowly bowels of Paradise to an audience all too willing to hear and heed the new and fascinating theology: 'Ye shall not surely die.'" – Prof. Amos Phelps (1805-1874), Yale University, Sermon: *Is man by nature immortal?*

OBJECTIONS

What about near-death experiences? Answer: Even though you saw your dead relative, heard their voice and recognized their features – do not believe it! If they speak not according to this Word, there is no light in them (**Isa 8:20**).

Is the spirit conscious? Answer: No (**Ps 104:29, Gen 6:17, Ecc 3:19, Ps 146:4**)

Luk 23:43 According to **John 20:17** Jesus didn't go to Paradise that day. Comma wrongly placed in the translation (there are no commas in the original). Paradise is in heaven where God's throne is (**Rev 2:7, 22:1-3, 2 Cor 12:1-4**).

Luk 16:19-31 It is clearly a parable, not to be taken literally. Otherwise trees can talk, the kingdom of heaven is the size of a mustard seed etc. (**Judg 9:8-16, 2 Kings 14:9, Isa 14:8, Luk 13:18-21**). Main point: v.31. The purpose was not to teach people about the state of the dead. Contradict the rest?

Rev 6:9-11 Does it mean that souls are actually pinned down underneath the altar in heaven? This is sanctuary language (**Lev 17:11, 4:25**) The idea is that the blood/life of the martyrs cries out for vengeance (**Gen 4:9-10, Heb 12:24**).

1 Sam 28:6-20 This was an evil spirit (**1 Chron 10:13-14**).

1 Pet 3:18-20 How did Jesus go to the spirits in prison? "By the Spirit"
When did Jesus go to the spirits in prison? "In the days of Noah"
Are the spirits really disembodied? (Num 16:22, Heb 12:9, 23)
What prison is meant? (**Ps 142:7, Luk 4:18, 2 Tim 2:26**) Sin.
Jesus was raised by the same Holy Spirit by which He preached through Noah to the people before the flood (**Gen 6:3, 2 Pet 2:5, Heb 11:7**).

2 Cor 5:1-8 Paul longs for the new body (**Phil 3:21**). Naked = Dead. He longed to live until the Second Coming (**1 Cor 15:51-53**). Paul longs to be absent from the body AND be present with the Lord. He doesn't say: To be absent from the body IS to be present with the Lord. Since death is an unconscious sleep, the next thing Paul knows is being with the Lord.